

Chapter 6: Bicycles



Bicycle use continues to increase as more people use a bicycle for transportation, recreation, physical fitness and energy conservation. Cyclists must obey the rules of the road the same way as vehicles and are also entitled to an equal share of the road.

INFORMATION FOR MOTORISTS:

When you are sharing the road with cyclists please remember:

- many children riding bicycles on the street are very young and lack the necessary training and skills for safe cycling;
- be alert for small children on oversized bicycles. This will increase the likelihood of erratic moves;
- when passing a cyclist, go around them like you would any other vehicle;
- when you are preparing to make a right turn, watch for cyclists who may pull up alongside your vehicle. Check your blind spots;
- when making a right turn, do not pull up beside a cyclist and then turn directly in front of them and cut them off;
- when pulling away from the curb always check for cyclists who may be trying to pass you;
- when parked at the curb, always check for cyclists when you open your vehicle door. It is the driver's responsibility not to open the vehicle door into oncoming traffic;
- do not drive too closely behind cyclists as they do not have brake lights to warn you when they are stopping;
- cyclists are entitled to make left turns in the same manner as motorists. Since they are exposed on left turns, they will need extra consideration especially on multi-lane roads;
- cyclists are entitled to ride at least one metre from the curb and may ride even further out when they have to steer away from drainage grates, pot holes, debris, loose gravel or sand, wet or slippery

surfaces, rutted or grooved pavement and even dogs. Be aware of the roadway conditions that may affect a cyclist; and

- do not blow your horn when you are passing a cyclist. It may frighten them and cause them to steer into your path. If you feel that you must use your horn, tap it quickly and lightly while you are still some distance away from the cyclist.

RULES OF THE ROAD FOR CYCLISTS

DO:

- keep both your hands on the handlebars except when making a hand signal;
- keep both your feet on the pedals;
- ride in a single file except when overtaking and passing another cycle;
- make sure your bike is equipped with at least one headlamp (but not more than two), one red tail lamp and at least one red reflector mounted on the rear of the cycle when cycling at night;

- make sure your bike has effective brakes. You should be able to make the braked wheels skid on dry, level, clean pavement;
- always ride on the right side of the roadway as close as possible to the right curb or the edge of the road;
- use a bicycle path adjacent to a street or highway if there is one;
- ride on the regular seat of the bicycle; and
- carry parcels in bicycle carriers so they do not interfere with your control of the bicycle.

DO NOT:

- ride on a sidewalk;
- ride on a highway where signs prohibit bicycles;
- ride the wrong way on a one-way street. There are no traffic signs in place for wrong way drivers;
- carry more people at one time than the cycle was designed for; or
- hold onto or attach the cycle to any other moving vehicle.

Cyclists have just as much right to use streets and highways as drivers of motor vehicles do. They also have responsibilities when riding their bicycles. Bicycle riders, regardless of age, must know and observe traffic regulations. In most cases these regulations are the same as those required of motor vehicle drivers.

SPECIAL RULES FOR CYCLISTS

Always use proper lights and reflectors when riding at night and wear light-coloured or reflective clothing.

Your bike must have:

- a lamp on front that is visible from a distance of 150 metres (500 feet);
- a red reflector on the rear that is visible from 90 metres (300 feet) to the rear;
- a bell or other device capable of giving a signal audible for a distance of at least 30 metres (100 feet). Just as there are safe driving practices for

motor vehicle drivers, these are safe cycling practices for bicyclists;

- always stop and check for traffic when you are coming out of a lane or driveway;
- be alert for cars coming from driveways, lanes or parking spaces;
- as you approach intersections, watch for cars turning right; they may squeeze you against the curb; and
- yield the right-of-way to pedestrians.

E-BIKES

E-bikes are limited-speed motorcycles under the *Highway Traffic Act*. These bikes are considered a moped under the rules of the *Highway Traffic Act*. A valid driver's licence is required to operate an E-bike in Prince Edward Island.



WHAT IS A BIKE HELMET?

A helmet protects your head from injury when you fall. It has a plastic shell on the outside and foam inside. It has a strap to keep it on when you fly through the air. It only covers your head, and the rest of your body is still exposed, so you still have to be careful.

