

## Bicycle safety tips

- If there's no bike lane, ride on the far right with traffic.\*
- Never ride against traffic.\*
- Obey all traffic signs, signals and pavement markings.\*
- Use proper hand signals.\*
- Yield to emergency vehicles, pedestrians and approaching vehicles.\*
- Walk your bike across intersections and busy streets.
- At night use a headlight and tail light,\* and wear reflective clothing.
- Watch out for opening car doors and cars pulling into traffic.
- Wear bright-colored clothing.
- Avoid objects on the pavement that may cause you to lose control of your bike.



\*New York State law

*If I can be of additional help in this or any other issue, please do not hesitate to contact my office.*

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# Bicycle Safety

## and the New York State Helmet Law



Important information from  
**Assemblyman  
Angelo Santabarbara, PE**

## Bicycle safety quiz



### Answer TRUE or FALSE

- |                            |                            |   |                            |                            |  |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|---|----------------------------|----------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> T | <input type="checkbox"/> F | 1. All bicycles must be equipped with a bell that can be heard from 100 feet away.                | <input type="checkbox"/> T | <input type="checkbox"/> F | 7. Having your rear wheel skid is fine when braking on loose dirt.   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> T | <input type="checkbox"/> F | 2. Traffic signs and signals are only for car drivers.  | <input type="checkbox"/> T | <input type="checkbox"/> F | 8. A loose bicycle chain means that it is easier to pedal.   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> T | <input type="checkbox"/> F | 3. You only need to wear a helmet while riding on busy streets.                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> T | <input type="checkbox"/> F | 9. Sidewalks are safer to ride on than roads.  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> T | <input type="checkbox"/> F | 4. Always stop before entering a street from an alley or driveway.                                | <input type="checkbox"/> T | <input type="checkbox"/> F | 10. You don't have to stop at a stop sign if no vehicles are coming.   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> T | <input type="checkbox"/> F | 5. Before you make a left turn, glance over your shoulder to find out what is coming from behind. | <input type="checkbox"/> T | <input type="checkbox"/> F | 11. It's generally a good idea to ride a bicycle at least 4 feet out from parked cars, even if it means being closer to moving cars. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> T | <input type="checkbox"/> F | 6. Make sure you can stand over the top bar of your bike before riding.                           | <input type="checkbox"/> T | <input type="checkbox"/> F | 12. Bicycles should be operated in the middle of traffic lanes.  |

**ANSWERS:** 1. True, 2. False, Everyone using the road must obey traffic signs and signals. 3. False, A helmet should be worn anytime you ride a bicycle, and it **must** be worn by cyclists under age 14. 4. True, 5. True, 6. True, 7. False, Brakes should provide fast, easy stops without instability or jamming. 8. False, A loose chain can cause chain slippage or derailment, which can cause injury to cyclists. 9. False, Sidewalks can be more dangerous due to the number of sight restrictions, driveways and obstacles. 10. False, Cyclists must stop at stop signs. 11. True, 12. False, State law requires bicycles to be operated in bike lanes, or near the right-edge curb or shoulder to avoid undue interference with traffic, unless turning left or avoiding obstructions.

## Make sure you know these rules of the road

- Know and follow the NYS Vehicle and Traffic Law (VTL). You will be ticketed for violations of the law, which could result in fines. Local ordinances may also apply.
- Check that your bicycle has the required safety equipment. See diagram to the right.
- Children under the age of 14 must wear bicycle helmets. Any parent or guardian who permits their child to violate the helmet law may be fined up to \$50.
- Child passengers from ages 1 to 4 must ride in secure safety seats and wear a certified bicycle helmet. The law prohibits carrying passengers under age 1.
- Don't carry more passengers than the bicycle is designed to carry.
- Never attach yourself or your bike to another vehicle on the roadway.
- Keep at least one hand on the handlebar at all times.
- Never wear more than one earphone attached to an audio device.
- File a report with the Department of Motor Vehicles within 10 days of any bicycle accident involving serious injury or death.

