

# Safety Matters Restaurant

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## Bicycle Safety for Food Delivery Workers

When using a bicycle to make food deliveries, it's vital to prioritize your safety. Failing to take proper precautions could lead to serious injuries or even death. In fact, data from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration found that more than 900 bicyclists are killed in traffic crashes each year.

Don't put yourself in harm's way on your delivery route. Read on for an overview of the primary risks associated with conducting food deliveries on a bicycle and best practices to help prevent potential safety incidents.

### Bicycle Safety Risks

There are several hazards that may arise from riding a bicycle, some of which could be compounded by transporting and delivering food. Here are some safety risks to consider:

- **Falls and crashes**—Improper balance, reduced traction or limited visibility could all cause you to fall or crash while operating a bicycle. These incidents may lead to various injuries, including sprains, strains, cuts and lacerations. Such incidents can be especially common if your delivery orders are not adequately secured onto your bicycle, your route requires you to travel on uneven or poorly maintained roads, or you frequently make deliveries in the evening.
- **Struck-by incidents**—While riding a bicycle, you are at risk of getting struck by motor vehicles or other objects on your delivery route. Struck-by incidents may result in broken bones, head trauma or death. These

incidents are more likely to occur at night when drivers have reduced visibility, in road construction zones and in high-traffic areas.

- **Outdoor exposures**—Because making deliveries on a bicycle requires you to spend prolonged periods outdoors, you may be exposed to adverse weather conditions. These conditions could create a number of hazards on the roadways, increasing the likelihood of falls and crashes. What's more, certain conditions—namely, hot or cold temperatures—could elevate your risk of experiencing ailments such as heatstroke, hypothermia, frostbite and cardiac arrest.
- **Thefts and robberies**—Carrying cash from deliveries may increase your chance of being targeted in thefts or robberies on a bicycle. In some cases, criminals may even resort to violence during these incidents, potentially causing serious injuries.

### Incident Prevention

Follow these best practices to promote bicycle safety and prevent incidents on your delivery route:

- **Ensure your bicycle fits your body.** Using a bicycle that doesn't fit you correctly could make you more susceptible to injuries. As such, confirm that you can fully extend your

legs while pedaling and ride comfortably on the bicycle before using it for deliveries.

- **Inspect and maintain your bicycle.** Be sure to keep your bicycle in good condition by regularly inspecting it and conducting maintenance as needed. If you frequently ride at night, equip your bicycle with a headlight and rear reflectors.
- **Wear proper clothing and equipment.** Always wear a helmet while on your bicycle. In addition, avoid overly loose clothing and select durable shoes. When riding at night, wear reflective clothing. If the weather is sunny or hot, consider putting on sunglasses and applying sunscreen before you ride. If the weather is cold or wet, dress in warm, waterproof layers.
- **Plan your delivery route.** Aim for a delivery route that offers a designated bicycle path for most—if not all—of the journey. Avoid construction zones, areas with heavy traffic, and roads that are poorly maintained or lack ample lighting as much as possible.
- **Keep delivery orders secure.** Ensure orders stay secure by placing them in a backpack and wearing it while you ride; putting them in a basket attached to the bicycle; or strapping them directly to the bicycle.
- **Obey the rules of the road.** Follow all street signs, road markings and traffic laws. Specifically, come to a full stop at any red lights and stop signs; know your hand signals and leverage them as needed to communicate with others on the road; and cross streets at designated crosswalks.
- **Ride defensively.** Be a defensive bicyclist by remaining focused and alert to surrounding

traffic. Try your best to anticipate what others may do on the road and respond accordingly. Refrain from distracting activities while you ride, such as texting.

- **Act predictably.** Ride your bicycle in a predictable way by moving in the same direction as other traffic, using a bicycle path when it's available, avoiding sidewalk riding (unless it's legal in your area), making your presence known to pedestrians as you pass them, looking both ways before crossing the street, and slowing down while taking turns or exiting driveways.
- **Avoid road rage or physical altercations.** Stay calm while you ride, and try not to get angry or upset with others on the road. If a driver acts irate toward you, don't react and continue riding. If someone attempts to steal cash, food or your bicycle from you, give them what they want rather than trying to fight them off; your safety is more important than any money or possessions. Report such incidents to your supervisor immediately afterward.
- **Aim for improvement.** Continue educating yourself on bicycle safety and proper riding techniques. Consider taking additional safety or skills courses through a local bicycle shop, recreation department or advocacy group.

### Conclusion

Overall, it's evident that using a bicycle to make food deliveries comes with various risks. Yet, by following proper precautions on the road, you can ensure a safe journey on your delivery route. Talk to your supervisor for more information.