

Bicycle Safety Month Kickoff: Preparing Your Bike for Spring

As the weather warms across Pennsylvania, more people are heading outdoors and back onto their bikes. Whether you're commuting, exercising, or riding with family, spring is the perfect time to get your bike road-ready. During **Bicycle Safety Month**, the American Trauma Society, Pennsylvania Division (ATSPA) encourages riders of all ages to prioritize safety before hitting the road.

Bicycling is a healthy and enjoyable activity—but it also comes with risks. According to the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation, hundreds of bicyclists are injured in crashes each year across the Commonwealth. Many of these incidents are preventable with proper equipment, maintenance, and safe riding practices.

Spring brings increased traffic, unpredictable weather, and road conditions like potholes or debris—all of which can contribute to crashes if riders aren't prepared.

Start with a Basic Bike Check

Before your first ride of the season, take a few minutes to inspect your bike using the simple “ABC Quick Check”:

A – Air

Check that your tires are properly inflated and free of cracks or excessive wear.

B – Brakes

Test both front and rear brakes to ensure they engage smoothly and stop the bike effectively.

C – Chain

Inspect the chain for rust or dirt. Clean and lubricate it to ensure smooth shifting.

Quick – Quick Releases

Make sure wheels and seat are securely fastened.

Check – Overall Bike Condition

Look over the frame, handlebars, and pedals for any damage or loose parts.

Don't Forget Your Helmet

A properly fitted helmet is the most effective way to prevent serious head injuries. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that helmets can significantly reduce the risk of head and brain injuries in a crash.

Helmet Fit Tips:

- Sit level on the head (not tilted back)
- Rest just above the eyebrows
- Straps form a “V” under the ears
- Buckle snug under the chin

Be Seen and Stay Alert

Spring riding often means sharing the road with more vehicles and pedestrians. **Visibility is key:**

- Wear bright or reflective clothing
- Use front white lights and rear red lights, even during the day
- Install reflectors on your bike
- Avoid distractions like headphones or mobile devices

Always ride in the same direction as traffic and follow all traffic laws.

Check the Environment Before You Ride

Pennsylvania roads can take a toll during winter months. **Be aware of:**

- Potholes and cracks from freeze-thaw cycles
- Loose gravel or debris
- Wet or slippery surfaces from spring rain
- Increased pedestrian activity in neighborhoods and parks

Taking a few extra moments to scan your route can help prevent crashes.

Ride Smart, Ride Safe

Bicycle safety isn't just about your bike—it's about your behavior, too:

- Obey all traffic signals and signs
- Use hand signals when turning
- Stay alert and make eye contact with drivers
- Ride predictably and avoid sudden movements

The American Trauma Society, Pennsylvania Division (ATSPA) is dedicated to preventing injuries and saving lives through education and outreach. Bicycle Safety Month is an important opportunity to remind Pennsylvanians that preparation and awareness can make all the difference.

Take Action This May

As you kick off Bicycle Safety Month:

- Inspect and tune up your bike
- Replace worn or damaged equipment
- Make sure every rider in your household has a properly fitted helmet
- Share bicycle safety tips with your community

A safe ride starts before you even leave your driveway.