



# Bike Smart

# Be a Safe Bike Driver

Riding your bicycle can be great fun. But do you know how to “drive” your bike?  
Riding your bike is just like driving a car—there are rules for bike driving.

Here are a few tips:

## Wear Your Helmet the Right Way

*It is important to wear a helmet correctly.  
Do the “Eyes, Ears, Mouth Test”™*



- **BIKE HELMETS** are required for bicyclists under 16 years of age (NH RSA 265:144X)
- **FIRST** put on your helmet so it is level and snug—if it slides around, you need to insert thicker pads
- **EYES**—you should see the very edge of your helmet when you look up past your eyebrows
- **EARS**—the straps should meet right under your ear lobes to form a Y
- **MOUTH**—the strap should be loose enough so you can breathe and insert a finger between the buckle and your skin, but tight enough that if you drop your jaw you can feel the helmet pull down on the top of your head

*If you need help, go to a bike shop.  
Never throw your helmet or leave it in a hot place  
because it will get damaged (even though you cannot tell).  
Replace your helmet if it is damaged, no longer fits,  
or if it is over 5 years old.*

## Check Your Bike for Safety

*Have your bike checked at least  
once a year at a bike shop.  
Check it yourself before biking  
with the ABC Quick Check:*

- **AIR**—pinch the tires, they should be hard
- **BRAKES**—make sure they work and aren’t rubbing the tire
- **CRANK/CHAIN**—if there are problems with your gears or if the chain is loose, take it to a bike shop
- **QUICK**—check “quick release levers” and other bolts to make sure they are tight



## Dress Bright for Safety

- Wear light- or bright-colored clothing so you can be seen
- Tuck away shoelaces or other strings or cords so they don’t dangle—they may get caught in the moving parts of your bike
- Loose or baggy clothing can also be dangerous— so make sure you wear snug clothes
- Never wear headphones

## Obey the Rules of the Road

- Ride on the right
- Ride single file
- Obey traffic signs, signals, and laws
- Ride straight—no surprises!
- Look back and signal before turning
- Yield to people walking
- Use lights if riding at night (remember to ask your parents for permission)
- Always stop at the end of your driveway—look left, right, then left again before entering the road
- Feel unsafe? You can always walk your bike



**When we all drive safely and follow the rules of the road, it is easy to be safe and have fun!**

Dear Parent,

Practicing safe bike driving is a great way for your family to be active and have fun together. There is much more to riding a bike than learning to balance and wearing a helmet.

Please set a good example by following all motor vehicle laws (which apply to bikes just as they do to cars), and wearing your helmet properly every time you ride.

To help your family become safe bike drivers, practice these basic skills:

- Checking helmet fit with the Eyes, Ears, Mouth test
- Doing an ABC quick Check
- Riding in a straight line
- Looking over your shoulder for traffic
- Scanning ahead for, and avoiding, hazards (rocks, car doors)
- Stopping at the end of driveways and at stop signs
- Looking for traffic and following right of way rules
- Using hand signals

Be sure your child knows where it is safe to ride and is able to safely negotiate the traffic typically found there. If your child is not yet ready to ride alone on the street, we recommend that you ride or walk together; the sidewalk is not necessarily a safer place. Practice skills on an empty street or parking lot.



We at the BikeSmart program advocate for bicycling and walking safety, education and access for all ages. We feel it is vitally important that today's youth learn to safely experience the fun and freedom of bicycling. We encourage walking or bicycling to school as a start toward the life-long healthy habit of regular exercise.

*NH BikeSmart appreciates contributions from the NH Department of Health & Human Services [www.dhhs.nh.gov](http://www.dhhs.nh.gov) and the Bike-Walk Alliance of NH [www.BWANH.org](http://www.BWANH.org). This flyer was adapted with permission from the Bicycle Coalition of Maine.*



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