

Bicycle Safety in Wisconsin



Did you know...

In Wisconsin, in 2021, one bicyclist was injured or killed every 14.4 hours.

- 691 crashes involved bicyclists in Wisconsin in 2021.
- In these crashes, 9 bicyclists were killed and 600 were injured.
- Bicyclists are almost always injured in a collision also involving a motor vehicle.

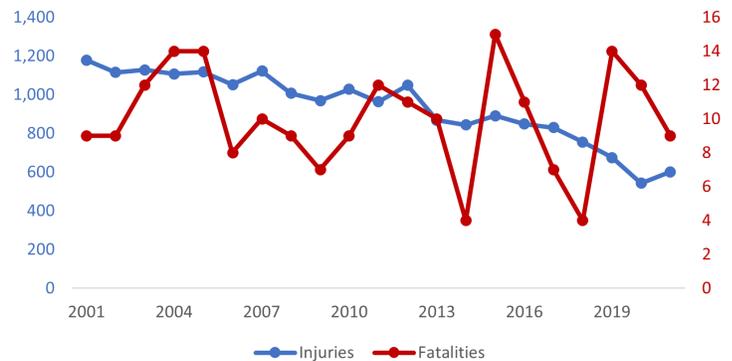
Scope of the Problem

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

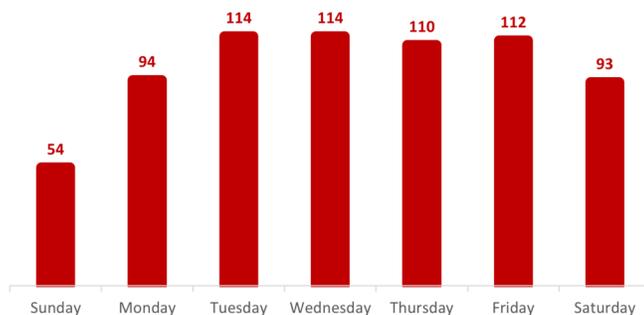
Over the long term, the number of bicyclist fatalities and injuries has decreased, but year-to-year fluctuations are apparent.

Over the past 20 years, the number of bicyclist injuries has decreased by 49%.

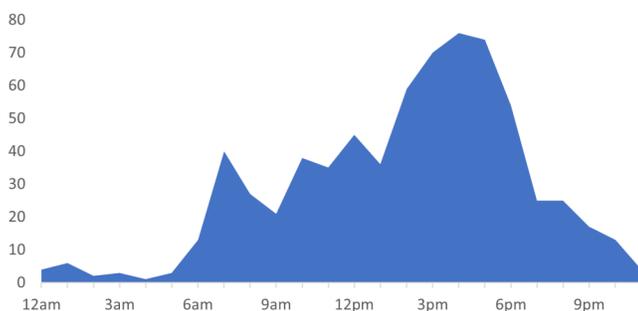
Trends in Bicycling Injuries & Fatalities 2001-2021



Crashes Involving a Bicyclist by Day of the Week in 2021



Crashes Involving a Bicyclist by Time of Day in 2021



Types of Bike Crashes

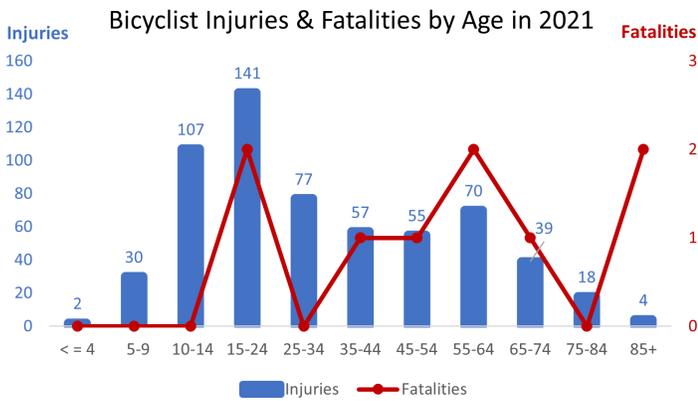
The most common types of bicycle crashes involve:

- 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

Bicyclists injured or killed in a crash were not at fault in 34% of incidents; 253 crashes in 2021 were the responsibility of the motor vehicle driver.

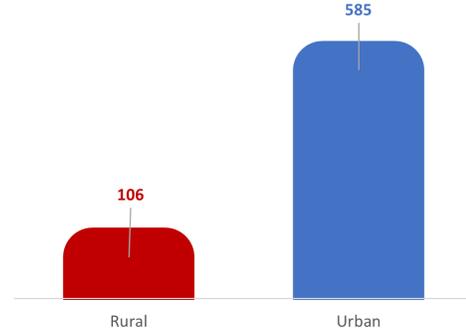
Crashes involving a bicyclist slightly peak in the morning when drivers are headed to work or school and crashes reach their highest point in the afternoon when returning home after their day. While there is more traffic on the road during these times, 196 of all bicyclist injuries and fatalities are in marked crosswalks.

Who is at Risk?



Children, teenagers, and young adults together comprised a heavy majority of the injuries (though not fatalities) in 2021. High injury rates among this group are a result of poor road skills and excessive vehicular speeds in neighborhoods and school zones.

Crashes Involving a Bicyclist by Location in 2021



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 WI. 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.