

## Head First

**Always wear a helmet.** As a bicyclist, your only significant piece of safety equipment is your helmet. A helmet can prevent serious head injury; it can save your life. In Missouri, a helmet is required safety equipment in some municipalities. Check with your local police department to see if your community has a helmet law.

Helmets can reduce risk of head injury by up to 85 percent. Consider your own safety and buy a helmet that:

- Meets current Federal Safety Standards. Look inside the helmet for label certifying it meets safety standards set by the Consumer Products Safety Commission (CPSC), American National Standards Institute (ANSI) or Snell Memorial Foundation.
- Has plenty of ventilation holes.
- Fits securely. Wear your helmet low on your forehead, just above your eyebrows.

Replace your helmet every five years and after any crash, even if it looks undamaged.

### Good fit is a must when choosing and wearing a helmet.

#### Right

Helmets come in both adult and child sizes. A helmet must fit snugly.

Be sure to wear the helmet straight across your forehead. Imagine a line parallel to the ground.

Fasten the chin strap securely so the helmet can't easily shift or come off in a fall.



#### Wrong

If the helmet is not in the proper position, it won't protect you in a fall. Make sure the front of the helmet protects your forehead.



## Dress for Safety

Besides wearing a helmet, there are several other ways you can dress smart to increase your safety as a bicyclist.

**Make yourself visible.** During the day, wear bright colors like yellow, orange or bright pink. It's safest to avoid night riding, but if you must ride after dark, wear reflective tape and white or light-colored clothes – and obey Missouri's laws for equipping your bike with lights or reflectors.

**Use leg clips on pants.** Avoid loose clothing which can catch in gears and chains and cause falls.

Wear gloves. They'll protect your hands if you fall.

Missouri Coalition  
for **Roadway Safety**



Missouri Coalition for Roadway Safety  
P.O. Box 270  
Jefferson City, MO 65102

**573-751-4161**  
**800-800-BELT**

[www.saveMOLives.com](http://www.saveMOLives.com)

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# Bicycle Safety

## Tips for Cyclists of All Ages



**ARRIVE  
ALIVE**

# Rules of the Road

## Ride a Safe Bike and Ride it Safely.

Your safety as a bike rider is mostly up to you. You need to know how to choose and care for your bike, use proper safety equipment and understand the rules of the road. Your actions on your bike can keep the streets safer and more enjoyable for everyone.

**Your bike should be equipped for safety.** Once you choose your bike style, you need to equip it for safety. This means adding safety features such as:

- A rearview mirror,
- A bell or horn, and
- A headlight and taillight, or comparable reflectors.

**Chapter 307 of the Missouri Revised Statutes** lists minimum mandatory requirements for safely equipping and operating your bicycle on Missouri roads. By law, bicycles must be equipped with a brake or brakes that will enable you to stop the bike within 25 feet from a speed of 10 miles per hour on clean, dry pavement. Additionally, all bikes ridden after dark must have:

- A white light mounted on the front of the bicycle or carried by the rider,
- A rear-facing red reflector at least two inches square, or a rear-facing red lamp,
- Reflective material and/or lights visible from each side of the bike, and
- Reflective material and/or lights visible from the front and rear on any moving parts or the bicyclist's shoes and lower legs.

Some municipalities may have additional laws that govern bicycle safety. Failure to comply with safety requirements may result in fines or even impoundment of a bicycle for up to five days.

## The Rules of the Road Apply to You.

According to state statutes, bike riders must obey the same laws and rules of the road as vehicle drivers. Stop and check for traffic before entering any street. Be aware of any vehicles around you.

**Always ride on the right** with the traffic flow. Stay as far to the right as you can but be aware of hazards on the roadway, parked vehicles or vehicles proceeding in the same direction. You may move into traffic when making a left turn, when the lane is too narrow to share with another vehicle, or on a one-way street.

**Use caution** at intersections, go slowly and yield to pedestrians. Look for turning vehicles. If traffic is heavy, or if you are uncomfortable biking in traffic, consider walking your bike across.

**Steer clear of parked cars.** Be alert for opening doors and cars pulling away from curbs. Drivers in cars are probably not expecting to see you approaching, so ride defensively.

**Be on the lookout.** As a bicyclist, you share the road with more than just cars. Pedestrians and other bicyclists also create potential hazards. Go slowly and alert people when passing. Remember, young children can run out in front of you anywhere.

**Respect pedestrians.** Always yield to pedestrians in crosswalks and on sidewalks. Take extra care when riding your bicycle on sidewalks, and when approaching pedestrians, always alert them of your intention to pass. Riding on sidewalks is prohibited in business districts and in other areas where signs are posted.

**Don't hitch a ride.** It is illegal in Missouri for bicyclists to attach to another vehicle by holding onto a car, truck or other bicycle for a ride. So no matter how tempting it is to "hitch" a ride with friends, don't do it.

**Extra precautions for young cyclists.** Children should take extra steps to stay safe on bikes. Kids are smaller, less familiar with road rules, and often ride their bikes in

congested areas such as school drop-off zones. Some special safety considerations for small bicyclists include:

- Small children can't pedal as fast as adults, and may not be able to cross streets as quickly as lights change. Walking bikes across intersections can be safer for kids who are not yet confident cyclists.
- Dusk and dawn are the most dangerous times for kids to ride. Encourage them to be extra careful if they ride their bikes during these times.
- School bus drivers may not see small bicyclists around their bus, and people in cars are not expecting them to ride out from behind a parked bus. Instruct children to look both ways before crossing the street, and not to cross between parked vehicles.
- Bicycles are vehicles. Children should be able to understand and obey the rules of the road before they are allowed to ride in the street.

### Even very young bicyclists will be safer if they learn to:

**Use hand signals.** Always signal turns and stops.

- Left turn: Left arm held straight out.
- Right turn: Left arm turned up or right arm held straight out.
- Slow or stop: Left arm bent downward.

**Check street signs.** Their size, shape and color give important information to everyone on the road.

- Stop: Red sign, eight sides.
- Yield: Red and white triangle.
- Caution: Yellow, diamond-shaped sign.
- Information & regulations: Square or rectangular.
- Railroad crossing: Yellow circle with X through it.