

III. Riding Safety

A. Safety rules of the road

- A.1. Always ride on the street, not on sidewalks**
- A.2. Ride with the traffic, not against it.**
- A.3. Obey all traffic signals, signs and pavement markings.**
- A.4. Use marked bike lanes or paths when available, except when making turns or when it is unsafe to do so.**
- A.5. Do not ride on expressways, drives, highways, interstate routes and thruways unless authorized by signs**
- A.6. Do not use more than one earphone attached to an audio device.**
- A.7. Alert riders behind you that you are slowing or stopping by using voice and/or hand signals.**
- A.8. Use the following expressions to alert other riders or pedestrians about possible safety hazards: car up, car back, rider up, passing on the left**
- A.9. Ride single file unless there is a wide shoulder and never more than two abreast**
- A.10. Always pass on the left and always alert the pedestrian or bike rider that you are passing.**

B. Safety equipment

- B.1. Helmets**
- B.2. White headlights and red taillights from dusk to dawn**
- B.3. Working brakes**
- B.4. Horns or whistles for passing or blind curves**
- B.5. A rear-view mirror either attached to the helmet or the bicycle**

C. Five things to check before you ride

C.1. **Tire pressure.** Make sure that the tires are neither under or over inflated. Take a quick look all the way around for places where the rubber might be cracked, gouged or worn. Also, check the nuts or quick release mechanisms that hold your wheels in place. Verify that your wheels are securely fastened so they don't come out while riding.

C.2. **Brakes.** Squeeze your brake levers to make sure that they apply enough pressure to stop your bike and that you don't have any problems with fraying or stretched cables. Also eyeball the brake pads in the front and back to be sure they are hitting only the rims and not the tires. If your brake pads are squeezing the tires when applied, not only can it wear or damage your sidewalls, but can also result in you being bucked over the handlebars,

C.3. **Seat post and handlebar stem:** Check that the stem is fastened tightly and that [your seat is set at the correct height](#).

C.4. **Helmet:** [Look it over once](#) to make sure there are no cracks on the outer shell or inner surface. Check too, that the straps are adjusted so that the helmet fits snugly, and sits down on your forehead, hitting somewhere above your eyebrows. A common mistake is to wear a helmet that rides up too high, which won't protect your forehead in the event of a wipeout.

C.5. **Chains and Gears:** The last thing to check is that your chain turns cleanly through your front and rear sprockets and doesn't rub against the derailleurs. You can do this as you pedal when you first set off. At the same time, quickly run your bike through its range of gears to make sure there are no problems with rough shifting, chain slippage etc., and that the drive train is free from excessive grime and doesn't need lubrication.