

Safety Check

From the Safety Chick

Biking In Winter

This winter the Chicago area's mild temps have made it easy to "find the time and motivation" to bike. Very little snow and temperatures in the 30-40 degree range produce few excuses for not getting outside and having a great time.

Even still, there are important details to consider: proper clothing, a bike in good condition, hydration and road conditions. Automobile drivers are even less likely to expect cyclists on the road, so take care.

Looking for more encouragement -- check out the www.bikewinter.org website. In addition to their list of 2007 rides, they offer many tips including winter dressing options, importance of lights, riding techniques/suggestions and additional gear for the winter bike. Gear suggestions include reflective tape, fenders and baskets or racks to carry 'stuff.'

The 4th Annual Frozen Snot Century (a three day ride starting on Friday, Feb 23) may be the most aggressive winter ride that I've come across. Information borrowed from the Bike Winter site, see below. To sign up, see their website for details. "A dozen Chicagoans will take Metra commuter rail to Harvard, IL, and bike 70 miles to Madison. They crash on local couches (Housing organized by Madison Bike Winter/BFW). Sat. Feb. 24: Those Chicagoans plus any interested Madisonians ride 80 (?) miles to Milwaukee. Meanwhile, another, larger group of Chicagoans rides 95 miles from Chicago to Milwaukee. Out-of-towners meet up at a tavern and crash with Milwaukeeans (housing organized by Milwaukee Bike Winter). Sun. Feb. 25: Everbody rides 95 miles to Chicago. Wisconsinites stay with Chicagoans (Housing organized by Chicago Bike Winter). Mon. Feb. 26: Madisonians take Metra commuter rail to Harvard, IL and bike home OR take the Van Galder bus with their bikes. Milwaukeeans ride home."



Annual Safety Reminders (these suggestions have been offered by your fellow riders)

1. Stop at stop signs, especially when there are vehicles at or near the stop sign.
2. When you are going to pass a rider/walker, announce "Passing on your left." Always pass on the left.
3. Stay to the right side of the road, do not ride in the middle of the road.
4. At intersections keep an awareness of intentions and positions of cars/trucks. Cars turning right may not see you next to them. Pay attention to the car's turn signals and the direction that their wheels are turned.
5. Don't ride erratically, other riders and drivers can't guess what you plan to do. Learn to ride in a straight line and until you do, don't crowd other riders.
6. When a fellow rider announces "Clear" when crossing a road, intersection, etc. – don't rely 100% on the other rider's judgment.

Not so safety oriented reminders ... but requested by fellow riders.

1. Now is a good time to take a look at your spandex cycling shorts. Do they need to be replaced? Spandex through use and laundering can lose its denseness, the fibers breakdown. What was once a fine, quality pair of cycling shorts becomes a sheer, black fabric that . . .well . . .uh . . .becomes see-thru. So to keep from having all the riders behind you crash into each to avoid the 'view,' take advantage of those clearance sales.
2. Whatever the posted ride time, plan to arrive a few minutes early to get you, your bike and your gear ready to ride at the posted ride time.

Tailwinds
The Safety Chick