

Safe Cycling Guide

**FOR WISCONSIN
BICYCLE RIDERS**



PRESENTED BY:



**WISCONSIN
BIKE FED**

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The Bike Fed is here to cultivate, motivate and unite a strong community of residents as well as business and political leaders to move bicycling forward in Wisconsin – through education, encouragement, and engagement.

The information in this guide can help you be a safer and more confident cyclist.
All information is in accordance with **Wisconsin Laws**.



Z“BICYCLE” means a vehicle propelled by feet or hands using pedals or cranks and wheels any of which are not less than 14” in diameter. Every person riding a bicycle upon a roadway is granted all the rights and subject to the duties of the operator of a vehicle (*a few exceptions are noted in this guide*)

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

A-B-C-D-E-QUICK CHECK.....	4
HELMET FIT.....	5
LOW LIGHT RIDING.....	6
THEFT PREVENTION.....	7
SIGNALING.....	8
OTHER TIPS.....	9
E-BIKES.....	10
SHARE THE TRAIL.....	12
SIDEWALK RIDING.....	13
WHAT TO DO IF INVOLVED IN A CRASH.....	14

A-B-C-D-E-QUICK CHECK

Before each ride it is important to make sure your bike is ready to ride and in good working order.

A: AIR. Tires should be stiff and hard to press. Proper air pressure is listed on the side of each tire.

B: BRAKES. When you squeeze your brake levers they should not reach all the way to your handlebars. If you pull both levers and try to roll your bike forward your wheels should not be rolling.

C: CHAIN. Make sure your chain is lightly oiled and moving freely. Rust and gunk on your chain can affect the safe operation of the bike.

D: DRIVETRAIN. Check the front and rear gears, also referred to as the cassette and chainring. Spin the pedals and make sure crank arms are not loose and the chain is rolling smoothly.

E: EVERYTHING ELSE. Lift the bike and spin each wheel to make sure the wheel moves freely and is true. Ride a short distance and listen for odd noises.

QUICK RELEASE: If your bike has quick release levers make sure they are closed and tight. Many bikes have a quick release at the middle of each wheel where it connects to the frame and on your seatpost.

If something doesn't seem right make the adjustment or take your bike to a local bike shop that can repair it for you. Annual tune ups can save you unexpected hassles and keep your bike in good shape.

HELMET FIT

A properly fitting helmet can keep you safe in the event of a fall or crash. It is recommended that all riders wear a helmet when riding.

It should not wiggle or move excessively once strapped properly. Some helmets have a dial in back to tighten around your head.

There should be a two finger width between your eyebrows and the helmet.

If wearing a hat or balaclava underneath the helmet the fit may vary seasonally and need re-adjusting.

Consider your hairstyle ahead of time. Some hairstyles may not fit under a helmet.

The straps should form a "Y" under your ear.

The chin strap should be snug under your chin, but not so tight you can not move your mouth.



LOW LIGHT RIDING

Most crashes between riders and drivers occur in the early evening hours. Being visible to other road users can reduce the chance you are involved in a crash.



A white **HEADLIGHT** AND **REAR REFLECTOR** ARE REQUIRED by Wisconsin law.

Add a **BRIGHT REAR LIGHT AND REFLECTIVE MATERIALS** for increased visibility.

THEFT PREVENTION

LOCK YOUR BIKE: Always use a U-lock or other heavy duty bike lock. Secure both wheels and the frame to a bike rack or other immovable pole. Do not lock to trees or block accessible walkways. Lock in visible and lit common areas in public or in secure locations at your home.

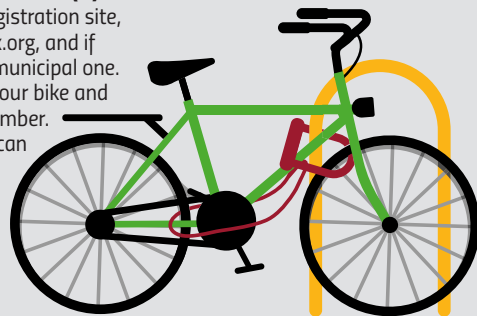
REGISTER YOUR BIKE(S).

