Safe Biking

Now that you're ready to ride...

Always wear your helmet - every time you ride.

- Ride in the same direction as other vehicles. Bicyclists and drivers follow the same rules of the road.
- Pay attention to traffic. Do not use headphones or cell phones while you bike.
- Be visible. Wear bright clothing and reflective materials when you ride.

And, above all, obey all traffic laws, signs, and signals.

"Safe Biking: Quick Tips" was developed by the Bicycle Transportation Alliance, through the support from the Oregon Department of Transportation, the City of Portland Office of Transportation, NikeGO, Giant Bicycles, and other local sponsors.

Quick Tips

- Use bike lanes when available. Bike lanes provide a space just for bicyclists so they can travel safely.
- Wear bright clothing with reflectors.
- Keep pant legs and shoelaces out of moving parts.

Biking basics
Ride predictably on the right side of the road in single file. Obey all traffic laws and signs.

- Always wear your helmet.
- Use bike lanes when available. Bike lanes provide a space just for bicyclists so they can travel safely.

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Check your helmet fit

- Before you ride, check that your helmet covers your forehead. When you look up you should see the helmet’s front edge.
- Straps should form a “V” shape with the sliders below ears. The chinstrap should be tight with only two fingers’ width between neck and strap.

Bicycle safety check

- Handlebars are tight and straight.
- Brakes in front and back work smoothly.
- Seat is straight and at the right height.
- Tires are properly inflated.
- Chain is clean, lubed and runs smoothly.
- Use a white front light, red rear light, and reflectors at night.

Before you ride

- Use bike lanes when available. Bike lanes provide a space just for bicyclists so they can travel safely.
- Wear bright clothing with reflectors.
- Keep pant legs and shoelaces out of moving parts.

Biking basics

Before you ride
Hazards
Watch out for potholes, broken glass, opening car doors, and parked cars that can block your view.

Road positions
Proper road position is essential to get where you are going safely and predictably.

Position 3 - Right side of the lane, 3 feet from the curb and 3 feet from parked cars. Used for the majority of riding.

Position 2 - Center of the lane. Ride in position 2 to avoid road hazards. Use a shoulder check before moving to position 2.

Position 1 - Far left of the lane. Use this position to turn left.

Signs

Stop sign
Come to a complete stop.

Yield sign
Slow down and watch for traffic.

Traffic signal
Green=Go
Yellow=Stop
Red=Stop

RR sign
Slow down, look and listen. Stop for trains.

Right-of-way

All vehicles must follow right-of-way rules. Right-of-way decides who goes first at an intersection. At an intersection with four stop signs—

If two vehicles arrive at different times, the vehicle that arrives first goes first.

If two or more vehicles arrive at the same time, the vehicle on the right goes first.

If two vehicles moving in opposite directions arrive at the same time, the vehicle going straight goes first.

Exiting driveways
Stop at the end of the driveway or alley and look for traffic before proceeding onto the road.

Yield to pedestrians. Move forward until you have a clear view around buildings and parked cars. Go only when it is clear.

Going straight
Stay in position 3 as you ride up to the stop sign. Stop at the stop sign and look left, right and left again for traffic. Continue riding in position 3 through the intersection.

Intersections
Make eye contact to communicate with drivers. Before moving into the intersection, make sure all motorists see you!

Let pedestrians cross the street safely before proceeding.

Shoulder checks
Looking back over your shoulder for traffic is an important skill. Cyclists use shoulder checks when preparing for left hand turns, lane changes, and to be aware of traffic. Here are some pointers for easy shoulder checks.

Sit up tall and look back for traffic without swerving.

Shoulder checks

Ride with your right hand on the handlebars and your left hand on your hip.

Practice until you can ride and look back for traffic without swerving.

Shoulder checks

Ride Safely. The Way To Go.