

Bicycle Safety

Bicycling is one of the most popular forms of recreational activity in the United States. The importance of bicycle safety cannot be underestimated. Bicycle helmets are 63-88% effective in preventing head and brain injuries; however, only 35% of all bicyclists regularly wear bicycle helmets.

1. Wear a Bike Helmet

Never ride a bike without a helmet. Persons 16 and younger are required by the state of Alabama to wear a helmet. It should fit snugly on your head with the chinstrap secured. Make sure the helmet is level and does not move in any direction, back to front or side to side. Choose a helmet that meets safety standards of the [American Society for testing and materials](#) or the [Snell Memorial Foundation](#).

2. Be Visible

Wear bright clothing to be visible and retro-reflective gear when there is little light. Avoid riding at night.

3. Obey Traffic Laws

Ride on the right-hand side of the street, so you travel in the same direction as cars do. Never ride against traffic. Ride single file on the street with friends. Stop at all stop signs and obey traffic (red) lights just as cars do. Before entering the street, exiting driveways or crossing intersections, look for vehicles to the left, right, in front and behind. Cross at intersections because drivers can't see you if you pull out between parked vehicles. Walk your bike across busy intersections using the crosswalk and following traffic signals.

4. Stay Alert

Watch for things in your path like potholes, cracks, drainage grates. Be extra careful in wet weather. Always check for traffic.

5. Check Your Brakes

Brakes are the most important part of the bicycle. Control your speed by using your brakes; apply rear brakes slightly before the front hand brakes. In wet weather, ride slowly and apply brakes earlier.