

# Transportation: Safety Tips



All students should obey all traffic rules both on and off campus. Please bear in mind one thing: accidents can happen to anyone, at any time. In order to have a great college life here, in the University of Tsukuba, you should allocate appropriate attention to your surroundings and avoid being involved in accidents.

**\*In Japan, drivers and cyclists must keep to the left, while pedestrians should keep to the right side of the road.**

## Bicycles

- Traffic on campus tends to be very heavy, especially during recesses between classes. Please ride on your bike at reasonable speed and avoid collisions with pedestrians.
- Never park your bike on tactile paving (yellow brick road) nor the place where it blocks doorways.  
(Keep the tactile paving and doorways clear for blind people and for emergency cases.)
- Do not leave your bicycle unattended for a long period of time at convenience stores or other places when you are outside campus.
- Don't carry stuff like bags or an umbrella in your hands while you ride. Serious accidents have been caused by (shopping) bags and umbrellas getting caught in the front wheel of bicycle.
- It is prohibited in Japan to ride a bicycle 1) without light on, 2) using a cell phone / portable device, 3) listening to music through earphones / headphones, nor 4) with an open umbrella in your hand.

**\*You could be fined in Japan for riding a bicycle while talking on a cell phone or breaking the traffic laws mentioned above (See the web site of IBARAKI PREF. POLICE for further details.).**

## Buses; University On-Campus Transportation System

- The University has introduced the bus service; University On-Campus Transportation System. When using the bus services, you must show a valid one-year(1 April - 31 March) bus pass. Please be aware to have a valid sticker on your student ID card. Not showing the sticker, riding on the bus with expired pass, or using the service with other's student ID card are considered as unauthorized use.

- In the case of unauthorized use, university disciplinary action will be taken on top of the payment of a penalty.

**\*When your bus pass is expired, renew it as soon as possible. Or, if you no longer use the pass, remove the sticker from your student ID card.**

## Motorcycles and other motorized bicycles

- It is not allowed to ride motorcycles/scooters on sidewalks nor any pedestrian paths. If you need to enter pedestrian areas to get to a parking space on campus, please get off your motorcycle/scooter and push it through with the engine off.
- Ride at a safe and reasonable speed always, and wear helmet for your safety. \*The Japanese law requires riders wear a helmet.
- Pay attention to traffic signs and signals always, obey the speed limit, and follow the parking control signs.

## Automobiles

- For campus safety, the speed limit on campus is 30 km/h. There are, however, still many accidents involving the students every year. Some cases off campus led to fatal accidents in the past.
- Main causes of accidents and crashes on campus are due to human errors, such as speeding, failing to stop or slow down at intersection, or ignoring traffic signs.
- Using cell phone while driving is very dangerous and prohibited. DO NOT use cell phone or look at the screen while you drive, use only after you have parked in a safe place.

**\*All bicycles/motorcycles/automobiles operated on campus is required to be registered and a permit sticker (IC-tag) must be attached. Please complete the registration process with the staff in your Academic Service Office/Division of Student Welfare.**

## Cautionary Points

- Commuting by Car

Those who need to commute by car shall apply for on-campus parking lot. Regarding its application procedure, please ask to the Road Safety Office (交通安全会) or your Academic Service Office.

Please note that it is, in principal, prohibited to commute by car for short-distance trips; less than 2 km from your Academic Service Office.

- Using a Used-Bicycle (Receiving a Bicycle from a Friend)

If you receive a bicycle from a friend, please be sure to transfer the ownership. Have your friend make a written statement (譲渡証明書) that proves he/she has given you the bicycle, and then go to a bicycle store (authorized one; 自転車防犯登録取扱指定店) to transfer the ownership. When you re-register the bicycle with your name, you will be asked to have (a) statement, (b) bicycle you received, and (c) your ID.

# Bicycle Accidents and its Compensation

Roughly 80 percent of the students at the university use bicycle to travel from home to the campus, or to go to off-campus location. Unfortunately, as the number of bicycle user increases, more bicycle accidents have been reported.

Please always keep in mind that riding on a bicycle could cause tragic accidents in a collision with pedestrian which results in a personal injury or death. In some previous cases in Japan, the cyclists who caused a tragic accident got charged with criminal liability, or charged tens of millions of yen as compensation for the damage. Having insurance for liability compensation for bicycle accidents is not mandatory in Japan, however, joining an insurance like "TS Mark Insurance" is highly recommended for the worst-case scenario.

