

Bicycle Safety

The warm weather is upon us and everyone is getting outside and enjoying recreational activities. Bicycle safety is not just for children, but all bike riders. The Tennessee Code Annotated provides for statutory requirements to ensure bicycle riders are aware of the equipment and operation needs.

Often the question is raised about helmets. TCA 55-52-105 stipulates that any bicycle operator or rider under the age of 16 wears a protective helmet of good fit and fastened securely upon the head with the straps of the helmet. The statute goes further and indicates any passenger less than 40 pounds or less than 40 inches in height, must be properly seated in an approved restraining seat. A good practice is for everyone to wear a helmet.

If a bicycle is operated in nighttime, it is to be equipped with a lamp on the front that shall emit a white light visible at least 500 feet. The rear of the bike must have either a red reflection or a lamp emitting a red light also visible from 500 feet. TCA 55-8-177 provides for this requirement and the need for adequate brake systems.

What about bicycles ridden on the road? TCA 55-8-172 says that the traffic laws apply to persons riding bicycles. That would mean driving on the right side of the road, proper lane usage, obedience to traffic signals, and stop signs. If you are operating a bicycle, it should be under the same rules of the road as a vehicle. If you are operating a vehicle, understand that the bicycle has the privilege of being on the road. Drivers of vehicles and operators of bicycles are to abide by the rules of the road. When overtaking a bicycle, drivers must provide three (3) feet of clearance until safely beyond the bicycle - it is the law. Respect for each other will provide for a safe and enjoyable recreational and fitness activity. Questions about this or other activities may be directed to the Police Department at (931) 455-0530 or tpd@tullahomatin.gov.