



SAFE CYCLING GUIDE

9th Edition

BEFORE SETTING OUT

A WELL-MAINTAINED
BICYCLE... is key

- A** Check the tire pressure to make sure it corresponds to the manufacturer's recommendations.
- B** Check that the chain does not slip (chain too stretched out, worn teeth on a gear sprocket).
- C** Check the brakes (adjustment, rusty cables, broken wires).
- D** Check the mandatory visibility equipment.

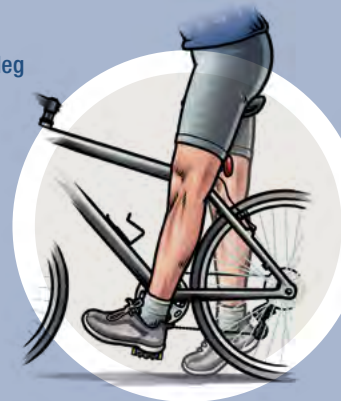


- 1 Front white reflector
- 2 Amber or white reflector attached to the spokes of the front wheel, a front tire with reflective sidewalls or reflective strips on each side of the rim, or an amber or white reflective strip on each side of the fork
- 3 Rear red reflector
- 4 Red or white reflector attached to the spokes of the rear wheel, a rear tire with reflective sidewalls or reflective strips on each side of the rim, or a red or white reflective strip on each seat stay
- 5 Amber or white reflectors on each pedal or a reflective band around each ankle or shoes with reflective strips

Adjust the frame to the rider's height

To check if the height is correct, the rider should stand astride the bicycle above the crossbar with both feet flat on the ground. There should be a clearance of at least 2 cm between the rider's crotch and the crossbar. The seat should be parallel to the ground.

To adjust the seat correctly, the rider's leg should be completely extended with the heel on the pedal. Thus, when the foot is in pedalling position, the leg will have to bend slightly.



Bike frames that are too large create a loss of balance and can cause injuries, especially with children.

WEARING A HELMET,

my only
PROTECTION

DID YOU KNOW?

Head injuries are a factor in approximately 60% of cyclist fatalities. If you fall, this is the part of your body most likely to sustain serious injury. If you are wearing a helmet when you have an accident, the force of the impact is distributed over the surface of the helmet, rather than concentrated on the head. That's why it's important to have a good helmet.

The perfect fit

Try on the helmet to ensure that the weight, padding and adjustment straps are right. The front and back straps of a properly adjusted helmet come together under the ear and the chin strap is not too tight.

Check that the helmet fits snugly. It should remain in position and not slide forward over the forehead or down the back of the neck.

Choosing the right helmet

When buying a bicycle helmet, look for one that has any of the following certification stickers or labels on the inside or on the packaging: CSA, CPSC, ASTM, CEN and SNELL. These certification stickers or labels are a guarantee of durability and proof that the helmet meets performance standards. A helmet that has deteriorated or sustained a shock should be replaced. Purchasing a used helmet is therefore not recommended.



FOR GREATER SAFETY...

Bicycles that are well maintained and that have all of the required equipment help ensure the safety of cyclists and other road users. Additional suggested accessories include:

1 A horn or bell

Since a bicycle doesn't make much noise, a simple bell allows cyclists to make their presence known to pedestrians and other cyclists. This helps to prevent collisions.

2 A rear-view mirror

Cyclists who can see what is approaching from behind won't be taken by surprise when a car passes them. A rear-view mirror also lets cyclists safely check traffic before passing.

3 A safety flag (pennant)

Putting a horizontal flag on your bicycle is sometimes all it takes to remind drivers that they are required to keep a distance of at least 1 m or 1.5 m, depending on the location. A vertical flag affixed to the rear of your bicycle or trailer will also make you more visible.

4 A basket or rack

Baskets on the front or racks on the back are practical and help cyclists carry their belongings safely.

Reflective accessories for cyclists (helmet, armbands, clothing, etc.)



COME OUT OF THE SHADOWS

DID YOU KNOW?

Just over a quarter of fatalities among cyclists are the result of accidents that occur during the evening or at night, between 6 p.m. and 6 a.m.

Cyclists must equip their bicycles with a white headlight or light and a red taillight to ride after dark, in addition to reflectors. The headlight or lights may be flashing.

Dealers are required to equip any bicycle they rent or sell with the mandatory visibility accessories, except the reflectors required for the pedals if the bicycle is equipped with clipless pedals or delivered without pedals. In such cases, dealers are not required to provide the customer with reflective ankle bands or shoes with reflective strips. However, cyclists should be sure to wear such accessories.

Brightly coloured or, better yet, **reflective** clothing enables drivers to see cyclists from further away. Cyclists can now get panniers or pant clips with reflective strips, or else stick such strips directly on their clothing. And, of course, a reflective vest is still the best way to ensure you will be seen!



