

## Boy Scouts of America Bike Safety Guidelines

The Boy Scouts of America Bike Safety Guidelines are designed to make bicycle riding safer and more enjoyable for you and others. Review the guidelines with your merit badge counselor.

**Physical Fitness.** Biking is strenuous. Long treks and hill climbing should not be attempted without training and preparation. For Scout activity, all participants must present evidence of fitness assured by a complete health history from physician, parent, or legal guardian. The adult supervisor should adjust all supervision, discipline, and protection to anticipate any potential risks associated with individuals' health conditions. Should any participant have a significant health problem, the adult leader should require proof that the participant has been examined by a physician.

**Helmets and Clothing.** All cyclists must wear a properly sized and fitted helmet approved and stickered by either the Snell Memorial Foundation or the American National Standards Institute. On cool days, cyclists should dress in layers so they can adjust clothing to avoid chilling or overheating. When skies are clear, cyclists should cover up for protection from the sun.

**Buddying Up.** When the program activity is a bicycle expedition or trek, the buddy system must be used. When there is program activity emphasizing individual performance skills, one buddy observes while the other takes a turn. In competitive activity where the buddy system cannot be applied practically, all activity must be directly observed by the adult supervisor. (Scouts should be taught that biking with a buddy is best. When biking alone, apart from Scout activities, Scouts should be encouraged to tell someone their route, schedule, and destination before departing.)

**Keeping Right.** Cyclists should ride with the flow of traffic, as far to the right as possible. They should avoid curbs, storm drains, soft or loose gravel on shoulders, and other hazards.

**Being Smart.** Cyclists should obey all traffic laws, signs, signals, and street markings and should watch for changes in road conditions. They should ride only one to a bike, and should not ride after dark. They should not attempt stunts—trick riding

is only for professionals using special equipment. Even when cyclists think they have the right-of-way, they should yield to motor vehicles. No cyclist should ever hitch a ride on another vehicle. Do not wear headphones while riding.

**Turns and Intersections.** Before turning, cyclists should look left, right, back, and ahead. They should stop and look in all directions when entering a street from a driveway, parking area, sidewalk, or alley. All turns must be signaled using universal hand signs. Cyclists should walk their bikes through or across busy intersections.

**Riding the Right Bike.** Cyclists should ride only bikes that fit their size. The bike should allow for keeping feet flat on the ground while the cyclist is on the seat. The handgrips should be no higher than the shoulders or lower than the seat.

**Accessories.** Every bike needs a horn or bell and reflectors (front, back, and sides). Items should be carried only in baskets, or saddlebags, or on a rear carrier rack. A bike- or helmet-mounted mirror is recommended for those who must ride in traffic. For long trips, a bike-mounted container for drinking water is recommended.

**Maintenance.** Bikes must be kept clean and maintained—especially the brakes and drive chain.

**Racing Right.** Street racing is dangerous. Racing should take place only with supervision and on marked courses that have been set up to exclude other vehicle or pedestrian traffic, to eliminate fall hazards and minimize collision risks, and to define clearly the starting and finishing points.

**Planning.** Both the route and timing of bike trips should be planned to avoid heavy traffic and hazardous conditions. Biking is unsafe on wet pavement and on windy days. Plans should include hourly (at least) rest stops and a maximum of approximately six hours of time on the bike per day.

**Discipline.** All participants should know, understand, and follow the rules and procedures for safe biking, and all participants should conscientiously and carefully follow all directions from the adult supervisor.