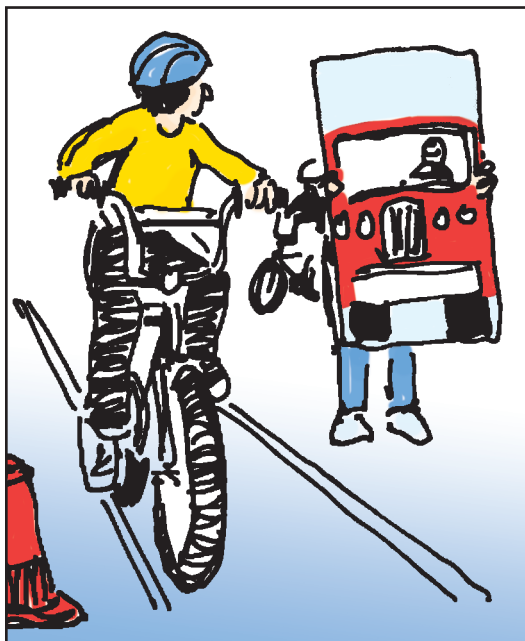
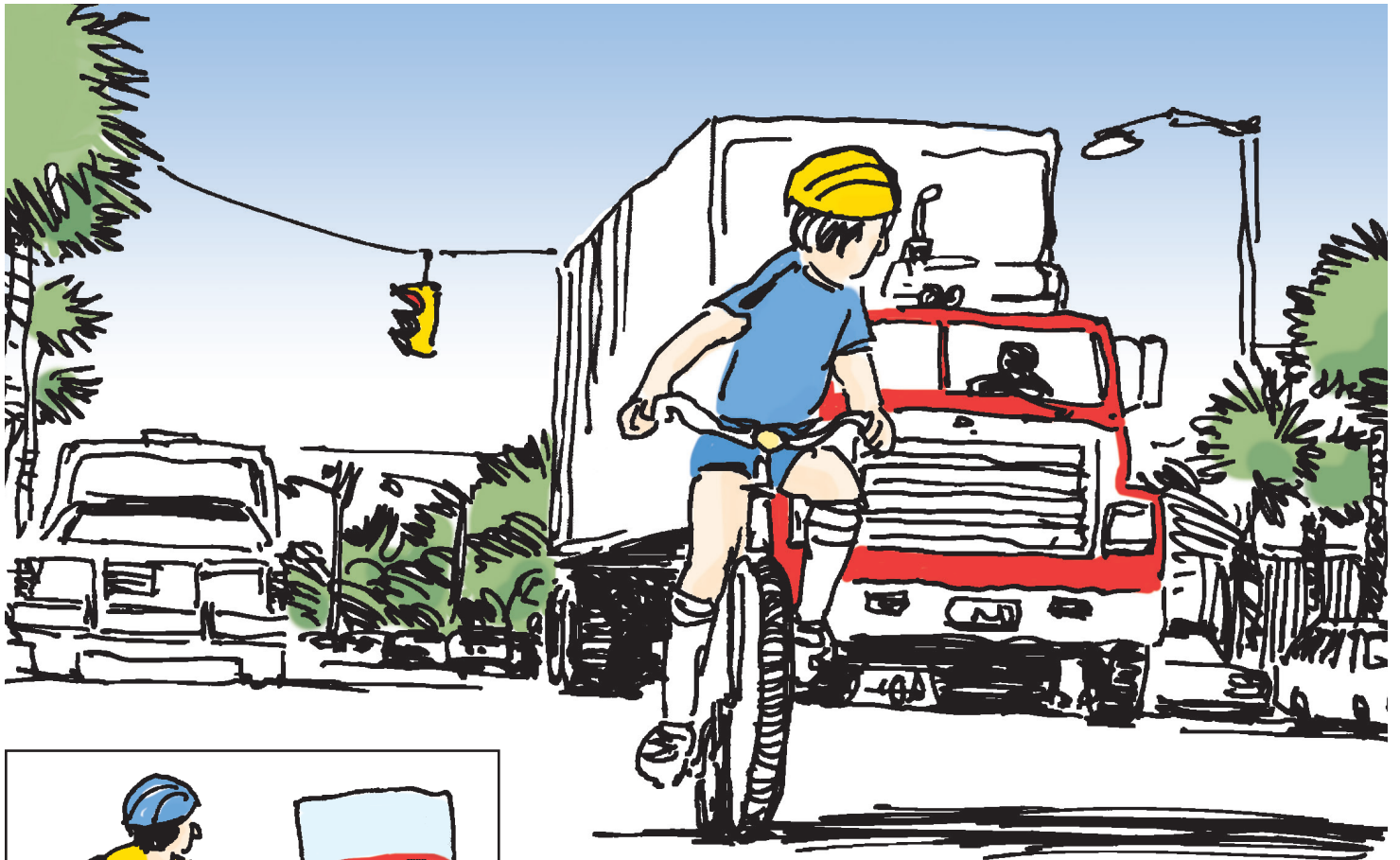


The Guide to Bicycle Rodeos

Published by Kalkomey Enterprises, Inc.



- Balance and traffic skills
- Accident causes and cures
- Resources for safety campaigns
- Examples of successful projects

**Includes all the masters you will need to
conduct your own bike rodeos!**

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Bicycle Safety

During the past decade, bicycle safety has changed dramatically.

Cycling continues to grow as a recreational sport as well as an increasing means of transportation. Safety programs also have evolved. These programs previously

taught simple “dos” and “do nots”, but we now teach hows and whys.

We’ve learned more about accidents and more about how bikes and cars share the

road. One basic lesson we’ve learned is that the bicycle is a vehicle and bicyclists are drivers of vehicles.

Education is paying off

Since the publication of the landmark Cross and Fisher study in 1977, we began to truly understand the types of accidents cyclists have. Since then, each decade brought changes to bicycles and comprehensive cycling education.

From 1995 to 2005, bicycling fatalities decreased by 6%. Education efforts are paying off, but we must continue teaching cyclists the proper way to cycle, create good cycling habits, and to become defensive drivers.

In the past, statistics indicated that head injuries occurring due to a cycling accident were increasing. To counteract those staggering numbers, almost all of our 50 states enacted laws requiring children 16 and younger to wear helmets.



Accident facts to keep in mind

1. On average, 700 plus bicyclists die each year in accidents.
2. There are about 44,000 reported injury-producing bike-car accidents each year.
3. There are about 40,000 more that go unreported each year.
4. Urban areas report more fatalities (73% of total).
5. About 14% of all cyclists who die in bike-car accidents are under the age of 16.
6. About 28% of cyclists injured in bike-car accidents are under the age of 16.
7. One-seventh of the cyclists killed in traffic crashes in 2006 were between 5 and 15 years old.
8. The profile of the most common bike-car accident is in an urban area at a non-intersection location, between the hours of 5 p.m. and 9 p.m. during the summer months.

Common causes of fatal crashes

• Failure to yield right-of-way

How it happens: Cyclist merges without yielding to other traffic and is hit by the overtaking car.

How many accidents happen this way: 16.82% of fatal accidents

• Riding, playing, or working on roadway

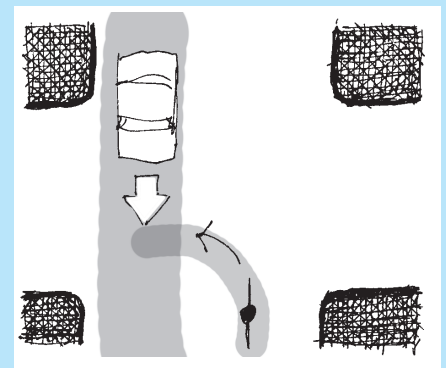
How it happens: Cyclist is on a roadway, and a motorized vehicle and the cyclist collide.

How many accidents happen this way: 10.2% of fatal accidents

• Improper crossing of roadway or intersection

How it happens: Cyclist improperly crosses without yielding to other traffic and is hit.

How many accidents happen this way: 8.67% of fatal accidents



Source: 2006 NHTSA "Traffic Safety Facts"

We're directing lessons at specific age groups

Studies also have shown us that cyclists of different ages have different accident problems.

We now know that children have different physical and psychological abilities than adult cyclists, young drivers exhibit different behaviors and driving skills than older drivers, and college-age cyclists may be reached through educational outlets that differ from those of other groups.

As an instructor, I know I have only so much time with the kids. If I'm called in to teach second graders and I have half an hour, I hit driveway safety hard, talk about helmets (showing them mine and other samples), discuss stop and yield signs, the proper side of the road, and show them some of the safety equipment on my bike.

I've found reading the accident studies very valuable because it keeps me from wasting precious time on subjects that aren't important to the kids.

—John Williams

We're getting the kids on their bikes and on the road

In the past, people thought that handing out some brochures and giving a pep talk were effective ways to teach bike safety. Now it's become obvious that such passive approaches don't teach the necessary information.

That makes sense, too. No one would think of teaching baseball, football, square dancing, car driving, or hunter safety by handing out brochures and talking to an auditorium full of kids.

We understand that it is important to get the kids on their bikes and teach real-world skills. Some of the lessons can be done on a playground or parking lot. Others must be taught on the road.

We need to demonstrate the skills, discuss why they are important, let the kids practice, and then test them—and correct them if necessary.



It's best to start teaching kids at an early age. When they're young, they are still impressionable.

By the age of 10, however, most kids will have spent many hundreds of hours in the saddle and will have formed many bad habits. The longer you wait before training, the harder it will be.



An adult cyclist dealing with urban traffic. In many states, the bicycle is defined as a vehicle, and the operator has the same rights and duties as any other vehicle driver.

According to a 2006 report published by the National Highway Traffic Safety Association (NHTSA), college-age adult cyclists sustain an accident rate equal to that of elementary school kids.

Bike safety—important now more than ever

Some might wonder why we need to teach bicycling at all. That would be a reasonable attitude if bicycling weren't so popular. Cycling remains one of the most popular participation sports in the country.

According to the League of American Bicyclists, in 2000, 20 million new bikes were purchased. In the early 1980s, bicycling became a billion dollar per year industry.

One important aspect of the continuing growth of bicycling is the number of adults who ride. Until the late 1960s, bicycling was pretty much a children's pastime. Since that time, however, more and more adults have taken up the bicycle.

Unfortunately, since few of these riders have had any formal training, we're seeing a growing accident problem among cycling adults. This problem seems most acute in college towns.

In the past, bike safety campaigns taught young bike riders good habits so they could become safe car drivers when they

grow up. Now, we need to teach good habits to kids so they can become better cyclists when they grow up. The success of our efforts will be measured in terms of reduced accidents and a growing acceptance of the place of the bicycle in our nation's transportation system.



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The Bicycle Rodeo or Skills Test

One part of a successful community program is the skills event. This manual is devoted to helping you organize and carry out a local event.

What is a rodeo?

Traditionally, a bike rodeo was an event in which children rode their bicycles through a set of bland exercises. Few of the exercises were important. They didn't deal directly with any of the known causes of bicycle accidents.

And since the rodeo was primarily a competitive test, the kids didn't really get a chance to learn much or practice the skills.

In many communities, the rodeo was the only focus for bike safety. One rodeo

per year was seen as enough training for any young cyclist.

For these reasons, serious bike safety professionals have often downplayed the value of bike rodeos. In so doing, they have also overlooked the potential good that a bike rodeo can do.

