



SAFETYMAN PRESENTS: SAFE CYCLING TIPS!!!



PHOTO CREDIT: J. Olsen

Faster than a speeding paeline. More powerful than side-pull brakes. Able to leap large potholes in a single bound. Look...far to the right, riding single file. It's a bird! It's a plane! It's SAFETYMAN!

Yes, it's SAFETYMAN, strange visitor from another planet who came to earth with powers and safety sensibilities far beyond those of mortal men...

SAFETYMAN, who can change the course of mighty pelotons, bend Power Bars with his bare hands, and who, disguised as Steven Asbell, mild-mannered insurance agent for a large insurance carrier known for its duck, fights a never ending battle for helmet-wearing, hand signaling and safe cycling everywhere!

A MESSAGE FROM SAFETYMAN...

"BOYS AND GIRLS, DRINK YOUR MILK, GO TO BED EARLY EVERY NIGHT AND READ THIS SAFETY MANUAL COVER TO COVER BEFORE THE CITY TO SHORE BIKE TOUR.

HAVE FUN, AND REMEMBER, WHEN DANGER CALLS, DO WHAT SAFETYMAN WOULD DO!"

Publication of "Team Tania Safe Cycling Tips" is underwritten by the Just Say No to Kryptonite Foundation, Earth-Two Universe, 19999.

Please look for The Man of Carbon Fiber in bookstores soon!

SAFETY BASICS—THE STUFF MOM WOULD TELL YOU IF SHE WERE A CYCLIST.

1. Wait 30 minutes after eating before you get back in the pool. (Oops, wrong manual...sorry!)
2. Ride at your own pace and pace yourself

When riding as a part of a large Tour adrenaline often will get the best of any cyclist, especially at the start. Resist the urge to ride faster than you usually would. Riding fast requires different reaction times, and requires you to be even more alert than usual. Don't use a long tour as the time to try out something new.

3. Carry Identification

When on the bike tour, wear your rider number to indicate you are part of the Tour. Complete the emergency contact info on the back of your rider number. At all other times when cycling, carry emergency information including your name, name and phone number of an emergency contact, any medical problems you have. Store it taped to the inside of your helmet AND on your body, in case your helmet and you are separated.

4. Drink and eat...well and often.

Dieting during a long bike tour is not a good idea, nor is a bike tour a good time to start eating things you don't normally eat. You'll be burning thousands of calories during the Tour no matter how fast or slow you ride, calories you need for fuel. Make sure you keep your "gas tank" (watch it, guys) full of premium fuel.

At rest stops, grab a piece of fruit, a bagel, pretzels or an energy bar. If you've never had a "Goo" product, this might not be the time to try one.

And drink, drink, drink! You will dehydrate before you know it so force fluids. You should use up at least one water bottle between rest stops. If you're not used to drinking power drinks, water them down a bit until you are sure you can tolerate their sweetness. Take a sip every time you see someone else do it as a trigger or at least every 15 minutes. Don't forget to hydrate well before the ride, too, drinking 8-12 glasses of water each day for the week before the tour.

If you feel weak, dizzy or confused during the ride, stop and seek medical attention. You might be dehydrated.

5. Wear a helmet whenever cycling!

Besides merely being sensible, this is the law. No helmet, no riding.

Falling at any speed can cause injury to an unprotected head. Falling at 15-25 mph can be devastating. Statistics indicate every rider will fall once in 4500 miles. That could be mile one or mile 4500 or anywhere in between.

Make sure your helmet fits well to get the most protection. A good fit means level on your head, touching all around and snug but not tight. Keep the straps taut...and strapped. For comfort, buy one with many vents (unless you're bald, in which case you might have really weird tan lines!)

Pick a white helmet or other bright color so you are more visible.

Replace any helmet after a crash as the foam may crush even if not visibly impacted. Most manufacturers recommend replacing even an undamaged helmet every 5 years as the foam may break down over time.

6. Wear sunscreen and lip balm to protect against windburn and sun exposure.
7. Stay alert and act predictably

Sometimes during a long bike ride a cyclist may fall into a sort of trance, especially if focused merely on the wheel of the cyclist in front. You must stay alert and aware every second of the ride. Keep your eyes active and look beyond the bike in front of you.

