

# »»»» Bicycle ««««

# Road Safety Guide



Observe the five rules for safe bicycle riding, and try to ride safely.

- 1 In principle use roadways and ride on the left; only in exceptional cases may sidewalks be used, and give pedestrians right-of-way there
- 2 At intersections, obey traffic signals, be sure to come to a stop, and check safety
- 3 Use your front light at night
- 4 Do not ride under the influence of alcohol
- 5 Wear a bicycle helmet



Cabinet Office

# The five rules for safe bicycle riding

(Decided upon by the Traffic Safety Measures Headquarters of the National Council for Traffic Safety Measures on November 1, 2022)

## 1 In principle use roadways and ride on the left; only in exceptional cases may sidewalks be used, and give pedestrians right-of-way there

Bicycles must in principle use roadways where there is a distinction between sidewalks and roadways. Riders must keep to the left when riding along roadways.

**Penal Provisions** Imprisonment for not more than three months or a fine of not more than 50,000 yen



If riding a standard bicycle on a sidewalk that can be ridden through, you must keep to the roadway side, and proceed at a speed enabling you to stop immediately. In the event that the passage of pedestrians might be obstructed, you must come to a stop.

**Penal Provisions** A Criminal fine or a petty fine of not more than 20,000 yen



### Exceptional cases in which it is possible for standard bicycles to ride along sidewalks



- When there is a road sign or marking indicating that standard bicycles can use a sidewalk
- When the rider is a child (less than 13 years old), an elderly person (70 years of age or older), or a person with a disability
- When there is no option in order to secure safety
  - ◆ When roadworks are being conducted
  - ◆ When there is a line of parked vehicles
  - ◆ When traffic is heavy and the roadway is narrow, etc.

## 2 At intersections, obey traffic signals, be sure to come to a stop, and check safety

At intersections where there are traffic lights, obey the signals and check safety as you proceed.

In principle bicycles must obey the vehicle traffic signals in front of them. If there is a traffic light indicating “pedestrians and bicycles only” or when crossing a pedestrian crossing, riders must obey the pedestrian traffic lights.



In places where road signs or markings indicate that you must come to a stop, be sure to do so, and check safety.



**Penal Provisions** Imprisonment for not more than three months or a fine of not more than 50,000 yen, etc.

### 3 Use your front light at night

In order to check safety in the front direction and make your presence known to pedestrians and vehicles, do not fail to put on your front light at night.



**Penal Provisions** A fine of not more than 50,000 yen

### 4 Do not ride under the influence of alcohol

As bicycles are a type of vehicle, riding under the influence of alcohol is prohibited. You must not ride a bicycle if you have been drinking alcohol.



**Penal Provisions** Imprisonment for not more than five years or a fine of not more than 1,000,000 yen

### 5 Wear a bicycle helmet

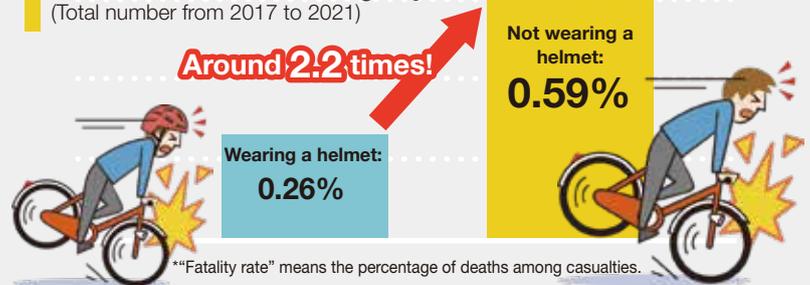
All bicycle users should wear a bicycle helmet in order to reduce the damage caused by bicycle accidents. People responsible for the protection of infants and small children should make them wear bicycle helmets when carrying them on their bicycles.



Approximately 60% of the people killed in bicycle accidents while not wearing a helmet died as a result of head injuries (according to the total number from 2017 to 2021). In addition, the fatality rate when not wearing a helmet is 2.2 times that of when a helmet is worn. It is extremely important to protect your head in order to reduce injuries due to bicycle accidents.

**Fatality rate according to whether or not helmets are worn when riding bicycles**  
(Total number from 2017 to 2021)

(Source: National Police Agency documents)



### Stop the dangerous act of distracted riding!

Distracted riding of a bicycle raises the dangers of making it hard to see your surroundings and hear noises, and adversely effects your concentration. It is a cause of traffic accidents so be absolutely sure not to ride in this way. (The following acts are prohibited by some prefectures.)

**Penal Provisions** A fine of not more than 50,000 yen



Riding while holding an umbrella



Riding while using smartphones, etc.



Riding while wearing earphones, etc.

