

## **USE LIGHTS & REFLECTORS AT NIGHT**

Lights and reflectors make you visible to other traffic at night. Your white front light also allows you to see hazards that could cause you to crash.

Even on city streets with street lights, your lights and reflectors help you stand out from the background and identify you as a bicyclist to motor vehicle drivers.

You need lights on bike paths and sidewalks to be seen by other bicyclists, pedestrians and cross traffic.

Nationally, only 4% of bicycling occurs at night, yet 17% of reported car-bicycle crashes occur at night, including 30% of bicyclist fatalities.

### **WISCONSIN LAW**

Wisconsin state law requires you to use a white front light and a red rear reflector during hours of darkness which are defined as from one-half hour after sunset to one-half hour before sunrise and all other times when you are not able to clearly see any person or vehicle at a distance of 500 feet.

Your white front light must be visible from 500 feet to the front. It can be attached to your bicycle or to yourself.

Your red rear reflector must be visible to the rear from all distances between 50 and 500 ft.

A lamp emitting a red or flashing amber light visible from a distance of 500 feet to the rear may be used in addition to, but not instead of, the rear red reflector.

## **BE RECOGNIZED AS A BICYCLIST**

Allowing motor vehicle drivers to recognize you as a bicyclist from as far away as possible is the key to nighttime bicyclist safety.

Start with a bright white front light and a large red rear reflector.

Add lights and reflectors that move. Pedal and wheel reflectors, reflective leg bands or leg lights, and flashing rear lights are eye catching due to their motion.

Wear reflective clothing. A reflective vest can be worn over any clothing and helps outline your body, making you more recognizable to other drivers.

Apply reflective tape to your helmet and bicycle. (Make sure the tape is approved for use on your helmet.)

Use a red rear light. Reflectors alone won't help if the driver behind you doesn't have his lights on. Flashing rear lights are especially effective.

## **SEE THE ROAD AHEAD**

The law only requires a front light that is visible to others 500 feet in front of you. But you should also want to see the road far enough ahead of you so you can stop if necessary to avoid a hazard.

It takes 35 feet to stop a bicycle traveling at 15 mph on a clean, dry, flat road. Under the best conditions, your front light should allow you to see the road at least 35 - 50 feet ahead. Additional lighting is needed under adverse road or weather conditions.

Be careful not to override your front light. Slow down if you cannot see far enough ahead to avoid road hazards. This will prevent the feeling of hitting something as soon as you see it.

## REMEMBER THESE POINTS WHEN BICYCLING AT NIGHT

Bicyclists should be seen, not hurt.

Bicycles are legal vehicles on the road.

Bicyclists are required to use lights and reflectors at night to make them visible to others.

Choose a front light that also allows you to see the road ahead.

Be careful not to override your front light. Slow down at night to be able to avoid hazards in time.

Keep all reflectors clean and properly angled.

As a car behind you moves left to pass, your shadow in its headlights should move right. If it doesn't, get off the road, you have not been seen.

Wear a helmet every time you ride. Helmets can add to your visibility and protect your head against serious injury day or night.

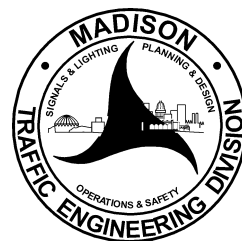
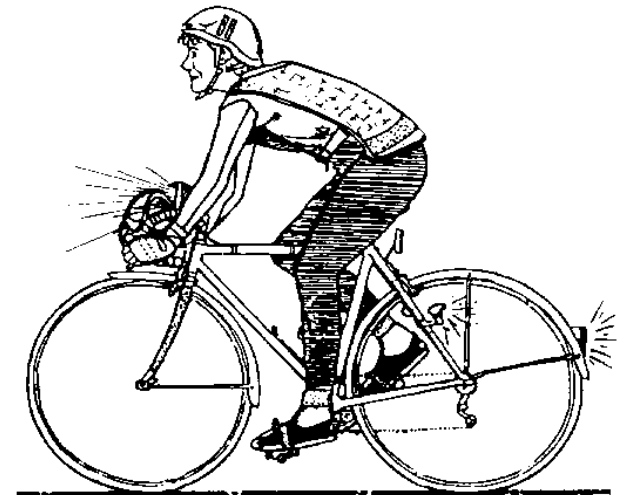
Check your local bike shops for the latest in lights, reflectors, reflective clothing and helmets.

This publication produced by  
City of Madison  
Traffic Engineering Division

For more information on bicycling in Madison  
call  
Pedestrian/Bicycle Coordinator  
266-6225

# BE BRIGHT

when bicycling at night



**TransMadison**  
The Word Is Getting Around