

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. Here are a few tips from the Bicycle Coalition of Maine

1 Wear Your Helmet the Right Way

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 breathe and insert a finger between the buckle and your skin, but tight enough that if you drop your jaw you can feel the helmet pull down on the top of your head

If you need help, go to a bike shop. Never throw your helmet or leave it in a hot place because it will get damaged (even though you cannot tell). Replace your helmet if it is damaged, no longer fits, or if it is over 5 years old.



2 Dress Bright for Safety

- Wear light- or bright-colored clothing so you can be seen
- Tuck away shoelaces or other 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
- Never wear headphones

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 Quick Check:

- **AIR** - pinch the tires, they should be hard
- **BRAKES** - make sure they work and aren't rubbing the tire
- **CRANK/CHAIN** - if there are problems with your gears or if the chain is loose, take your bike to a bike shop
- **QUICK** - check "quick release levers" and other bolts to make sure they are tight



4 Obey the Rules of the Road

- Ride on the right
- 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!

Dear 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

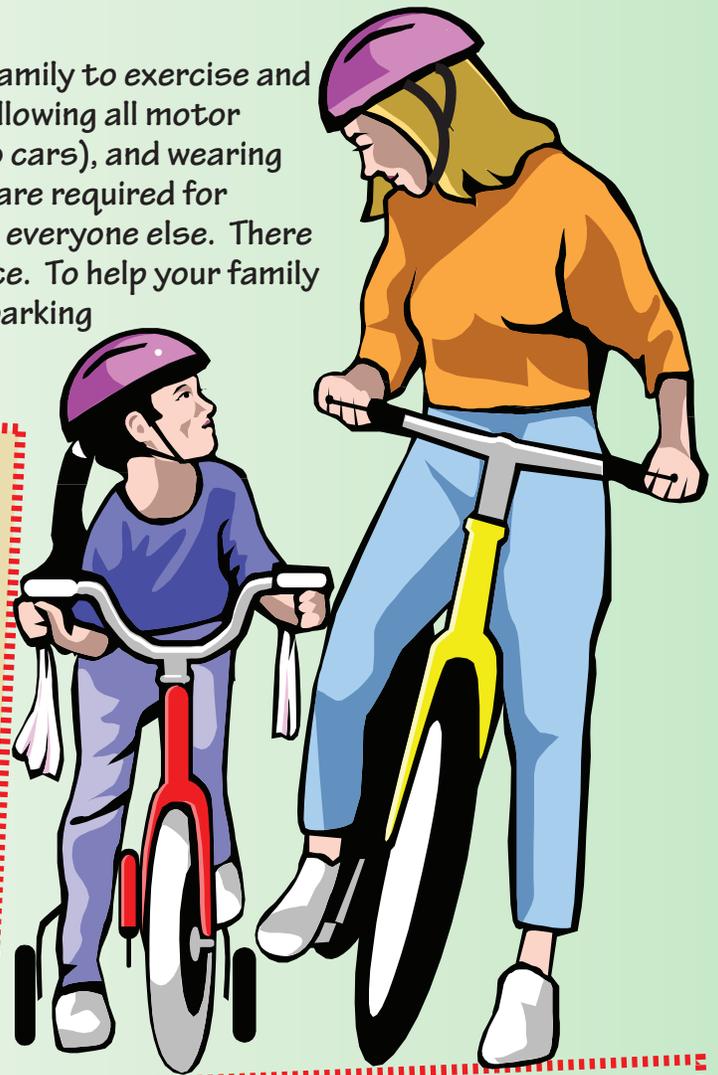
Riding with one hand and signaling with the other

Making left and right turns with both hands on the handlebars



Be sure your child knows where it is safe to ride and how to do an ABC Quick Check on his or her bicycle. More information about these and other safety skills can be found in the information your child brought home from the School Bike Safety Education Presentation.

For additional information, go to www.BikeMaine.org or contact the Bicycle Coalition of Maine at 623-4511



The Maine Department of Transportation has secured Federal safety funds to present this Bicycle Safety Education Program in elementary and middle schools statewide. We are pleased to offer this program as presented by the Bicycle Coalition of Maine. Our program encourages all people in Maine to use bicycling and walking as modes of transportation whenever feasible. We feel that it is vitally important that today's youth learn how to make bicycling a safe and fun activity. I would be happy to receive your feedback on the Bicycle safety Education Program or your comments on how to improve bicycling and walking transportation in your community.

Please contact me at 624-3252 or Dan.Stewart@maine.gov
Dan Stewart, Bicycle and Pedestrian coordinator
Maine Department of Transportation

The Maine Department of Transportation's School Bike Safety Education Program is in partnership with the Bicycle Coalition of Maine (BCM). The BCM is a nonprofit organization working for better and safer cycling in Maine. Graphics by Melissa Arndt and MaineDOT Communications office.

PO Box 15272,
Portland, ME 04112
207-623-4511
www.bikemaine.org



Dan Stewart, Bike/Ped Coordinator
State House Station #16, Augusta, ME 04333
(207) 624-3252 or dan.stewart@maine.gov
www.mainedot.gov