# The bicycle rider training system

Bicycle riders who are aged 14 or above and repeat any of the 15 dangerous illegal acts (dangerous conduct) twice or more within three years are required under the orders of the prefectural public safety commissions to attend bicycle rider training.



## The 15 types of dangerous acts subject to participation in the bicycle rider training

### 1 Ignoring traffic signals



### 2 Violation of prohibited road use

Acts using roads, etc. where there are road signs or markings prohibiting the use of bicycles



### 3 Violation of obligations for vehicles in pedestrian paths (speed reduction violations)

Acts in which attention is not paid to pedestrians or speed not reduced on pedestrian paths where the use of bicycles is permitted



### 4 Traffic distribution violations

Acts using sidewalks that cannot be ridden through by bicycles, and using the right-hand side of the road



### 5 Obstructing the passage of pedestrians when using side strips

Acts in which side strips are used at a speed and in a manner that could obstruct the passage of pedestrians



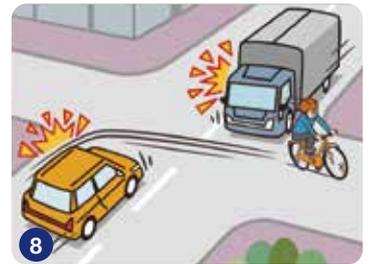
### 6 Entering railroad crossings when the gate is closed

### 7 Violation, etc. of the obligation to proceed safely at intersections

Acts such as the obstruction of vehicles using priority roads at intersections with no traffic lights

### 8 Obstruction of vehicle rights of way at intersections

Acts obstructing the progress of vehicles passing straight through or turning left when a bicycle turn right at an intersection



### 9 Violation, etc. of the obligation to proceed safely at roundabouts

Acts obstructing the progress of vehicles, etc. at roundabouts

### 10 Failure to come to a stop at designated places, etc.

### 11 Violations of traffic rules when using sidewalks

Acts obstructing pedestrians on sidewalks where the use of bicycles is permitted



### 12 Riding bicycles with faulty breaking equipment

Acts such as riding a bicycle without front or rear brakes, or faulty brakes

### 13 Riding while intoxicated by alcohol

### 14 Violation of obligation to ride safely

Acts involving speeds and riding methods that could harm others such as not securely using handlebars, brakes, etc.



### 15 Obstructive driving (causing fears of danger or extreme traffic dangers)

Acts of riding in the wrong direction, suddenly braking or changing course and other dangerous actions with the intent of obstructing other vehicles



# If you cause an accident

If you cause an accident while riding a bicycle, remain calm and follow the procedures below.



- 1 Provide emergency aid to the injured person** If somebody is injured, the priority is their emergency aid. Dial 119 and call an ambulance straight away.
- 2 Prevent danger on roads** In order to prevent secondary accidents, move your bicycle to the edge of the sidewalk or another safe place.
- 3 Call the police** Check the situation of the accident site and call the police.  
NB: If the police are not notified a Traffic Accident Certificate will not be issued, and in some cases you will be unable to receive compensation, etc. from an insurance company.
- 4 Check the other person** Confirm the other person's name, address and contact number.
- 5 Contact your insurance company** If you have bicycle insurance, contact your insurance company.

## Obligations of riders who have caused an accident with their bicycle

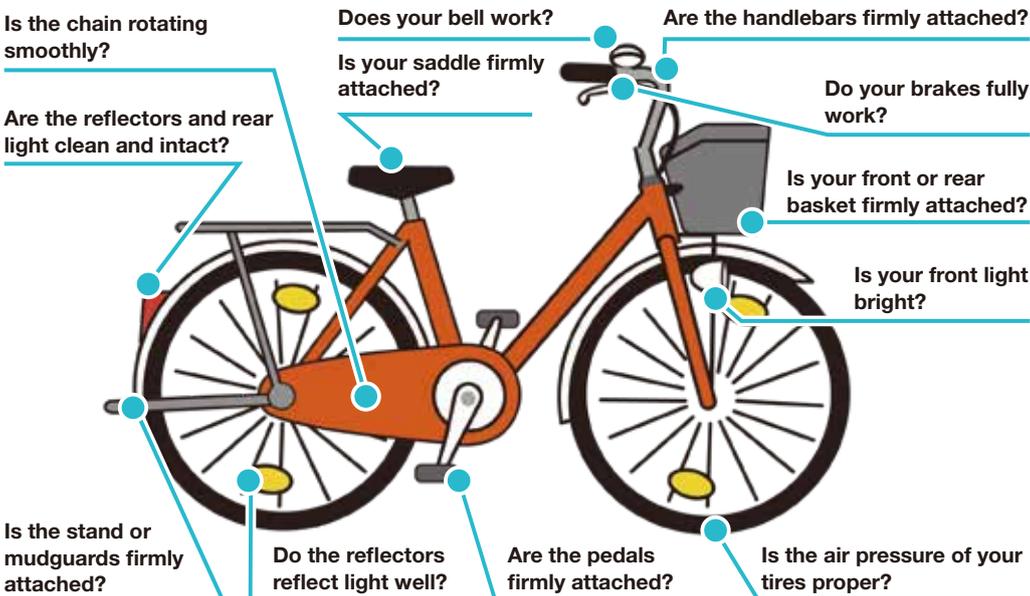
- Obligation of emergency aid to help the injured person, and protect them
- Obligation of preventing hazards by preventing danger on the roads
- Obligation of reporting by reporting accidents to the police

