



Lethbridge **cycling** handbook



CITY OF
Lethbridge

Get ready to roll!



Cycling is a healthy, active mode of transportation that lets you get to where you want to go – all while having fun! However, riding your bicycle on the road comes with the same rights and responsibilities as motorists. Cyclists are held accountable to the same traffic laws and may be ticketed just like motorists (including drunk/distracted driving).

Ride Requirements

No matter which type of bike you have, if you plan to ride in traffic there are two important things you are **legally required** to have on your bike as per the **Alberta Traffic Safety Act**:

- A horn or bell
- A working brake (whether hand brake or coaster-style)

In addition to these two requirements, if you ride at night, or in foggy/rainy/dusk conditions, you're also **legally required** to have:

- One white headlight
- One red tail light
- One red rear reflector



Safety First

To ensure a properly-fitting helmet, use the **2-V-1 rule of thumb!**

- **2 fingers** of space between your eyebrows and the edge of the helmet
- **V shape** of the straps around your ears
- **1 finger** of space between your chin and the chin strap

As per the Alberta Traffic Safety Act, riders and passengers under 18 years of age must wear a CSA approved helmet. In addition, parents must not “authorize or knowingly permit” their children under 18 to ride or be a passenger on a bicycle unless the child is wearing a helmet.



Sizing your bicycle

Is this even the right bike for you? Make sure your bike isn't too big or too small, as this will make it difficult to control and possibly result in injury.

You should be able to:

- Stand over the top bar of the bike with both feet on the ground
- Put your tiptoes on the ground when seated on the saddle

Beginner cyclists should lower the saddle so they can put their feet flat on the ground while seated. Once you gain confidence and skill, then raise the seat up. A bike that is too big or doesn't fit right isn't just uncomfortable to ride, it's dangerous. While you should follow these general guidelines, every bike and rider are unique.



Bike safety basics - the 'ABC' check

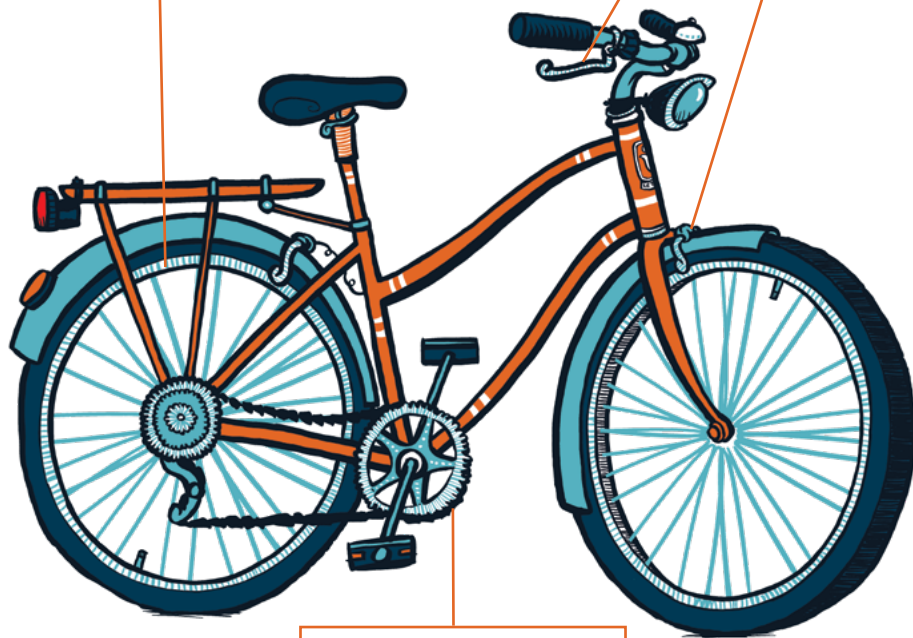
Every time you get ready to ride, you should perform an 'ABC' check before you get in the saddle:

A for Air

Check that your tires are firm and they aren't worn or damaged

B for Brakes

Make sure they grip the wheels and that you can pull the levers easily



C for Chain

Your chain should be tight and well-lubricated

Last but not least, check that your wheels spin freely and that the bolts holding them on the forks are tight. If you have quick-release wheels, that the levers are tight and folded up against the frame of the bike.

Now do one last final check: pick up the bike a few inches and drop it – hear any funny sounds? Anything loose that needs to be tightened?

It's easy to assume that your bike will always be in working order, but you don't want to get caught with a problem while flying down a hill!

