



For many of our UAH students, the bicycle represents more than just a quick way to get around campus - it is an inexpensive, environmentally safe form of transportation. Bicycling to and from class can keep students in good physical shape, and many students find that they save time because bike parking is more convenient and closer to campus buildings. If you are deciding whether or not biking is the route you would like to take, here are a few tips to keep in mind.

Bike Equipment

Always wear a safety-certified bicycle helmet **EVERYTIME YOU RIDE YOUR BICYCLE**. It should sit snug and level on your head, without any movement. Wearing a helmet can greatly reduce the risk of serious head injury.

Your bicycle should fit you. You should be able to stand over the frame of the bicycle with both feet on the ground. The seat should be positioned high enough for your legs to extend fully. Riding with the seat too low makes it difficult to pedal.

You should always wear a reflective type vest or belt so that other motorists can see you. Recent statistics show that the majority of bicycle accidents happen because the bicyclist was not visible to motorists during dawn and dusk hours of the day. The more visible you are as a bicyclist, the better your chances for not having an accident. Make sure your bicycle is equipped with a front and rear light for visibility.

Sharing the road with motorists

Bicyclists have the same rights and responsibilities as any other driver of a vehicle

Always be vigilant when sharing the road with motorists. If a lane is too narrow to travel safely, stay off the road or travel behind the flow of traffic. Riding behind an experienced partner can be helpful as well. Know the area in which you are riding. Do not bike on a route or street if you are not familiar with its traffic flow, terrain, or shoulder width. Carry a cell phone or money for a pay phone in case you stray away into unfamiliar territory. Tell a friend where you are going and approximately what time you will return.

Practice looking over your shoulder and behind you for traffic. This simple but essential skill allows you to move safely left or right to avoid a hazard, change lanes, or make a turn. Looking over your shoulder makes drivers pay attention to you. Master this skill even if you have bicycle mirrors.

Pick routes that you feel confident riding. Before riding somewhere you're not familiar with, talk to someone who knows the area or drive the route first. When planning your route, pick streets that have low traffic and low speed limits, or roadways with wide outside curb lanes or striped bike lanes.

Use hand signals to communicate the direction you are turning at least 100 feet prior to a turn or change in lanes. Traffic flows smoother when drivers predict what others will do based on traffic laws. By following traffic laws and being aware of your surroundings, your bicycle rides will be much safer.

Bicyclists must follow the rules of the road, [Alabama Code Title 32, Section 5A, Article 12](#). A bicyclist may not ride in a pedestrian crosswalk. A cyclist must dismount the bike and walk while crossing a pedestrian crosswalk. A person riding a bicycle is not considered a pedestrian.

Crime/Theft Prevention

Register your bicycle at the UAH Police Department. There is no charge for this service. If your bicycle is stolen, call the university police and relay the bicycle's description (make, model, color, etc) and the serial number as soon as possible. The faster the police know about the theft, the better chance they have of recovering it.

Inspect your bicycle before and after each ride. The tires, gears, and brakes need to be in good working order every time you ride.

Check the weather forecast before riding. Avoid riding in bad weather conditions. High visibility waterproof clothing is recommended for wet weather rides, and be especially cautious of braking distances in slick conditions. It would be best to share a ride rather than bike in inclement weather.

Please stay safe and enjoy the semester.