

## Bicycle safety and insurance

Keep your bike, yourself and your assets safe with these tips

### Properly insure your bicycle?and your assets

Bicycling is increasingly popular, both as a sport and as a means of transportation. And bicycles can cost anywhere from several hundred dollars for a basic bike to thousands of dollars for specialized racing bikes.

Bicycles are covered under the personal property section of standard homeowners [1] and renters insurance policies [2]. This coverage will reimburse you, minus your deductible, if your bike is stolen or damaged in a fire, hurricane or other disaster listed in your policy.

If you are purchasing a new bicycle, keep the receipt and add the bike to your home inventory list. If you own a particularly expensive model, call your insurance professional to review your options. He or she may recommend an endorsement that will provide additional coverage [3].

Homeowners and renters policies also provide protection for harm you may cause to someone else or to their property. In the event you injure someone while riding your bike, your policy includes no-fault medical coverage, usually ranging from \$1,000 to \$5,000. If the injured party decides to sue, you will be covered up to the liability limits of your policy so, as always, make sure you have adequate coverage to protect your assets.

### Keep your bicycle locked and secure

Whenever you're not riding it, prevent bike theft by taking these precautions:

- **Always lock up your bike**, even if it is in your garage, an apartment stairwell, or a college dormitory. Make sure it's in a visible, well-lit area.
- **Lock your bicycle to a fixed, immovable object** like a parking meter or permanent bike rack. Be careful not to lock it to items that can be easily cut, broken or removed, and make sure that the bike cannot be lifted over the top of the object to which it's locked.
- **Use a U-lock**. For maximum security, position the bike frame and wheels so that they take up as much of the open space within the U-portion of the lock as possible. The tighter the lock-up, the harder it is for a thief to use tools to attack the lock. Always position a U-lock so that the keyhole is facing down towards the ground. Do not position the lock close to the ground as this makes it easier for a thief to break it.
- **Change your bike lock-up locations**. If you secure it in the same location all the time, a thief may notice the pattern and target you.
- **Consider registering your bike** with the National Bike Registry, so if a bike is stolen it can

potentially be traced.

## Just in case?take steps to make insurance claims easier

Minimize the pain of theft or damage by being prepared in the case of an insurance claim for your bike and related items.

- **Add your bicycle to your home inventory** <sup>[4]</sup>, as well as any related items, such as a helmet, patch kits, pumps, extra inner tubes and other essentials?not to mention that fancy new bike jersey. If your bike and related items are stolen or destroyed, having an inventory can help speed the claims process.
- **Save your receipts.** Make sure to save your receipts for your bicycle as well as any of the aforementioned nifty equipment and accessories you purchase for use with it. The cost of these can add up quickly and, again, proof of what you paid will greatly speed the claims process. Keep these with your home inventory, above.

## Keep yourself safe while riding

Your safety is, of course, of utmost importance. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration suggests that cyclists follow these seven rules:

- **Protect your head.** Never ride a bike without a properly fitted helmet.
- **Assure bicycle readiness.** Ride a bike that fits you and check all parts of the bicycle to make sure they are secure and working well.
- **Learn and follow the rules of the road.** Bicycles are considered vehicles on the road; therefore riders must follow the same traffic laws as drivers of motor vehicles.
- **Act like a driver of a motor vehicle.** Always ride with the flow of traffic, on the right side of the road, and as far to the right of the road as is practicable and safe.
- **Be visible.** Always assume you are not seen by others and take responsibility for making yourself visible to motorists, pedestrians and other cyclists.
- **?Drive with care.?** When you ride, consider yourself the driver of a vehicle and always keep safety in mind. Ride in the bike lane, if available. Take extra care when riding on a roadway. Courtesy and predictability are key to safe cycling.
- **Stay focused. Stay alert.** Never wear headphones as they hinder your ability to hear traffic. Be aware of your surroundings and ride defensively.

## Additional Resources

[National Bike Registry](#) <sup>[5]</sup> [The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration](#) <sup>[6]</sup>

**Next steps: To prevent more than a bicycle thief, learn how to secure your home against burglary.**  
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