## TS Mark Insurance covers injury, liability, and damage compensation

**The TS Mark is affixed to your bicycle at a bicycle safety maintenance shop when you purchase a bicycle or have an inspection / maintenance carried out on your bicycle.**

The TS Mark Insurance includes accident insurance and liability insurance, and is valid for one year from the date the bicycle is inspected

**Please ask any bicycle shop for further details.**

**Have your bicycle inspected once a year and renew your TS mark sticker.**





You'll find this mark attached in member stores



(Only available in Japanese)

Source: Japan Traffic Management Technology Association

## Traffic Accidents Involving the Students

(AY2019-AY2023)

Figure1: The number of accidents on/off campus

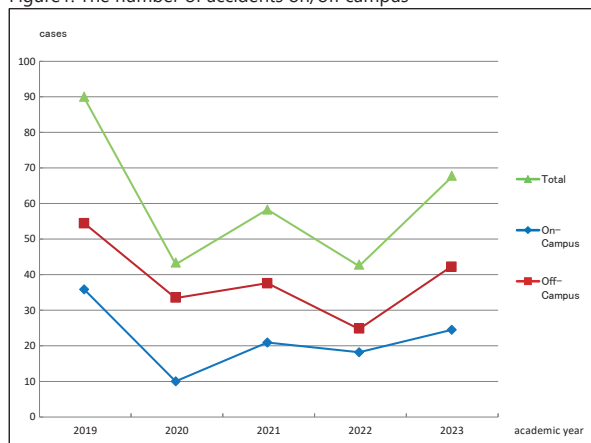
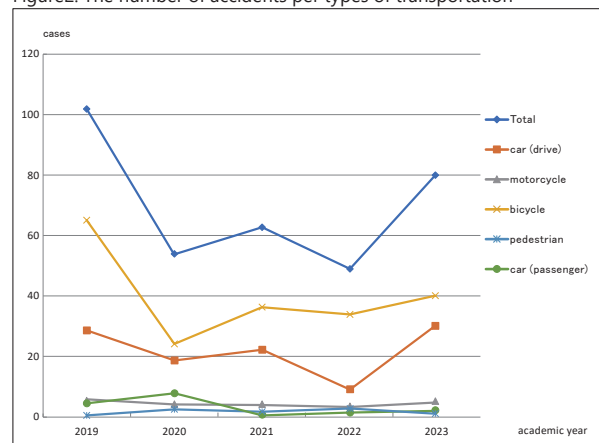


Figure2: The number of accidents per types of transportation



## Safety First!

### The number of traffic accidents is on the rise

○Police departments and local governments in Ibaraki prefecture, which has one of the highest number of traffic accidents nationwide, have launched road safety campaigns and the University has participated in them as well as launching its own original campaigns. However, many traffic accidents occur each year. Those campaigns are not enough unless you yourself are aware of road safety. Your safety awareness is the key to reduce traffic accidents and protect yourself from them.

### Bicycle-related injuries/accidents are remarkably increasing

○Many traffic accidents resulting in broken bones or fatalities have occurred on/around campus. To protect you from critical accidents, the University wants you all to pay attention to traffic safety as well as respecting traffic rules and manners. Unfortunately, we have been reported of students' bad manners on bikes by local residents and communities. Some have claimed that they almost had an accident with students on bikes due to their poor traffic manner. As a member of local communities, please make sure that you read and understand rules and manners described on pages 30 and 32.



## Bicycle rules and manners

Here in Tsukuba, you will have many chances to use bicycles to get around the campus, to go shopping, or to go to the movie theater. While bicycles are an easy-to-use, convenient mode of transportation, they can also be a “weapon” that can harm people, things, and even the bicyclists themselves. In order for you to have a safe “bike life,” basic rules, manners, and bicycle maintenance are introduced in this chapter. Please refer to this guide for your own safety.

Bicycles, like cars and motorcycles, are vehicles. Therefore, if bicyclists do not obey traffic regulations, and commit a traffic violation, they can be subject to severe penalties. Please understand the riding rules and manners for bicyclists and ride safely.

### Ride your bicycle on the left side of the road

In fact, bicycles in the roadway are considered vehicles. Here in Japan, you must ride a bicycle on the left side of the road and give pedestrians right of the way. Cycling on side walk is permitted only where there are signs that say “自転車歩道通行可 (bicycles allowed)”, or in unavoidable circumstances. Even if it is allowed to ride on side walk, you must yield to pedestrians and go slowly on sidewalks. On the Campus Pedestrian Walkway, pedestrians there have priority, and bikers must use the left side of the walkway.

