

Caribou County Sheriff's Office

Safety in the Community

Bicycle Safety

A BICYCLE IS NOT A TOY, IT IS A CHILD'S FIRST VEHICLE.

Young Children leave their homes on bicycles to explore a world where adventure awaits. Unfortunately, so does danger. Young children are especially at risk in traffic situations because:

- They expect others to look out for them
- They do not understand complicated traffic situations
- They focus on one thing at a time
- They overestimate their knowledge and physical strength
- They assume that if they can see a car, the driver can see them
- They think that cars can stop instantly
- They have difficulty estimating the speed a car is traveling
- They have a field a vision one third narrower than adults have
- They have difficulty determining the direction of sounds

As Children grow older they begin to ride on busier streets where cycling demands greater skills to avoid collisions. If children develop safe cycling skills and learn to follow the rules-of-the-road, many collisions can be avoided. Some accidents, however, happen through no fault of the cyclist, and that is why children must be taught to ride defensively and to wear bicycle helmets.

- 85% of all head or brain injuries could be avoided if cyclists wore bicycle helmets
- 85% of bicycle accidents occur within five blocks of home
- 47% of bicycle accidents occur off the road, in driveways and on sidewalks.
- 90% of all accidental deaths to children on bicycles occur when they dart into traffic from a driveway or when they cycle through a stop sign

Traffic laws tell children what rules they must obey when cycling. Traffic laws alone, however, cannot protect them. To be safe they must develop cycling skills and good judgment.

Some general rules your child should follow:

1. Ride with traffic, on the right half of the road.
2. Ride a safe functioning bike. Check **ABC's**
A= Tires are properly filled with **AIR**
B= **BRAKES** are working properly
C= **CHAIN** is tight
3. Obey applicable traffic laws
4. Ride in Control
 - Ride in a straight line, don't weave.
 - Watch for and avoid road hazards.
 - Don't carry things in your hands that will affect your control.
5. Wear a properly fitting helmet. (check hints below)
6. Use proper hand signals.
7. Be Seen. Wear light colored clothing at all times and reflective gear when light conditions are low. Use a headlight and taillight when riding at night.

Helmets

A bicycle helmet reduces the risk of serious head injury by 85 percent. But it's not enough to simply buy and wear one – you need to make sure it fits properly.

1. Buy one that has been tested and **approved** for protection. You can tell this by looking for a CPSC, ASTM, or Snell B-95 sticker.
2. There are many different brands and sizes. Select one that fits well prior to any adjustments. Many offer adjustable sizing pads to help ensure a better fit. Buy the one that's most comfortable and attractive to you. You'll be more likely to wear it.
3. Any helmet that has been involved in a crash has done it's job!
REPLACE IT!!!!
4. Visors are not tested for snagging, and they can shatter in a fall, cutting your face.