

Tips for Bicycle Commuting in Montana

Montana was recently ranked as the “Safest Bicycle Commute” by the Alliance for Biking & Walking 2014 Benchmarking Report. More people are choosing to avoid the hassles of traffic congestion by biking to work and even doing their after work shopping and errands by bicycle. They are also incorporating exercise into their transportation time.



Commuting Tips

- **Bicycle Helmets** - Wear a bicycle helmet every time you ride. Helmets provide a 66% to 88% reduction in the risk of head, brain and severe brain injury for all ages of bicyclists, according to the Bicycle Helmet Safety Institute.
- **Dress for Visibility** - As a general rule; you should always wear light or reflective clothing.
- **Bicycle Size** - Make sure your bicycle is the right size for you and is properly adjusted. If you are in the market for a new bicycle, check out the hybrids and mountain bikes. Some commuters prefer the fatter tires and upright position for riding in traffic.
- **Maintenance** – Regularly check your bicycle’s tire pressure, tire wear, quick releases, brakes and chains. When riding bring along a basic tool kit and a tire pump will allow you to make roadside repairs should they be necessary. The farther away you are from your destination, the more important this becomes.
- **Bike Lights & Reflectors** - Lights and reflectors are a must, even if you do not plan to ride at night. There is always a chance of a late meeting or spur of the moment social activity after work or school that may see you riding home after dark. A white headlight and retroreflective sidewalls or reflectors mounted on the spokes of each wheel are required by Montana law for night riding. A rear-facing red taillight is also encouraged.
- **Riding in Weather** - Fenders are handy if you plan to ride when its wet as well as layered clothing so that you can always add or subtract a layer depending on weather during your commute.
- **Bicycle Racks** - A rack over the rear wheel is essential for carrying items such as clothes, briefcases, books, etc. Panniers that attach to the racks are available in a variety of sizes and shapes.
- **Route planning**- Plan your route ahead of time. For most commutes there are several different ways to get from your house to the office. Plan a route that avoids dangerous roads and avoids road work.
- **Store hygienic necessities at the office** – Keep an extra of everything you need to clean up from your commute (deodorant, towels, wipes, etc.) at your office. No need to carry them back and forth daily.