What can a rodeo do?

First, it can focus community attention on the need for cyclist training. By highlighting important skills that each cyclist needs, a rodeo can be an important

marketing tool for an education program.

Parents often have too much faith in the cycling abilities of their kids. A successful rodeo can demonstrate weaknesses and encourage parents to take more interest in their children's cycling instruction.

Rodeos are well-established traditional events. Many people know what a bike rodeo is. Many will donate goods or labor to one, and many will participate.

In some communities, the annual bike rodeo attracts thousands of participants.

A rodeo doesn't have to be "just a test." By encouraging the kids to work on the exercises, by offering hints, and by urging them to improve, rodeo organizers can turn a skills test into a useful learning experience.

A rodeo can deal with important accident problems. If organizers understand how bike accidents happen, they can orchestrate an event that deals with the most common causes.

A rodeo can be an excellent place to test out new on-bike lessons. To do this, a bike rodeo doesn't have to be a huge event. It can involve as few as 5 to 10 kids after school.

A rodeo can help with evaluation of educational programs. It can give the kids a chance to show off their skills, and it can reinforce the lessons.

If the kids do well, that's a good sign. If they do poorly that suggests the instruction isn't as effective as it could be.

How is this rodeo different from others?

Like many other bike rodeos, the one described here includes a series of stations. In many ways, it looks like other rodeos, and most of the organizational steps are the same. But there are some differences.

First, this rodeo was designed to teach real-world skills that kids need to survive on the roads. There are exercises in looking back without swerving, riding straight while missing potholes, and crossing busy streets without getting hit by cars.

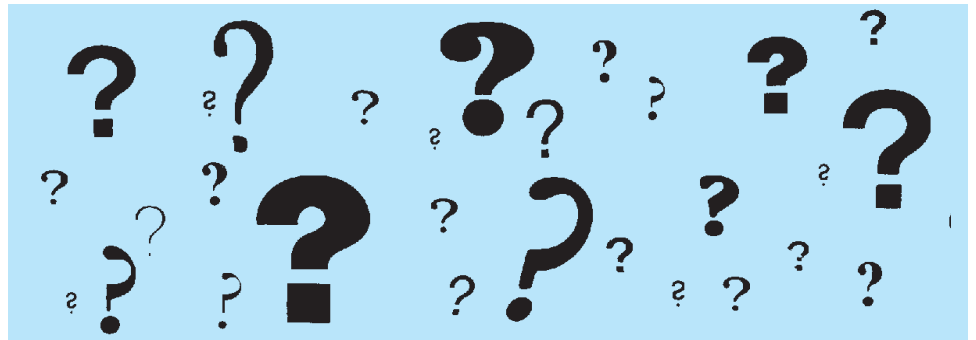
Each of these lessons relates directly to an accident problem young cyclists have.

The next thing to notice about this rodeo is that we give you the what and the why of each station. We want you to understand why each is included and what it does for the kids.

But we give you this information for another reason as well. There are always new and possibly better ways of getting a point across. Each person or group can add a twist to improve the rodeo.

Most of the lessons here have gone through just such changes.

We hope you take this same approach to the rodeo—experimenting with it,



Questions and Answers About the Bike Rodeo ...

What if we don't have a large group of helpers? How can we cut back?

- There's nothing sacred about this rodeo. You can certainly trim to suit your staffing limitations.
- Cut back on the scope of the event. Trying to run an event for 2,000 kids with a skeleton crew will only frustrate everyone.
- If you have only 20 or 30 people, run a rodeo for 100 or 200 kids. You can reduce the event size by limiting advertising to a target neighborhood and a couple of nearby schools.
- Another way to cut back is to drop specific stations. We've run small events for 100 first graders using only four stations (bike shop, rock dodge/thread the needle, who's there?, and demon driveway). We were able to get by with only 15 people running the actual stations.
- If you take this approach, try to include the most important lessons for the age group you're teaching.

What about the hand signals—isn't it important to teach them?

- Hand signals are important but not as important as either looking back without swerving or getting across an intersection without being hit by a car.

- A cyclist who makes a left turn simply by holding out a hand signal and then going is likely to get hit. No signal in the world will change that. Safe left turns involve looking back and yielding to overtaking traffic.
- Programs that emphasize knowing the hand signals to the exclusion of more important topics are misguided.

Each station has an evaluator. What are they, and do we really need them?

- The evaluators stand at the end of each station and grade each child's performance. This is important if you want to give out prizes for performance but it is important for another reason as well.
- The whole point of the rodeo is to teach survival skills. Knowing how to dodge a rock without swerving more than one foot can keep a cyclist out of trouble. For this reason, judging performance is vital.
- The kids need to know if they are doing skills the right way or the wrong way. If they get a particular lesson wrong, they must have the chance to try again until they learn the right way.

changing things that don't work well for you, and adding new ideas. We've left space for you to write notes and ideas.

You may also find this rodeo more of a challenge to organize than most. It's easier to run the kids around a figure eight than to teach them to look back without swerving. It's easier to have them weave around the traffic cones than learn to cross the street without being hit.

But the rewards of teaching survival

skills are so much greater. You will be able to see the kids improve and you will know that you are making a real contribution to their safety. That's a good feeling.



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Organizing Your Bicycle Rodeo

Putting together a successful rodeo takes organizational skills and a commitment to seeing things through. Here are some ideas to help make your event a rousing success.

The first step

Before you decide your plan of action, organizing the event is likely one of the most important preliminary steps you can make. Project management software programs are great for the scope of a bicycle or rodeo. If you prefer pen and paper, purchase a large notebook. Use it to keep copies of all correspondence, literature, assignments, rosters, contact information, sources, ideas, leads, notes on for improvement, and other tips.

Either method will not only guide your work for this year's event, but also will

become an indispensable tool for building future events. In our experience, using strong organizational skills cuts down on the work needed the following year by 50-75%, and also increases efficiency. Don't just think about it—do it.

Finding a leader

Chances are you have a natural interest in setting up the skills course, and you have already decided to take the lead. If so, skip to the next section.

If not, then your first task is to find a natural leader who can pull together a

volunteer effort. The person selected shouldn't simply be interested in safety, children, or bicycling. Instead, look for a mover and shaker who understands how to work with others to carry out a community goal.

In other towns, leaders for such events have included public relations people, police officers, PTA leaders, or leaders from local service clubs. Leadership must be combined with enthusiasm and a desire to succeed.

Finding volunteers

Even a dynamic leader cannot work alone. By forming a committee of 5 to 10 members, you can assemble a core group to help solicit donations, promote the event, find volunteers, and solve problems. An effective working committee will assure an ongoing life for your rodeo in future years.

Select your committee carefully. As a suggestion, you might consider recruiting active people from the following groups:

The media, the local bicycle trade, civic clubs, parent/teacher groups, local recreation departments and other city/county staff, safety organizations, and the local office of the AAA or the local bicycle club.

Keep the committee to a workable size. Having too many members can slow progress to a crawl as some members may attempt to take over. Try to keep it from 5 to 10 members total.

Set your meeting dates well in advance, and call or e-mail your members to confirm their attendance. With busy people, you may find it hard to get everyone together at one time.

Why not try regular breakfast meetings at a local cafe? Groups like the Kiwanis and Jaycees use this approach in many communities.

Keep your meetings brief and to the point. Have a well-developed outline. Make specific assignments with realistic completion dates. Your committee serves you best when they can review and add to and expand the work of key staff.

Also, send out brief progress reports to committee members regularly. This will help committees to stay abreast of progress and make them feel like they're part of something. This should also streamline your meetings since members will have received briefings already.

E-mailing updates is a simple and effective way to keep your committee members in the know. Don't underestimate the value of this sort of communication. Most e-mail programs have a groups' function. You create your group and then just select that group in your future e-mails.



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Above: A good crew of volunteers is the key to a successful event. Treat them well and they may want to help again next year.

Important: *Put the local media on your mailing list. If they receive regular progress reports as you prepare for the event, they'll be more likely to cover it.*

Setting the size of your event

Your first decision will be size. How many participants are you planning to serve? Rodeos can attract from 30 to more than 1,000 participants.

Be realistic when you set your goal. If you want to attract the entire city, then your event will have to be one of the most interesting events happening.

You'll also have to hold it when good weather is anticipated but before families take vacations, join summer baseball leagues, or get deeply involved in other warm-weather pursuits.

Let's assume that this is your first year and you would like to have between 100 and 300 participants. Although you may be thinking of just the number of kids, remember that each child usually comes with one or two older people.

Your numbers will add up fast. Keep this in mind when you are planning for food, parking, activities, and other logistics.

From here on, we'll refer to an event with 100 to 300 participants as an "entry-

level" rodeo. This scale event demands only a modest-sized site with one range of skills tests, and it keeps your volunteer and funding needs down to a manageable level.

Next, let's look at a "fair-level" rodeo, which we recommend only after you've successfully held at least one entry-level rodeo. To have a successful rodeo, you will need many other attractions to entice your audience from the neighborhoods.

Expect from 300 to more than 1,000 participants. You'll need two ranges, and your site must be picked carefully to provide for ample parking, food service, P.A. systems, and your other activities. You must make another critical decision.

Choosing a time

No other decision you make will be as critical. Pick an autumn or spring weekend that does not conflict with popular local sporting events, festivals, holidays, the opening of the little league season, or other such attractions.

Check with your local weather station for advice on times to avoid—months of heavy rains, for example. Their historic records can be very helpful. Also, talk to the people who set the schedule for your proposed site.

If it's a popular site, you may have to book a year in advance. If possible, choose a time that reduces conflicts for your key volunteers.

Choosing a place

First, consider the scale of your event. A large rodeo may require a site as large as the state fairgrounds, while a small one could be held in a large church parking lot. To run the skills course, you'll need a clean, flat, hard-packed surface.

In some cases a grassy area will work. But before you commit to a site, test it out with some bikes. Car parking will take at least twice the space needed for your field activities. You will also need electricity, telephones, indoor shelter for movies, rest rooms, running water, and other services for food preparation.

Check with local municipalities to determine if a permit is needed for your event. Whatever site you select, keep in mind the need to barricade a section for your skills course events. Some sites will make this chore difficult. Your site should be centrally located, or at least easy to reach by families in cars and families cycling to the event.

Each range will require a minimum space of 175 feet by 200 feet. The preferred size for each range is 200 feet by 250 feet. This allows reasonable movement within the course, and allows greater flexibility in your layout.

The best sites in town are often booked at least three to six months in advance, so secure your site early.

When reserving your site, also reserve the site for the evening before your event. Then weather permitting, you will be able to lay out your range(s) the night before. Otherwise, plan on getting up very early the morning of your rodeo.

Finding money and supplies

Your next step is to set a budget and to start soliciting donations. You will probably buy some supplies and services, but in-kind contributions should provide the bulk of your needs. List proposed cash purchases separately from expected donations.

The best and easiest way to fund your rodeo is to secure one major sponsor.

