Be A Safe Bike Driver

Riding your bicycle can be great fun. But do you know how to "drive" your bike?

[Riding your bike is just like driving a car - there are rules for bike driving.]

1 Wear Your Helmet the Right Way

The Right Way   **Too Far Back**   **Too Far Forward**

It's the law in Maine to wear a helmet correctly if you are under 16. Do the "Eyes, Ears, Mouth Test™"

First put on your helmet so it is level and snug — if it slides around, you need to insert thicker pads.

- **EYES** - you should see the very edge of your helmet when you look up past your eyebrows.
- **EARS** - the straps should meet right under your ear lobes to form a Y.
- **MOUTH** - the strap should be loose enough so you can insert no more than two fingers between the buckle and your skin. It should be tight enough that if you drop your jaw you can feel the helmet pull down on the top of your head.

2 Dress Bright & Tight for Safety

- Wear light or bright-colored clothing so you can be seen.
- Tuck away shoelaces, strings or cords so they don't dangle *~they may get caught in the moving parts of your bike.*
- Loose or baggy clothing can also be dangerous~*so make sure you wear snug clothes.*
- Avoid wearing headphones.
- Never wear flip flops.

3 Check Your Bike for Safety

Have your bike checked at least once a year at a bike shop.

Check it yourself before biking with the **ABC Q**uick Check:

AIR – Pinch the tires. They should be hard.

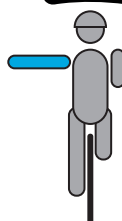**B**RAKES – Make sure they work and aren't rubbing the tire.
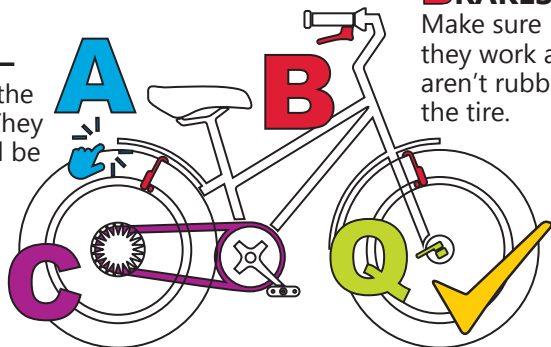
CRANK/**C**HAIN – If there are problems with your gears or if the chain is loose, take your bike to a bike shop.

QUICK CHECK – Check "quick release levers" and other bolts to make sure they are tight.
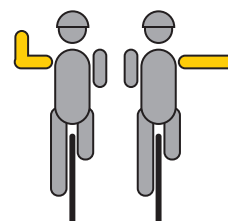
4 Obey the Rules of the Road

LEFT   **RIGHT**   **STOP**

(Back View of Bike Driver)

- Ride on the right side of the roadway with traffic.
- Use hand signals when turning or stopping.
- Ride single file.
- Obey traffic signs, signals, and laws.
- Ride straight — no surprises!
- Look back and signal before turning.
- Yield to people walking.
- Use lights if riding at night (*remember to ask your parents for permission*).
- Always stop at the end of your driveway — look left, right, then left again before entering the road.
- Feel unsafe? You can always walk your bike.

When we all drive safely and follow the rules of the road, it is easy to be safe and have fun!

Improve the Safety of Your Kids

A Message to Parents

Practicing safe bike driving is a great way for your family to exercise and have fun together. Please set a good example by following all motor vehicle laws (which apply to bikes just as they do to cars), and wearing your helmet properly every time you ride. Helmets are required for bicyclists under 16 and are just common sense for everyone else.

There is much more to riding a bike than learning to balance. To help your family become safe bike drivers, find an empty street or parking lot to practice these basic skills:

- Riding in a straight line.
- Stopping quickly without skidding or falling.
- Scanning ahead for obstacles.
- Avoiding hazards (use a soft sponge to represent loose gravel or broken glass).
- Scanning behind by looking back over your shoulder.
- Riding with one hand and signaling with the other.
- Making left and right turns with both hands on the handlebars.
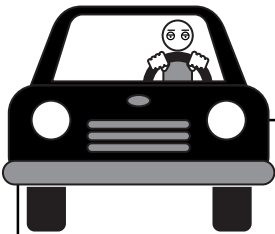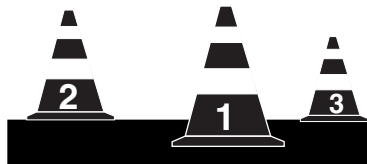
Be a Safe Motorist

Role modeling safe driving habits in your community helps all of us. Here are the most common ways to keep walkers and people on bicycles safe. **Heads Up! — Safety is a Two-Way Street!**

- **Don't rush — that is when crashes happen!**
- **Slow down and wait for a safe place to pass a bike or walker.**
- **You must provide at least 3 feet of clearance when you pass a bike or walker.**
- **Avoid distractions like cell phones, eating or drinking while driving.**
- **Obey crossing guards and yield to pedestrians in crosswalks. In Maine law, drivers must yield when someone enters a crosswalk.**
- **Double check for approaching bicyclists before opening your car door.**
- **Watch for kids crossing the road when you are pulling out, backing out, or turning.**
- **Do your community a favor and drive the posted speed limit, which also ensures everyone behind you does too.**

The Maine Bicycle And Pedestrian Safety Education Program

For additional information, go to **www.bikemaine.org** or contact the Bicycle Coalition of Maine at **(207) 623-4511** or **info@bikemaine.org**

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