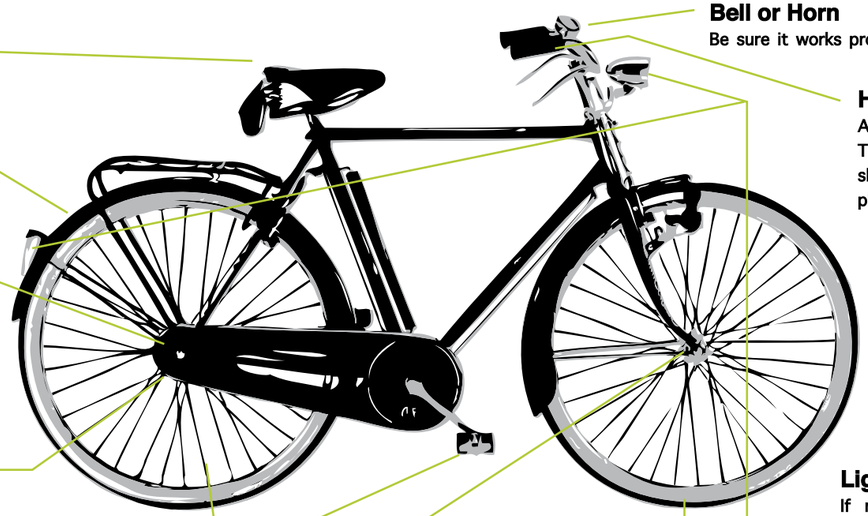
Bicycle Safety Tips

Riding a bicycle is fun and by using your bicycle instead of a car, you can help reduce air pollution and traffic congestion in Austin.

BEFORE YOU RIDE, CHECK YOUR BIKE FOR SAFE OPERATION



Saddle
Adjust for comfort and growth. Tighten saddle and seat post nuts securely.

Fenders
Be sure they are undamaged and securely fastened.

Brakes
(coaster or hand) Check before your first ride. Periodically inspect and maintain brakes. The coaster brake arm must be securely fastened to the frame.

Chain
Check frequently for damage and stretch, and readjust if necessary. Lubricate frequently with light oil.

Pedals
Reflectorized pedals add safety in night riding. It is imperative that the shoulder of the pedal axle be securely tightened against the crank arm. Replace worn or damaged pedals.

Spokes
Replace broken spokes promptly. Keep them tight.

Wheels
Should rotate smoothly without wobbling from side to side. If necessary, should be realigned. Axle nuts should be kept tight.

Tires
Inspect frequently for wear or leaks. Remove embedded stones, nails, glass, etc. Keep inflated to the correct pressure which is stamped on the sidewall of tire.

Bell or Horn
Be sure it works properly, load and clear.

Handlebars and Grips
Adjust for comfort and growth. Tighten securely. Handlebar grips should fit snugly, and worn ones replaced.

Lights and Reflectors
If reflectors are damaged or lost, for your safety, replace them immediately. Lights and reflectors should be visible at dusk and at night, headlights from 500 feet, rear reflector from 300 feet. Flashing lights and pedal and spoke mounted reflectors are very visible to motorists. Don't ride at night without a light. At some angles, an unlit bike is invisible to motorists. Use state-approved reflectors.

Obey Traffic Signs and Signals
Bicycles must operate like other vehicles on the roadway.

Never Ride with Headphones

Always wear a helmet

Never Ride Against Traffic
Motorists aren't looking for bicycles riding on the wrong side of the road. State law and common sense require that bicycles drive like other vehicles.

Use Hand Signals
Hand signals tell motorists and pedestrians what you intend to do. Signal as a matter of law, courtesy, and self-protection.

Don't Pass on the Right
Motorists may not look for or see a bicycle passing on the right. Pass on the left like other vehicles.

Don't Weave in or Leave the Curb Between Parked Cars
Don't ride out from between parked cars. Motorists may not see you when you enter traffic.

Follow Lane Markings
Don't turn left from the right lane. Don't go straight from a lane marked "right-turn only" unless "except bikes" is posted.

Riding in the Middle of the Lane is Safest when:
- the lane is too narrow to share safely
- debris, glass or obsrtuctions are present
- traveling the same speed as traffic

Avoid Road Hazards
Watch out for parallel-sewer grates, gravel, ice or debris. Cross railroad tracks at right angles.

Choose the Best Way to Turn Left:
There are two ways to make a left turn. (1) Like an auto: signal, scan for approaching vehicles over your shoulder, move into the left turn lane and turn left. (2) Like a pedestrian: ride straight to the far-side crosswalk. Walk your bike across.

Make Eye Contact wth Drivers
Assume that other drivers don't see you until you are sure that they do. Eye contact is important with any driver which might pose a threat to your safety. A smile and wave can often humanize the situation.

Be Visible: Wear Bright Colors in Daylight and Use Lights at Night
Texas law requires a white headlight (visible from at least 500 feet ahead) and a rear reflector or taillight (visible up to 300 feet from behind).

Scan the Road Behind
Learn to look back over your shoulder without losing your balance or swerving. Some riders use rearview mirrors, but still look before turning.

Don't Ride Double
Riding with extra people on the back or handlebars of the bike makes it unsteady and unsafe. State law requires every rider to have their own seat or saddle.

Keep your Bike in Good Repair
Adjust your bike to fit you and keep it working properly. Check brakes and tires regularly. Routine maintenance is simple and you can learn to do it yourself.

Keep Both Hands Ready to Brake
You may not stop in time if you brake one-handed. Allow extra distance for stopping in the rain, since brakes are less efficient when wet.