

Bike Safety

The following guidelines and procedures apply to all BSA units, councils, and national program activities involving bicycling.

1. Qualified Supervision

All unit, district, council, and national event activities must be supervised by a mature and conscientious adult at least age 21 who understands and knowingly accepts responsibility for the safety of children in his or her care, who is experienced with the skills and equipment involved in the activity, and who is committed to compliance with these BSA safety guidelines.

2. Physical Fitness

Biking is strenuous. Long treks and hill climbing should not be attempted without training and preparation. For Scouting activities, all participants must present evidence of fitness assured by a complete health history from a physician, parent, or legal guardian. The adult supervisor should adjust all supervision, discipline, and protection to anticipate any potential risks associated with individual health conditions. In the event of any significant health conditions, proof of an examination by a physician should be required by the adult leader.

3. Helmets and Clothing

All cyclists must wear a properly sized and fitted helmet approved by either the Snell Memorial Foundation or the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) standards. Layer your clothing for warmth on cool days so you can avoid chilling or overheating. Cover up for sun protection on clear days.

4. Buddy-Up

When the program activity is a bicycle expedition or trek, the buddy system must be used. When there is program activity emphasizing individual performance skills, one buddy observes while the other takes his turn. In competitive activity where the buddy concept cannot be practically applied, all activity must be directly observed by the adult supervisor. (Youth members should be taught that biking with a buddy is best. When biking alone, apart from Scouting activities, youth members should be encouraged to tell someone their route, schedule, and destination before departing.)

5. Keep Right

Ride with the traffic flow, as far to the right as possible. Avoid curbs, storm drains, soft or loose gravel on shoulders, and other hazards.

6. Be Smart

Obey all traffic laws, signs, signals, and street markings. Watch for changes in road conditions. Ride only one to a bike. Do not ride after dark. No stunts—trick riding is only for professionals who use special equipment. Yield to motor vehicles even if you think you have the right-of-way. Never hitch a ride on another vehicle. Keep your head and ears open and do not wear headphones while riding.



7. Turns and Intersections

Look left, right, back, and ahead before turning. Stop and search all directions when entering a street from a driveway, parking area, sidewalk, or an alley. Signal all turns using universal hand signals. Walk your bike through or across busy intersections.

8. Right Bike

Ride only a bike that fits you. Select a bike that permits you to put both feet on the ground while sitting on the seat. The handgrips should be no higher than your shoulder or lower than your seat.

9. Accessories

Every bike needs a horn or bell and reflectors (front, back, and sides). Items should be carried only in baskets, saddlebags, or on a rear carrier rack. If you must ride in traffic, a bike- or helmet-mounted mirror is recommended. For long trips, a bike-mounted container for drinking water is recommended.

10. Maintenance

Keep your bike clean and well-maintained—especially the brakes and drive chain.

11. Race Right

Open street racing is dangerous. Race only with supervision on marked courses that have been set up to exclude other vehicle or pedestrian traffic, to eliminate fall hazards and minimize collision risks, and to define clearly "start" and "finish" points.

12. Planning

Plan both the route and timing of bike trips to avoid heavy traffic and hazardous conditions. Biking is unsafe on wet pavement and on windy days. Plan for at least hourly rest stops and a maximum of approximately six hours on the bike per day.

13. Discipline

All participants should know, understand, and follow the rules and procedures for safe biking, and all participants should conscientiously and carefully follow all directions from the adult supervisor.