



# STAY SAFE

## Bicycle Safety

---

*Bicyclists are governed by the same rules of the road as automobiles. You have the same rights to the road as vehicles. Along with these rights come the responsibilities of being a safe cyclist. We become annoyed with irresponsible drivers, so let's make sure that we, as cyclists, obey the rules and take extra caution to operate our bicycles safely.*

**Ride Defensively:** Expect that vehicles will not see you so that you will not be surprised by their actions.

**Wear a Helmet:** A properly adjusted bicycle helmet is mandatory at all times. If you aren't sure about the adjustment, ask a guide for help.

**Use a Mirror:** We strongly recommend that you use a mirror keep track of traffic and situations behind you.

**Be Visible:** Wear bright clothing and your WomanTours triangle in the rear. Use a flashing red rear light for fog and in low light.

**Obey Traffic Laws and Signals:** Use hand signals and eye contact with motorists and other cyclists before changing directions. Use verbal and hand signals with pedestrians and other cyclists to indicate your intentions, especially when stopping, making turns, or passing on the left.

**Keep a Distance:** Maintain adequate space between you and the cyclist or vehicle in front of you. Add more distance if you or the rider in front or behind you are inexperienced cyclists or if the riding conditions are less than ideal.

**Pull Off the Road:** If you need to stop along the road, pull off onto the grass or well onto the shoulder—at least 3 feet from the road surface.

**Ride Single File:** Be sure to ride single file except on back country roads with little traffic. If you do ride side by side, be sure to get into single file when there is traffic.

**Be Alert:** Always be aware of what's around you. Don't wear ear buds or headphones. You always need to be able to hear traffic from all directions.

**Obey Signs and Signals:** We must follow all traffic signs and signals as if we driving. Use hand signals when turning and stopping.

**Carry ID:** Be sure to have identification and emergency info in your pocket or bike bag.

**Be Careful When Drafting:** We do not recommend drafting unless you have experience doing so. Drafting requires knowledge of the riding styles of the other cyclists. Always pay close attention to the bike in front of you. Against headwinds, drafting can be very helpful by providing a windbreak. Should you attempt to draft, leave 3 feet between your front tire and the rear tire of the person in front of you. It is very important that you signal to the rider behind you any speed changes, and point out debris, potholes or other dangers in the roadway.

**Take the Lane:** You are entitled to ride in the right tire track made by vehicles. This is especially important when there is traffic approaching from both directions.

**Drink Water Continuously:** Drink often, even before you are thirsty. Drink at least 1 bottle of water before you start the ride. Under normal weather conditions, 1 bottle/hour is minimal. In hot weather, drink 2 bottles/hour. And pay attention to how often and how much you are urinating. Once you become dehydrated, it is very difficult to catch up. Dehydration causes muscle cramps, dizziness, headache, confusion — all conditions that make cycling dangerous. Adding some sports drink such as Gatorade to your bottle helps replace or maintain electrolytes. Remember to drink before you're thirsty and to eat before you're hungry.

**Be Safe, Not Sorry:** Anytime you feel road conditions are unsafe for riding, wait in a safe place for the WomanTours SAG vehicle. This is a personal decision for each rider.

**Do a Safety Check:** Check your bike each day before riding:

- Spin front wheel
- Check brakes
- Check headset

*(continued)*



# STAY SAFE

**Sand and Gravel:** These annoyances often appear on curves and at intersections. Take it slow, steer straight and avoid braking.

**Holes in Road:** Avoid holes but do not swerve into traffic to do so—better just to hold on tight and ride straight through, lifting off the saddle a bit if possible.

**RR Crossings & Cattle Guards:** Be sure to cross railroad tracks at a right angle to the direction of the tracks. If tracks are wet, they are especially treacherous. We recommend you walk over them. Some cattle guards are okay to ride over at right angles and some may require you to get off the bike and walk.

**Storm Sewers, Grates, & Drains:** These are prominent in cities at the right edge of the roadway. It's best to ride around them. Please watch for them and point them out to riders behind you.

**Parked Vehicles:** Watch for opening doors or for cars pulling out in front of you.

**Heavy Traffic:** If you are uncomfortable in heavy traffic, walk your bike on the sidewalk.

**Steep Hill Descents:** Use caution when descending, especially when the visibility and road or traffic conditions are compromised. Fast descents are a major cause of accidents among bicyclists. It is best to feather (gentle pressure on and off) your brakes. Be sure to sit back in the saddle to get your weight back. Sitting up as tall as possible also helps to slow your speed.

**Wet Weather:** The road surfaces, especially white painted line, become very slippery in wet weather. Avoid puddles that may conceal potholes. Braking power will diminish because of wet wheels. Slow down and plan for a longer distance to stop. Take turns slowly.

**High Winds:** It takes a great deal of wind to blow over a cyclist, yet it can happen. You will have to be the judge as to how much wind you can tolerate and still feel safe. If

you are on a long downhill in the wind, just remember that the wind can change as you descend because of surrounding hills and valleys. Be prepared to feel a gust of wind from different directions.

**Dogs:** Some dogs chase bicyclists simply because it's inherent in their nature. Even a friendly dog can be a dangerous dog if it comes in contact with your front wheel. Avoid having a dog run beside you. If you know you cannot out run the dog, stop and walk until the dog goes home. If there is no tail wag, keep your bike between you and the dog until you can walk out of its territory. Other things that may work are a squirt from your water bottle or use of spray or a whistle.

**Hitchhiking:** This practice is not condoned except in extreme circumstances. If you have hitched a ride for some reason and you see another member of our cycling group, ask them to tell the SAG driver. Our SAG driver or sweep rider could be out looking for you. If a cell phone is available, please call a guide.

**Turns:** Always be sure to signal your turns.

- Right turn: Watch for cars coming toward you and turning onto the same road as you are.
- Left turn on 2-lane road: Move to center of road (right side of center line).
- Left turn on 4-lane road: Move to center of road (right side of center line)
- Left turn with a left turn lane: Move to right side of left turn lane.

## COVID & Other Illnesses

If you experience upper respiratory symptoms or feel ill while on tour, please wear a mask around other people and in our vehicles to decrease risk of contagion. You are responsible for providing your own masks and COVID tests. If you test positive for COVID, our guides will arrange for take-out meals for you. You will be responsible for the cost of the hotel room if you or your roommate desires your own room.

**Be safe and have a great tour!**



# STAY SAFE