

Crime Prevention Tips to Prevent Bike Theft

Every year thousands of bikes are stolen in Davis. In some cases people steal bicycles, use them for transportation, and then discard the bicycle in a remote area. Other times the thieves steal the bicycles and then sell them. Professional thieves often focus on higher end brands and take the bicycles out of Davis.

Here are some crime prevention tips to help keep your bike safe:

- Many bikes are easily stolen because they are not locked. Your first line of defense is to **lock** your bike with a good solid lock.
- Many bikes are stolen from homes (yard, porch, garage, apartments, dorm room, etc.). Store your bike in a secure place when not in use. If you are not sure storage is secure, use your lock. Try and keep your bike out of view from the street.
- The second most common cause of bike theft is improper locking. Any security device whether it is a cheap cable lock, a heavy duty U-lock, or a 30-pound tow chain, will stop the casual thief of opportunity. But pros are hunters, and go out armed with a definite plan to stalk and steal.
- The most effective counter strategy for a cyclist is to use 2 types of locks; a solid steel combo U-lock combined with a cable or chain.
- Put the U-lock around a fixed object (guard rail, bike rack, etc.), the rim of a wheel, or if possible, both wheels and some part of the bike frame (the seat tube, chain stay, or seat stay). Make sure the lock goes around the rims and not just the spokes, or a thief with wire cutters can walk away with your nice set of wheels.
- Thread the cable lock through the frame, the front wheel (if it's bolted on) and around the fixed object. Because different tools are needed to break each lock, you'll have a backup if one lock is defeated.
- Position your bike frame and wheels so that you take up as much of the open space within the U-portion of the lock as possible. The tighter the lock up the harder it will be for a thief to insert or pry open your lock.
- If your U-lock has its keyway on the end of the crossbar, position the lock with its keyway end facing down towards the ground. This makes it harder for the thief to access your lock.
- Do not simply lock the wheel of your bike to a rack you may find only that wheel remaining when you return.
- **Don't** lock your bike to small trees, aluminum or wooden posts, or to chain link fences. These items can easily be broken or cut.
- **Don't lock your bike to itself.** A thief will just carry the whole bike away!



- Always lock your bike in visible well-lit areas. Not only does this deter bike thieves, but it also keeps you in a safer environment.
- You may want to think about using an inexpensive bike for transportation and save the expensive bike for the special rides.

Many bicycles are not recovered because the owners do not know the serial numbers for their bicycle frame. Police officers stop bicyclist every day for traffic violations. If the serial number was never entered in the stolen property system, the officer will never be able to recover the stolen bike.

Things you can do to help dramatically increase the chances of recovery for your stolen bicycle:

- License your bicycle at the University of California Transportation Department at 752-TAPS. Registering your bicycle is a requirement on the UCD Campus and a great way to deter theft. The database keeps your bicycle serial number cross-referenced with the bike license. Even if a thief removes the license sticker, the officer can retrieve information on the registered owner through TAPS. B & L Bike Shop and Freewheeler Bikes also offers bike licensing (you will need your bike with you to license it).
- Write down the serial number for your bicycle. This is vital when making a police report because the “serial number” distinguishes your bicycle from all others. Many manufacturers stamp a serial number and a model number on the bicycle frame. This can be confusing because the model number is not unique. So find out which one is the serial number from your manufacturer.
- Engrave your driver’s license number in a discrete place on the bike frame. Officers often recognize a California Driver’s License number because of its sequence. They can run this number and obtain information about you in seconds, which then helps us contact you and find out if you know who has your bicycle, if it’s found being used.



If your bike is stolen, report it to the police. Here is how to report a stolen bike:

1. You may fill out an Offense Report Form (online)
2. Print out the completed form, mail it to the police department, or you may drop it by the police department in person. Once the report is submitted to the police department a case number will be issued.
3. Another option is to come into the police department to fill out the Offense Report Form and a case number will be issued to you immediately.

Bicycle Safety Tips to Follow

When riding a bicycle on a public roadway, the California Vehicle Code states that you must follow all the rules of the road just like the driver of a car. Your bike must be equipped with a working brake, and if ridden at night, a light, and proper reflectors.

The following is a list of some of the most common bicycles violations:

- **Stop signs:** At a stop sign law requires you to come to a complete stop before proceeding straight, making a right turn or left turn. Slowing down is not enough. Nothing in the Vehicle Code states that you must put your foot on the ground, but you do have to stop your forward movement at the limit line. Stopping allows you the time to observe what is happening at the intersection.
- **Wrong side of the road:** Riding on the wrong side of the roadway is illegal and dangerous. Drivers pulling into the roadway from their driveway or another street will check the side where traffic should be coming from, but fail to look in both directions.
- **Traffic lights:** Some bicyclists get tired of waiting at the red light and simply ride through. Some pedal harder on a yellow light in an attempt to make it through the intersection before it turns red. Bicyclists must follow traffic signals the same way a driver of a car would. Stop and wait at the red light. If the light is yellow, slow down and prepare to stop.
- **Riding a bike on a sidewalk in the central business district:** The Davis City Code prohibits the riding of bicycles or skateboards on downtown sidewalks. The downtown sidewalks are designed for pedestrian shoppers. If you are in the downtown area, you need to ride on the street or walk your bicycle on the sidewalk.
- **Radio Headphones:** It is against the law to have both ears covered with your radio headphones/plugs. You should be able to hear honking, sirens and other vehicles or pedestrians when riding.
- **Bike helmet:** California state law requires that everyone under the age of 18 wear a bike helmet when riding on a public roadway. In fact, it is a good idea for everyone to wear a bike helmet for protection.



Many children use bicycles as their primary source of transportation. Parents, take the time to educate your children about safe riding practices and discuss the rules of the road. Remember to check your child's bike on a regular basis. The brakes should always be in good working order. Your child should wear bright clothing so that he or she is visible to motorists and should always wear their bike helmet.