### Attention

If you leave the accident site without taking these measures, it will be treated as a "hit-and-run" incident, and you may be liable for heavy punishment.

# Don't forget regular inspection and maintenance

In order to use your bicycle safely, it is important that you do not ride a bicycle that is damaged or not working properly. Before you ride your bicycle refer to the following points and inspect your bicycle to make sure there are no malfunctions. In addition, regularly visit a bicycle safety maintenance shop to have your bicycle inspected and maintained.



The main inspection and maintenance points are:

- Brakes
- Tires
- Reflectors
- Frame
- Bell

# Understanding the responsibility for being the offender in an accident



Bicycles are categorized as light road vehicles, which in turn are a type of vehicle. If a bicycle rider causes an accident in violation of traffic rules, the rider will be held criminally responsible as the offender, and civil liability for compensation will arise. There are also cases in which large amounts of compensation are demanded when a minor is the offender. Make every effort to ride safely with a strong determination “never to cause an accident,” and “never to be a victim or an offender in an accident.”

## Criminal liability

- In the event that another person is killed or injured due to gross negligence, the offender may be charged with “death or injury caused by gross negligence,” etc. (and given a sentence of imprisonment or imprisonment without work for not more than five years, or a fine of up to 1,000,000 yen.)
- In some professions those receiving a criminal punishment may have their licenses or qualifications rescinded or become unable to acquire them.
- ◆ **Professions in which criminal punishment affects licenses and qualifications**

<b>Imprisonment without work or more severe</b>	Teachers, judges, lawyers, certified public accountants, architects, etc.
<b>A fine or more severe</b>	Doctors, nurses, pharmacists, dietitians, licensed cooks, etc.

## Civil liability

- ◆ **Example case of a bicycle accident involving expensive compensation** According to the General Insurance Association of Japan

Face of judgement*	Outline of accident
<b>95.21 million yen</b>	An elementary school boy (age 11) collided head-on with a 62-year-old woman while riding home at night on a road with no distinction between the sidewalk and roadway. The woman suffered a fractured skull, etc. and fell into a coma. (Decision made by Kobe District Court on July 4, 2013).

\* “Face of judgement” is the amount of money the offender is ordered to pay in the decision of the court (approximate amount). It is possible that the actual amount to be paid by the offender may be different following appeals, etc. after the verdict.

# Prepare for the risk of accidents with bicycle insurance, etc.

Against the backdrop of a social situation in which there has been a spate of claims for large amounts of compensation regarding bicycle accidents where the rider is the offender, more and more prefectures are making it obligatory through ordinances to take out Bicycle Liability Insurance (bicycle insurance), etc. in preparation for damage caused by accidents. Make sure that you take out bicycle insurance, etc. just in case of an accident.

## ◆ Insurance to prepare for damage caused by bicycle accidents

Coverage	Other party in an accident		Yourself
	Life/body	Property/goods	Life/body
Types of insurance			
Personal liability insurance	○	○	×
Accident insurance	×	×	○

## Personal liability insurance

- A type of insurance that pays in the event that you injure somebody else or damage their property and become liable for compensation.
- It is possible to take out the insurance as a special contract in vehicle insurance/fire insurance/accident insurance policies, etc., or as a credit card insurance.
- There are also some sorts of bicycle insurance, etc. that can be easily taken out at convenience stores or over the internet.
- Some mutual aid insurance and group insurance (for companies, PTAs, etc.) policies include personal liability insurance.
- Check the details of the insurance that you and your family have taken out.

## Accident insurance

- A type of insurance that pays in the event that you are injured and require medical expenses, etc.

### The TS Mark Insurance is a handy bicycle insurance!

- This type of insurance comes with the TS Mark that is affixed to your bicycle when you purchase a bicycle or have it inspected or maintained at a bicycle safety maintenance shop.
- The insurance includes liability insurance, accident insurance, etc. valid for one year. There are three types: green, red and blue, each with differing details of compensation.

