**Bicycling Study Guide**

**Introduction**

Bicycling is great for fun, physical fitness, and getting places. It is an efficient means of transportation and the bicycle is non-polluting as it operates. The popularity of bicycling can be seen readily in the large increases in bicycle sales and the numbers of bicyclists seen on our roads and trails.

But the fun and physical fitness advantages of bicycling are marred each year by thousands of accidents involving bicycles. These accidents result in tragedies causing injuries and deaths.

A bicycle is usually at a disadvantage with other vehicles on the road. A cyclist does not have the protection that motorists usually have. The bicycle rider’s best protection is skill and knowledge. Although there are laws enacted to control the riding behavior of bicyclists, laws by themselves cannot replace good skills and good judgement.

A person on a bicycle has the same responsibilities to obey the traffic laws, be alert to dangerous situations, and assume responsibilities for control and use of a bicycle as does the driver of an automobile.

**Types of Bicycles**

* The single speed
* The three speed
* The derailleur
* The fad bike: the high rise, tandems, unicycles, adult tricycles, recumbents.

**Proper Fit Is Essential**

Far too many people are seen riding bicycles too large for them. This is and contributing factor to many accidents. The correct saddle height for beginning riders permits both feet to rest comfortably on the ground when they are seated and their legs are extended. For more experienced riders the right frame size should allow the rider to straddle the upper horizontal bar comfortable and permit easy mounting and dismounting. When the experienced rider sits on the saddle with the heel of one foot on the low pedal and grips the handlebars, the leg, thigh, and the heel should form a straight line. The upper part of the body should lean slightly forward and the hands should fall naturally to the handlebar grips without stretching.

**Require Equipment Under Wisconsin State Law**

* Braking equipment in good working order
* If bicycling during darkness the bicycle must be equipped, or the rider must wear a light giving off a white light visible from a distance of at least 500 feet.
* A bicycle must be equipped with a red reflector with a diameter of at least 2 inches mounted on the rear and maintained so it is visible from all distances from 50 to 500 feet to the rear.

**Learning to Ride**

Before you start to ride, be sure you know and understand the state and local laws or ordinances. To practice the basic skills, find a place where there is not automobile traffic, steep hills, or rough roads. A clean grassy area is preferable to absorb the bumps from the few inevitable falls. Training wheels may be advisable for small children.

Practice mounting and dismounting, making turns, stopping, changes in direction, speed, and hand signals. After these maneuvers have been mastered, you are ready for street ridding, but keep out of heavy traffic until you are certain that you are able to ride skillfully and safely.

**Rules of Bicycle Safety**

The most single important fact for bicycle rider to remember at all times is that motor vehicle drivers are not always observant of bicycles and the bicycle rider’s rights. Thus, bicycle riders must develop the habit of riding defensively by being alert to possible risk situations. One example, motor vehicle drivers turning right do not usually check to their right to see if a bicycle is on that side.

* Route Planning: Whenever possible it is best to plan your route ahead of time. Plan ahead.
* Ride with traffic.
* Ride single file.
* Special hazards include;
  + Cars pulling away from curbs
  + Car doors opening in the bicycles lane of traffic
  + Pedestrians emerging from between parked cars
  + Storm sewers with open gratings
  + Pot holes, ruts, gravel, sand, and leaves
* Intersections are a commonly encountered hazard for the bicyclist. At marked intersections, the rider should be especially alert to all signals. At unmarked intersections, the rider should yield the right of way to everyone, including motor vehicles and pedestrians. Special care should be taken when making a left turn at a busy intersection.
* Driveways: Stop and yield to pedestrians and motor vehicles before entering roadway.
* Signaling: Signal your intention to turn well in advance, at least 100 feet before the turn or stop, and hold the signal to the point where you need both hands to turn or stop.
* Bicycles build for one should have only one rider. A small child may be carried by an adult in an approved carrier.
* Never attempt to be pulled by a motor vehicle.
* Use voice, horn, or bells to warn others.
* Never ride between parked cars.
* Dress appropriately. Wear tennis shoes. Wear white or reflective clothing at night.
* Don’t ride up or down curbs.
* Always use both hand brakes. Use front brake carefully to avoid locking which would result in a fall.
* Wear a properly fitted helmet.
* Do not intentionally scare animals. If you encounter a dog it is best to continue to pedal while holding a straight line. Sustaining an injury from falling or crashing is usually a bigger concern than being bitten by the dog.
* Pass on your left and yield to your right.
* Control your bike!
* Allow sufficient space between you and the rider in front of you to be able to stop in an emergency.
* Two hands on the handlebars and SIT on the seat.
* Do not “pop” the front tire.

**Hand Signals**

* LEFT TURN: Extend left arm horizontally out to the left side.
* RIGHT TURN: Extend left arm out to the left side with a 90 degree upward bend at the elbow.
* STOPPING OR SLOWING: Extend left arm out to the side with a 90 degree bend down at the elbow.

**Class Procedures**

1. Perform the Pre Ride Check. Include your name, date, mod, and bike number
2. Secure your helmet
3. Follow all rules. Stay on the correct route. Know the stopping points and wait at each one until instructed to continue.
4. Ride with the left gear in 2.
5. Perform Post Ride Check.
6. Clean helmet and SET in box.
7. Turn in “Check Sheet.”
8. Make sure bike is safely parked.

**Other Tips**

* Gear down before stopping or turning.
* Lower gear when climbing hills. This should be done while pedaling but with little or no pressure on the pedal to avoid having the chain come off.
* When going down hills a rider should change to higher gears while continuing to pedal to take advantage of gravity and the grade.
* Avoid pedaling during a turn.
* Be aware that wet brakes are less effective and require a longer stopping distance.

**Bicycle Parts**

Chain, pedal, spoke, rim, tire, rear derailleur, rear brake, reflectors, headset, kick stand, saddle, seat post, front brake, front derailleur, brake levers, seat tube, top tube, down tube, tire valve.

**ALLWAYS ASSUME ALL DRIVE RS OF VEHICLES DO NOT SEE YOU!**