



TIPSHEET

BICYCLE TRAIN



WHAT IS A BICYCLE TRAIN?

A bicycle train is an organized or ad hoc group of students with adult leaders that travels to and from school together. Students benefit from being active before and after school, and improving their bike-riding skills.

Led by at least two adults (one at the front and one at the rear), bicycle train participants ride together or along a planned route where more students might be "picked up" along the way to school. Bicycle trains are best suited for upper elementary and middle school children.



How do I set up a Bicycle Train?

First decide on the route and schedule. Bicycle trains can be as simple as one meet-up location or as elaborate as having multiple "pick-up" locations. Things to consider when selecting your bicycle route:

- Where are the most riders coming from? One option is to meet at a central location and have a "park-and-ride." Alternatively, the bike train can start with one or two students in a single location and travel along a safe route that allows students to join up on the way to school.
- Are there bicycle paths or bike lanes that can be used along your selected route? If none are available, try to pick routes with low speed limits and minimal traffic.
- Where are the best places to cross the street? Select locations where motor vehicle traffic is controlled by a stop sign, traffic signal, or crossing guard for the street you are crossing.
- How will the bicycle train enter and exit the school grounds? Pick a route that avoids family cars, school buses and other motor vehicles as much as possible.
- Test the route! The adult leaders should ride the route during arrival and dismissal times, to make sure it works safely, before making it official.
- How often will the bike train operate? What is the morning start time? Set the schedule with pick-up times at each stop and let everyone know so they can be on time.

Provide adequate adult supervision:

- The bike train needs a minimum of two adult volunteers – one as the "conductor" and one as the "caboose!" After that, a good rule of thumb is to have one adult for every three to six children.



Getting ready for the ride: Safety first!

- Students should practice bicycle safety and handling skills before joining the bicycle train.
- All riders must wear helmets.
- All riders should wear brightly colored or reflective clothing.
- All riders should wear closed-toe shoes. Make sure all shoe laces are tied and out of reach of bicycle chains before beginning the ride.
- All riders should perform an [ABC Quick Check](#) to ensure their bicycle is working properly.
- Review the “Rules of the Road” before each ride.

Rules of the Road for students:

- Ride on the street or along shared-use paths, not on the sidewalk.
- Explain the late arrival policy for riders.
- Listen for and obey directions from the adult leader at all times.
- Stay in formation with an adult leader in front and in back. Do not pass other riders in the bicycle train.
- Ride with traffic, generally about an arm’s length from the curb. Ride as straight as you can so that cars can pass safely.
- Use hand signals to show when you are turning or stopping.
- At major intersections, where there is a traffic light or crossing guard, get off the bike and walk it across the street.

Rules of the Road for adult volunteer bicycle train leaders:

- Know the route to take before you start.
- Use safe riding habits.
- Keep track of all the students participating.
- Make sure students arrive at school on time and park their bicycles in the designated location.

Keep it going!

- Encourage students to name their bicycle train or route.
- Provide incentives such as book bag charms, stickers, or healthy snacks!
- Keep track of participation and reward students for miles/days biked by recognizing them at school assemblies or during the school’s morning news announcements.
- Thank volunteers with small gifts, such as handmade cards from students or recognition in the school’s newsletters.



Keep it going!

Resources:

http://www.walkbiketoschool.org/sites/default/files/SRTS_BikeTrain_final.pdf
<http://www.nhtsa.gov/Bicycles>
<http://www.pedbikeinfo.org/bicyclesaferjourney/>