

Cub Scout



Scouting
America

Heart of Virginia Council

Bike Safety



For
All
Ranks!

Bicycle Safety | Pre-Ride Checklist

Learn more in the
Guide to Safe Scouting

<https://www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/gss/gss08/>

Bicycle Safety

Follow these basic safety tips when you ride.

- Wear a properly fitted helmet. Protect your brain; save your life! Bicycle helmets can reduce head injuries by 85 percent, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA).
- Adjust your bicycle to fit. Make sure you can stand over the top tube of your bicycle.
- Assure bicycle readiness. Make sure all parts are secure and working well. Assure that tires are fully inflated and brakes are working properly.
- See and be seen. Wear clothing that makes you more visible, such as bright neon or fluorescent colors. Wear reflective clothing or tape. Avoid riding at night.
- Watch for and avoid road hazards. Stay alert at all times. Be on the lookout for hazards, such as potholes, broken glass, gravel, puddles, leaves, animals, or anything that could cause you to crash. If you are riding with friends, and you are in the lead, call out and point to the hazard to alert the riders behind you.
- Follow the rules of the road. Check and obey all local traffic laws. Always ride on the right side of the road in the same direction as other vehicles. Go with the flow—not against it! Yield to traffic and watch for parked cars.

Pre-Ride Checks

Tighten Bolts & Quick Release

It is essential to your child's safety to check their bicycle before each ride and make sure there are no loose bolts. Some key things to inspect are the stem, headset, and wheels (either check the wheel bolts or the quick-release skewer). Bolts can gradually loosen over time through the vibrations of riding, so it's important to double-check them regularly.

Air

Check that your bike's tires are at the right tire pressure. Tire pressure can drastically change the way a bike feels. Bike tires have a recommended PSI range listed on the side. In general, run a higher pressure if your child is riding only on pavement; you can run a lower pressure if they're riding off-road on trails (a lower PSI essentially functions as minimal suspension, making the ride feel smoother).

Brakes

Are the bike's brakes working well? Sometimes brakes can wear down or loosen over time. First, make sure the brake pads aren't rubbing the rims. An easy way to check is to pick the wheel off the ground and spin it—watch and listen: the wheel should spin freely. Second, make sure that the front and back brakes are engaging the rim; to check, roll the bike around and gently apply pressure individually to the front and back brakes. For small adjustments to your woom bike's brakes, loosen the barrel adjuster to make the brake pads farther apart, or tighten to bring them closer.

Chain

Check the chain on your bicycle for wear or corrosion. If your chain has rust spots, dirt, or debris lodged in the links, derailleur, crankset, or rear cassette, remove these and wipe off the chain with a rag; once your chain is clean, add a little chain oil along the full length of the chain. A great way to keep your bike in good working order is to periodically clean and oil your chain. A clean chain that is not worn will help your drivetrain last as long as possible.