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Bicycle Safety—The rules of the road.

## **"BICYCLE SAFETY"**

Summer is over and school is in session again. The streets before and after school are filled with children and bicycles. Motorists who traveled the same routes from day to day seemed to forget to be a little extra cautious of the children crossing the street. The parents of the children, on the other hand, forgot that their children might get into the street to on the way to school or after school, or might ride their bicycles in the street. Perhaps they forgot to remind their children that the streets are made for traffic and that the children should watch for cars before crossing the street. Perhaps the parents also forgot (or didn't know themselves) to instruct their children that when they are riding their bicycles in the street, bicycles are considered "part of the traffic" and must obey ALL of the traffic laws just like cars. The bicycle becomes another "vehicle" on street. **THE ONLY DIFFERENCE IS THE SIZE OF THE VEHICLE AND THE VULNERABILITY OF THE DRIVERS.**

When these things happen, accidents do occur. Everyone who is involved in the accident blames themselves and others because the accident happened. Some accidents are more serious than others, and in some cases the person hit by a car was extremely lucky that there were not more serious injuries. By this time, blaming people is not any help. The accident still happened and time doesn't turn back, as much as we would like it to.

Extra caution should be taken by the motorists when driving, because there are so many bicyclists out there. Now more than ever there are a lot of adults on bikes too. Let's face it, children will always be children, but adults can be just as vulnerable too while on a bicycle. Parents should take extra time out with their children and make sure they understand about crossing the street and riding their bicycles in the street. All traffic laws apply to children and adults on bicycles when riding in the street. Many times, children are seen in and out of the street unsupervised by any adult.

The Copperas Cove City Ordinance requires that all persons who reside in the city and own a bicycle must register the bicycle and receive a tag. The cost of the tag is only two dollars. By registering a bicycle, you have a record that will be available in case the bicycle is lost or stolen. The serial number, make, model and color are kept on file at the Copperas Cove Police Department. Bicycles are registered Monday through Friday 8 am to 5 pm. If you need more information on registration of a bicycle, contact the Copperas Cove Police Department Records section for more information at 547-4273 ext 540.

## BICYCLE (TRAFFIC) LAWS AND TIPS

1. Bicycle riders should ride on the right side of the road (with traffic), in a single file, as close to the curb as possible.
2. Traffic signs such as **STOP** signs, **YIELD** signs, **WARNING** signs, and traffic lights apply to bicycle riders as much as they apply to cars, and should be obeyed at all times.
3. Bicycle riders should walk their bicycles across a busy intersection, not ride across.
4. Bicycle riders should learn and use hand signals to let other drivers know what they are going to do. (All hand signals are made with the left hand.)
5. Bicycle riders should wear a helmet whenever they are riding.
6. Bicycles are **NOT TOYS** and riding in the street is serious business. Riding on one wheel is not safe.
7. Packages should be placed in a basket. Do not carry packages on a bicycle that are so large that they obstruct the view of the driver.
8. Most bicycles are made for one rider (one seat) and only one person should ride on a bicycle at a time. Handlebars are NOT made to carry passengers.
9. Safety equipment is important on bicycles, just like vehicles. Safety equipment includes a bell or horn; good brakes; good tires; reflectors - front, rear, and pedal; chain guards; fenders; properly inflated tires; tight spokes and pedals that are in good order.
10. Safety equipment for night includes a white headlight visible from at least 500 feet, white front reflectors, and red rear reflectors visible for 300 feet.
11. Choose a bicycle that feels comfortable. This means the bike is the proper size and is adjusted to the rider.
12. Be a defensive driver. Be sure to watch out for cars, the driver of the car **MAY NOT SEE YOU**.

## **OTHER SAFETY TIPS**

1. Children should not be permitted to play in the street.
2. Children should be supervised while playing at or near a street.
3. Children should be instructed to stop and look both ways before crossing or entering the street.
4. Children should not run into the street or cross the street from in between parked vehicles, where they might not be visible to oncoming traffic.
5. Bicyclists (adults and children) should learn the traffic laws before riding a bicycle.
6. Just like cars, the bicycle should be checked to see if all equipment is operating properly BEFORE riding a bicycle.
7. When driving a bicycle around a parked car, make sure you watch for the unsuspecting driver exiting from the driver's side door. Allow enough clearance in case the door does open unexpectedly.
8. Watch for obstructions in the road way which might cause the bicyclist to lose control (rocks, drain covers, etc.)

Further information concerning Bicycle Registration, Traffic laws, Theft Prevention and Reporting stolen bicycles can be obtained by contacting the Copperas Cove Police Department at 547-4272.