Some sites others have used successfully

Entry-level rodeo

- Church parking lots
- Shopping malls
- Large movie complexes
- Neighborhood parks
- Schools

Fair-level rodeo

- Sports arenas
- Civic centers
- City or regional parks
- Major street closures

Materials, equipment, and supplies

Overall site needs

Supplies:

- Balloons (for decoration): 1 gross
- Balloons (to hand out): 1 each
- Safety films (if desired): 1 or 2
- Fingerprint ink and cards: enough to fingerprint all the kids
- Helium (for balloons): as needed
- Name tags: enough for volunteers
- Spray cleaner and towels
- T-shirts: enough for volunteers

Equipment:

- Canopies (shade for workers): 2 or 3
- Chairs: 2 times number of tables
- Electrical generator (power for P.A. system, lights, engravers, etc.): 1
- Engravers (to put ID on bikes): 2 to 5
- Extension cords: 12 or so
- First-aid kits: 1 or 2
- Movies and projector (if desired): 1 or 2
- P.A. system: 1
- Portable stage: 1
- Portable toilets: 2 to 4
- Tables: 5 to 35, depending on event size
- Trash cans: 1 dumpster and 6 big cans
- Trucks to haul equipment: 1 or 2

Feeding the participants

Supplies:

Total quantities vary with size of event

- Cups (12 oz.): 1 or 2 per participant
- Hot dogs: 1 or 2 per participant
- Ice: lots
- Mustard, catsup, and condiments: 1 to 3 gallons each
- Napkins: 1 or 2 per participant
- Buns: 1 or 2 per participant
- Soft drink (tanks): 5 to 35

Equipment:

- Large gas stoves: 1 or 2
- Big ice chest from ice company: 1
- Trash cans: 1 dumpster, 6 big cans
- Kitchen equipment: as needed

Some possibilities include the city or county recreation department, the police benevolent association, a local AAA chapter, a local service club, the chamber of commerce, fast food restaurants, area banks, realtors, insurance companies, or associations representing these groups.

Once you've secured a sponsor, work hard to keep them. Include their name and logo on your posters, or flyers, and in news releases. Don't forget to mention their role.

If you do things right, they will be so

pleased with the positive association, the success of your event, and its future potential that they will agree to sponsor your event again. If so, be sure to include them on your next year's organizing committee.

Most of your contributions will not come from your sponsor, but from many small donors. As an example, ask a local supermarket or meat market to contribute 500 or 2,000 hot dogs, your local bread distributor to give you the buns, a fast food restaurant to chip in with the

Running the stations

Supplies (per range *)

- Bicycle inspection forms: 200 to 4,000**
- Flyers for parents: 200 to 2,000**
- Pencils: 20 to 50
- Pens for evaluators: 20
- Watercolor markers: 20
- Rubber bands for hang tags: 200 to 4,000*

Props (per range*)

- Bicycle: 1
- Assorted bike tools: 3 each
- Tire pumps: 1 or 2
- Cars or vans: 4
- Hazard posters: 20 (see station nine)
- Sponges or 3" x 5" pieces of plastic: 50 to 70
- Stakes to hold signs: 20, three-foot long
- Assorted bike locks: 4 to 5
- Traffic signal (optional): 1

Cardboard props *** (per range*)

- Bush (can be Christmas Tree): 1
- Cars (large): 7
- Cars (small): 6
- Fence (can be wooden): one 8-foot section
- Misc. pieces of cardboard for assorted signs: 5 to 10
- Station id signs: 1 per station
- Stop signs: 3
- Yield signs: 2

* For a large, fair-level event, run two ranges, one for younger kids and one for older kids.

** Numbers depend on size of event.

*** See samples on page 19.

Staffing requirements

Entry-level rodeo

- Instructors, aids, and evaluators: 41 to 50*
- Master of Ceremonies: 1
- Assistant to M.O.C.: 1
- Event Director: 1
- Assistant Event Director: 1
- Food preparers and servers: 10 to 15
- Registration: 2 to 3
- Bike engraving: 2 to 3
- First aid: 1 to 2
- Finger printing: 1 to 2
- Films: 1 to 2
- Relief workers: 2 to 3
- Others: _____

*For tips on cutting down on your staffing needs, see "Questions and Answers ..." on page 7.

Fair-level rodeo

- Instructors, aids, and evaluators: 82 to 100*
- Master of Ceremonies: 1
- Assistant to M.O.C.: 1
- Event Director: 1
- Assistant Event Director: 1
- Food preparers and servers: 15 to 20
- Registration: 3 to 5
- Bike engraving: 3 to 5
- First aid: 2 to 3
- Finger printing: 2 to 3
- Films: 1 to 2
- Relief workers: 4 to 7
- Others: _____

packets of mustard, catsup, napkins, cups and plates, and a local church, school, or motel for the ice.

Be creative and resourceful. Remember, there are multiple sources for everything you need. Resist the temptation to ask one person for everything unless he or she is genuinely interested in doing more.

Keep in mind that you are not begging for donations, you are giving merchants an opportunity to participate in a wonderful event. Take this attitude when you visit

their stores and offices.

Show them what they will gain from being associated. And don't be afraid to tell them what you want.

Too many people hem and haw, asking for "any contributions that can be spared" or mumble that "your help would be greatly appreciated." If you need 500 hot dogs, ask for that. Don't leave it up to your prospect to guess your needs.

People are more likely to say yes to a specific request than to a vague (and,

therefore, possibly unlimited) request. You may be surprised at how easy it is to get those 500 hot dogs.

Talk to your potential donors early. Two to three weeks notice may be enough when you ask for a small print job or some hot dog buns, but go after your major prizes well in advance.

For example, the bicycle shop may be able to set aside one of last year's models for you if you ask soon enough; otherwise, it may go in the spring clearance sale.

Whenever you can, acknowledge your main sponsor and each contributor in your print literature and during your actual event. But strike a balance. If you go overboard, people will think your event is just an advertising gimmick.

The timetable

Establish a detailed timetable for your event, showing what needs to be done when, who is in charge, and who will help—then stick to your schedule. Enough challenges will occur during the final week anyway. You won't want to be taking care of all the details you forgot to do earlier.

If your team is working smoothly, you can accomplish much of your final work on the phone or e-mail, and with one or two runners in reserve.

Finding volunteers

Since you need between 30 and 125 helpers depending on your event's scale, you must attract a diversity of volunteers. Even if your chief of police has committed 50 of his best, you need other people too. Look for skilled recreation or physical education teachers to run some of the courses, sharp bicycle dealers and bike club members to help check bikes and demonstrate skills, and several dependable civic groups to serve food, register bikes, direct traffic, and lay out the course.

Directing the volunteers

Since many parts of your event will be going on simultaneously, you will need an assistant in charge of each of your main activities—food, prizes, entertainment, the skills course, parking, registration, inspection, and other events.

Each of these key people must be trained and will need some written instructions. Meet with them individually at least two weeks before your event.

For some, written instructions can be brief while others—especially your assistant handling the skills course—will need detailed instructions. A special section of this manual outlines the skills course.

Your course supervisor should try all of the stations out in advance. Plan several dry runs at a school parking lot with a few kids, and take notes of any problems or ideas.

The difference between a great event and a mediocre one is team spirit among your volunteers. If they are enthused and involved, problems won't stop the progress.

Get your volunteers special T-shirts or caps. These will help identify them to the public, and it will give them something unique to keep afterwards.

How about a banquet or special breakfast before the event? You could pass out the shirts or hats, make last-minute announcements, and get everyone fired up. And don't forget the thank-you notes after they do a great job of running the event.

Publicity

Often, people complain that their event wasn't covered by the newspaper, radio, or TV. They feel they've been slighted and ignored while other less-worthy events got scads of coverage.

Publicity doesn't just happen. Newspaper reporters and TV film crews don't roam the streets looking for stories. Nor do they always know what's going on everywhere in town. You have to tell them what you're doing and why it's worth covering.

This part of the project is so important that you should pick your public relations person carefully. Someone with contacts in the media, a feel for what is newsworthy, and a track record at getting publicity can do wonders for your project.

Unless you do a good job of selling the importance of your rodeo, chances are that only a few people will attend. The sad truth is that a safety event isn't the opening



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Rewarding your helpers

- Want to reward your volunteers for their help? Give them special T-shirts! Although a T-shirt may be a small token of appreciation, it can make your helpers feel special and part of something. You may find them asking to help next year.
 - Find a talented graphic artist, a donor to cover the cost, and you're off and rolling. Don't forget to change either the design
- or color of the shirt each year. Your helpers will want the whole collection.
- Also don't forget to mail hand-written letters of appreciation, preferably signed by your chief of police, or another high-ranking official in your community.
 - If some of your helpers played a key role or worked especially hard, send a special letter, with a copy to their employer.

of a great new video arcade. Safety isn't even little league, or the dozen or so more attractive events in your community.

Visit each school and talk to as many classes as you can. Make presentations to school assemblies, and leave behind flyers and posters. But before going to any school, clear your visit with the administration. Let the superintendent know what you want to do, and then approach the principals.

Next, tack up posters on public bulletin boards, and other high-traffic areas (e.g., supermarkets, theatres and recreation centers). Your town's website may put an announcement on its home page, as well. But don't stop there.

Get your message on mall marquees, as well as the marquees of popular businesses on each of the main roads through town. Set up TV and radio

talk show presentations, and ask about public service announcements (PSAs). You may be able to get free publicity by sending some photos and text to your local TV stations.

With radio stations, one good approach is to send written announcements or news releases. Some people prefer to give the stations PSAs on tape, complete with background music.

But it's a lot less trouble to give them written material. And you get the added benefit of having the kids' favorite radio personalities read your message.

Don't forget to prepare press packets. These packets should contain news releases about your event, 8" x 10" glossy pictures, related stories on bike safety, the latest research on bicycle use, accident statistics, and anything else you think ought to be included.



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Competition vs. learning

- Avoid the temptation to make the skills course an overly competitive event. The aim should be to teach. Children already have a keen desire to succeed in the presence of their teachers, friends, and parents.
- By adding competition to this event, you run the risk of having your students try to grimly outperform each other. When this happens, the focus changes from what is being taught and what they should take time to learn or practice.

Teaching Tips

- One thing to keep in mind: you will have to work hard in some places to keep the lesson from becoming a parade where the kids simply ride, mimicking the person in front. That is one of the most common problems in both cyclist training and cyclist behavior.
- Break up groups, and throw in extra things. The problem won't be serious in the handling skills lessons but may be very important in traffic skills lessons.

But put the packet together carefully. No one appreciates a blizzard of unrelated and unorganized papers!

If your budget can afford it, print a colorful poster with professional graphics for wide distribution. Find out who can donate printing and typesetting services—perhaps your main sponsor, a city or county agency, school, church, the local AAA office, or some other safety organizations can pay the bill.

Prizes

Prizes are an important part of the promotional mix. Both entertainment (next section) and prizes are critical if you are going to attract kids and parents to your event.

Prizes fall into two categories—those you can distribute to most everyone (e.g., T-shirts, caps, flags, posters) and those that everyone has a chance to win. At least several of your prizes should be for big money.

Often you can get a local merchant or group of merchants to pay for the design and production of 100 to 1,000 T-shirts or ball caps. But remember to allow at least six to eight weeks lead time for production. There's nothing worse than having 800 kids clamoring for the T-shirts featured on all your posters while the shirts haven't cleared the manufacturer's shipping dock.

An important part of the skills course is the rewards kids earn for doing something correctly. At each station, there are small prizes that each child can win by simply improving.

They don't have to compete against others in order to win. After all, we're trying to teach all the children to be better cyclists, not reward a select few.

