

Before You Ride

Wear a helmet and wear brightly-colored, close-fitting clothes. Snug-fitting clothing doesn't dangle down and get caught in your equipment, but it's less likely to get caught in your equipment. Make sure your bicycle is in tip-top condition. Check tires, chains, brakes, and other moving parts. If you are not sure how to check your bicycle, ask a friend or take it to a more experienced bicyclist. Plan your route carefully. This map may help you avoid more hazardous routes which will contribute to a safer and more pleasant trip.

When Riding

Check traffic safety laws and rules as if you were driving an automobile, including all traffic signs, signals, and pavement markings.

Ride as close as practicable and safe to the right-hand curb or edge of the road. Do not ride on the road shoulder or on the sidewalk or on the road itself. Ride single file on trails and no more than two abreast on roads.

Obey all traffic prohibiting bicycles. Be aware that in Illinois bicycles are prohibited on all interstate highways, freeways, and tollways. Other roads may also prohibit bicycles and are marked as such.

Night Riding

Take extra precaution when riding at night. When riding at night, you must have:

1. Front white light visible for a distance of at least 500 feet.
2. Red rear reflector visible for a distance of up to 600 feet or a steady or flashing red light visible for a distance of up to 500 feet.

You should also wear brightly-colored clothing with reflector stripes for high visibility.

Making Turns

Use hand signals for turns and stops.

1. For a left turn, extend your left arm out.
2. For a right turn, extend your right hand out or bend your left arm 90° at the elbow.
3. For a stop, bend your left arm 90° at the elbow with your hand, pointing downward.

When a turn must be made in one of two ways:

1. Like a car:
 - Use the left-turn lane or left-most lane, stay to the right-hand side of the lane and swing your wheel when safe, well in advance of the turn.
2. Like a pedestrian:
 - Stay to the right side of the road, cross straight ahead and pass safely and legally to go, after crossing, walk all the rights and duties of pedestrians.

Stay slowly, if you wish to ride fast, ride on the road.

Riding on a Sidewalk

Local ordinance may prohibit bicyclists from using sidewalks. Where permitted, bicyclists must yield to pedestrians and give audible signals before passing and must give audible signals when riding with the rights and duties of pedestrians. Ride slowly, if you wish to ride fast, ride on the road.

Information courtesy Illinois Secretary of State and Ride Illinois.

