

Message from Safety Committee Chair, Michael Tirrell

Kids on Bikes: Stop Signs, Wearing Helmets, and More

This is a special and timely notice about bike safety in Bayside.

Scenes of kids heading off on their bikes is a longtime village hallmark – whether they're tearing down to the wharf, pedaling up to the Bayside Store for ice cream, or meeting up in Ruggles Park for a group activity.

And yet, already this summer, we are hearing of heightened concern about bike safety issues. Recently, there was an alarming near miss involving a vehicle and children on bikes on Shore Road – along a stretch that has some hills and blind spots.

STOP Means STOP

All bikers – young and not-so – need to STOP at STOP signs, but many children don't. This is especially important in busy, high traffic areas – including all streets leading to Ruggles Park.

Next time you're around the park, watch how kids barrel down the hill on Maple St. and sail right thru the intersection by Blair Realty.

Our police officer is making a special effort to reinforce messages around bike safety – but he cannot be everywhere at once, as we know.

Wear a Helmet: It's the law

Maine state law requires a bike helmet for anyone under the age of 16. I've attached with this note a one-sheet on Maine's Bicycling Law, the attachment is a screen grab from the website of the Bicycle Coalition of Maine (www.bikemaine.org).

Maine has some of the most **bike-friendly traffic laws** in the country. The laws are designed to make bicycling safe, fun and healthy for all riders.

Maine law outlines both rights and responsibilities for bicyclists traveling on our streets, roads and highways. **The better you know the law, the more confident you'll feel and the more you'll enjoy your ride.**

🌀 **Know the rules of the road** ▶ Bicyclists are expected to observe stop signs, red lights, one-way streets, yield right-of-way, and, in general, obey the same rules of the road motorists follow.

More than any other single factor, riding in accordance with the law reduces risk of accident and injury to bicyclists.

🌀 **Be visible** ▶ By far, most serious bike accidents occur because motorists claim they did not see the bicyclist. All nighttime riders benefit from both headlights and taillights — the more powerful the better. Maine requires at least a light in front and a reflector in the rear when riding after dark.

🌀 **Allow three-foot clearance when passing a bicycle** ▶ So bicyclists can travel safely and without intimidation, motorists are required to allow at least 3 feet of clearance when passing bicyclists. Courteous drivers usually give bikes as much clearance over 3 feet as is practical and safe.

🌀 **Allow bikes in the travel lane** ▶ To allow bicyclists to safely prepare for turns, overtake slower moving vehicles, and to avoid obstacles and hazards such as opening car doors, potholes, sand, and glass, bikes may legally operate anywhere within the travel lane. Otherwise, bikes should remain as far to the right as is safely possible.

🌀 **Children must wear helmets** ▶ All bicyclists under 16 years old are required by law to wear a helmet. Helmets are encouraged for adult bicyclists as well, because they provide the best protection against head injury in the event of an accident.

🌀 **Bikes can pass on the right** ▶ Bicyclists may pass slower-moving traffic on the right, but only at the bicyclist's own risk.

The Bicycle Coalition of Maine worked closely with legislators and organizations statewide to introduce and pass Maine's updated bicycle law in 2007. The law firmly establishes bicyclists as rightful users of Maine's streets and highways, and makes clear how bicyclists and motorists can safely and efficiently share the road.

We've been proud to see Maine's biking law become a model for other states across the country. The Bicycle Coalition of Maine thanks the many lawmakers and biking advocates who made it possible.