Source: New York State Department of Transportation



## Basic safety equipment

State law requires bicycles be equipped with:

- Bell or horn
- Brake
- Reflective devices on front and rear wheels (or reflective tires) and pedals

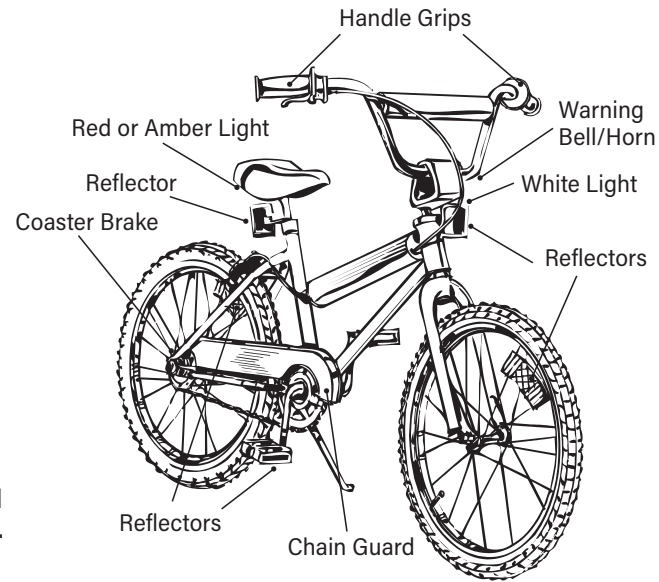
Use lights at night, both front and rear: front light (white), visible from 500 feet; rear light (red or amber), visible from 300 feet. At least one of these lights should be visible from at least 200 feet from the side.

For additional safety, equip your bicycle with a chain guard and handle grips.

Riders must wear approved helmets, and should use pant-leg clips and wear bright-colored clothes.

Riding the right-sized bike will help keep you safe. Make sure you can stand over the top bar of your bike. Read the owner's manual to adjust your bike to better fit you.

Source: New York State Governor's Traffic Safety Committee

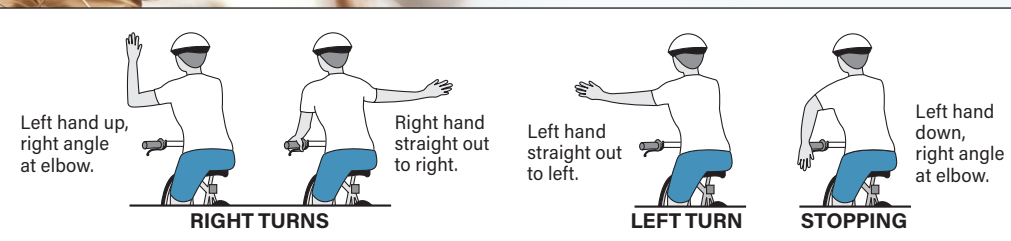


**New York State Law requires riders and passengers under the age of 14 to wear approved safety helmets.**

## Learn and use proper hand signals

One way to stay safe while biking is to use hand signals. Hand signals help prevent accidents and injuries by letting motorists and other cyclists know when you are turning or stopping.

Make sure you practice the hand signals (illustrated below) before you ride your bike on the roads.



## Use your head and always wear a helmet!



### Your helmet should:

- Sit level on your head, evenly between the ears, low on your forehead and about two finger-widths above the eyebrows.
- Fit comfortably, touching the head all the way around, have fit pads or rings that can be adjusted to secure the helmet and be stable enough to resist even violent shakes or hard blows and stay in place.
- Have straps adjusted so when you look up, the front rim should be barely visible to your eye. The "Y" of the side straps should meet just below your ear.
- Have an adjustable chin strap that is snug against your chin so when you open your mouth very wide you feel the helmet pull down a little bit.



Pictures courtesy of U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission

### Bicycle Helmet Standards

Helmets made for the U.S. must meet the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) standard. Look for the CPSC label. The American Society for Testing and Materials standard is identical (ASTM F1447), although it is self-certifying, so a manufacturer can state that its helmets meet the ASTM standard without independent certification. The Snell Memorial Foundation standard (B-95) is more strict, but seldom used.

Source: U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, [www.cpsc.gov](http://www.cpsc.gov)