As the riders enter the course, they are given a hang tag that attaches to their handlebars with a rubber band. On the tag, there are numbers for each station and boxes for the judges to check.

At the end of the entire course, the kids turn their tags in and receive their prizes. These need not be elaborate or expensive. A sundae or milkshake and hamburger at their favorite restaurant would please many kids. The big prizes should be awarded through chance. Find a local celebrity (e.g., a popular radio personality, TV personality, or sports hero) to make the draw. Give away at least one big prize, like a new bicycle, each hour or half hour. This way those coming early won't be disappointed if they have to leave. After each drawing, tell the crowd that other prizes will be given away in another 30 to 60 minutes. Many folks will stick around for the entire morning!

And don't forget the adults. Mom and dad might enjoy a free dinner at their favorite restaurant, tickets to a popular concert, or a new appliance. Many such prizes can be obtained for the name recognition that will be given over the P.A. system as you announce the prize.

Providing entertainment

Choose a popular Master of Ceremonies. If your local "Officer Friendly" is a hit with the kids, he or she will be ideal. Otherwise consider a TV or radio personality that

either the kids or parents recognize. A guest appearance by a popular celebrity will also help.

We suggest that you have at least one form of entertainment each hour. But be careful not to overdo it; you could overwhelm the skills course!

For a stage, try to locate a large semi-trailer flatbed. Also check with your local recreation department for a portable stage and lighting system. Consider having safety displays like the local Life Flight helicopter or Resuscitation Annie.

Feeding the participants

Rounding out your attractions are the free food. Hot dogs, chips, and cold beverages are always favorites. Try to get a local civic club or merchant to provide food service as a turnkey operation.

Look for an organization with a special camper or trailer for preparing and serving food. If you start looking early enough, you also can find sources for free hot dogs, buns, ice, potato chips, popcorn, beverages, and even cotton candy.

Before you shut down

Make some final notes in your notebook before you shut down operations. It's much easier to take a half hour or so and collect your thoughts now, than to try to remember just how you laid out your course or what time you ran out of coke months down the road. Invite your key people to share their ideas at a breakfast meeting (any money left over that shouldn't be kept for next year? ... here's the perfect place to spend it).

Sent a nice thank-you card to each of the people that either donated time, goods, or money to your event. If you don't have the time to do this, pick the very best person on your committee to take charge. This is a most important detail.

Organizing the truly small rodeo

The large rodeo doesn't fit everyone's needs. Maybe you've got 30 scouts or one 4th-grade class. What can you do? I've run successful events with as few as four kids but generally have class sizes of 10 to 20. By simplifying my own mini-rodeos, I can carry everything I need on my bike now. For slightly larger events, everything fits in a small car. Here's how to run a truly small rodeo.

Approach:

Focus on a limited number of stations to cut the work (and the space) needed. Take all kids through in a group, dealing with one station at a time. This will further reduce your staffing needs. If you know the stations well (do your homework and practice with your own kids), you'll be able to run the event with two or three novice volunteers.

Stations:

Choosing from the rodeo stations listed on pages 20-42, use Stations 1, 4, 6, and 7. If you like, send the poster from Station 9 home with the kids. If you have time, add the slow race described on page 42. Participants enjoy this one.

Station 1: The Bike Shop (p. 20-21)

Gather the kids around and have them check their own bikes as you demonstrate with yours. Have assistants circulate among the group, helping as needed. Mention safety equipment (helmets, lights, etc.) while you talk. Also discuss hazards and obstacles. Ask students what hazards they have faced. Use their experiences to build the lesson. Learn additional teaching points from pages 24-25.

Station 2: Demon Driveway (p. 28-29)

This is one of the most enjoyable and useful lessons in the rodeo. You may prefer to save it for last. You can replace the required fence and bush props with real parked cars (see photo on p. 29); this is especially useful in windy conditions. While your volunteers deal with the cardboard cars, stand at the driveway to coach the kids.

Station 3: Who's There? (p. 32-33)

Learning to look back without swerving is both useful and fun. And the kids learn

it quickly. Instead of setting the station up with three lanes, use one lane and position two volunteers on the left side of the lane about 20 feet apart. After the kids have gone through several times, move your volunteers to the right side to give students practice looking that way.

Station 4: Rock Dodge (p. 34-35)

Use the lane from Station 3 for this lesson. Place the pieces of plastic stair tread cover in the lane as shown on page 35. Move them closer together as the kids get better and need more of a challenge.

Staffing:

1 instructor, 2 to 6 assistants

Sites:

Find an unoccupied paved area 50' x 100'. This could be a playground, bank parking lot (on Sunday), a corner of a large department store lot, or just about any relatively clean, paved, and empty space. (Make sure to get permission.)

Layout:

No layout is needed for Station 1—just gather the kids around. The driveway doesn't need a complicated layout. With the parked cars, a bit of tape, and a couple of traffic cones, the kids will get the idea. For Stations 3 and 4, use 3-inch masking tape to create one 60-foot-long lane.

Materials:

- 2 rolls of 3-inch masking tape
- 4 to 10 traffic cones (optional)
- 2-3 small cardboard cars
- 1 bush
- 1 fence (optional)
- 1 plastic stair tread cover cut into small (e.g., 3" x 5") rectangles

Actually, I've found that working with a smaller group can be especially satisfying because you can get to know the kids, work with them on specific challenges, and see real improvements in their skills.

— John Williams



Using Displays

You can pack more into your event by including them, and you can give non-participants something to do.

No matter how smoothly your event goes, there will be delays. Why not take advantage of that time?

Staging areas, where kids wait before going through a lesson, and the registration table are perfect places to set up displays on safety, bike locks, helmets, lights, and other subjects.

Where do you get these displays? One possibility would be to ask local bike clubs. Most likely, some members have well-equipped commuter bikes they would be willing to bring. There's nothing like the real thing.

Another possibility would be 4-H or scouting groups. They could build a display as one of their projects. As an example, a scout group in Seattle, Washington, built an elaborate and working display of bike lights for a cycling convention.

Also consider classes at your local schools. Cooperative art teachers could give bike safety poster assignments a week or two before your rodeo. Imagine the

color you could add to your event with artwork from a hundred kids.

With planning, these sorts of projects can help build the kids' interest and anticipation and make sure your event is the event of the season. Be sure to make your contacts with the groups or schools at least several months in advance.

Some display ideas

Bike locks/good and bad: Ask the Police Department to cut the locks off some auction bikes just before they hold their sale. (Often, stolen bikes have cables and chains neatly coiled up under the saddle because the owners forgot to lock them.)

Mount these on pegboard along with a written description of each. Tell how long it took to cut each one. The kids may be surprised to learn that their own locks could be cut in a matter of seconds. Don't forget to include good locks and good locking techniques.

Helmets: More cyclists understand the importance of helmets. Since almost 70% of all cyclist fatalities are caused by head injuries, good reason exists to wear a helmet. Borrow an assortment of helmets from local bike shops, and create a display on the benefits of wearing one.

Bike clubs may be able to help you find helmets that have been damaged in a crash. Mount these on a display along with a brief account of the wreck and how well the cyclist survived.

Bike lights and reflectors: Mount various brands and types of bike lights and reflectors on a display. If possible, set it up so that the kids can test the lights if they want.

Another possibility is to borrow a well-equipped commuter bike and put signs near the bike describing the lights and reflectors.

There are lots of other possibilities. Use your imagination.

What you'll need

Quantities per range*

Equipment:

- Barrels or barricades: 8
- Hammer: 1
- 100-foot measuring tape: 1
- Paint rollers and trays**: 4
- Traffic cones: 100

Supplies:

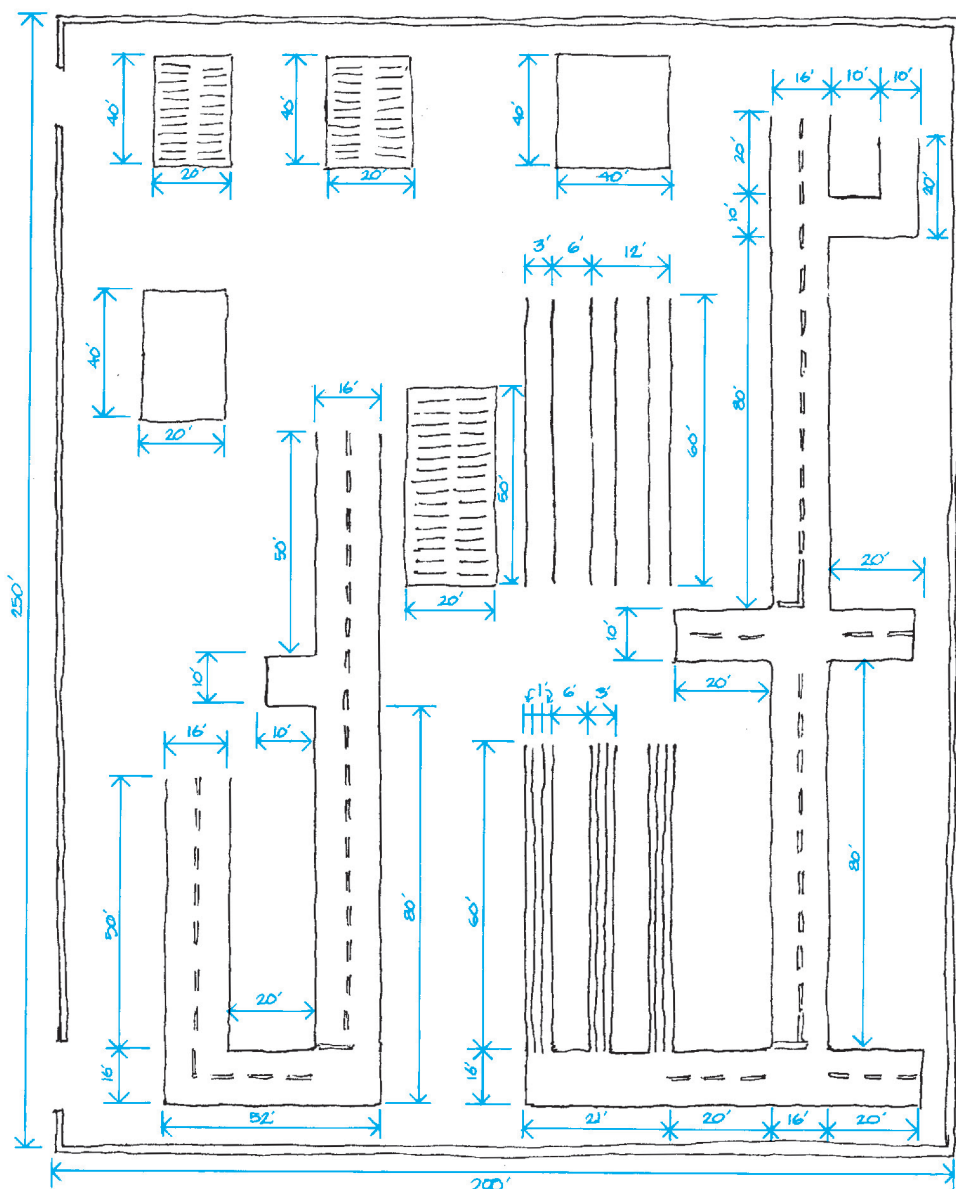
- 16d nails: 20
- Chalk: 2 to 3 pieces
- Yellow poster paint**: 10 pints
- White poster paint**: 20 pints
- Scraps of 2 x 4 lumber: 2 to 3
- Surveyor's or crime scene tape: 2 to 3 rolls
- Twine: 250 feet

* For a fair-level event, run two ranges, one for younger kids and one for older kids.

