

Laws and Rules of Bike Safety

Adapted from "Bicyclists Required to Obey Traffic Laws"; Trooper Tim Rust, MN State Patrol
West Central Tribune, December 16, 2003

Pre-reading

Questions:

- What are some rules of bike safety?

Definitions:

- Intersection – the place where two or more roads meet
- Traumatic – produced by sudden physical injury



Reading

16 The traffic rules for pedestrians and bicyclists can be confusing. When a person rides his
34 bike in a crosswalk, is he considered a pedestrian? Should a bicyclist walk her bike across a street
instead of riding the bike?

38 Minnesota Law defines a pedestrian as “any person afoot or in a wheelchair.” A pedestrian
53 has the right of way in a crosswalk. In Minnesota, drivers are required to stop or slow down so that
74 a pedestrian can cross the street safely at a marked crosswalk. Crosswalks are usually marked with
89 white lines at an intersection.

94 Minnesota law views a bicycle as a vehicle. A person riding a bicycle is **required** to obey
111 the same traffic laws as a person driving a car. This is why a bicyclist is required to ride in the
133 same direction as other traffic and obey traffic signs.

141 When a bicyclist gets off the bike, that person becomes a pedestrian. When the bicyclist
156 gets back on her bike, she is a “driver” of the bicycle. A bicyclist riding in a crosswalk is not given
177 the legal protections that pedestrians have. For that reason, it is often safer for a bicyclist to get off
196 the bike and walk the bicycle across the street at a crosswalk.

208 Over the last 10 years in Minnesota, more than 1,000 bicyclists have been injured each year
224 because of **collisions** with a car or other motor vehicle. It is very important to know the laws about
243 bike safety and follow them.

248 One of the most important rules of bike safety is wearing a bike helmet. Bicyclists of all
265 ages, children as well as adults, should wear bike helmets on every ride. A good fitting helmet
282 worn just above the eyebrows helps protect the head and the brain.

294 According to the Minnesota Safety Council, “two out of three bicycling deaths are the
309 result of head injuries. Nearly half of children hospitalized for bike-related injuries suffer from a
324 traumatic brain injury, affecting their ability to walk, talk and think. In a crash, helmets reduce the
341 risk of brain injury by up to 88%.”

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Level 8.0

Understanding

1. Who or what is a pedestrian? _____

2. What is a synonym of the word **collision**? _____

3. On average, how many bicyclists per year are injured in Minnesota because of collisions with a motor vehicle? _____

4. Why does a person riding a bike need to obey the same laws as a person driving a car? _____

5. What are some possible effects of injury to the brain? _____

6. Where can a person safely walk across a street? _____

7. What does the word **require** mean? _____

8. Why should you wear a bike helmet when riding a bike? _____

Writing

Option A: Write a summary of the reading.

Option B: Write about your own bike riding experiences, and how you stay safe while riding.