HOW DOES A HELMET WORK?

The foam crushes when you hit the road. That cushions the blow, and usually saves your brain. The shell makes it skid on the street so your neck does not get jerked. The shell also keeps the foam in one piece. It can split when you hit the car and not be there when you hit the street.

If the strap is not tight, your helmet can slip to the side or to the back. Then your bare head hits the road. Ouch. Pavement is very, very hard.

WHY WEAR ONE?

Under the Bicycle Helmet Regulations, everyone who operates a bicycle must wear an approved safety helmet. Being careful and not crashing is the best way to stay safe. That's better than crashing in a helmet! The helmet only covers your head, so you need to learn the rules of the road, but even the best riders crash. If you hurt your brain, it can change you. You may not be able to read this page, or play video games, or talk, or run, or even feed yourself.

HOW DO I PICK ONE?

A magazine called Consumer Reports can tell you which helmets are best, but they don't test them every year.

First, make sure the helmet has a sticker inside with the letters CPSC somewhere on it. That means it works. Then find one that fits you. That will keep it on

your head while you fly through the air. Work on the straps to get the fit just right. You don't have to pay a lot for a good helmet. But be sure you like it and will wear it.

CAN I WEAR IT TO SKATE?

Yes if you have in-line skates. For skateboards, you need another helmet. Skateboards crash a lot.

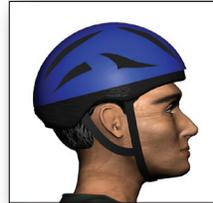
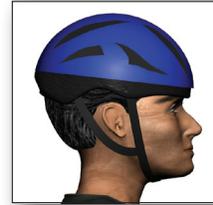
WHAT IF I CRASH?

You will have to buy a new helmet. It is good for only one crash.

FITTING A BICYCLE HELMET

POSITION

Put the helmet on your head so it sits evenly between the ears and rests low on your forehead. It should be about only one to two finger widths above your eyebrow.



PADS

Put foam pads inside the helmet so it feels comfortable but really snug. Usually, the helmet includes more than one size of foam pads that can be affixed inside the helmet for a better fit.

STRAPS

Tighten the chin strap as snugly as possible. Adjust the junction of front and back straps just under the ears and secure back strap without putting pressure on the front strap.

If all of this sounds confusing, follow the simple Five Step Helmet Fit Test below.

A GOOD HELMET FIT is as important as wearing one... but it takes time. Allow as much as a half hour to get a proper helmet fit. If fitting your child, don't try to "rush" it when they are trying to go outside to ride. Do it while they're relaxed and you have plenty of time. Then secure the adjustments so the helmet is ready for the next ride.

FIVE STEP HELMET FIT TEST

STEP 1

With one hand, gently lift the front of the helmet up and back.

Problem

Helmet moves back to uncover the forehead.

Solution

Tighten front strap to junction. Also, adjust padding thickness and/or position, especially in back. Make sure chin strap is snug. If this doesn't work, the helmet may be too big.

STEP 2

With one hand, gently lift the back of the helmet up and forward.

Problem - Helmet moves forward to cover the eyes

Solution - Tighten back strap. Make sure chin strap is snug. Also, adjust padding thickness and/or position, especially in front.

STEP 3

Put a hand on each side of the helmet and rock from side to side. Shake your head “no” as hard as possible.

Problem

Helmet slips from side to side.

Solution

Check padding on sides and make sure straps are evenly adjusted.

STEP 4

Open your mouth (lower jaw) as wide as possible, without moving your head. The top of your helmet should pull down.

Problem

Helmet does not pull down when opening your mouth.

Solution

Tighten chin strap. Make sure junction is under each ear.

STEP 5

Check to see if the front edge of the helmet covers your forehead. The front edge of the helmet should not be more than one to two finger widths from your eyebrows.

Problem

Helmet does not cover the forehead.

Solution

Position helmet no more than one to two finger widths above eyebrows. Tighten any loose straps. Make adjustments so the helmet stays over the forehead.

Have someone else test your helmet fit by doing the Five-Step Test outlined above. Hold your head still during the test. The helmet should pass each of the five steps.