

Bicycle Safety

One thing to think about as you prepare for college is how you will get around campus. The size of your school, whether you are living on or off campus, and whether your campus is rural or urban are all factors you need to consider. Many schools prohibit first-year students from having a car on campus, and even if they do allow it, parking passes can be very expensive. Often the choice is to use public and alternative transportation. Bicycles are the most common of these, so I wanted to talk a little bit about how to stay safe while riding.



- Always wear a helmet! A 2021 study by the Consumer Product Safety Commission shows that there were 597,000 traumatic brain injuries from bicycle accidents from 2009 to 2018.
- Wear clothing that is “tight and bright.” Loose clothing can get caught in the gears and cause an accident. Wearing clothing that is bright will increase your visibility to all who share the road with you.
- Have a pre-ride checklist. Make sure that the seat is at the proper height for you. Are your tires properly inflated? Do you have front and back reflectors? Are your front and back lights working if you are riding at night? Check the overall condition of your bike and if your chain needs to be greased.
- Know the rules of the road. Never ride against the flow of traffic. Obey all traffic laws, signs, and signals. If you are on a sidewalk, remember that pedestrians have the right of way. Use hand signals. Your left arm straight out to the side indicates that you are making a left turn, while bending your arm 90 degrees at the elbow indicates a right turn.
- Look both ways before crossing the street.

What about some of the alternative methods of transportation? These include micromobility devices such as e-scooters, hoverboards, or e-skate boards. These can be a fun way to quickly get around campus but come with some dangers as well. Make sure to check with your school to see if they are allowed on campus. Many schools have banned them, citing safety concerns. Students have been injured and even killed in accidents. Not only have there been many accidents involving riders and pedestrians, but lithium-ion batteries have been known to explode and burn. These explosions release toxic gas and can be deadly if in an enclosed space such as an elevator. If you bring one of these to campus, the above safety tips apply - with the number one tip being to wear a helmet!