What Every Young Michigan Bicyclist Must Know
A Guide for Youth

Tips for Riding Legally and Safely
Meet the LMB Safety Kids

Sprocket

Madison

Spokes

Hub

Chase

Ryder

Also Available from LMB:
What Every Michigan Bicyclist Must Know

www.LMB.org/wembmk

What Every Young Michigan Bicyclist Must Know and What Every Michigan Bicyclist Must Know were recognized by the Governor’s Traffic Safety Advisory Commission with an Outstanding Traffic Safety Achievement Award.
Dear Parents and Law Enforcement,

Congratulations! Learning to ride a bicycle is an big milestone of early childhood. By sharing this booklet, you are taking an important step in educating children about safe bicycling and basic traffic laws in Michigan.

The League of Michigan Bicyclists (LMB) offers a companion to this booklet, an adult version titled *What Every Michigan Bicyclist Must Know*.

The mission of LMB is to promote bicycling and the safety of all bicyclists on Michigan roadways.

If you are interested in volunteering with LMB to help us make Michigan bicycling safer, please contact our office using the information on the back cover.

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**What Every Young Michigan Bicyclist Must Know**

was created to help young bicyclists understand how to ride their bicycles legally and safely in Michigan. This booklet is made possible by generous donations from Michigan bicyclists. The content of this booklet was created by Rich Moeller with input from Michigan bicyclists.

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The content of *What Every Young Michigan Bicyclist Must Know* may not be reproduced in whole or in part without the express written permission of the League of Michigan Bicyclists.
Everyone — adults and children — should wear bicycle helmets every time they ride. Helmets are the best way to prevent head injuries resulting from bicycle crashes.

All new helmets must meet or exceed government safety standards. Bicycle helmets range in price from $20 to over $200, but they all protect your head equally well.

**Make sure your helmet fits properly**

- Level on head with two (2) fingers above eyebrow
- "V" under the ears
- Two (2) fingers between strap and chin

Bicycle crashes can cause permanent injuries, be sure to wear your helmet every time you ride!
When riding on a sidewalk or trail, bicyclists should ride to the right, ride single file, and yield to people walking.

When riding on sidewalks, bicyclists must be very careful to watch for cars backing out of driveways or turning into driveways from the road.

When passing on a sidewalk or trail, bicyclists should always call out “on your left!” to warn walkers that you are passing on their left-hand side.

When riding on a street or roadway you should act as a vehicle and follow the same rules of the road that drivers follow. Bicyclists should ride on the right side of the road just as cars do.
Ride about an arm’s length from the edge of the road to allow room to ride around dangerous objects in the street.

Ride to the right of the striped line in the middle of the shoulder.

Ride in the middle of a striped bike lane.
When riding on the road or street, bicyclists should follow the same rules as motorists. A bicyclist must ride in the same direction as cars, not against traffic. It is extremely dangerous to ride against traffic!

Talk with your parents about what rules cars must follow.

**Bicyclists must signal all turns**

![Left-turn](image1)

![Right-turn](image2)

![Stopping](image3)

Bicyclists must obey all traffic signals and signs such as stop signs and stop lights.
Bright visible clothing makes you stand out to motorists and helps prevent crashes. A light-weight safety vest works on those days that you must wear dark clothing.

While night riding is not recommended for children, if you get caught out after dark you need a front white light and a red rear tail light.
Bicyclists should look ahead for these obstacles and always be prepared to take action to avoid them, such as slowing down and riding in a straight line.

Bicyclists should always carry a lock when they ride so that they can lock up their bicycle when they need to leave it. If you don’t, your bike might be missing when you come back to get it.

Special road conditions you need to be aware of:

- Debris in Road
- Wet Leaves
- Sand or Gravel Over Road
- Wet Streets
- Potholes & Sewer Grates
Bicyclists should ride in a straight line. Don’t zig-zag while riding. Ride about an arm’s length from the edge of the road and in single file. Don’t ride too close to the curb as you might catch your pedal and fall.