** An option to painting the course with poster paint is to use 2" wide masking tape. It's faster and cleaner. Use 6 to 10 rolls per range.

The problem with masking tape, though, is weather. If you try to apply it after a rain, it won't stick.

Another possibility to consider for striping the course is marble dust, if it's available locally. You can lay it down with a field-lining machine.



Laying Out the Skills Course

A well-organized site can help make your event run smoothly.

Introduction

If you plan to run a fair-level event, you'll need to set up two ranges like the one shown above. For a smaller entry-level event, one range will do. Use one team of six for each range. Allow a minimum of 90 minutes for a first-time setup. Although we recommend that the course be set up the evening before your event, foul weather or site scheduling conflicts may prevent this.

Step one

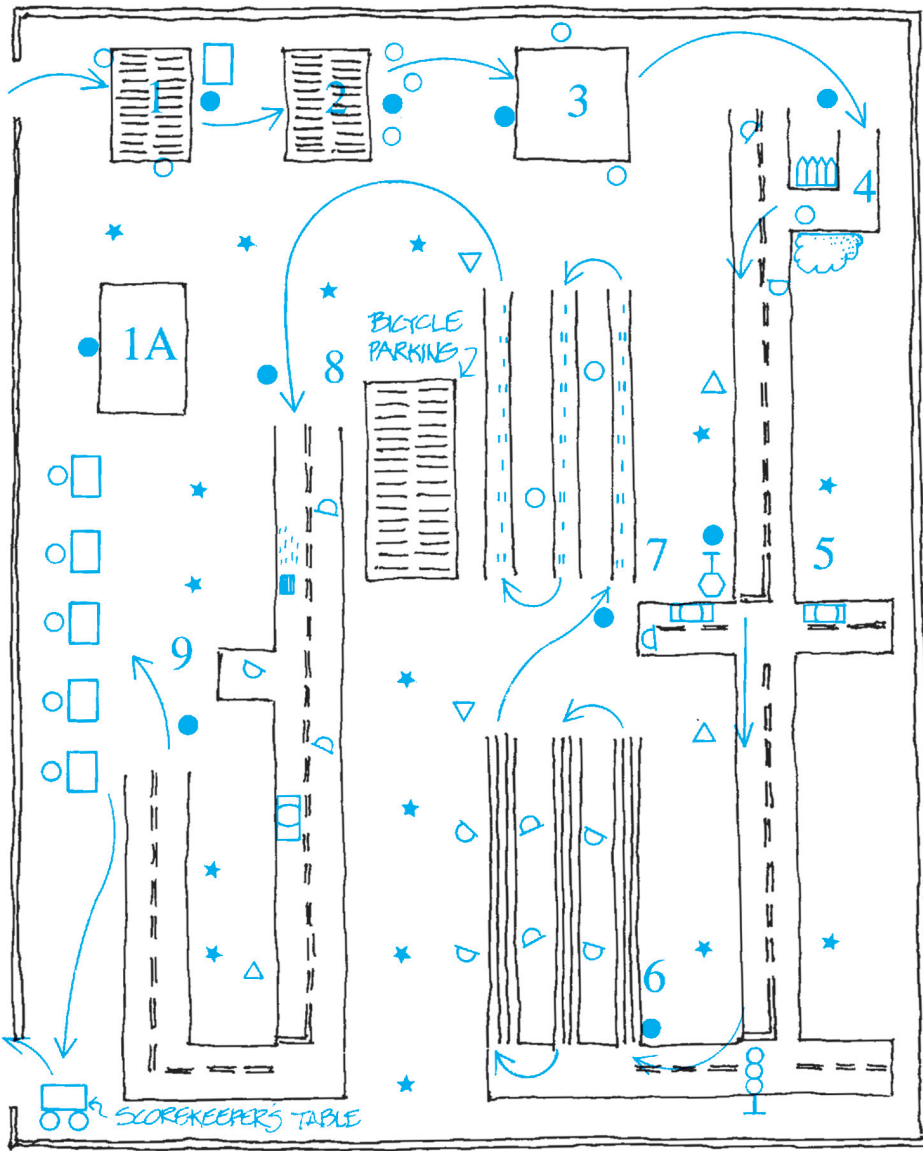
Divide your crew of six into teams of two. Your first team will consist of one liner who will paint the lines, and one runner who will run the tape measure and mark distances.

Your crew will first establish a perimeter 200 feet by 250 feet (175 feet by 200 feet is the absolute minimum). Once they have determined the boundaries of the course, they should place a traffic cone in each corner.

If the surface is asphalt, nail the cones in place. Otherwise use barriers, barrels, or other large stable objects for the corners. Next, outline the range perimeter with surveyor's or crime scene tape, traffic cones, barricades, or whatever you have.

Step two

While the perimeter is laid out, measure and cut the twine into one 150-foot length and one 200-foot length. These will be used to lay out roadway lengths.



Key

Workers:	Props:
○ Assistant	□ Car or van
◻ Asst. with "car"	★ Display
△ Evaluator	▨ "Drain grate"
● Instructor	☁ "Bush"
	🌳 "Fence"
Note: items in quotes are made of cardboard (see p. 19 for samples).	☹ Sponges
	⊕ "Stop sign"
	▭ Table
	🚦 Traffic light

Step six

As a final step, add lines to guide bicycle parking and stop lines at your intersections. Look around for any weak markings left by the first run, and have the liner go over them. Add any other details you feel are appropriate for your course. Beef up the intersections with traffic cones, and add any extras where you think they would help. Take any tables and training aids to the appropriate stations.

Instructor briefing

We recommend that you walk your team of instructors and assistants through the complete course, explaining the layout and the purpose for each station. Have the station instructors ask any questions they may have during this briefing.

Note: You should have already briefed each instructor earlier in the week, and each should have a set of instructions. This walk-through should take place a full 30 minutes before your first kids arrive. If additional time permits, have a few children go through the activities while the instructors practice their teaching methods.

Hint: To avoid tangling the strings, tie one of the 2 x 4 lumber scraps to one end of each string and simply drag them along the course as you set up. Assign your second team to handle these measurements.

Next, cut a 20-foot length of twine, and at the 10-foot midpoint, tie a large knot. Your third team will use this to measure the width of the roadway, and to mark the center line (10 foot).

Step three

Start at Station 1 and proceed according to the diagram from station to station. Using the large pieces of chalk, mark where the liner should begin and end each run.

Run your string between each end point and dash a chalk line on the pavement.

This will guide your liner in rolling the poster paint. Carefully note end points at each driveway, intersection, and other stops in applying the paint. Mistakes are not easily corrected.

Step four

As your other two teams are chalking the roadways, your runner and liner should now be available for independent tasks. The liner can simply follow the guides. Meanwhile the runner can set out the equipment needed for each station (e.g., the fence, bush, and traffic signs).

Step five

Park the vans or cars in the spaces indicated.

Running the Skills Tests

Here's how the lessons are organized and how to run the kids through the course.

How the lessons are organized

In the descriptions of the stations, you'll find a common structure.

First, we tell you approximately how much time to allow per child. Next, we describe what each lesson teaches.

After that, we discuss why the lesson is important. Here, we'll bring in any accident statistics or other data.

Next, we give the specific information or maneuver that will be taught. We then describe how to run the lesson.

Following that, we tell you how to judge the performance of each child. We also tell you what advice to give the kids, depending on their scores, to help them improve.

Finally, we give you a list of materials and assistance you'll need to run each station.

Getting things started

As the kids register for the course, attach one hang tag to the handlebars of each bike. The hang tags will be the kids' scorecards for the rodeo.

Number the tags in advance. The numbers will help you keep track of how many kids have registered and will also be useful if you plan any drawings for door prizes. There is a sample tag on page 43 of this manual.

Before sending the kids to the first station, give them the following instructions:

There are nine stations in this event. At the first three, you earn four points each just for going through.

As you complete stations four through nine, your card will be scored. You can get between one to four points per station.

If you get a really low score and want to improve, you can get back in line and try again. If the line is too long, return to that station later.

After you've finished all the stations, go to the scorekeeper's table where they'll add up your points. Any questions?

If you've decided to provide two ranges, one for young kids (10 years and younger) and one for older kids, separate them at this point.

Running the lessons

As the bicyclists arrive at each station, the instructor explains the lesson and sends them through. The explanation should be clear and concise.

At the end of the station, the evaluator stops the kids, writes their scores on their hang tags, and gives advice for improvement.

When the kids have gone through all the stations and are satisfied with their scores, they move on to the scorekeeper's table. Here, they receive their final scores and any prizes.

Figuring scores

A perfect score for the entire course is 36 points. Each child gets 12 points for going through the first three stations and up to four points each for the remaining six.

If you're giving out ribbons, here are some suggested breakdowns for different colors.

Younger kids:

(ten years and younger)

Purple: 28 points

Blue: 26 points

Red: 23 points

Silver: 18 points

Older kids:

(11 years and older)

Purple: 35 points

Blue: 31 points

Red: 28 points

Silver: 24 points

Judging performances

The descriptions of stations four through nine tell you how to judge performances. In each case, we've given specific instructions. Scores range from one point (the lowest) to four (the highest).

If a child gets the lowest score, he or she should try again. Generally, getting a score of one means having made what could have been a fatal error—if it had been done on the street.

A score of two means getting the basic idea, but not much more. A child getting a two may want to try again.

A score of three is quite good. A child gets a three for performing almost flawlessly.

A perfect four is the best. To get a four, a child must generally show good cycling technique in addition to getting the maneuver right.

Why judge performances

There are two main reasons to judge performance in this rodeo. First, people often learn best from their mistakes. The lessons included here are directed at common mistakes that kids make.

Second, the scoring will help if you want to give out awards or prizes to the most skillful riders.