CYCLISTS, LIKE DRIVERS, have to follow the rules

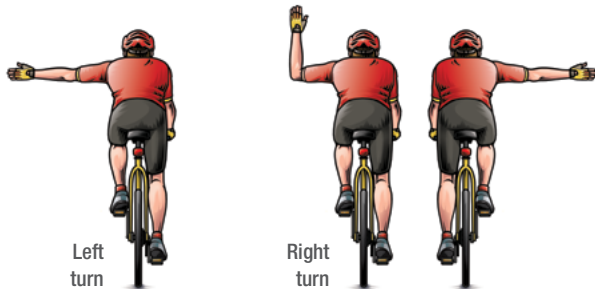
AMONG OTHER THINGS, QUÉBEC'S *HIGHWAY SAFETY CODE* REQUIRES CYCLISTS TO:

ride as close as possible to the right side of the roadway, while taking into account the condition of the roadway and the risk of vehicle doors opening

They can, however, leave the right side of the roadway if they are preparing to make a left turn.

signal their intentions to turn left or right, unless the manoeuvre puts them in danger

...over a reasonable distance so the other road users can see them.



ride in single file when travelling in a group

No more than 15 riders per group is allowed.



ride astride the bicycle and keep hold of the handlebars

ride with the flow of traffic

...unless signs or signals authorize cyclists to ride against traffic, or in case of necessity.

stop, give the right of way to pedestrians, and ride at a safe and reasonable speed when riding through a pedestrian crossing on a bicycle



IMPORTANT!

Among other things, the Code prohibits cyclists from:

- riding on limited access highways or their access ramps
- riding against the flow of traffic, unless authorized to do so by a sign or signal or in case of necessity
- riding on sidewalks, except in case of necessity or where directed or authorized to do so by a sign or signal, in which case they must ride at a safe and reasonable speed and give the right of way to pedestrians
- riding with earphones or headphones that cover one or both ears
- riding while using a portable electronic device—whether hand held or not—unless it displays information that is relevant to riding a bicycle, in which case it must be mounted on a bracket that is attached to the bicycle
- carrying a passenger, unless the bicycle is equipped with a fixed seat for this purpose
- riding between two lanes of moving vehicles, unless the vehicles travelling in the lane to the right of the cyclist are in a lane reserved for right turns
- consuming alcohol while riding a bicycle
- riding a bicycle with a faulty brake system

WATCH OUT FOR:

- vehicles coming out of private driveways
- buses (never try to pass them on the right)
- vehicles turning right at a red light



- the doors of a stationary vehicle
- outside mirrors of buses and trucks
- sewer grates
- spaces between parked vehicles (ride in a straight line so drivers can see you)



Before making your move, make eye contact with drivers to make sure they have seen you.



DIFFERENT TYPES OF BIKEWAYS

... so we can all share
the road safely

Cyclists in Québec are allowed to ride on any type of road, except limited access highways. For cyclists' safety, four different types of bikeways have been designated for their use.



Paved shoulders

On paved shoulders, cyclists ride with the flow of traffic.

Bicycle lanes

Road signs, traffic signals and road markings indicate that these lanes are reserved for cyclists.



Designated roadways

These are roadways that do not have reserved lanes for cyclists. The road signs and pavement markings indicate that the roadway is shared by both drivers and cyclists.

Bicycle paths

Bicycle paths are designed for cyclists and are generally located away from automobile traffic or separated from traffic by a physical barrier.



ROAD SIGNS AND TRAFFIC SIGNALS

Like all other road users, cyclists must always obey road signs and traffic lights. Moreover, special road signs and traffic signals exist for cyclists and can be found most often on bikeways. Below are a few examples, along with an explanation.



Indicates a road on which bicycle traffic is facilitated. Cyclists can ride side by side across the entire width of the lane in the direction of traffic, unless they are riding against the flow of traffic on a one-way street. Bicycle boulevards must have a posted speed limit of 30 km/h.



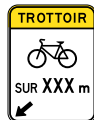
Indicates that it is mandatory for children under 12 to be accompanied by an adult on a road where the speed limit is 50 km/h or over.



Indicates that it is mandatory for cyclists to get off their bicycles for safety reasons.



Indicates a mandatory cyclist and pedestrian route.



Indicates that cyclists may ride on the sidewalk.



Indicates the period during which the bikeway is not accessible to cyclists.



Indicates that there is a parking lot near a bikeway.



Indicates that cyclists can ride against the flow of traffic on a one-way street.



Indicates that parking a bicycle at this location is prohibited.



Indicates to cyclists when to cross. These traffic signals for cyclists are placed at the intersection of a bikeway and a public roadway.



Indicates that cyclists must respect a pedestrian light.

