

## Safe Kids Charlotte Mecklenburg

### Bike Safety Tips & Laws

More than 70 percent of children ages 5 to 14 ride bicycles. These children account for approximately 21 percent of all bicycle-related deaths and nearly half of all bicycle-related injuries. Brain injury is the leading cause of death by bicycle and the leading cause of disability for those that survive. As your child gains independence and learns to explore their world by bike or other wheeled means, a few steps on your part will need to be taken to ensure their safety.

Children are at increased risk for bike injuries for several reasons:

- Their smaller size makes them difficult for drivers to see, especially if they are standing between parked cars on the side of the road.
- Young children are often unable to judge distances and vehicle speeds accurately, so they can easily misjudge whether it is safe to cross a street or how long it will take a car to stop.
- Parents can overestimate their child's ability to cross the street. Many elementary school-age children don't understand traffic signals or how to anticipate a driver's actions.
- Drivers and child pedestrians each assume (incorrectly) that the other will yield the right-of-way.

**Children can't make their own safety decisions until they are at least 10 years old. They will require adult supervision while riding a bike or walking anywhere until that age.**



#### Current North Carolina Bicycle Laws

- North Carolina Law says children under the age of 16 must wear a helmet when riding a bicycle. Younger children shorter than 40 inches or weighing less than 40 pounds have to ride in restraining seats when they are passengers on bicycles and must also wear helmets.
- Mecklenburg County requires residents under the age of 16 to wear helmets when riding a bicycle, roller blading, or skateboarding in Mecklenburg County Parks.
- Many towns and cities within Mecklenburg County, including Charlotte, Matthews and Cornelius require residents under the age of 16 to wear helmets when riding a bicycle, roller blading, or skateboarding at all times.
- North Carolina Law states you must be over 16 to ride a motorized scooter on roadways, or in parking lots.

For more information on bike safety visit, [www.safekidscharmeck.org](http://www.safekidscharmeck.org) ,  
[www.bhsi.org](http://www.bhsi.org), or [www.carolinasinjuryprevention.com](http://www.carolinasinjuryprevention.com)