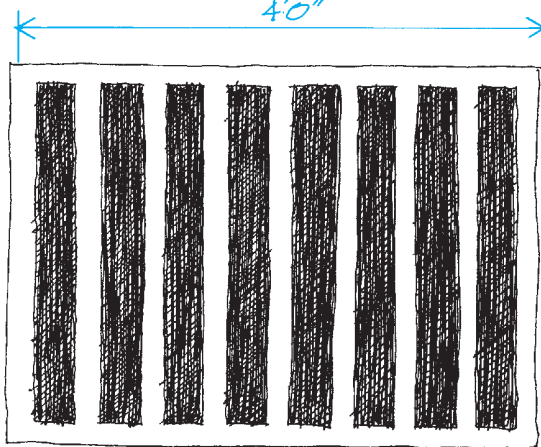
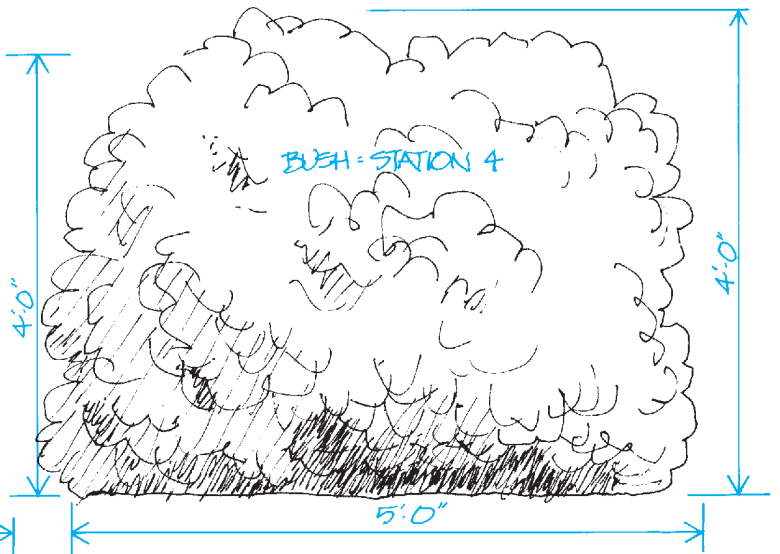
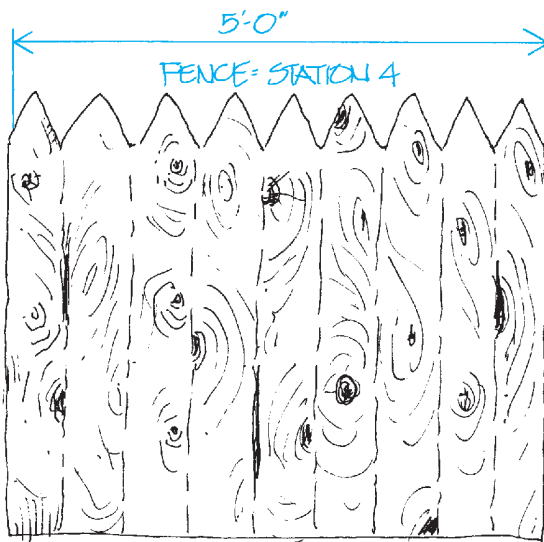
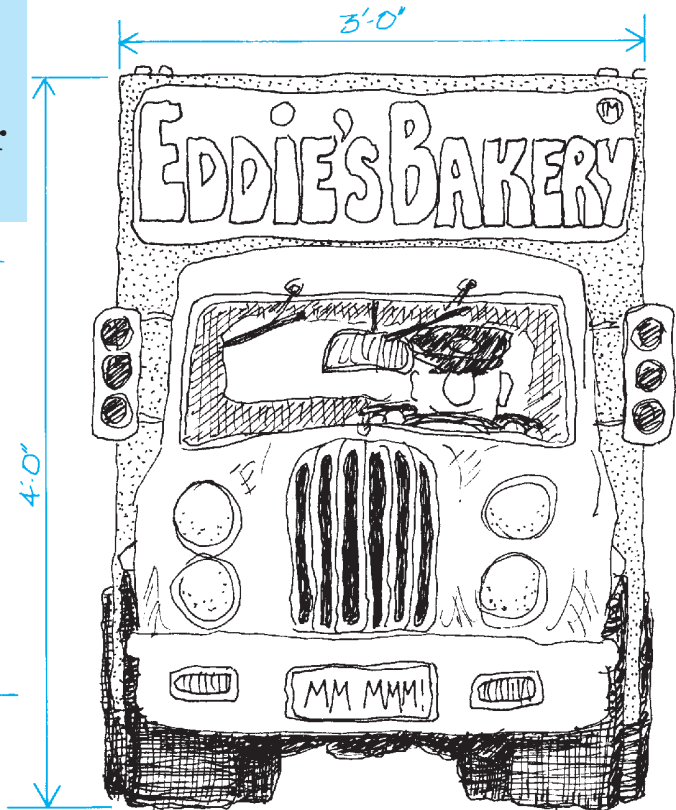
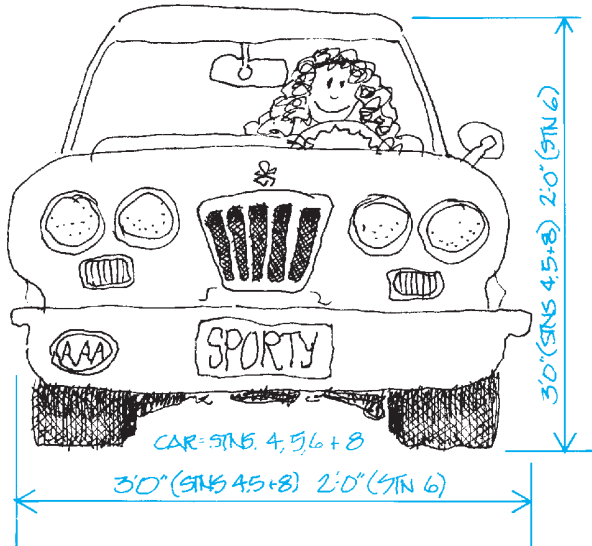
Because this event is a teaching rodeo, we also list specific tips you can give the kids, depending on how well they do. This puts you more in the role of a coach than a judge.

Teaching tips

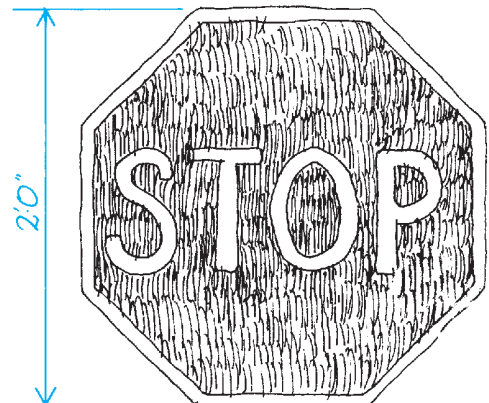
- If you see people taking things for granted, surprise them.
- If you see someone really having trouble, give assistance; this isn't supposed to be torture!
- If you see people zooming around on their bikes, make them park the bikes in the area provided.

Sample Props

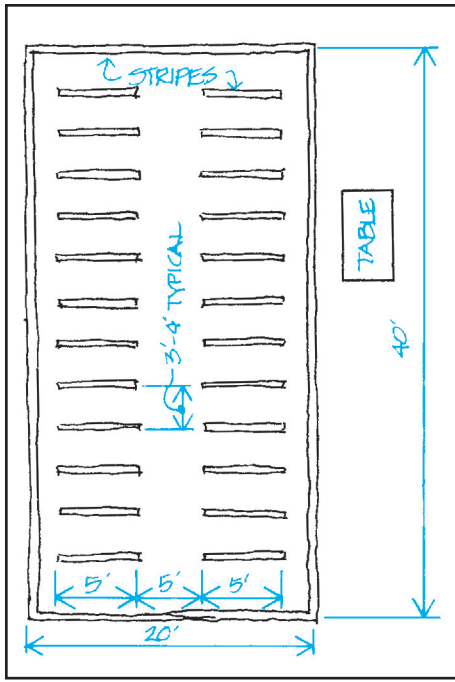
Use these as patterns or create your own cardboard cut outs.



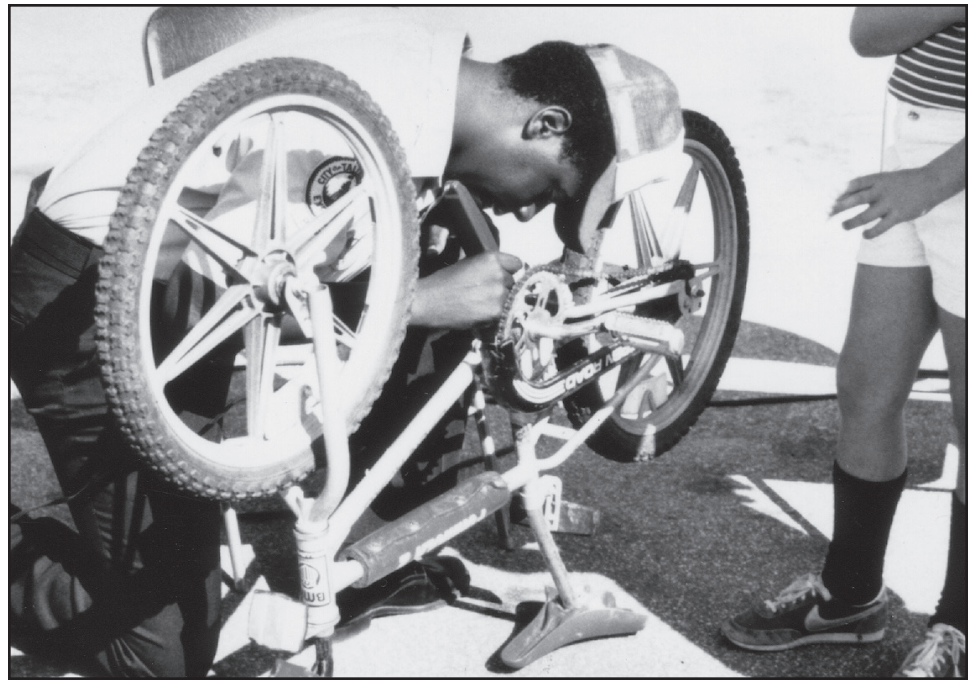
DRAIN GRATE: STATION 8



STOP SIGN: STATION 5



Suggested layout for the station. Have the kids park their bikes between the stripes.



An instructor works on a student's bike. Try to keep repairs to a minimum, or you'll quickly fall behind.

Station 1: The Bike Shop

Teach kids basic bicycle sizing and maintenance.

Allotted time

Allow 5 to 10 minutes per group.

What this lesson teaches

Students will get a quick bicycle inspection at this station and will learn some of the important maintenance problems to watch for. They will also learn basic bike sizing and fit.

Why it's important

In order to deal effectively with traffic, cyclists must be in control of their vehicles. The bikes should work well and fit right.

Unfortunately, many children ride bikes that are unsafe at any speed. While parents seem to use care in selecting shoes and clothes for their kids, the truth may be that they don't pay as much attention to the bikes their youngsters drive in traffic. If you've ever held the maintenance section of a bike rodeo, you are familiar with it.

The information

The intent here is *not* to renovate the kids' bikes but to check them for basic fit and condition. The appendix has a handy bicycle inspection form that you can print and use for this purpose.

Basic sizing: The cyclist must be able to stand flat-footed over the bike with at least an inch of clearance above the top tube. On a bike with a step-through frame, the rider must be able to adequately reach the pedals while seated, and it should be possible to set the saddle height as discussed below.

Chain tightness: On a bike with a coaster brake, there should be a little up-and-down play in the chain but not much.

Coaster brake: Push the bike forward while pushing back on one pedal—the rear tire should skid. Next, make sure the brake arm is attached to the frame (back at the rear wheel).

Crankset: Grab hold of the left crank arm near where it goes through the frame. Try to rock it up and down. If it rocks, the crankset bearings need adjusting.

Frame and fork: Check for basic straightness. Look particularly at the fork while standing next to the bike. It should continue a straight line down from the frame's head tube. *Note: on some dirt bikes, the fork will angle slightly forward by design.*

Hand brakes: Check the pads—they should all be there and not worn out. Brake pad holders should not have an open end facing forward. The pads should touch the rims squarely with the front ends touching slightly before the rear.

The brake levers should work smoothly, and there should be about an inch of clearance between the levers and the handlebar when the brakes are fully applied. The brakes should also come away from the rim completely when the lever is released.