IMPORTANT: Where this sign is not posted, cyclists can cross obeying the pedestrian light or obeying the traffic lights for vehicles.



Indicates a bicycle crossing.



Indicates a paved shoulder intended for cyclists along a cycling route.



Indicates a temporary detour due to work on the bikeway.



Indicates the direction of traffic in a lane reserved for cyclists. These symbols are painted on the roadway.

POWER-ASSISTED BICYCLES

RIDERS BETWEEN THE AGES OF 14 AND 17 MUST HOLD A LICENCE AUTHORIZING THE USE OF AT LEAST A MOPED.

Riders age 18 or over do not require a licence.

Power-assisted bicycles:

- have handlebars and pedals
- are designed to travel on not more than three wheels in contact with the ground
- can be propelled by muscle power applied to the pedals
- have an electric motor (but not a gasoline motor) of 500 W or less

Riders must:

- wear a bicycle helmet
- be at least 14 years of age

Equipment on a power-assisted bicycle must comply with *Highway Safety Code* requirements, in particular those regarding the mandatory visibility accessories.



Non-motorized scooters

In order to meet requirements for riding on public roads after dark, scooters that are rented or sold must have at least one white reflector in front and one red reflector on the back, or else white reflective material in front and red reflective material on the back. Riders of these scooters are exempt from this requirement if they wear reflective clothing or accessories so that they are visible to other road users.

Finally, scooters must be equipped with a rear-wheel braking system. The brakes must be powerful enough to bring the vehicle to a quick stop when riding on a dry, paved, level road.

Fines

OFFENCE	AMOUNT
Travelling on a roadway on in-line skates, skis, a skateboard or toy vehicle	\$80 to \$100
Travelling on a roadway on a scooter without a rear-wheel braking system	\$80 to \$100
Travelling on a scooter after dark without being visible to other road users	\$80 to \$100
Travelling on a public road with a motorized scooter	\$100 to \$200

IN-LINE SKATES, SKATEBOARDS, SCOOTERS... allowed or prohibited?

Bicycles are very popular, but there are also other ways of getting around on wheels! However, not all wheel-mounted equipment can be used on roadways.

According to the *Highway Safety Code*:

ALLOWED on the roadway: non-motorized scooters

PROHIBITED on the roadway:
motorized scooters, in-line skates,
skis, skateboards and toy vehicles

Contact your municipality to find out where you can safely use these types of equipment.



KIDS AND BICYCLE SAFETY

To ride a bike, first you have to listen to and observe traffic. If your children want to ride their bikes unaccompanied, such as to go to school, be sure to travel the route with them several times in order to help them identify dangers and adopt the right behaviour. Give your children support while they are learning:

- Go for bike rides with them and keep an eye on them.
- Practice stopping and turning and help them learn how to deal with unexpected situations.
- Make sure they understand the importance of performing a shoulder check every time they want to change directions.
- Show them how to cross or turn at intersections.

For more details about what to teach your children, go to our website at saaq.gouv.qc.ca and look through the “Road Safety” section.

Important: Under the *Highway Safety Code*, children under 12 are prohibited from riding on any roads where the speed limit is over 50 km/h, unless they are accompanied by an adult.



CYCLISTS, LIKE DRIVERS...

must obey the
Highway Safety Code

OFFENCE	PENALTY
Riding between two rows of moving vehicles	\$80 to \$100
Riding on a sidewalk (except in case of necessity or where directed or authorized to do so by a sign or signal)	\$80 to \$100
Riding against the flow of traffic (except in case of necessity or where authorized do so by a sign or signal)	\$80 to \$100
Riding with earphones or headphones that cover one or both ears	\$80 to \$100
Riding while using a portable electronic device — whether hand held or not — unless it displays information that is relevant to riding a bicycle, in which case it must be mounted on a bracket that is attached to the bicycle	\$80 to \$100
Drinking alcohol while riding	\$80 to \$100
Turning right at a red light where prohibited by a sign	\$80 to \$100

OFFENCE	PENALTY
Failing to stop at a red light or stop sign	\$80 to \$100
Failing to yield the right of way at an intersection to users who have priority	\$80 to \$100
Failing to obey a road sign or traffic light	\$80 to \$100
Failing to ride in single file	\$80 to \$100
Failing to signal one's intentions (turning)	\$80 to \$100
Failing to hold onto the handlebars	\$80 to \$100
Riding two on a bicycle without a fixed seat for that purpose	\$80 to \$100



For more information, go to saaq.gouv.qc.ca and view the “Road Safety” section.

For questions regarding road signs and traffic signals, as well as cycling infrastructures, go to transports.gouv.qc.ca.

A resource for planning safe and bicycle-friendly routes:

quebec511.gouv.qc.ca

Québec 

A joint project involving:

- The Société de l'assurance automobile du Québec
- The Ministère des Transports