



## MOUNTAIN BIKING

**Step 1: IDENTIFY THE HAZARDS:** Let's look at the hazards associated with Mountain Biking:

- Weather (black ice, rain, sleet, snow, and extreme winds)
- Location (dirt trails, gravel roads, urban roads)
- Wildlife (bears, moose, other critters)
- Activities (off-road cycling, backcountry cycling, touring, commuting)
- Mechanical (failure of bicycle part(s), flat tires, etc.)

**Step 2: ASSESS THE RISK:** Then assess the impact of each hazard in terms of potential loss and severity:

- Injuries and damage due to changing road and trail conditions created by the weather
- Incidents involving traveling over rough dirt or gravel roads and trails, and urban roads with potholes and other obstacles
- Potential for injury by bears, moose, or other animals
- Increased potential for mishap due to alcohol consumption, riding for long periods of time and fatiguing yourself; erratic driving by other drivers; other drivers' failure to yield. Potential for mishap also exists when riding off-road, along trails. Catastrophic failure of bicycle components when "hot-dogging," or because of extreme trail conditions is also possible.

**Step 3: MAKE RISK DECISIONS:** Once you have identified the hazards and assessed the associated risk, you should develop risk control options. Start with the most serious risk first and select controls that will reduce the risk to a minimum consistent with mission accomplishment. Decide on some controls that can be employed to reduce or mitigate the hazards:

- Check the weather and plan accordingly. Don't take chances with summer rain, sleet, or snow. Pack extra clothing to be prepared
- Only travel on roads or trails you are capable of riding on. Do not exceed your capabilities. Try to choose routes in town that are relatively free of potholes; wear

protective clothing that does not leave skin exposed; wear a helmet; continuously scan road or trail ahead and shoulders of road for signs of wildlife. Make noise by talking and use bells or whistles to alert animals of your presence

- Avoid traveling with people who are “risk takers” or are known to flaunt their abilities. Do not drink or allow others to drink and ride. Know and practice defensive driving techniques. Strive to be visible to other drivers by wearing highly visible clothing. When traveling long distances, take frequent breaks, and avoid trying to ride longer than reasonable distances per day. Carry a basic tool and first aid kit.

With selected controls in place, decide if the benefit outweighs the risk. If risk outweighs benefits or if assistance is required to implement controls, communicate with higher authority in the chain of command. You need to either accept the risk, avoid the risk, reduce the risk, or spread the risk. Do not make dumb decisions.

**Step 4: IMPLEMENT CONTROLS:** Once you select appropriate controls, implement them! A plan is only good if it is followed.

**Step 5: SUPERVISE:** As always, the situation is subject to change quickly. Monitor the situation and adjust as necessary to keep things under control. Mountain biking is a great way to have fun and we all deserve a break every now and then. Use risk management to make your riding experience memorable and safe. No one wants an outing to turn into a tragedy!

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Member  
Printed Rank/Rate/Name

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Member Signature

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Date