Handlebar stem tightness: Hold the front wheel straight between your legs, and try to turn the handlebars to the side. If they turn, the handlebar stem binder bolt needs to be tightened.

Headset: The headset is actually two sets of bearings found where the fork and the handlebars go through the head tube of the frame. To check the headset, try to rock the handlebar stem forward and backward. If you see any rocking motion, the headset is probably loose.

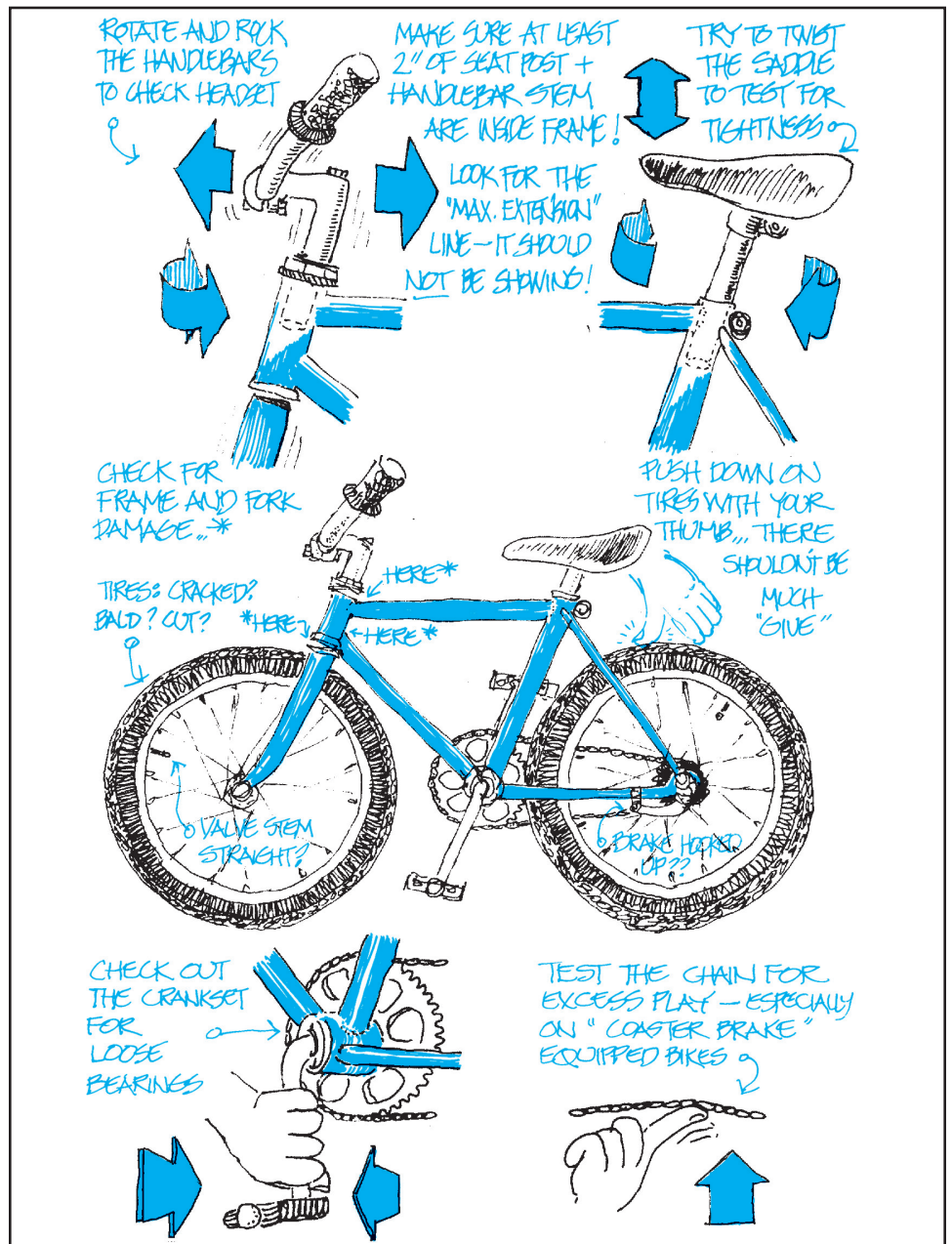
Next, lift the front wheel off the ground and turn the handlebars from side to side. There should be no catches or grinding—otherwise the headset is too tight (or something may be bent).

Pedals: Few kids' bikes have adjustable pedals so there's not much to adjust. Make sure the pedals are secured tightly and in good condition.

Saddle height: A very young rider—or one just learning—should be able to put both feet on the ground while seated on the saddle. The saddle of a more experienced rider should allow the leg to stretch almost straight while pedaling with the ball of the foot. The saddle should also be roughly level.

Saddle tightness: Grab hold of the saddle and try to twist it from side to side or up and down. It shouldn't move.

Spokes and rims: Spokes should be at least finger tight. On dirt bikes, the wheel fits between the fork or frame without rubbing. The rim should be roughly straight.



The lesson

First, decide whether you will have the manpower to assess each child's bike individually. If so, have your assistants take one bike each as the kids arrive. They can check each of the points mentioned above and give the kids the completed bicycle inspection forms.

If you don't have enough people, do this lesson as a group. Distribute the forms and pencils to the kids. As you demonstrate each test, have the kids do it with their own bikes. Your assistants should circulate through the group helping those who have trouble.

Another way to run this station is to have parents help their kids. In this way, the parents learn what repairs their kids' bikes may need.

When the kids do the saddle-height test, have your assistants move through the group, holding each child up in turn.

Don't forget to collect the pencils as the youngsters leave.

Lights and Reflectors

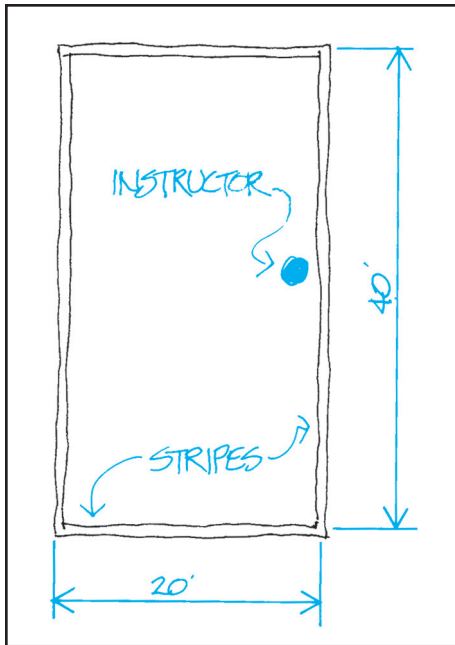
Without proper lighting, don't approve any bike for nighttime riding.

Judging performance

Each child should receive a completed bicycle inspection form to take home.

What you'll need

- One instructor
- Three to six assistants
- An assortment of tools
- Any equipment you want to give away (pedals, reflectors, etc.)
- 20 to 50 pencils and a sharpener
- Enough bicycle inspection forms for all the kids
- A table



Suggested layout for this station



A parent giving instructions to his daughter. Time spent in this way can help avoid tragedy later.

Station 1A: Parents' Orientation

Mom and dad also need a good dose of "cycling road sense."

Allotted time

Allow about five minutes per group.

What this lesson teaches

Parents will be introduced to basic bike safety, some ideas for future homework for their kids, and some explanatory literature.

Why it's important

Realistically, you aren't going to change the kids' riding habits in one rodeo session. They will have ridden hundreds or perhaps thousands of hours before you work with them and will ride many more hours afterwards.

One or two hours of instruction won't replace bad habits with good ones. But parents who learn proper bike safety concepts can continue the instruction after the rodeo is over.

The information

Serious bike crashes: Many young bicyclists who are seriously injured in a bike-car crash make this mistake—they

ride into the street from their own driveways without searching for traffic or yielding.

Other accidents occur when a cyclist rides through a controlled intersection without stopping or checking for traffic. Accidents also occur when a cyclist swerves suddenly to the left without looking back or yielding.

Children aren't just small adults: Child development researchers tell us the following things about children.

Young children can't see things peripherally as well as adults can. This lack of well-developed peripheral vision is one reason they dart out in front of cars.

Kids often have trouble telling where a sound originates. They may hear a car coming but may look the wrong way searching for it.

Until about age eight, kids typically lack a sense of danger. They don't really understand how vulnerable they are.

Kids are often restless and anxious to go. For them, a traffic signal may seem to take forever to change.

Kids have trouble judging complex chains of events. For example, it's hard for them to see an accident situation developing. It's difficult for them to judge closing speed. A car coming toward them doesn't seem to change much in size or shape even though it may be approaching quite fast.

They may focus only on things that interest them the most—an ice cream truck across the street may be much more interesting than the dull brown car coming down the street.

Kids often mix fantasy with reality. They may see cars as creatures with headlight eyes. They may also think they can go a zillion miles an hour on their bikes.

They often believe that grown-ups will look out for them. And they may think that because they can see the car coming, the driver can see them too—and will know they are about to cross the street from between two parked cars.

Kids like to imitate grown-ups and friends. Peer pressure is probably one of the biggest barriers to teaching safe cycling to kids. Many accidents happen when the

first child takes a chance and the second one tries it and gets hit by a car. Parents must realize that untrained children have no safe place in traffic. And the job of teaching kids how to ride goes along with buying them bikes.

The lesson

Gather the parents into a group, and hand out the flyers. Briefly explain the problems outlined above and then describe each station.

Discuss basic traffic rules for bicyclists, paying particular attention to:

- Yielding—where and when
- Riding with traffic
- Obeying traffic controls
- No nighttime riding without the proper equipment

Suggest that parents watch their kids go through the different stations, noting which ones the children had particular problems with. Encourage parents to continue the instruction at home.

What you'll need

- One instructor
 - Enough flyers for the parents of participants
- Note: For a 5½" by 8½" flyer, have a printer enlarge artwork at right 115%.*
- A sign: "Parents' Orientation"



A tip ...

- We have found that parents learn from watching their children go through the course. Encourage all parents to do so.
- You may wish to add several extra instructors to walk with groups of parents and answer questions and make suggestions.

Front side:

Dear parent ...

Welcome. Today your child will learn some new and valuable traffic safety skills. You can do your part by continuing the lessons at home.

The first thing to remember is that your child's bicycle is a vehicle, and your child is the driver. He or she has all the rights and responsibilities given to drivers.

It's up to you to make sure your child learns to live up to those responsibilities. Here are some tips.

The big three causes of bike-car crashes (for kids under 15 years):

1. Riding out of a driveway without stopping
2. Running stop signs
3. Turning left without yielding

Nine things to keep in mind about kids in traffic:

1. Young kids can't see things peripherally as well as adults can.
2. Kids often have trouble telling where a sound (like a siren) originates from.
3. Kids often lack a sense of danger.
4. They are often restless and have trouble waiting for things like traffic lights.
5. They have trouble understanding complex chains of events.
6. They have trouble judging speed and distance of oncoming cars.
7. They tend to focus only on the things that interest them the most.
8. Kids often mix fantasy with reality.
9. They may believe that grown-ups will look out for them.

On the back of this flyer, there is space for you to make notes. If your child has difficulty with a particular lesson, write down which one. Homework may be in order.

