



BICYCLE SAFETY

By Douglas H. Frazer

Fox Point, together with our surrounding communities, is a great place to cycle. We welcome and encourage it, and recognize that for kids bicycles are a particularly important form of transportation and exploration.

As the village improves its arterial streets it makes every effort, if feasible, to add bike lanes. In recent years we have such added

lanes or widened shoulders along Lake Drive, Green Tree Road, and most recently, Calumet Road.

Wheel & Sprocket, an award-winning constellation of bike shops, has a store smack in the middle of the village in the Fox Point Shops at 6940 N. Santa Monica Boulevard. And here's some news: It will soon open a coffee shop, including the sale of bakery goods, inside the store.

With all this two-wheel activity comes safety concerns. Here are some facts. Regardless of season, bicyclist accidents occur most often between 6pm and 9pm. Accidents are much more common for males than females. Finally, all states require bicyclists on the roadway to follow the same rules as motorists.

With this in mind, let's review the rules and tips that will help keep cyclists safe.

- Adjust your bike to fit. If the bike is too big, it is harder to control.
- Make sure your bike works. It doesn't matter how well you ride the bike if the brakes don't work.
- Wear a properly fitted bicycle helmet. This rule cannot be overstated. A major study of bike helmet use around the world from more than 64,000 cyclists found helmets reduce the risks of a serious head injury by nearly 70 percent.
- See and be seen. Wear equipment that makes you more visible to others, such as bright clothing, reflective gear, reflectors on the bike, and a white front light and red rear light. If you can, avoid riding at night altogether.
- Carry all items in a backpack or strapped to the back of the bike.
- Plan your route. Choose routes with less traffic and slower speeds. The safest route may be away from traffic altogether, in a bike lane or on a bike path.

Okay. We are out cycling. Here are some tips for bicyclists and for motorists.

BICYCLISTS

- Ride with traffic flow. Ride on the right in the same direction as other vehicles. Riding on sidewalks can be hazardous because when you leave a sidewalk to cross a street it's hard for motorists to see you.
- Walk your bike across intersections.
- Obey all traffic laws. A bicycle is a vehicle and you are the driver. Obey all traffic signs, signals, and lane markings.
- Yield to traffic when appropriate. Look right and left before entering a street.
- Be predictable. Ride in a straight line, not in and out of cars.

- Signal your moves to others.
- Stay alert.
- Look before turning. When turning left or right, look behind for a break in the traffic, then signal before making the turn.
- Watch for parked cars. Ride far enough out from the curb to avoid the unexpected, like doors opening, or cars pulling out of into parking spaces or driveways.
- Pass pedestrians and other bicyclists with care. Announce "on your left/right" or use a horn.

MOTORISTS

- Share the road. Bicyclists have the same rights and responsibilities as those behind the wheel of a motor vehicle.
- Yield to bicyclists as you would motorists and do not underestimate their speed.
 - Scan your surroundings for other vehicles, including bicycles. This is particularly important in parking lots, at traffic lights or stop signs, and when backing up.
 - Drivers turning right on red should look to the right and behind before proceeding. This will help avoid hitting a bicyclist approaching from the right rear.
 - Obey the speed limit, reduce speed for road conditions, and drive defensively.
 - Give cyclists room. Do not pass too closely. Pass bicyclists as you would any other vehicle—when it's safe to move over to an adjacent lane.

Parents can play an important part in bicycle safety by talking about it with their children. All adults can serve as role models by following the rules on their own bikes.

Historically Fox Point has been a safe place for those who use the roads, paths, and sidewalks. Let's work to keep it that way.

Douglas H. Frazer is a Fox Point resident and neighborhood contributor as well as the village president. The views expressed are his own and not necessarily those of the Village, the village board, other village board members, or Best Version Media, LLC.



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