Use a national registration site, such as Bikeindex.org, and if available a local municipal one. Take pictures of your bike and note the serial number. This information can help retrieve your bike if it is found.

IF A BIKE IS STOLEN,

report it to the local Police Department. Keep that report number and information handy for insurance reasons. This can also help them return to you if found and identify problem areas for theft.

CONSIDER ADDING an inconspicuous **GPS TRACKER** to your bike.



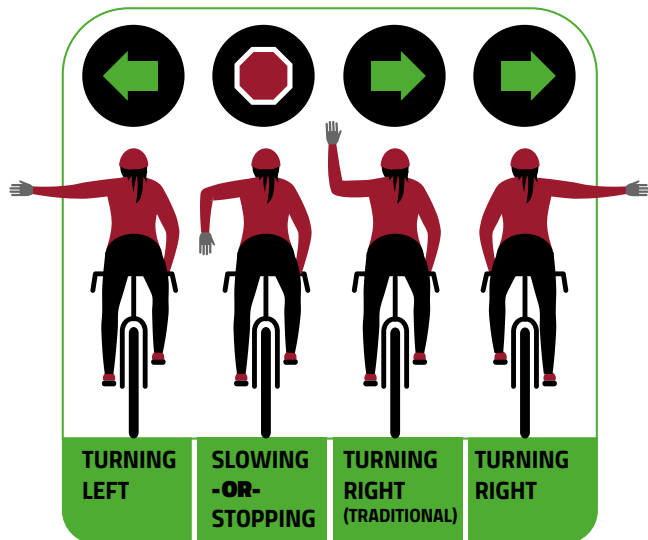
YOUR RENTERS -OR- HOMEOWNERS INSURANCE SHOULD COVER THE REPLACEMENT

VALUE, but you may also want to consider carrying a bike specific insurance policy, especially if your bike is a high value bike such as cargo, e-cargo bikes or a high end model to avoid higher premiums on your personal plan.

SIGNALING

BE PREDICTABLE.

Let other road users know what your intentions are. Use signals when changing lanes, turning, or stopping. Bicyclists must signal their intention to turn within 50 feet prior to making the turn as long as signaling doesn't interfere with the operation of the bicycle.



OTHER TIPS

GROUP RIDING: Riding 2 abreast/side by side: Bicycles may be ridden upon a roadway 2 abreast within a single lane so long as normal and reasonable movement of traffic is not impeded.



RED TRAFFIC SIGNALS: If a bicyclist believes a signal to be motor vehicle actuated the rider may proceed through the red signal after stopping for not less than 45 second provided no other vehicles are present at the intersection that can actuate the signal. The bicyclist shall yield the right of way to any vehicular traffic or pedestrian in the intersection.



NEWER FACILITIES: Your community may be adding new infrastructure such as raised and separated protected bike lanes, parking protected bike lanes, or other traffic calming features. While these facilities make it safer and easier for riders of all abilities to enjoy riding, a bike rider is not required to utilize separate or painted facilities should the situation warrant. Cyclists are legally allowed to take the lane if necessary to avoid hazards or make certain turning or other movements on the roadway. **Check out our "Built for Safety" video series** for more tips on navigating various traffic calming features.





CLOTHING AND GEAR: Riding is possible all year round! **Check out this video** from the *League of American Bicyclists* on tips for various weather conditions and what to wear.

E-BIKES

E-bikes are legally able to operate on any road in Wisconsin as of the passage of 2019 Wisconsin Act 34.

"Electric bicycle" means a bicycle that is equipped with fully operative pedals for propulsion by human power and an electric motor of 750 watts or less.