While you ride



There are two other rules of the road that you must be aware of and follow as per the **Alberta Traffic Safety Act**:

- Bicycles must travel single file. Avoid cycling side-by-side on roadways.
- Cyclists must ride as “close as practicable” to the right curb, or the left curb if on a one-way street.

While this is what the law says - it's more important that you ride **safely** to stay away from potential dangers like sewer grates, road grit and other hazards along the right hand curb.

If necessary, you may **“take the lane”** (i.e. ride in the middle of the lane), to avoid roadside hazards, and discourage vehicles from passing too closely.

If a vehicle can't safely pass you in your lane while you're riding a safe distance from the curb, it shouldn't, and you shouldn't encourage them to do so by hugging the curb. Cyclists have the same **right to the road** as vehicles do.



Keep in mind

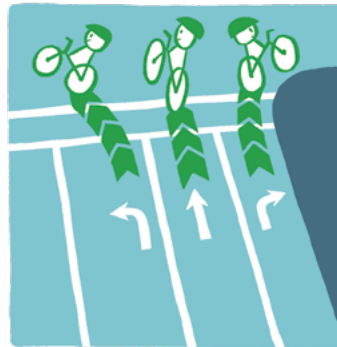
Generally speaking, ride the way you'd like other vehicles to behave. Move in a straight, consistent manner and avoid swerving and weaving around other vehicles.



Ride a safe distance away from parked cars and the curb, watching for drivers and passengers exiting their vehicles so you don't get hit by an open door.



If you are going straight through an intersection, keep in the straight lane, rather than hugging the curb. When turning, move into the proper turn lane to do so.



While riding on multi-use pathways, be careful when approaching crosswalk intersections. Watch for vehicles turning right across your route, and left-turning oncoming vehicles. You do not have the right of way leaving a pathway. It is safest to dismount and walk your bike through intersections.



Signaling

Just like a car – you need to let people know which way you're going! Ensure you remain in control while signaling and avoid any sudden braking with only one hand on the handlebars. Signal early and with confidence – fully extend your arm to clearly indicate your intentions.



Right Turn



Left Turn



Alternate Right Turn



Stop

You are much more vulnerable on a bike than in a car. Don't assume that vehicles will always see you while you're cycling. Wear high-visibility clothing and have extra reflectors in your spokes to make sure you can be seen. Always use headlights and taillights while riding in the dark.



Cycling infrastructure



Currently there are two distinct pieces of cycling infrastructure to be aware of – both located on the 7th Avenue Bike Boulevard.

Traffic signal bike boxes: When approaching the red light, stop directly on the green bike box to trigger the sensor. Be patient - it can take between 15-120 seconds for the light to change.

Traffic diverters: Designed to calm traffic and push vehicles off 7th Avenue, cyclists may pass through the gaps in these diverters. While motorists must yield to cyclists at these intersections, check both ways for traffic before proceeding through.



Locking your bike

A rigid steel U-lock, or a cable lock with braided steel coating are the strongest designs to prevent thefts. Ensure both your frame and wheels are locked to a fixed, immovable object to prevent thieves from unbolting one of your wheels.

Stolen bikes are often abandoned and recovered by police – but you can't claim it unless you can prove ownership.

- Write down your serial number
- Take photographs of your bike, noting color/model/style
- Report thefts immediately

Register your bicycle at [BikeIndex.org](https://www.bikeindex.org) which is used by Lethbridge Police Services to aid in tracking stolen bicycles. In the event of theft, report it [online here](#).



Nature Reserves

Bicycles are only permitted on [designated pathways](#) in the Helen Schuler Nature Reserve and Elizabeth Hall Wetlands. Please respect the environment and keep bicycles off walking trails in these areas.





For more local cycling resources visit lethbridge.ca/cycling

Cycling Clubs and Organizations

BikeBridge Cycling Association: bikebridge.ca

Headwinds Cycling Club: headwinds.ab.ca

Lethbridge Area Cycle Association: facebook.com/bikelethbridge

Lethbridge BMX Association: lethbridgebmx.com

United Riders of Crowsnest: uroc.ca

Medicine Hat Cycling Club: medicinehatcyclingclub.ca

Alberta Bicycle Association: albertabicycle.ab.ca

Alberta Cycling Coalition: albertacyclingcoalition.com

Local bicycle shops

Alpenland
1203 3rd Ave S
403-320-2453

Ascent Cycle
330 18th St S
403-329-6099

Bert & Mac's
1108 1 Ave S
403-327-3221

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