

# BICYCLES ARE VEHICLES

## Florida's Bicycle Safety Laws

In Florida, the bicycle is legally defined as a vehicle. Bicyclists have the same rights to the roadways, and must obey the same traffic laws as the operators of other vehicles. These laws are highlighted in the information below.

With few exceptions, there is only one road and it is up to bicyclists and motorists to treat each other with care and respect. Strict adherence to the law is the foundation for this respect.

### TRAFFIC LAW HIGHLIGHTS

#### Bicycle Regulations [316.2065, F.S.]

- A bicyclist must obey all traffic controls and signals.
- A bicyclist must use a fixed, regular seat for riding.
- No bicycle may be used to carry more persons at one time than the number for which it is designed or equipped, except adults may carry children in a backpack.
- Parents and guardians must not knowingly allow a child or minor ward to violate any provision of this section.
- Every bicycle must be equipped with brakes that allow the rider to stop within 25 feet from a speed of 10 miles per hour on dry, level, and clean pavement.

#### Sidewalk Riding [ 316.2065, F.S.]

- When riding on sidewalks or in crosswalks, a bicyclist has the same rights and duties as a pedestrian.
- A bicyclist riding on sidewalks or in crosswalks must yield the right of way to pedestrians and must give an audible signal before passing.

#### Lighting [ 316.2065, F.S.]

- A bicycle operated between sunset and sunrise must be equipped with a white lamp on the front visible from 500 feet and both a red reflector and a red lamp on the rear visible from 600 feet to the rear.
- Additional lighting is permitted and recommended. See the "Night Riding" section for safety tips.

#### Headsets [ 316.304, F.S.]

- A bicyclist may not wear a headset, headphone, or other listening device other than a hearing aid when riding. Wearing a headset blocks out important audio cues needed to detect the presence of other traffic.

#### Roadway Position [ 316.2065, F.S.]

- A bicyclist must ride at the right hand curb or edge of the roadway except when making a left turn, when reasonably necessary to avoid a hazard, or when a lane is too narrow for a bicycle and a car to share it safely.

#### Left Turns [ 316-151 (1)(b)(c), F.S.]

- A bicyclist intending to make a left turn is entitled to full use of the lane from which the turn is made. After scanning, signaling, and moving to the right portion of that lane, the bicyclist must check the traffic signal, then proceed when it is safe to do so.
- In addition to the normal left turn, a bicyclist may proceed through the right-most portion of the intersection and turn as close to the curb or edge as possible at the far side. After complying with any official traffic control device the bicyclist may proceed in the new direction of travel.
- A bicyclist may dismount and walk through an intersection in the crosswalk as a pedestrian.

#### Signaling Turns [ 316.155(2) and 316.157 (2), F.S.]

- A turn signal must be given during the last 100 feet traveled by the vehicle before turning. If a bicyclist needs both hands for control, the signal need not be given continuously.
- A bicyclist may signal intent or turn right either by extending the left hand and arm upward or by extending the right hand and arm horizontally to the right side of the bicycle.

#### Civil Penalties [318.18 (1),(2) & (3), F.S.]

Since bicycles are considered motor vehicles, the following actions may result in fines that are the same as those assessed for traffic violations:

- Moving violations, such as disregarding a traffic control device, running a stop sign, riding against traffic, or traveling the wrong way on a one way street
- Non-Moving violations, such as riding or driving while wearing a headset
- Violation of Laws Specific to Bicycles, such as failure to use required lighting equipment at night, failure to have at least one hand on the handlebars, or failure to have working brakes
- Violation of Florida's Bicycle Helmet Law which requires children 16 years of age or younger to wear a bicycle helmet while riding a bicycle

**You can access the current fine amounts by going to <http://www.alachuacounty.us/government/clerk/.LocalOrdinances>**

Local governments may adopt ordinances regulating bicycle riding. Some areas may also have registration and licensing requirements. Sidewalk riding may be prohibited entirely or limited to certain areas. Local law enforcement agencies can provide copies of any such local ordinances.

#### Night Riding Bicycle Parking

Before riding at night, every bicyclist should consider the extreme risk, take extraordinary care, reduce the number of nighttime trips, or eliminate the practice completely.

For those who must ride at night, use of additional lighting and reflectors is strongly encouraged. The use of leg lamps or any other lights that create motion should be considered. Battery powered and generator type systems are readily available and are a small investment when it comes to staying alive. Reflective tape on the bicycle and reflective clothes are additional insurance.

### SAFETY EQUIPMENT

#### Mirror

Use a rearview mirror to keep track of traffic approaching from behind. Mirrors that attach to glasses or a helmet allow for scanning by turning your head from side to side. Some attach on the handlebars but may only give a view of your leg or hip. Shop with care.

#### Rear Carrier

Bicycle riding requires total concentration. Do not add to distractions by trying to carry things in your hands. Use a carrier.

#### Helmets

Nearly 75% of all bicycle-related deaths are the result of head injuries. The use of helmets could prevent many of these deaths. In Florida, people 16 years of age or younger are **required** to wear a helmet when riding a bicycle. All bicyclists are encouraged to wear a bicycle helmet for their safety. Serious head injuries can be avoided when bicyclists wear this important piece of safety gear.



A bicycle shop is a good place to buy a helmet. Knowledgeable professional staff at bicycle shops can assist with helmet selection and proper fit.

### **Bicycle Parking**

Parking in the following areas may result in the impoundment of your bicycle for violation of University of Florida parking rules:

- Parking on the sidewalks
- Parking in service drives or roadways
- Parking obstructing an entrance, exit, ramp, or breezeway
- Parking in a university building except where designated
- Parking in an area designated for motor vehicles

**NOTE: The university and its agents are not responsible for cut locks or damage resulting from the removal of illegally parked bicycles.**

### **SECURING YOUR BIKE**

It is important to remember to properly lock up your bike every time it is left unattended. To properly lock up your bike:

- Invest in a U-lock, these locks are much harder for thieves to break and are a deterrent to would be thieves
- Thread the U-lock through the wheel, frame, and bike rack



### **Register Your Bike**

Registering your bicycle with UFPD increases the chance that your bicycle will be returned to you if it is stolen. Bicycle registration is also a deterrent to would-be thieves. Register your bike at the UF Police Department or see any UFPD officer, and s/he will assist you in registering your bicycle.



### **Bicycle Citations**

If you have received a citation for a bicycle traffic violation, **failure to take action on this citation within your 30-day period could result in a suspended driver's license.** You may use one of the following options:

1. **PAY** the fine.
2. **APPEAL** the citation by contacting the Clerk of the Court at (352) 374-3636.



If you have any questions or would like more information about bicycle safety, contact the

**University of Florida  
Police Department's  
Community Services Division  
(352) 392-1409  
[www.police.ufl.edu](http://www.police.ufl.edu)**

UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA  
**POLICE**  
DEPARTMENT

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## **FLORIDA'S BICYCLE LAWS**

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**...and some safety tips**

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