**Bicycling Safety**

Bicycling is one of the best ways to get exercise, see the sights and reduce your carbon footprint. However, bicyclists face a host of hazards. They often must share the road with vehicles, and injuries can happen even on a designated path.

With about 80 million bicyclists sharing the road with motorized vehicles, it is vital bicyclists – and drivers – take some safety precautions.

**How Can Drivers Keep Cyclists Safe?**

The far hand reach, or Dutch reach, is a simple technique that will stop you and your passengers from opening your vehicle door in front of an oncoming vehicle, cyclist, or pedestrian. This works for streets, sidewalks, and parking lots.

**Cyclists, Check Your Equipment**

* Always inspect your bike prior to riding.
* The seat should be adjusted to the proper height and locked in place
* Make certain all parts are secure and working properly
* Check that the tires are inflated properly
* Make sure the bike is equipped with reflectors on the rear, front, pedals, and spokes
* A horn or bell, a rear-view mirror and a bright headlight also are recommended

**Plan to Be Seen**

* Make certain drivers can see you.
* Wear neon, fluorescent or other bright clothing
* Whenever possible, ride during the day
* If you must ride at night, wear reflective clothing, and use flashing lights

**Wear a Helmet**

Helmets appropriate for bicycling should be worn by everyone – adults and children – on every bike ride regardless of length of the ride. Make certain the helmet is [certified by the Consumer Product Safety Commission.](https://www.cpsc.gov/Business--Manufacturing/Business-Education/Business-Guidance/Bicycle-Helmets)

Follow these [guidelines from NHTSA](https://www.nhtsa.gov/sites/nhtsa.dot.gov/files/8019_fitting-a-helmet.pdf) to properly fit the helmet:

* Adjust sizing pads or fit ring until the helmet is snug
* Position the helmet level on your head, covering the forehead and not tipped backward or forward; this will be about one to two finger widths above the eyebrow
* Adjust the side straps so they form a “V” shape under and slightly in front of your ears
* Center the buckle on the chin strap under your chin
* Buckle and tighten the chin strap until it is snug; no more than one to two fingers should be able to fit between the chin and strap
* When fitted, the helmet should not rock more than 1 inch side to side or front to back on your head

Watch [Fitting a Bicycle Helmet](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hLlXswx0VvQ&feature=youtu.be)

**Follow These Rules of the Road**

[Stay safe by following these rules](https://www.nhtsa.gov/sites/nhtsa.dot.gov/files/6124-b-v2-rules.pdf):

* Get acquainted with traffic laws; bicyclists must follow the same rules as motorists
* Ride single file in the direction of traffic
* Remain alert, keep your head up and look around; watch for opening car doors and other hazards
* Use [hand signals](https://www.nhtsa.gov/sites/nhtsa.dot.gov/files/8009-handsignals.pdf) when turning and use extra care at intersections
* Never hitch onto cars
* Before entering traffic, stop and look left, right, left again and over your shoulder

**May is National Bike Month**

During National Bike Month, cycling enthusiasts across the country celebrate the many benefits of cycling.

[The League of American Bicyclists](http://www.bikeleague.org/), which advocates for a "Bicycle Friendly America," sponsors Bike Month each year. The 32-page [National Bike Month Guide](http://bikeleague.org/sites/default/files/Bike_Month_Guide_2018.pdf) has everything you need to plan a Bike Month event in your community. The League's [Ride Smart program](https://www.bikeleague.org/ridesmart) also is a great resource for educational videos, classes, tips, and other information about bike safety.

**Maryland** **Bicycle** **Law**

**Safe** Passing Laws

* Maryland requires that the driver of a motor vehicle overtaking a bicycle pass safely at a distance of not less than 3 feet, unless, at the time:
* The bicycle rider fails to ride in conformance with the laws requiring riding to the right side of the roadway or riding within a bike lane  paved to a smooth surface,
* A passing clearance of less than 3 feet is caused solely by the bicycle rider failing to maintain a steady course, or
* The highway on which the vehicle is being driven is not wide enough to lawfully pass the bicycle at a distance of at least 3 feet.

Drivers can cross to the left side of the roadway in a no-passing zone, typically marked by a double yellow line, in order to provide a safe passing distance to bicyclists.

Source: Md. Code Ann., Transp. §21-1209; §21–307

**Helmet** **Law**

Maryland requires that any person under the age of 16 riding a bicycle, as an operator or passenger, must wear a protective bicycle helmet.

Source: Md. Code Ann., Transp. §21-1207.1