⊗ Under articles 17 and 18 of the Road Traffic Act, violators are subject to **imprisonment of up to 3 months, or a fine of up to 50,000 yen**.

### Obey traffic signals and signs

You need to obey signals and signs. Failure to obey them has often resulted in traffic accidents, and in many cases bicyclists have been negligent. Many places on campus have poor visibility. It is very dangerous to ignore traffic signals or suddenly dart into sidewalks or roads, so please follow the signals and do not rush out to the road.

⊗ If you violate the rule, you are subject to **a penalty of up to 3 months in jail, or a fine of up to 50,000 yen**, under Article 7 of the Road Traffic Act.

### Have lights on at night

Bicyclists must use a light at night. Riding a bike at night without lights is extremely dangerous. If you don't have lights, it can put you and others in danger as the bikers cannot be easily seen by others, or they are unable to recognize the pedestrians on the street / road.

⊗ If you violate the rule, you are subject to **a fine of up to 50,000 yen**, under Article 52, Section 1, and Article 62 of the Road Traffic Act.

### Do not ride double or side-by-side

Riding double on a bicycle is extremely dangerous, as it is difficult to control the bicycle and the brakes are much less effective. Except for riding a bicycle with a child in a special seat, riding double is prohibited. Also, riding side by side on bicycles is not permitted. Violating these rules can cause not only troubles for pedestrians, but may also lead you to be involved in an accident.

⊗ If you violate the rule, you are subject to **a fine of up to 20,000 yen**, under Article 19, and Article 57, Section 2 of the Road Traffic Act.

### Do not ride a bicycle holding an open umbrella

Cycling while holding an umbrella is very dangerous on top of the danger of wet rainy roads. Not only it puts you in danger, you may cause an accident when your umbrella collide with pedestrians, cars, or motorcycles. On rainy days, please consider using public transportation or walking instead of riding a bicycle. If you still need to ride, wear a rain jacket or some other type of rain gear.

⊗ If you violate the rule, you are subject to **a fine of up to 50,000 yen**, under Article 71, Section 1, Clause 6 of the Road Traffic Act, or the road traffic rules of the public safety commission of your prefecture.

### Do not operate a cell phone, or listen to music while riding

To ride a bicycle safely for yourself and other road users, your full attention is needed when riding. In order to be aware of your surroundings, such as approaching cars or the voice of people around you, do not wear earphones when riding. Also, riding a bike one-handed while talking on / operating a phone is extremely dangerous as it does not allow you to control the properly or look ahead carefully.

### Parking bicycles in inappropriate places can cause troubles

Do not park your bicycle in non-designated bicycle parking area. Also, parking on and around “Braille blocks” (raised blocks for blind pedestrians) is strictly prohibited. Parking in non-designated area is particularly dangerous for people with visual impairments and in wheelchairs. It can narrow passageways, which can cause traffic congestion and accidents. It can also obstruct evacuation when a disaster hits, which is extremely dangerous.

## << Amendment to the Road Traffic Amendment Act of November 1, 2024 >>

- ① Using your phone while riding a bicycle
  - Holding a smartphone or other device in the hand, talking on the phone while riding a bicycle, or staring at the screen while riding a bicycle are newly prohibited and subject to penalties. \*Operation while stopped is not applicable.
    - Violators are subject to **imprisonment for not more than 6 months or a fine of not more than 100,000 yen.**
    - If a traffic hazard is created, **imprisonment for not more than one year or a fine of not more than 300,000 yen.**
- ② Driving under the influence of alcohol on a bicycle and aiding and abetting
  - In addition to drunk driving on bicycles, new penalties have been developed for serving alcoholic beverages and providing rides or bicycles with alcoholic beverages.
    - Violators and bicycle providers are subject to **imprisonment for up to 3 years or a fine of up to 500,000 yen.**
    - The provider of alcoholic beverages and passengers shall be **imprisoned for not more than 2 years or fined not more than 300,000 yen.**



## Bicycle Maintenance

Bicycles that are not well-maintained cannot perform at its best, and may cause an accident. In order to enjoy a safe and comfortable ride, the tires, chain, and other components should be regularly checked and maintained.