 3 CLASSES OF ELECTRIC BIKES 			
	CLASS 1	CLASS 2	CLASS 3
PEDAL ASSIST	✓	✓	✓
THROTTLE	✗	✓	✗
MAX ASSISTED SPEED	20 MPH	20 MPH	28 MPH

E-BIKES ON TRAILS:

They are generally allowed in the same places a regular bike is. The Wisconsin DNR has some specific location rules for trails they manage. Always check the local laws before you ride in a new location.

ON WISCONSIN DNR MANAGED TRAILS:

Class 1 and Class 3 e-bikes are allowed on many bicycle trails, but must observe a 15 mph speed limit. No throttle usage is allowed. E-bikes used without the motor engaged are allowed on all bicycle trails.

SCAN HERE
for a list of the DNR managed
trails that allow e-bikes:



GENERAL E-BIKE SAFETY TIPS:

Follow all rules of the road as you would on a regular bicycle.

▪ Take some time to
BECOME FAMILIAR
WITH THE SPEED BURST
and settings of the motor.

▪ **PRACTICE GETTING ON AND OFF YOUR BIKE** before heading out. Heavier bikes can be more difficult to maneuver especially when moving at slow speeds or getting on or off them.

▪ **E-BIKES** are heavier than an "acoustic" bike and **MAY HAVE LONGER STOPPING DISTANCES.**

▪ **CHECK BATTERY LIFE BEFORE LEAVING.** Carry a charger with you if going on longer trips. Plan ahead and know where you can charge at.

▪ **COLD WEATHER CAN REDUCE BATTERY** life and power.

▪ **STORE AND CHARGE** your battery in a dry and temperature controlled environment.

▪ When putting your e-bike on a car rack **ENSURE THE RACK CAN HANDLE THE WEIGHT.** If there is an external or removable battery, take it off before transporting it.

▪ Buy your e-bike from a local bike shop. **NOT ALL SHOPS WILL SERVICE E-BIKES PURCHASED ONLINE.**

To ensure your bike is safe and locally serviceable, buy local.

▪ **READ** and follow all **MANUFACTURER'S GUIDANCE.**



SHARE THE TRAIL

Be courteous and respectful of other users.



Be aware at **MULTIPLE CAR LANE CROSSINGS.**

If one driver stops another driver may try to pass in the adjacent lane. Go slow, ensure they see you and stop. Always look again before finishing crossing the street.



DON'T STOP ON THE TRAIL.

If you need to pause for directions, a snack, or to adjust your bike, step off the trail.

BE AWARE OF YOUR SPEED, especially near other users and on curves.



BE ALERT WHEN CROSSING STREETS on a trail. Drivers may not see you coming. Follow traffic signs.

Give a clear audible signal when passing, use a bell and kindly say **"PASSING ON YOUR LEFT"** early enough for the other trail user to react.



BE PREDICTABLE AND VISIBLE:

- Use lights in low light situations.
- Ride in a straight line.

SIDEWALK RIDING


The legality of riding on sidewalks varies by municipality and age across Wisconsin. Check local ordinances.

A bicyclist using the sidewalk has the same rights and duties as pedestrians while in crosswalks. Some general tips to ensure the safety of people walking include:



DRIVERS MAY NOT EXPECT A PERSON BIKING ON A SIDEWALK.

Stop at curbs and make sure they see you before crossing.



YIELD TO PEOPLE walking at all times. Be aware at all crossings including driveways, alleys, and intersections.



RIDE SLOWER than you would in the street.

WHAT TO DO IF INVOLVED IN A CRASH

We never plan to be in a crash. Being prepared will help you if the unexpected happens. Consider carrying a first aid kit.

▪ **MAKE SURE YOU ARE IN A SAFE PLACE** If any vehicle moves, note where it was before movement.

▪ **CALL THE POLICE** Wisconsin law states the operator involved in a crash resulting in injury or death of any person, any damage to government owned property, or total property damage owned by any one person of \$1,000 or more shall immediately give notice of such crash to law enforcement.

