

# Bicycle Safety in Wisconsin



## Did you know...

In Wisconsin, one bicyclist was killed or injured every 11 hours in 2024.

- 894 crashes involved bicyclists in Wisconsin in 2024.
- In these crashes, 8 bicyclists were killed and 787 were injured.
- Bicyclists are almost always injured in a collision with a motor vehicle.

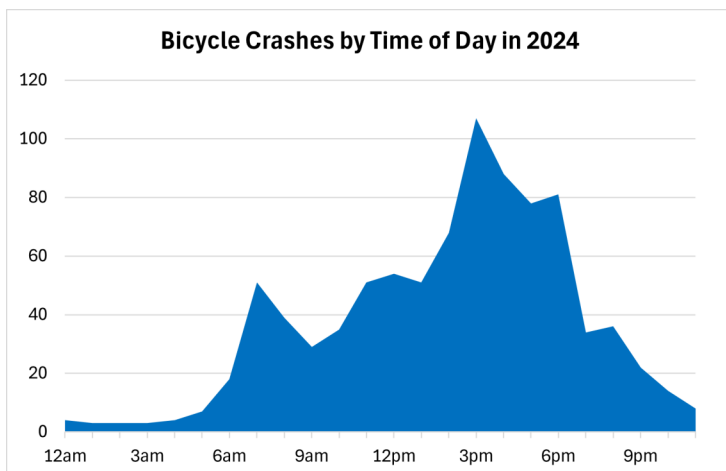
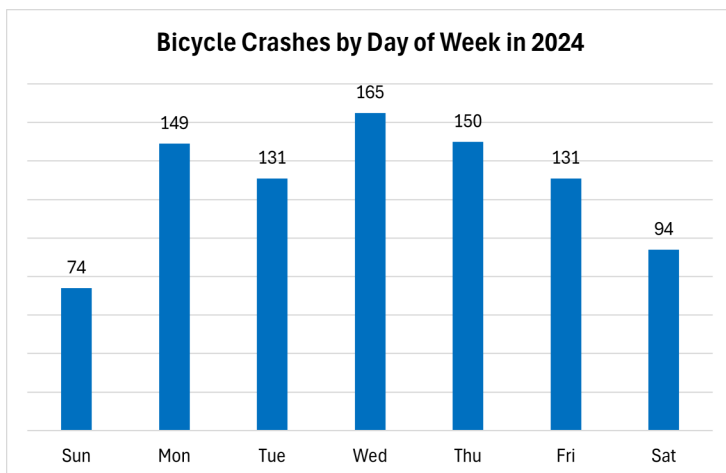
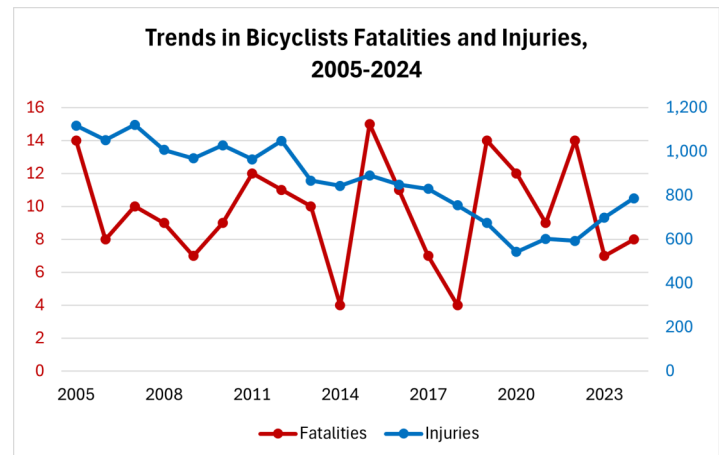


## Scope of the Problem

Over the years, improvements to bicyclist safety have been made in areas such as engineering, education, enforcement, and emergency response.

Over the long term, the number of bicyclist injuries has decreased, but year-to-year fluctuations in bicyclists fatalities are apparent.

Over the past 20 years, the number of bicyclist injuries has decreased by 30%.