Act in a predictable manner, one which would be expected by anyone, whether a cyclist or auto driver behind you. This includes riding on the correct side of the road, not passing other cyclists by passing over the center line of the road, and act in a way to allow them to pass safely. We'll address signaling below, but for now, just make sure you think before acting and maneuver your bike sensibly.

Do not wear stereo headphones (against the law in NJ) and do not talk on your cell phone while cycling.

8. Dress wisely!

Ok, well the wisdom of all cyclists wearing funky, tight fitting lycra with little regard to body shape is in question to begin with, but, fashion sense aside, consider the following.

Wear bright colors. Be visible no matter the time of day or weather conditions. Reflective gear or clothes with reflective strips are a good idea. Be prepared for any conditions. We will be covering 75-100 miles per day traveling from morning to late afternoon in some cases. The temperature may fluctuate by 20, 30 or even more degrees. Consider arm warmers or otherwise wear removable layers. Pack a foldable rain jacket.

Wear gloves meant for cycling. They serve to keep your hands warm, protects them from chafing and, if well padded, from pain from the pressure of the handlebars. Of course, they will also protect you from scrapes if you fall.

Wear clothing that wicks away perspiration. Cotton will not do this and will remain damp. Wear cycling shorts with a chamois; the more panels in the shorts the better the fit. Do not wear undergarments under the shorts...you're more likely to experience chafing and you'll negate the wicking properties of the cycling shorts.

Lastly, wear sunglasses. They will not only protect your eyes from the sun but from debris, sand and dust.

9. Make sure your bike fits and is tuned up for the ride.

Proper bike adjustment is critical to safe and comfortable cycling. Knee pain, numbness or tingling in the hands, sore shoulders or neck, sore Achilles tendon, and numbness in the groin are often caused by improper bike adjustment. As well, a bike requiring you to reach too far to brake, pedal, stop or steer will affect your reaction time, bike handling and control. Seat height is only one measure of a well-fitting bike. See a professional who can fit you properly for reach, seat position and height, handlebar/stem position, etc. Make sure you ride the bike a few times after adjustment but before the Tour to be sure it fits well.

Check your brakes before every ride to make sure they work correctly and don't squeal. Always check your brakes again when you get to the ride, especially if you have removed your wheel(s) for transport. If brakes are properly adjusted, they will be in full contact with the rim when the lever is pulled about halfway.

Check your tires for cuts or cracks and make sure there is no debris (rocks, sand, sticks, mud) on the tires that could cause a puncture or reduce traction. The night before a ride you should inflate the tires to your desired air pressure. Remember that bicycle tires do not hold air pressure very long and need to be inflated before every ride.

Make sure your wheels don't wobble or hop and do not have any broken spokes. If there is more than about a 1/16" wobble, take them to your bike shop to have them trued.

The chain should be oiled and free of dirt or sand. Shift the bike through all of its gears to make sure that it shifts smoothly on all gears.

Check the handlebar and stem for cracks and ensure that the handlebar and stem lines up with the front tire.

Check the seat and seat post bolts to make sure they are tight. The seat or post should not move at all.

10. Stay to the right side of the road as much as possible without encountering grates, dangerous road debris or other obstacles. If you need to pass other cyclists or unexpected obstacles, be sure to check behind you and signal that you are moving out. More about signaling below. If riding adjacent to vehicular traffic, don't dart in and out of the right lane unpredictably (remember, be predictable!). You would be better off riding a bit in the lane than on a shoulder that would require you to weave left and right to avoid obstacles.
11. Never ride more than two cyclists across and always ride with, not against, traffic.

RIDING AS PART OF A GROUP

The dynamics of group cycling are different from lone cycling, Riding among 7000 riders, however, most of whom you've never cycled with before, is a whole different matter. With forethought, your own safe practices and "defensive" cycling, you'll do just fine. Here are some things to think about and practice.

