

CYCLING SAFELY WITHIN BFG

For the German population cycling is a well established part of life, with people of all ages taking advantage of the dedicated infrastructure and cycle paths for work and pleasure purposes. It should come as no surprise that the use of cycles is increasing in the BFG community and this is encouraged.

BENEFITS. Here are just a few of the benefits for ditching your car and choosing to cycle instead:

- **Healthy.** Even a short ride to and from work or school can contribute towards the recommended hour a day moderate physical activity and is achievable by most people regardless of age or level of fitness.
- **Non-Polluting.** By leaving your car at home you can not only help protect the environment but also reduce the exposure of your children to harmful air pollution.
- **Economical.** Apart from the initial outlay and a little wear and tear on the bike, cycling is completely free – even with BFG Fuel Coupon concessions fuel costs is an expenditure that we would all like to reduce.
- **Safer Roads.** We are well aware that cyclists involved in accidents with cars tend to come out worse off, but despite this, by encouraging the use of cycles we can actually make our roads safer. By reducing the amount of vehicular traffic around busy conflict areas such as schools and the workplace we can make it safer for the cyclists and pedestrians alike.
- **Reduced Stress.** Cycling is a relaxing activity, you don't need to worry about traffic queues and it is often just as quick to reach your destination by bike as it is by car.
- **Sociable.** A good time for parents, children and friends to chat and enjoy time together.
- **Educational.** It encourages children and young adults to use their senses and appreciate the environment around them. It also teaches young people road awareness skills and enhances road safety; skills that will stay with them and help protect them throughout their life.

Cycling is a healthy and fun activity that should be encouraged – but it must be made safer. Unfortunately in the UK thousands of people of all ages are injured every year whilst out and about on their bikes. The most serious of injuries and deaths tend to happen when hit by a car or other motorised vehicle; regardless of the cycle infrastructure and concise network of cycle paths. This is also the case in Germany.

TIPS FOR SAFE CYCLING. The following tips can help to make cycling safer for all:

For Individuals

- **Wear a Helmet!!** You don't need me to tell you that wearing a helmet will greatly improve your chances in the event of an accident. There are many different styles to suit all types of riding. All the pro's wear them, just pick up a bike mag and see for yourself. You know it makes sense!
- **Be Safe-Be Seen.** To ensure other traffic can see you and so that you comply with the law, ensure your bike is fitted with all the correct items, such as: Serviceable Front and Rear Lights (German law requires them to be dynamo powered), reflectors on the front and rear of the bike, also reflectors on the pedals and the wheels, don't forget you will also require a bell. These items are inexpensive with reflectors only costing a couple of Euros each. In addition you should try to wear bright (by day) and reflective (by night) items or clothing, especially if you are wearing military uniform or dark clothes.
- **Check Your Bike.** Check your bike regularly to ensure it is serviceable, especially things like brakes and lights.
- **The Highway Code.** Learn the rules for cyclists, how to use cycle paths correctly especially when they cross roads at junctions and traffic lights.

For Parents

- **Educate.** Ensure you teach your children how to be safe when they cycle by employing the tips listed previously.
- **Example.** Set a good example for your kids, make sure your bike is kitted out and you wear the right gear; this goes for teachers and youth team leaders too.

For Schools and Children's Community Groups

- **Promotion.** Promote safe cycling and all of the tips previously listed.
- **Training.** Arrange cycle proficiency training; assistance can be obtained from your Garrison Road Safety Officer or local Master Driver.

Ultimately it's just common sense; nobody wants to get hurt, or to hurt others. So get out there enjoy the freedom and benefits gained from riding your bike, but make sure you do it safely and encourage others to do likewise and let's make our community a safe and enjoyable place to be.

Further information and assistance can be obtained from:

- Unit/ Garrison Road Safety Officer.
- Master Driver.
- RMP Community Police Officer.

Alternatively, the following Web Sites:

- www.brake.org.uk
- www.thinkroadsafety.gov.uk
- www.bhit.org – information and education on cycle helmets.
- www.cyclesense.net

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