



Getting started

Cycling is enjoyable and healthy.

This leaflet will give you some tips on how to make it safer as well.

A bicycle is not a toy!

When you take your bicycle onto the road, you will be travelling with many other vehicles which are bigger and faster – and much more dangerous.

Is the bicycle the right size for you?

Riding a bicycle which is too big or too small is very dangerous. When on the saddle, both feet should touch the ground.

Is the bicycle working properly?

- If you are buying a new bicycle, ask the salesperson to tell you all about it. Find out how to look after your bike and keep it working properly.
- If you are buying a used bicycle, get an expert to check it carefully before you buy.
- Whether new or used, check your bicycle regularly. If something is not working properly do not use your bicycle until it is fixed!



Get to know your bike



1. Bell

Be sure your bell works! Your hands should be able to easily reach it.

2. Brakes

Replace brake blocks when they become worn.

3. Chain

Keep the chain snug, clean and well oiled.

4. Gears

Check and adjust the gears when you need to.

5. Handlebars

Make sure your handlebars are properly adjusted and tight.

6. Lamps

The front headlight must be a white or yellow light. Flashing lights are permitted for use on bicycles. The rear tail light must be red. Other road users should be able to see the front light from 150 metres and the red tail light from 180 metres.

7. Mudguards

Keep your mudguards securely fastened.

8. Pedals

Lubricate bearings and spindle of the pedal, and replace worn threads.

9. Reflectors

Your bicycle must be fitted with a red reflector to the rear. Where reflectors are fitted in pedals they must be amber in colour. Remember you should keep reflectors on pedals clean.

10. Saddle

Keep your saddle properly adjusted and tight.

11. Spokes

Keep your spokes tight and replace broken ones quickly.

12. Tyres

Inflate your tyres to the correct pressure which is shown on the side of the tyre.

Use a proper cycle pump and replace worn tyres.

13. Wheels

Your wheels should rotate smoothly, and you should lubricate bearings, and keep axle nuts tight.

“It’s the law to have a bell on your bike at all times and to have working lights after dark”.



Be Safe

Always wear a helmet when you ride your bicycle!

Wearing a helmet reduces the risk of you getting a head injury by 69 to 85 per cent ^{1,2}.

The best helmet for you

Ask the experts at your bicycle shop about the best helmet for you.

- A helmet should have a “CE” mark and should be EN 1078 compliant to show it meets European safety standards.
- Pick a helmet that fits your head well before adjusting it. Then use the adjustable straps and/or sizing pads to make sure it is a snug fit for you.
- Pick a helmet that fits you or your child now, not a helmet to “grow into”.

A helmet is not a fashion statement. It is an essential, life-saving piece of cycling equipment. If your helmet gets a bang in a crash, replace it even if you cannot see the damage.

Be seen!

When cycling you should always wear fluorescent and reflective clothing to make sure other road users can see you. This includes high visibility vests, armbands, and Sam Brown reflective belts.

These safety accessories should all meet European safety standards. Adult high visibility vests should be EN471 compliant. Children’s high visibility vests should be EN1150/1999 compliant. Children’s and adult armbands and Sam Brown adjustable belts should be EN13356 compliant.

The brighter, the better!

Sharing the Road Safely

Top tips

Always be aware that cyclists are the most vulnerable regular road user.

The RSA recommend that children younger than 12 should not ride bicycles in any type of traffic.

- Know how to control your bike before cycling in traffic.
- Never weave in and out of traffic. Stay in your lane and signal your turns.
- Always cycle with the flow of traffic.
- Never hold on to a moving vehicle.
- Never wear an mp3 player or iPod or use a mobile phone when you are cycling.
- Always obey the Rules of the Road. Other road users will respect you more if you respect the rules.
- Think ahead. Think about what drivers may do. Catch their eye.
- Ride well clear of the kerb. It will help drivers to see you and will prevent your pedal hitting the kerb. You also have more room to move if you come across obstacles or if vehicles pass too close to you.
- Show drivers what you plan to do. Always look and signal before you start, stop or turn.
- Ride a straight line past parked cars rather than moving in and out.
- Ride positively and decisively. It helps motorists to understand what you plan to do.
- Keep well back from motor vehicles in case they brake.
- Never cycle on a footpath. Use cycle tracks where provided.



Traffic lights & road signs

- Prepare to stop when the traffic light turns to amber.
- Never try to race through an intersection when the traffic light shows amber.
- Come to a full stop when the light is red.
- Do not move off until the light has turned green.
- A stop sign means STOP for all vehicles – including bicycles!
- Learn the meanings of all the road signs and road markings. Obey signs such as STOP or YIELD.