1. Be aware of others around you, especially those who seem nervous, those who brake frequently and unexpectedly. Same strategy you'd apply when in your car to avoid a drunk driver (or cell phone talker).
2. Mini-packs of riders tend to form within the larger group. Do your best to find a "pack" that rides at your pace and try to stay in the front of that pack. If you find that a long paceline is speeding past you and it makes you uncomfortable, just stay right until the cyclists pass. Don't feel intimidated, just stay true to your own ability. Remember, the City to Shore Tour is not a race, but some cyclists have a need for speed.
3. Stay to the right side of the road, and in the shoulder as much as you can. If you need to stop, make certain you pull off the road and as far off the shoulder as you can. If there is a bike lane, you must use it if you are moving slower than normal traffic. Leave the bike lane only when necessary to pass another cyclists, pedestrian or vehicle, if you are readying to turn left or if necessary to avoid parked cars or other obstacles.
4. If you choose to pass other riders, do so on the left, but move only far enough left to pass them cautiously. Be sure to call out "*Passing on your left!*" in advance of making your move so the others know you will be passing. Use care to avoid swinging out too far, and always look behind you before making the move.
5. Practice drinking out of your water bottle while riding to ensure you can do it without swerving on the road. You don't want to be a hazard to others, right? You'll find that some cyclists swerve a bit when standing or shifting positions. Be aware of that. Watch their shoulders, which usually move before the rest of the body.
6. Use hand signals to advise others behind you of moves you are about to make. Signal for right and left turns using your outstretched arms. If you are slowing, stretch your arm behind you with

your palm open just at seat level behind you. Point to the left or right if you are planning to move in either direction, and point out obstacles on the road like glass, debris, potholes, etc.

7. Use verbal communication, too!. When turning, shout out "*Turning right*" or "*Turning left*". When slowing, say "*Slowing*" and when preparing to stop, simply state "*Stopping*". If you are coming upon a hole, debris, gravel, sand, glass, bump in the road, etc., shout it out, simply and clearly.
8. If a car (dog or other moving "obstacle") is approaching from the right or left at an intersection, yell out "*Car right*" or "*Dog left*". Notice, too, when passing parked cars, if a driver is about to exit. Shout out "*Car door*" as a warning. If a car is approaching from the rear or from ahead of you, you should yell "*Car back*" or "*Car up*".
9. When approaching intersections, some cyclists will yell out "*Clear*" when no traffic is coming to let others behind know that the intersection is clear. There's some danger in that as it only takes seconds for a car to approach once that first cyclist is through the intersection but before another approaches. The call-out is still helpful, but every rider approaching an intersection should assess safety upon approach.
10. When passing another rider, leave ample space between your back wheel and their front wheel. As well when someone passes you, don't speed up; allow adequate space in front of you so that your wheels do not overlap.

OTHER SAFETY TIPS & REMINDERS WHEN ON THE ROAD

1. Use care when entering and exiting bike tour rest stops. There will be a lot of bike traffic and the entrances and exits may be clogged. When pulling out of a rest stop, use care to merge into the traffic flow. Make sure when pulling in that you pull all the way off the road and to the right as far as possible or otherwise follow directions or signs to stop and store your bike.
2. Be prepared for someone else to do the wrong thing. Keep your hands near your brakes, just in case.
3. Dogs can cause cyclists to panic if they bark and/or make chase. Dogs may do this for a variety of reasons. In most cases, you can outride a dog. Do your best to stay on your bike and ignore the dog. If that doesn't work, yell sternly at the dog. Some suggest squirting the dog with water, hitting it with a pump or kicking with your foot. All of these are obviously actions of last resort as they cannot only cause harm to the dog but may cause you to lose balance. If you must dismount your bike, keep your bike between you and the dog.
4. If you need assistance while on the tour, pull off the road as far as you can to the right and turn your bicycle upside down. Flash a "thumbs down" at SAG, safety advisors or mechanic vehicles passing and one will stop to help. If you are merely pulling off the road to rest, flash a "thumbs up" to those vehicles so they know you are ok and they do not need to stop.
5. Obey traffic signals. In most states, bicycles are expected to navigate the road and follow traffic signs just like cars. Stop for red lights and stop signs. Signal when turning.
6. Ride with bright front and rear lights when it is dark, before dawn or at dusk or when the weather is inclement and vision of someone behind you could be impaired.
7. Again, ride on the right side as far as practical and travel in the direction of traffic, not against it. Cars and other cyclists will not be looking for you on the opposite side of the road and movement through intersections becomes more complex.
8. Approach intersections in the right spot for intended direction of travel. If turning left, stay near the center line, but right of center. If turning right stay close to the right curb. If going

straight, stay in between. Make a wise decision to either stay far right or more central in the right lane depending on the specific situation in which you find yourself. Always yield to cars when in doubt about Your safety. Yield when changing lanes or before moving within the lane. Look back for traffic before you move.

