

Safe Bicycling in Iowa

Know the Laws Affecting Bicycles

Under Iowa law, bicyclists must generally comply with the same rules of the road as the drivers of motor vehicles.

Bicyclists using the roadways are required to **obey all traffic signs, signals and roadway markings.**

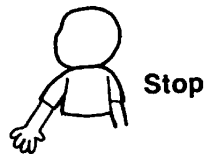
Use **hand signals** to advise other vehicle operators of your intention to turn, change lanes or stop.



Yield to other vehicles when necessary.



If you ride at night, Iowa law requires that your bike be equipped with a white light on the front and a red light or reflector on the back, both of which must be visible for at least 300 feet.



No bicycle may be equipped with a siren or whistle.

In addition to the state laws outlined above, cities and towns may have ordinances regulating the operation of bicycles. For example, some communities require bicycle registration and/or licensing. You can determine what local ordinances apply to bicycles in your area by contacting the local police department or the city clerk.

Route Selection

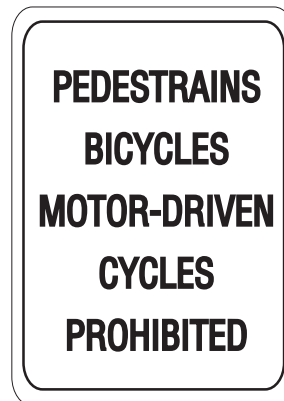
As a bicycle commuter you will need to carefully select the route you take to and from work. If separate bicycle facilities are available, use them.



If not, select lightly traveled streets, considering traffic volumes, intersection conditions, hills, and your own bicycling ability. Choose a route that you can ride comfortably with the gears provided on your bike, and a route on which you feel comfortable.

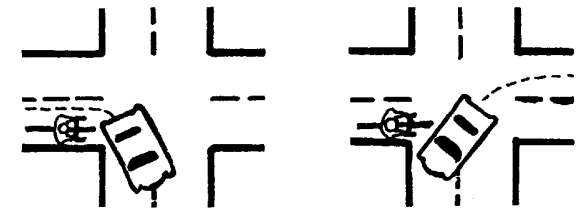


Ride only on authorized streets or highways. In Iowa bicycles are not allowed on the interstate highway system or where otherwise prohibited. Check with your local police department for information about bike routes or paths in your community.



Safe Cycling Tips

- Use bicycle paths, or ride single file on the right side of the roadway with the flow of traffic.
- Watch out for parked cars pulling into traffic, or car doors opening into your path.
- Obey all traffic signs, signals and road markings.
- Use proper hand signals whenever you turn, change lanes or stop.
- Use caution at intersections. Watch out for cars turning across your path - and be prepared to stop.



- Yield to autos and pedestrians. Dismount and walk your bike across busy streets.
- Wear light or brightly colored clothing to make yourself more visible to motorists.
- Be sure to keep your bike in good condition by performing regular maintenance.
- Don't carry passengers or packages that interfere with your vision or control of the bike.
- Use voice, horn or bell to warn others.
- Make sure your bike is properly equipped for night riding.
- Wear a helmet to prevent serious head injury.
- Use a rear view mirror to check on traffic behind you.
- Ride predictably - avoid sudden unexpected movements.

Bicycling, once considered a recreational activity for the young, has suddenly become a popular means of transportation for adults. The recent rise in fuel costs, an increased interest in physical fitness and concern for the environment have resulted in a growing number of adults choosing to commute by bike.

The benefits of commuting by bicycle are numerous, and include saving money, promoting good health and energy conservation. However, the combination of bicycles and motor vehicles on public roads is not always a pleasant experience. Increasing numbers of cyclists on city streets lead to increased conflicts with motor vehicles and can endanger both vehicle operators.

Your trip to and from work can be a safer and more enjoyable experience if you follow the basic “rules of the road” contained in this brochure. Your best protection is your knowledge of traffic laws, your skill in handling the bicycle and your ability to deal with hazards if they appear.

Remember, you and your bike are not easily seen by motorists. Unless you are a skilled cyclist, avoid congested streets and restrict your cycling to bikeways, bike lanes, paths and lightly traveled streets.

RIDE DEFENSIVELY

Watch out for others.

Watch Out For:

- pedestrians
- potholes
- debris
- drain grates
- bumps
- rocks
- dogs
- loose gravel
- wet pavement
- low-hanging branches

Control your speed when you observe these hazards and avoid sudden stops or swerving into the path of traffic.

Protect Your Bicycle

- Always lock your bike when left unattended. Secure it to a strong stationary object. Use a bike rack whenever possible - avoid damage to trees, fences and other property.
- If possible feed a chain through both wheels and the frame and then around the stationary object. If not, make sure the chain goes through the rear wheel and frame.
- Park your bike in a place sheltered from the weather if possible.
- Register your bike if your community has a registration/licensing program.
- Encourage your employer to provide safe bicycle parking facilities.

For further information contact:



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