

Bike Safety at Night

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Daylight Savings Time ends on Sunday, November 1. As darkness arrives earlier, cyclists are reminded to take extra precaution riding at night. White lights on front, red lights on back, and plenty of reflectors and reflective clothing. The local advocacy group Bike Newport is chanting the mantra “See and be seen!”

Area bike shops are joining the chorus by offering bike lights and night riding apparel at a special “Fall Back and Light Up” discount of 20% throughout the weekend of Oct 31-Nov 1. Participating stores are: Newport Bicycle on Broadway, Pedal Power on West Main Road, and Ten Speed Spokes on Elm Street.

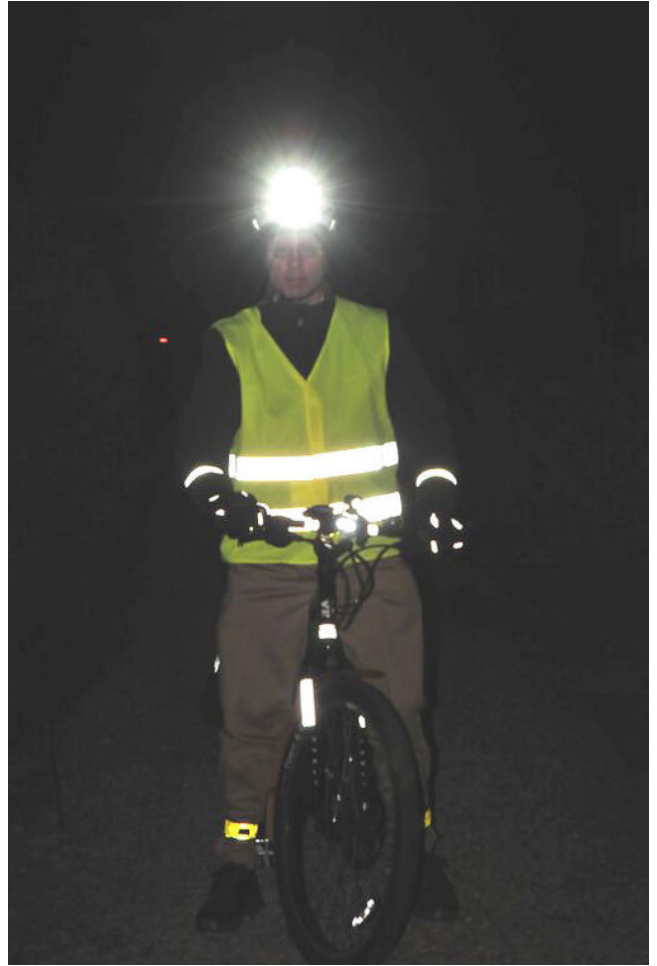
For bike enthusiasts, riding at night can be fun, relaxing, and a delightful end to the day. For bike commuters, riding in the dark is a fact of life. Statistically, there are more crashes at night than during the day. This is due in part to the difficulty motorists have in seeing cyclists at night, and in part to cyclists not seeing unsafe road conditions in the dark. There are several ways to improve cyclist visibility and safety at night:

Headlights: Handlebar mounted headlights can be USB rechargeable or run on batteries. There’s a range of brightness and settings that are steady and flashing. Newport law requires a white lamp on the front of your bike that can be seen from 500 feet. Bike shops can help riders choose the best light based on how and where they ride.

Front light on your helmet: Helmet headlamps send light whichever way the cyclist looks. Smart!

Rear light: Law also requires a red light on the rear of a bicycle. Many cyclists use red blinking lights throughout the day to be more visible as cars approach from the rear. Rear lights can be mounted on fenders, seat posts, seat stays, racks, or saddlebags.

Reflective vest or jacket: Reflective material increases visibility exponentially and can make cyclists



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Chris Tompsett of Newport demonstrates the best of night brightness. Courtesy of Bike Newport

much more obvious on the road at night. In fact, highly reflective material can be far brighter even than the bike lights. Be careful – brightly colored clothing is not the same as reflective. Bright clothing may be highly visible in the daylight, but no different from any other color at night. Be sure that nightwear is reflective.

In addition to encouraging all cyclists to visit the local bike shops to be prepared for night riding, Bike Newport also provides free equipment to lower-income riders. “Night Bright” is a granted program that provides bike lights and reflective vests free of charge to bicycle dependent workers, thanks to grants from the RI Department of Transportation and support from Newport Federal Savings. bikenewportri.org