## Types of Bike Crashes

The most common types of bicycle crashes involve:

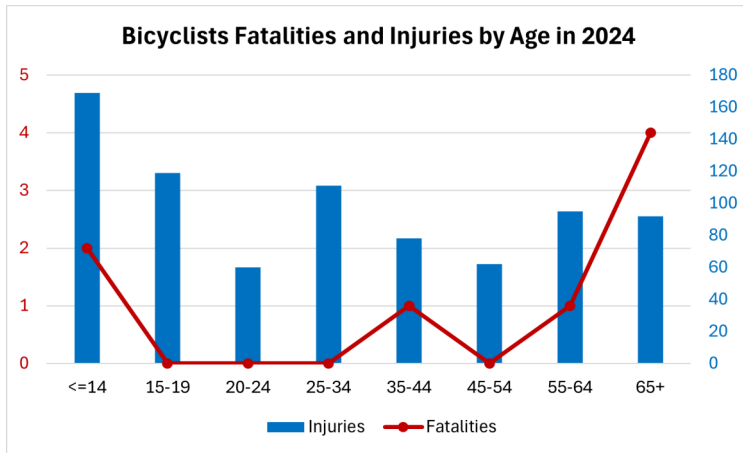
- Motorists failing to yield the right of way to a straight-through bicyclist when making a left turn.
- Motorists failing to yield at a controlled intersection.
- Bicyclists failing to yield at a controlled intersection.
- Motorists turning right on a red.

In approximately 38% of all bicycle crashes, the bicyclists was determined not at fault.

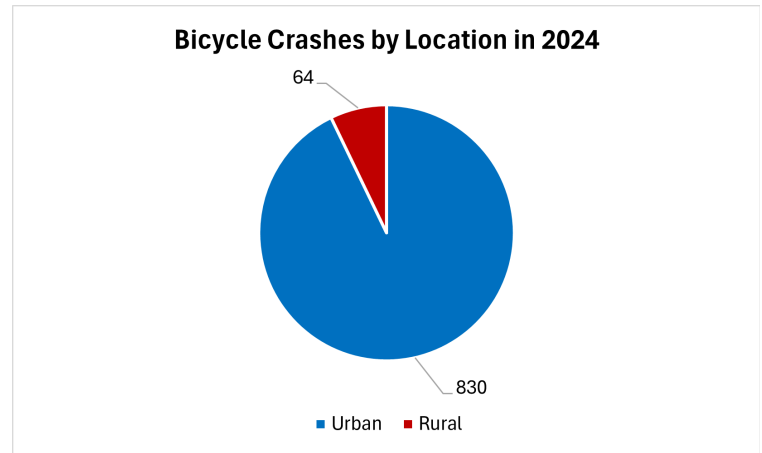
Bicycle crashes are more likely to occur on week days than weekends, with Wednesday having the highest number of bicycle crashes. The lowest number of bicycle crashes occurred on Sunday.

Bicycle crashes peak in the morning when drivers are headed to work or school, but crashes reach their highest point in the afternoon when returning home after their day. While there is more traffic on the road during these times, 35% of all bicycle crashes are in marked crosswalks.

## Who is at Risk?



Children and teenagers account for 37% of all bicyclists injuries. Bicyclists fatalities rise as age rises, with half of the total number of bicyclists killed over the age of 65.



Most bicycle crashes occur in urban areas and on local roads and streets. This is not surprising considering that bicycling rates are higher in urban locations.

## Current Bicycle Laws

Bicycling laws are defined in Wis. Stats. 340.01(5), 346.02(4)(a) and 346.80(2)(a).

The bicycle is defined as a vehicle. The operator of a vehicle is granted the same rights and subject to the same duties as the driver of any other vehicle.

Any person operating a bicycle at less than normal speed shall ride as close as practicable (not as far right as possible) to the right-hand edge or curb of the unobstructed traveled roadway. This includes riders who are riding two or more abreast.



## What can Drivers Do?

- Give cyclists at least three feet of clearance when passing.
- Occupants of parked vehicles should look back and to their left before opening their door into traffic. Being “doored” is among the most common types of bicycle collisions and can lead to serious injury or even death.
- When turning left, watch for and yield to oncoming bicyclists just as you would for oncoming motorists. This is the most common type of auto/bike collision.
- When turning right, yield to any bicyclist traveling on your right. Do not try to pass a bicyclist if you are planning to turn right at the next intersection or driveway.
- Practice caution when young cyclists are present.

## What can Cyclists Do?

- Cyclists are vehicles. As such, they must ride in the same direction as traffic and must use hand signals to indicate their movements.
- Wear a helmet; taking this easy step can eliminate up to 85% of head injuries in a crash.
- Parents should ensure that children have mastered the ability to ride in a straight line before allowing children to bike on their own. Most children do not develop this skill until seven or eight years old.
- Bike safety courses are available throughout the state; contact the Bicycle Federation of Wisconsin or the League of American Bicyclists for more information.