

Merrymeeting Wheelers Bicycle Club

Bike Safety Tips

Protective Equipment

Helmets: Helmets are mandatory equipment at MWBC. They provide protection for minor to medium impacts. They deflect branches when riding through wooded areas and help prevent ruining your hair when you use your head as the brake.

Gloves: Gloves help protect hands mostly when cycling through and gel lined gloves may make riding more comfortable by reducing fatigue.

Sunglasses: Bugs hurt. Even little bugs such as black flies and mosquitoes can cause a temporary panic and loss of eyesight plus they look cool too.

Lights: Want to see where you are going turn on a light. A white light in the front allows you to see any possible obstructions in your path. A red light in the rear allows other to see you as an obstruction in their path.

Reflectors: Others can't avoid you if they can't see you. Give others you share the path or road with a chance to avoid sharing the same space you are using. Place a red reflector in the rear of the bike, a white one in the front of the bike, and others in the wheels. This helps other tell which direction you are going. Also turn your entire body into a reflector with reflective clothing. Don't give any excuse to be hit.

Road Cautions

Sewer Grates: Some are designed wrong and can swallow an entire wheel. Their long narrow openings allow bike tires to fall into them sending you somersaulting over your handlebars and into the ground.

Potholes: Potholes are the pits. Can cause damage to your rim, blow a tire, and lose of control.

Gravel: Making fast turns is exhilarating when the rubber adheres to the road. Take gravel into account when going around corners.

Drivers: Cars and trucks have many blind spots such as roof pillars, headrests, and passengers. Riders have fewer blind spots so keep an eye out for drivers that don't see you or don't know how to share the pavement. Remember, even if you are right, the car always wins.

Equipment

Spokes: Wheels work better when they are round. Spokes should be checked periodically. Loose spokes should be tightened to provide even tension all around

the rim. When spokes are loose other spokes must work harder and can result in spoke breakage and possible rim failure such as folding. Spokes not only provide true the rim in the flat plane but also true the circular dimensions of the rim. If the rim is oval then it may be from tighter spokes in some areas of the rim than others may. Also make sure spokes don't poke through and puncture you tube.

Brakes: Speed is great and better when you know you can slow back down if necessary. Make sure the braking surface and pads are free of debris that degrades their performance such as sand, oil, and wax. Adjust the brakes to provide the maximum deceleration capability. Don't loosen brakes to accommodate a poorly tuned rim.

Wheel Hubs and quick release (cam) levers: Riding on two wheels is easy, but one wheel takes much more talent. Make sure your wheels are secure. Adjust the bearings so they roll without grinding and don't wobble. If you have quick release adjust it so your wheel is well secured when closed. Banging down on your tire can help ensure the sure is secure.

Nuts and Bolts: Things shouldn't fall off. All nuts, bolts, and screws should be tightened (torque) to their specified torque. Over tightening a bolt can cause premature wear, and breakage. Thread glues can be used to help prevent nuts, bolts, and screws from coming loose. Periodic checking should be done for loose screws. When rebuilding a bicycle one may want to purchase a torque wrench to ensure proper assembly.