9. Act assertively and with confidence, like you belong on the road. But, do not trust motorists and do not tangle with them. Make eye contact with a motorist turning, exiting a parked vehicle or at an intersection to ensure he sees you and is considerate of your movement. When moving through an intersection, keep pedaling, don't coast to show you mean business.
10. Brake evenly front and rear or with a bit more pressure on the rear brake to avoid an "endo" or end-over, tossing you over the handlebars. When traveling downhill, lean back on your seat for the same reason. Cross bridges with extreme care, especially when wet. Metal and wooden bridges can get slick when damp. Cross railroad tracks at a 90-degree angle. Remember to call out "bridge" or "tracks" to signal the danger to those behind you.

THE TEAM TANIA SAFE CYCLING QUIZ

1. Wearing a cycling helmet is necessary when

- a. riding in traffic.
- b. riding on trails.
- c. riding faster than a speeding locomotive.
- d. you don't want to break the law.
- e. All of the above

2. Your bike fits you properly when

- a. the color matches your eyes.
- b. you can reach the brakes comfortably, can stop with confidence.
- c. you can ride 20+ miles without discomfort in you neck, arms, hands, etc.
- d. who cares....it's the same bike Lance rides.
- e. a & d above
- f. b & c above

3. Passing on the left side of another cyclist is ok

- a. even if you have to cross the center highway line.
- b. without calling out "On your left".
- c. if you are left handed. Pass on the right if right-handed. If ambidextrous, you just can't pass others.
- d. only when you've checked behind you, have called out "Passing on your left" and have assessed the roadway ahead to be sure you will not be in any danger.

4. Pacelines are

- a. the lines that separate highway lanes.
- b. comprised of cyclists who ride in a single file, close together at a relatively fast pace to take advantage of drafting.
- c. not permitted on the City to Shore Bike Tour.
- d. used by cardiologists treating patients with irregular heartbeats.
- e. a & d above
- f. b & c above

5. When cycling, use hand signals

- a. when waving at friends.
- b. only when turning left.
- c. only when turning right.
- d. whenever turning.
- e. when you want to let a motorist know you're really angry.

6. How should cycling helmets be worn?

- a. Tipped back and turned sideways for a "hip hop" look. Yo yo yo...
- b. With the strap loose and undone.
- c. Strapped and level on your head.
- d. Hanging from your handlebars.
- e. Facing forward when riding to the shore, backwards when riding back to PATCO.

7. When cycling with others, you should travel

- a. no more than 2 abreast.
- b. no more than 3 abreast.
- c. no more than 4 abreast.
- d. while eating a grilled chicken breast.
- e. depends on the size of your.....

8. When cycling on the road, ride

- a. as close to the right side of the road as practical, travelling in the direction of traffic.
- b. as far to the left as you can.
- c. between traffic lanes. Isn't that why they paint that double line?
- d. in and out of traffic, weaving between cars.
- e. against traffic.

9. "Dog left" means

- a. the dog left the roadway and went home.
- b. there's a dog approaching from the left.
- c. all the cats ran away but there's a dog left on the road.
- d. check it out....a dog on a bike is passing on the left.

10. When approaching an intersection

- a. just blow through it; traffic signals are for cars, after all.
- b. use hand signals if planning to turn, slow or stop.
- c. loudly announce your intentions to slow, stop, or turn in advance of the intersection.
- d. don't bother looking out for cars if someone else said the intersection is clear; cycling's all about team work.
- e. a and/or d above
- f. b and/or c above

11. If there's debris on the road, point to it and shout out "Debris" or name the debris (e.g. "glass") to warn others behind you.

- a. True
- b. False
- c. Who cares...as long as you pass it without incident.

12. At rest stops.....

- a. pass 'em by...only sissies need to rest and refuel.
- b. stop, rest, you'll eat a little something, bubbala....
- c. seek medical attention if you're not feeling well, are dizzy or weak.
- d. seek mechanical attention if your bike's not feeling well.
- e. pull all the way in, park your bike out of the way.
- f. All of the above. Well, all except "a".

11. Wearing stereo headphones is ok while cycling if only "plugged" into one ear.

- a. True
- b. False