### 5-Minute Bike Safety Check

#### Bike Seat Height & Positioning

Check that the seat is adjusted at the right height and position for you.

#### Lock

Ensure to have a proper locking.

#### Reflectors

Keep the reflectors clean and maintained.

#### Chain

Keep your chain in good condition, and check if it is well adjusted.

#### Handlebars

Make sure your handlebars are straight and the stem is tight.

#### Bell (or Horn)

Check whether the bell or horn is in good working order.

#### Brakes

Grasp the hand brake levers for front and rear tires alternately while rocking the bike, and ensure the both breaks working properly.

#### Light

Check if the lights turn on and illuminate properly.

#### Tires

Make sure they are inflated, and are not wearing down.

#### IC tag sticker

Be sure the sticker is securely attached.

Front →

Back →



Remove the white paper back from the sticker and affix the sticker to your bicycle.

\*Any bicycles without a valid IC-Tag on campus will be removed.

⇒ Lastly, take your bicycle for a test ride.  
If anything sounds fishy, take your bike into the shop.

## To avoid unintentional/accidental crime.....

### Embezzlement of Lost Property;

- Recently, many unintentional bike thefts have been reported. Those who were stopped by police often claim that they thought the bike was abandoned, however, it is technically theft and considered as a crime "Embezzlement of Lost Property". Even though it may appear to be abandoned, it could be someone else's bike which got stolen and left there. To avoid committing a crime unintentionally, DO NOT TAKE WHAT'S NOT YOURS.

### The University's Disciplinary Action;

- If the students committed a severe traffic offence(e.g. drunken-driving, speeding offence, unlicensed driving, etc.) or they are at fault in a traffic accident, disciplinary actions (reprimand, suspension, or withdrawal) will



# Incidents / Traffic Accidents Map



- Unfortunately, many traffic accidents and incidents such as robbery, groping woman in public area, or flasher occur on/around campus. The map below shows the spots where accidents/incidents occurred the most.
- On top of the frequent accidents spots, some common bicycle accident cases on/around campus are described on the map below. In order to prevent those accidents, we need you all to ride in a safe and careful manner. When you use the Campus Pedestrian Walkway, please keep in mind that pedestrians always have priority there though the walkway is for both pedestrians and bikers. Also, it is very important to respect traffic rules and manners. For your safety and that of others, never cycle while holding an umbrella or cell phone, nor wearing earphones. And lastly, remember that you need to use extra caution in your riding when it rains and the walkway gets very slippery.

## Walkway Junction in front of Matsumi Pond

Situated at the meeting point of the sloping walkway and a roadway, many bike-on-bike accidents have occurred.

## Kasuga 4-Chome Intersection

Since many apartments are located in this area, the intersection tends to be busy and cause a lot of car-on-bike accident cases.

## Entrance / Exit of Hirasuna Pedestrian Tunnel

Traffic accidents tend to happen in the pedestrian tunnel that leads to the baseball field. Since it has no traffic light neither at the entrance nor exit of the tunnel, people tend to come in / out the tunnel without looking and have collisions. Further, some motor bikes enter the tunnel ignoring the fact that it is a pedestrian tunnel. Thus, collisions between bikes and motorbikes occur as well.

## Incidents on/ around Campus; Robberies and Thefts

(Aug.2023-Jul.2024, Tsukuba Police Station)

- ☀ Number of thefts & robberies
- Areas targeted by molesters/flashers
- ✕ High-risk crash sites
- 🕒 Areas to be extra careful at night
- 🚶 The Campus Pedestrian Walkway

## Shibasaki Intersection

Many students cross this intersection to go to grocery stores in Sakura, however, the intersection, which is always heavily crowded with vehicles and pedestrians, has a very high accident rate. Some tragic accidents resulting in death occurred in the past.



## University Park South-Crossroad

Many people use this intersection, especially in morning / evening commuting hours. There have been severe accidents in this intersection and at the crosswalk next to it.



## Crosswalk in front of University Hall

The small crosswalk at the bottom of the slope has poor visibility. Many cyclists tend to ignore the crosswalk to go up the following slopes and collisions with pedestrians occur.

## Walkway Crossroad / Path leads to Tsukuba Station

Since the area has a hospital and many houses, many people (including children, elders, and outpatients) pass the crossroad and use the walkway, the part that leads to Tsukuba station. There is heavy traffic on both the walkway and the road, so collisions with pedestrians often occur at these points.