▪ **DOCUMENT** Document any damage to you, your belongings, or your bicycle. Take or find videos, either on your own device or look for security doorbells, or cameras nearby.

▪ **DON'T NEGOTIATE** with the driver or accept blame verbally or in writing. **DO NOT ADMIT FAULT.** Give an accurate statement of what happened to the police. Take your own pictures if possible.

▪ **IF POSTING** about the crash on **SOCIAL MEDIA**, your comments could impact your case.

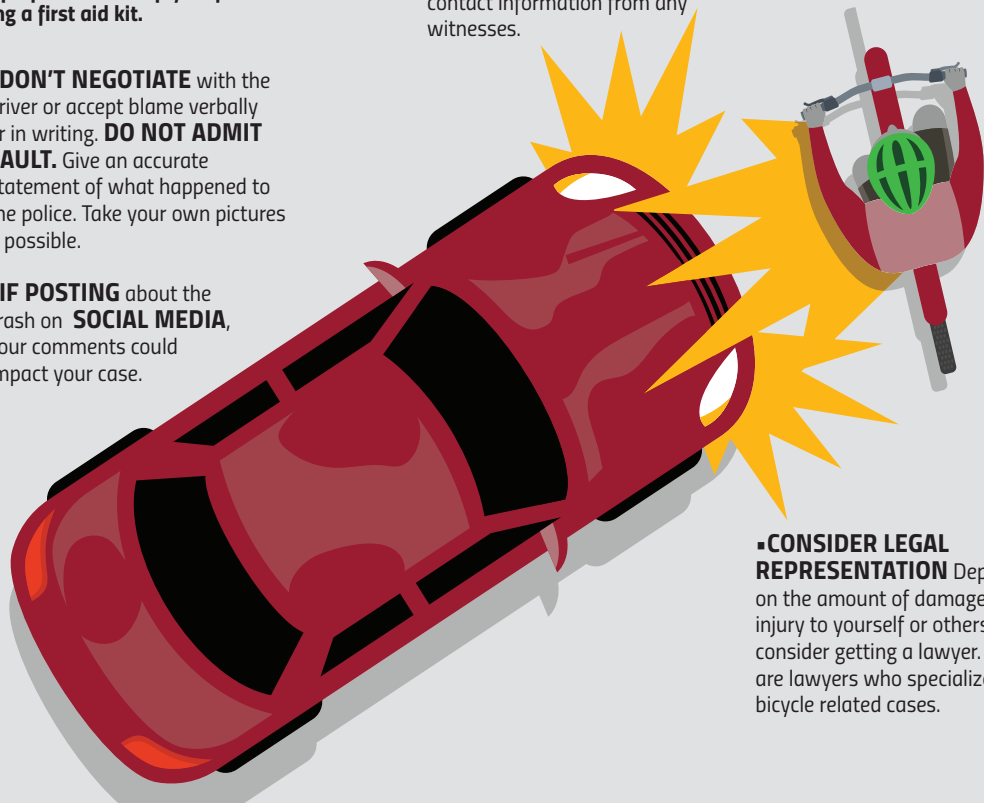
▪ IDENTIFY THOSE INVOLVED

Get names, license or registration, and note injuries or apparent damage to others. Get contact information from any witnesses.

▪ SEEK MEDICAL CARE AND KEEP RECEIPTS.

Keep a record of anything that continues to cause pain after the crash

▪ **CONSIDER LEGAL REPRESENTATION** Depending on the amount of damage or injury to yourself or others, highly consider getting a lawyer. There are lawyers who specialize in bicycle related cases.



**THANK YOU to the
WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT
OF TRANSPORTATION.**

**THANK YOU to the
LEAGUE OF AMERICAN BICYCLISTS
for their support and inspiration.**



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WisconsinBikeFed.org

**VISIT US
ONLINE:**



**FOLLOW US ON
INSTAGRAM**

**Check the highlight
reels to share and
spread awareness of
the concepts covered
in this guide:
@BIKEFED**