

## Bicycle Safety Tips

- Children under 14 must wear an approved helmet\*
- 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
- Use a headlight and tail light at night,\* 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
- Keep at least one hand on the handlebars at all times\*
- Riding the right-sized bike helps 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.

\* New York State law



Updated 7/21

## BICYCLE SAFETY and the New York State Helmet Law



Courtesy of  
Speaker of the Assembly  
**Carl E. Heastie**

250 Broadway, Suite 2301  
New York, NY 10007  
212-312-1400

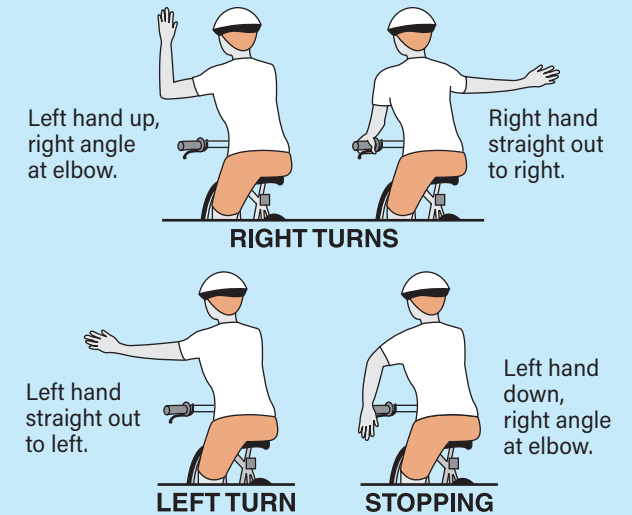
Room 932, LOB  
Albany, NY 12248  
518-455-3791

[speaker@nyassembly.gov](mailto:speaker@nyassembly.gov)

## 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 at right) before you ride your bike on the roads.



## Basic Safety Equipment

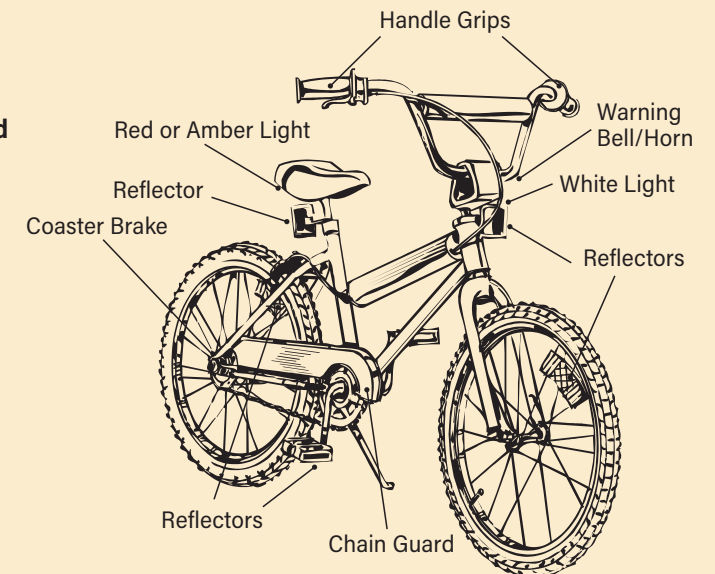
State law requires bicycles be equipped with:

- 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.

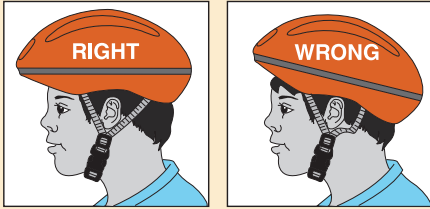
For additional safety, bicycles should be equipped with chain guards and handle grips. Riders should wear approved helmets, use pant-leg clips and wear bright-colored clothes.

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.**

## Use your head and always wear a helmet!



Pictures courtesy of Consumer Product Safety Commission

To prevent head injuries, your helmet should:

- Fit comfortably, touching the head all the way around; be level and stable enough to resist even violent shakes or hard blows and stay in place.
- Have fit pads or rings that can be adjusted to secure the helmet. It should sit level on your head, evenly between the ears, low on your forehead and about two finger-widths above the eyebrows.
- 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. The chin straps should be strong enough to keep your helmet in place during a fall or collision.
- 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)

## Parents and children! Take the... BICYCLE SAFETY QUIZ

Answer TRUE or FALSE

- T  F 1. All bicycles must be equipped with a bell that can be heard from 100 feet away.
- T  F 2. Traffic signs and signals are only for car drivers.
- T  F 3. You only need to wear a helmet when riding on busy streets.
- T  F 4. Before you enter a street from an alley or driveway, you should always stop first.
- T  F 5. Before you make a left turn, look quickly over your shoulder to find out what is coming from behind.
- T  F 6. Before riding, make sure you can stand over the top bar of your bike.
- T  F 7. Your brakes are good enough if your rear wheel skids on loose dirt, but not on dry level pavement.
- T  F 8. A loose bicycle chain means that it is easier to pedal.
- T  F 9. Sidewalks are safer to ride on than roads.
- T  F 10. You don't have to stop at a stop sign if there are no vehicles coming.
- T  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.
- T  F 12. Bicycles should be operated in the middle of traffic lanes.



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

## Rules of the road

- Stop at red lights, stop signs and before entering a roadway.
- Never wear more than one earphone attached to a radio or other audio device.
- Children under 14 years of age must wear bicycle helmets; child passengers from age 1 to age 4 must ride in secure safety seats and wear a certified bicycle helmet. The law prohibits carrying passengers under age 1. Do not carry more passengers than the bicycle is designed to carry.
- Any parent or guardian who permits their child to violate the helmet law is subject to a fine of up to \$50.
- For any bicycle accident involving death or serious injury, you must file a report with the Department of Motor Vehicles within 10 days.
- Ensure the bicycle has the equipment required by law. See the front page.
- Bicyclists must know and follow the NYS Vehicle and Traffic Law (VTL). You will be ticketed for violating the law, which could result in fines. Local ordinances may also apply.

### E-bikes

As of 2020, state law allows the operation of multiple classes of bicycles with an electric assist (e-bikes) on some streets and highways in New York State. Statewide safety regulations include:

- E-bike users must be 16 years of age or older
  - E-bike use is prohibited on sidewalks
  - The maximum assisted speed limit is 20 miles per hour for Class 1 and Class 2 e-bikes and 25 miles per hour for Class 3 e-bikes
  - Helmets must be worn by Class 3 e-bike riders
- Cities, towns or villages may also set further safety regulations, such as mandating helmet use for Class 1 and Class 2 e-bikes, setting a maximum speed that is lower than the statewide requirement, setting clothing requirements to increase visibility or choosing to opt-out entirely from allowing e-bikes. Be sure to check with your local municipality to learn more.

Source: New York State Department of Transportation, [www.dot.ny.gov/display/programs/bicycle](http://www.dot.ny.gov/display/programs/bicycle)