

# BICYCLE SAFETY

**BICYCLE HELMET LAW:** By law, all bicyclists under the age of 14 are required to wear approved bicycle helmets when bicycling or riding as passengers on bicycles in New York State. The maximum penalty for an offense is a \$50 fine. However, if a parent can prove the helmet has been obtained, the fine will be waived.

**The importance of a helmet:** When your head hits the ground, your skull stops but your brain continues to travel, crashing against the skull. That impact will bruise and damage your delicate brain tissue and can result in a **lifelong change** in the way you think, act, feel and move.

Have your child wear a helmet as soon as they begin to ride a bike - good habits start at an early age. Parents should wear helmets too!

## What should you look for when buying a helmet?

- Look for the label that says the helmet has passed the American National Standards Institute (ANSI), American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM), or SNELL and meets the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) Standards;
- Helmets should have a strong strap and fastener to assure it will stay on in a crash, and the straps should form a “Y” beneath the child’s ears;
- A helmet must be constructed with thick, firm polystyrene or other shock-absorbing material. The polystyrene crushes on impact to absorb the shock of the fall and reduce the likelihood of brain injuries. Foam pads alone will not provide crash protection;
- Helmets should sit low and level on the forehead. Your forehead should be covered with 1-2 fingers width between the eyebrows and the helmet;
- Always buckle the strap;
- If you fall and hit your head, do not reuse the helmet. Have your helmet checked by the manufacturer to make sure it’s still usable or buy a new one, as the shock-absorbing material that protects your head in a crash may not retain its cushioning properties after a fall.

## Prior to riding your bicycle, you should always check the following:

- Make sure you have a properly fitting helmet;
- Use a bicycle that is the right size for you so that you will be able to control it properly;
- Make sure the brakes are working and the tires are inflated to the correct pressure;
- Install rear and front lights/reflectors that are very bright or flash to increase visibility.



## Rules for Riding a Bicycle on the Street:

- Bicycles are considered vehicles, therefore cyclists are expected to obey all traffic laws, including stoplights, signs, signals and lane markings;
- Yield to pedestrians;
- Always ride your bicycle in the same direction as traffic;
- Ride one to a bike;
- Use a horn or a bell;
- Signal when you make turns;
- Keep to the right, but leave enough room to steer around road hazards and near parked cars as car doors may open unexpectedly;
- Riding the bicycle in the street is the safest place to ride. Children under 10 years old should not ride their bicycles on the street without adult supervision;
- Night riding should not be allowed for young children and youth, especially where there is high-speed traffic;
- Make yourself visible to motorists by wearing bright colors or reflective vests, especially when riding at night or at dusk.



**Riding a bicycle is a fun and healthy family activity.  
Be safe; obey the rules of the road; and  
ALWAYS WEAR A HELMET!**