Be particularly careful when a road sign warns of an oncoming hazard – like a dangerous bend or a pedestrian crossing.

Signalling

- Always look behind you before you signal.
- Always signal a turn or a change of lane in good time.
- Never pull out, turn, or change lanes without signalling.

Turning left

- Stay in the left lane when you are turning left.
- Signal your turn in good time.
- Never cycle between another left turning vehicle and the kerb. Stay well behind it and let it go. Then turn and don't swing out into the road.
- Never pass a vehicle on the inside when it may turn left. Keep well clear of buses and trucks near junctions.

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Like all road users,
cyclists must obey the
Rules of the Road

Turning right

- Turning right can be very dangerous! Many collisions happen when cyclists are turning right.
- Plan your turn well in advance.
- Look back. Signal. Then look back again before you move into the right lane.
- When you have reached the junction. Stop. Look left and right. Then look left again.
- When it is safe to go, you should signal again and move off.
- Stay well into the left as you enter the lane.
- If you don't feel confident about turning right, get off your bike and walk it across the road.

Watch out for cars, trucks, and buses

- Cars, trucks and other vehicles can be dangerous to cyclists even when they are parked.
- Always signal and pull out well in advance when you are passing a parked vehicle.
 - Leave plenty of space when you are passing – if someone opens a door, it can knock you off your bicycle.
 - Cycle in single-file when you are overtaking parked vehicles.
 - Remember all vehicles have blind zones and the driver may not be able to see you.

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Cycle to work scheme

The Cycle to Work Scheme allows employees who are paying tax in Ireland to purchase a bicycle and associated equipment tax free. Using the Bike to Work scheme, your employer can help you obtain a brand new bike and safety equipment worth up to 1,000 euro. You can use a salary sacrifice arrangement to pay for the bike monthly and that means you can save up to 47% of the retail price of bike and equipment. Your employer also makes savings to encourage them. Further information at www.biketowork.ie.

Special facilities for cyclists

Cycle track

A cycle track is part of a road including part of a footway or part of a roadway which is reserved for the use of cyclists.



Cycle ways

A cycle way is part of a public road that only pedal cyclists can use or both pedal cyclists and people walking can only use. People walking who are also called pedestrians have a right to enjoy these places too. You should give way to them and let them have plenty of space.



Working To Save Lives

RSA



Cycle Safety

SOME TIPS ON SAFER CYCLING

Údarás Um Shábháilteacht Ar Bhóithre
Road Safety Authority

Páirc Ghnó Ghleann na Muaidhe, Cnoc an tSabhaircín, Béal an Átha, Co. Mhaigh Eo.
Moy Valley Business Park, Primrose Hill, Ballina, Co. Mayo.

phone: (096) 25000 lo-call: 1890 50 60 80
email: info@rsa.ie website: www.rsa.ie

obsp: 1037

Údarás Um Shábháilteacht Ar Bhóithre
Road Safety Authority

Be Safe



Cycle tracks on footpaths

Pedestrians expect the right of way on footpaths. Cyclists should give way to pedestrians. Remember that pedestrians may not expect cyclists and they can't always hear cyclists coming from behind them. Give pedestrians plenty of clearance and be prepared for them to change direction suddenly.

Shared bus and cycle lanes

Cyclists can use the same lane as buses. Watch out for buses pulling in or out in front of you. Be careful of passengers getting off the bus.



Advanced stop line areas

Watch for the Cycle Symbol on the road surface. These rectangular boxes at traffic lights provide a safe area for a cyclist to stop. They give cyclists turning right a chance to move into the correct position while the rest of the traffic is waiting for the lights to change.

Parking your bicycle

- If your local area provides cycle stands, use them.
- Never park your bicycle where it could cause a problem especially for people with disabilities or on busy footpaths.
- Use a strong bicycle lock.

- 1 Thompson, D.c.; Rivara, F.P and Thompson, R.S. (1996). Effectiveness of bicycle safety helmets in preventing head injury. A case-control study. JAMA, 276(24), 1968-1973.
- 2 Thompson, R.; Rivara, F. and Thompson, D. (1989). A case control study of the effectiveness of bicycle safety helmets. New Eng J Med. 320(21), 1361-1367.

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For further information on safe cycling, please look at the Rules of the Road website at www.rulesoftheroad.ie