Before entering the street, always stop, look left, then right, and left again. Also use your ears to listen for oncoming traffic.

Always look before you turn.
You should be able to check over your left shoulder for traffic behind you and still ride in a straight line.

Riding in a straight line is important when you ride on the street or roadway so that motorists can see you and understand what you are going to do.

Gears make riding your bike easier to pedal and more fun. Practice using all of your gears and learn when to change your gears when you ride.

You should never listen to music on headphones or talk on a cell phone while riding your bike. It is unsafe!
Practice starting so you don’t swerve as you take off. One foot should be on the ground and you should push off in a straight line.

If you have hand brakes, make sure you apply pressure evenly to both brakes when stopping. Skidding your rear tire may be fun, but it will wear out your tire quickly and can be dangerous.

If you have coaster brakes practice pushing backwards on the pedals to stop your bike without skidding the rear tire. A worn rear tire is not safe.
Staying Away from Trouble Spots

Do

look left, look right, and then look left again whenever exiting a driveway or crossing an intersection.

Don't

weave between parked cars. Always ride in a straight line and be predictable.

Don't

ride through stop signs or stoplights. Always stop and look for traffic. At stoplights, wait for the light to turn green.

Make sure you look, signal, and look again.
turn without checking or stopping. Always check behind you for traffic and then signal before turning.

Don't ride too close to car doors. Stay alert for car doors opening into you. You should ride slower and look into the window to see if someone is in the car.

Don't carry friends on your bike. It is very dangerous and illegal.

Do Always cross railroad tracks carefully at a right angle.
Bikes too big or too small are unsafe. Make sure your bike fits you perfectly. The store or shop where you bought your bike can help you get a safe fit.

NOTE FOR PARENTS: We don’t recommend buying a bike for your child to grow into.

Children of all abilities can enjoy cycling! Children who have difficulty moving their legs can ride handcycles. Children who have trouble making decisions can ride with an adult on a bike built for two.
Before every ride you should do an ABC Quick Check on your bike. If you find a problem, ask your parents to help fix it!

A is for Air

Make sure your tires are inflated to the recommended pressure on the side of the tires.

Use a tire gauge to ensure proper pressure.

Check for damage in the tread and sidewall. Replace any damaged tires.
B is for Brakes

Check to make sure that your brakes stop your bike.

If you have rim brakes:
1) Check brake pads for wear and make sure they don’t rub the tires.
2) Check levers. They should not be too loose when you pull them.

C is for Cranks & Chains

Make sure the bolts that hold your cranks on are tight.

Check your chain to see if it needs lubrication.

If your chain skips when pedaling, you may need a new chain.
Know and obey your Traffic Signs

**STOP**
- Stop, put your foot down and look both ways

**YIELD**
- Stop and look both ways, let other traffic go first

**No right turn allowed**

**Stoplight ahead, stop on red and go on green**

**Caution: railroad track, cross carefully**

**BIKE LANE**
- Separate lane for bikes to ride in

**BIKE ROUTE**
- Designated bike route

**ONE WAY**
- One way, only ride with traffic

**Cross street ahead, be careful**

**Bikes not allowed, avoid these areas**
The **League of Michigan Bicyclists (LMB)** is the main state-wide organization that works to promote bicycling and the safety of all bicyclists on Michigan roadways. Our job is best summed up by this quote from Conor Waterman, age 9, Saline, MI:

“I want safe streets so I can ride my bicycle without getting squished!”

LMB provides educational materials like this booklet for both youth and adults. We also work with our lawmakers to make sure that it is safe to ride your bike. LMB hosts multi-day bicycle vacations for youth and adults, and publishes an annual Ride Calendar with hundreds of fun bicycle events for your family to participate in across Michigan.

For more information on bicycling please visit our website at [www.LMB.org](http://www.LMB.org) or call us at **517-334-9100**.