

BIKE HELMETS ARE REQUIRED FOR BICYCLE RIDERS UNDER 16 YEARS OF AGE AND RECOMMENDED FOR ALL

RSA 265:144X This is a violation subject to fine.

A Message for Parents

A bicycle is not a toy. It's a vehicle!

Most bicyclist deaths result from bicycle-motor vehicle collisions. But injuries can happen anywhere - in parks, bike paths, and driveways and often do not involve motor vehicles.

Head injuries are the most serious injury type and are the most common cause of deaths among bicyclists. The most severe injuries are those to the brain that cause permanent damage. Studies have proven that bicycle helmet use can significantly reduce head injuries.

HOW CAN YOU HELP STOP THESE TRAGEDIES?

- Buy your child an approved bike helmet. Purchase one that has a sticker inside certifying the helmet meets standards of the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC).
- Let your child help pick out the helmet because it must be worn every time he/she rides. If you're a rider, buy one for yourself, too, and set a good example by wearing it. Also encourage your child's friends to wear helmets.
- **Make certain your child's bike is the correct size**, safely maintained, and has lights and reflectors. Children under age nine should not ride their bikes in the street. They are not able to identify and adjust to the many dangerous traffic situations.

- Teach your child to always stop and look left-right-left before entering the road. This is also a good pedestrian safety practice for crossing the street.
- If a bicyclist rides in the road, they must obey traffic laws that apply to motor vehicle operators. Instruct your child on the bicycle rules of the road. Driver licensing agencies and highway departments are good sources for booklets that explain bicycle safety rules. Enroll your child in a bike safety education program if one is available in your community.
- Never allow your child to ride at night or with audio headphones. Emphasize the need to ride alert since most drivers do not see riders. Bicyclists should ride single file on the right side and signal their intentions to other road users.

TRAFFIC LAWS APPLY TO BICYCLES

Every person riding a bicycle has the same rights, privileges, and **responsibilities** as persons driving cars. Every person riding a bicycle shall have all of the rights and be subject to the duties applicable to the driver of any other vehicle under the rules of the road. (RSA 265:143)

RESPECT THE LAWS IN YOUR COMMUNITY

You can be a welcome bicycle rider in your community if you are aware of the regulations and you follow them. Check the local ordinances pertaining to bicycles before you begin riding in a new community. Remember, you do come under the jurisdiction of law enforcement officials. Any city or town shall have the power to make ordinances, bylaws or regulations respecting the use and equipment of bicycles. (RSA 265:149) Any bicyclist shall stop upon demand of a peace officer and permit his bicycle to be inspected. (RSA 265:144 VIII)

DRIVE SINGLE FILE

Two riders are safest when riding single file on the right side of the road. Never block traffic by riding two abreast. Persons riding bicycles two or more abreast shall not impede the normal and reasonable flow of traffic, and on a laned road shall ride within a single lane. (RSA 265:144 V)

KEEP YOUR BICYCLE SAFE

Don't wait until you are driving to find out that your brakes don't work or that your chain is weak. Do a bicycle safety check before you ride. NO bicycle shall be operated unless the steering, brakes, tires, and other required equipment are in safe condition. (RSA 265:144 IX)

BRAKES

In order to ride safely you must be able to stop your bicycle when you want to. Maintain your brakes in good condition and check them before each ride. Every bicycle shall be equipped with a brake or brakes which will enable its driver to stop the bicycle within 25 feet from a speed of 10 miles per hour on dry, level, clean pavement. (RSA 266:88)

HANDLEBARS AND SEAT

Be sure your bicycle fits you. Keep handlebars and seat adjusted tightly and correctly. Handlebars should be the same height as the seat and tightened. Always ride upon or astride a permanent and regular seat attached to the bicycle. (RSA 265:144I)

LIGHTS FOR NIGHT DRIVING

You must see and be seen to be safe on a bicycle. Most nighttime bicycle accidents are caused by bikes not being seen by other vehicles. Bicycle

lamps and reflectors are basic safety equipment. Every bicycle operated during darkness shall be equipped with a lamp emitting a white light visible from a distance of 300 feet in front of the bicycle and with a red reflector on the rear visible to a distance of 300 feet. A lamp emitting a red light visible from 300 feet may be used in addition to the red reflector. (RSA 266:86)

REFLECTORS

Reflectors will increase your ability to be seen. Spoke reflectors, pedal reflectors, front and rear reflectors, as well as reflectorized tire walls, reflective tape on your bicycle frame, and reflectorized clothing will help you enjoy safe night riding. All bicycles shall be equipped with a reflector on each pedal visible from a distance of 200 feet from the front or rear of the bicycle. (RSA 266:87)



DON'T CARRY PASSENGERS

Two on a bicycle built for one is double trouble! No bicycle shall be used to carry more persons at one time than the number for which it is designed and equipped. (RSA 265:144 II)

DON'T CARRY BULKY PACKAGES OR BUNDLES

Too large a package in front of you will obscure your vision. Carrying a large or heavy package may cause you to lose your balance or to swerve and fall. No person shall carry a package, bundle, or article which prevents the driver from keeping at least one hand upon the handlebars. (RSA 265:144 IV)

DON'T CLING TO OTHER VEHICLES

Clinging to a moving vehicle is extremely dangerous. The driver of the tow vehicle and other vehicles are unaware of your presence and may endanger your life. The tow speed and your lack of visibility increase your chances of losing control of your bicycle. No person riding a bicycle shall hold fast to or hitch onto any other vehicle moving upon a way. (RSA 265:145)



WHY WEAR A HELMET?

A crash can happen to even the most careful person. On any ride you might catch a wheel in a crack in the road surface, skid on gravel, hit a wide pothole or drain gate or collide with a pedestrian, a dog or another vehicle.

Nobody expects to have a crash, but it is essential to have head protection in case you are involved in one. Road rash and broken bones are painful, but they do heal. Head injuries, however, can cause permanent damage.

New Hampshire Bicycle Laws and Safety Guidelines

**BIKE HELMETS ARE
REQUIRED FOR RIDERS
UNDER 16 YEARS OF AGE
(NH RSA 265:144X)**



Sponsored by
New Hampshire
Highway Safety Agency