Back side:

Comments and problems

Station 1: _____

Station 2: _____

Station 3: _____

Station 4: _____

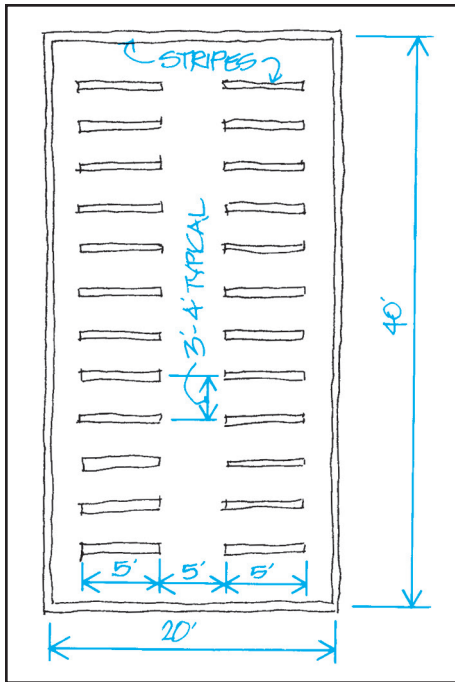
Station 5: _____

Station 6: _____

Station 7: _____

Station 8: _____

Station 9: _____



Suggested layout for this station. Have the kids park their bikes and gather around you.

Many accidents happen because the bicyclist and motorist don't see each other until it's too late.

Station 2: Seeing and Being Seen

Teach kids the importance of watching where they're going.

Allotted time

Allow five minutes per group.

What this lesson teaches

Students will learn the importance of visual cues in the traffic scene. They will also learn techniques for being seen by other road users.

Why it's important

The vast majority of all bike-car crashes could be avoided if people would simply pay attention. In many cases, the bicyclist and motorist **see** each other in time to avoid the accident. Unfortunately, what they see just doesn't register.

The information

Seeing: As bicyclists and motorists travel, they pay attention to some things and ignore others. This is called selective perception. Simply put, it means people tend to see only what they expect to see.

Often, the things they pay attention to are important for reasons other than traffic safety. For example, they may be looking for an address or a place to park or they may be reading a sign.

Truly skilled cyclists and motorists pay more attention to the task at hand—traveling safely. They keep their eyes open for hazards, and they anticipate trouble.

They also look down the road to where they will be in about 12 seconds. How far is that? A cyclist riding at 10 mph, for example, would go about 175 feet in 12 seconds.

What should cyclists watch for? The following list covers most general hazard types:

1. **Moving hazards:** cars, pedestrians, animals, other bicyclists, trains, trucks, buses, motorcycles, or anything else that could cross their paths
2. **Stationary hazards:** parked cars, utility poles, park benches, fire hydrants,

fences, parked bicycles, or anything else that would be in the way

3. **Surface hazards:** potholes, sand, rocks, drain grates, concrete joints, raised manhole covers, broken glass, cans, roadway litter, and anything else that could cause a fall or loss of control
4. **Visual hazards:** bushes and shrubs, fences, parked cars, buildings, large flashing signs and other obstacles that either block the view or distract people's attention

Being seen: Another important aspect of safe travel is being seen by other road users. Cyclists who wear bright clothing are more likely to be seen than those who wear dark, drab colors. Some of the better colors for daytime riding are the fluorescents (e.g., safety green and blaze orange). Unfortunately, these colors are less effective at night. However, several companies make fluorescent-colored reflective material (like Reflexite) that is

both bright during the day and highly reflective at night.

This material can be used to make reflective pants straps (to keep trouser legs out of the chain) or can be used for trim on helmets, jackets, and other clothes. Some companies market small adhesive reflective dots that can be stuck to clothing or bikes.

For nighttime riding, however, cyclists need more than a few pieces of reflective material. Unless they have effective lighting systems, they shouldn't be riding.

The lesson

As the kids arrive from Station 1, have them park their bikes and gather around you. Discuss the points mentioned above.

To demonstrate the point about selective perception, have two of your assistants hold up a sheet. Have the other assistant go behind the sheet and subtly change his/her appearance.

Changes can include such things as adding or removing false moustaches, ties, T-shirts, shoes etc. When your assistant reappears, have the kids guess what has changed. Try this three or four times.

This game can be lots of fun. Afterwards, make the point that cyclists need to pay attention to what's going on around them and not get caught napping.

Next, go over the information on hazards. Ask the kids for examples of the various kinds listed. Mention that cyclists who plan ahead can often avoid hazards easily.

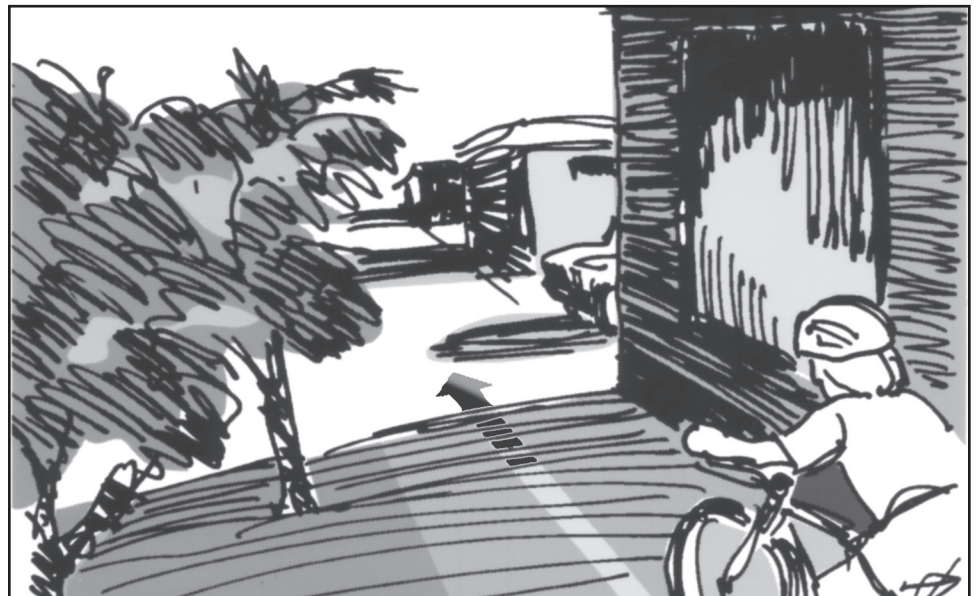
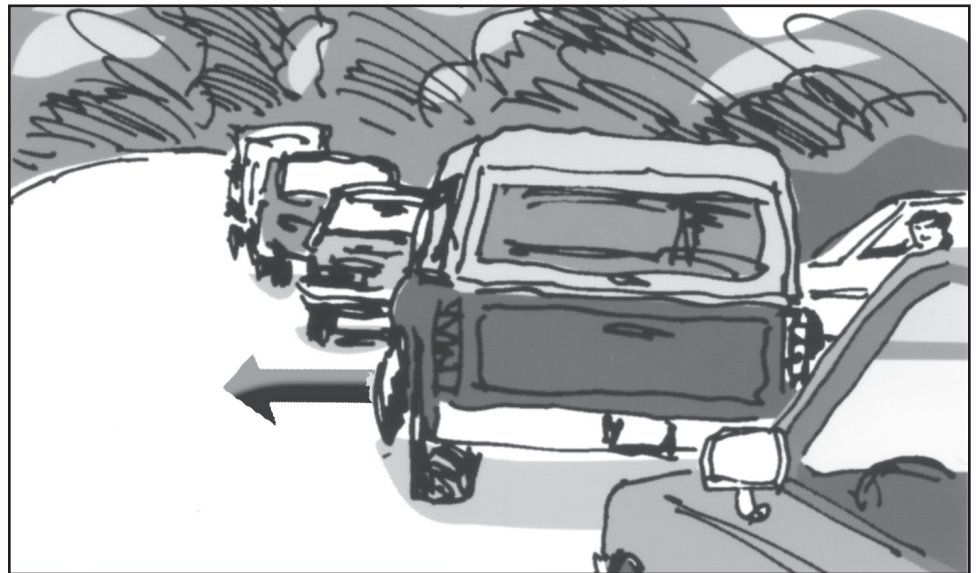
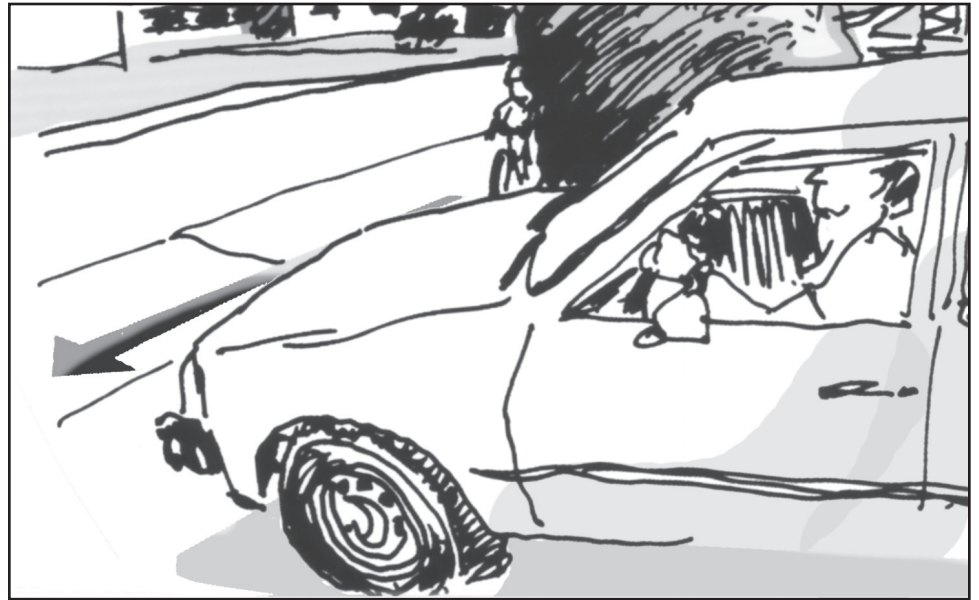
Finally, discuss the importance of being seen. Ask for ideas on what cyclists can do to make themselves more visible. Show them samples of reflective materials and bright colors, as well as examples of lighting systems.

Judging performance

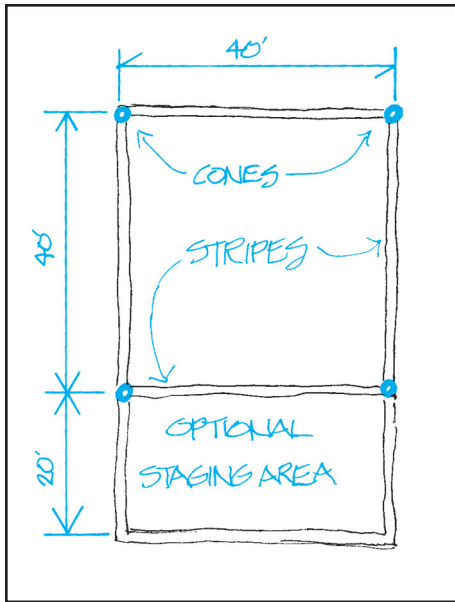
Each child should receive a passing grade.

What you'll need

- One instructor
- Three assistants
- One sheet
- Numerous pieces of clothing and disguises
- Examples of lighting systems, bright clothing, and reflective materials



Other examples of sight obstructions that could lead to accidents



Suggested layout for this station. As an alternative, consider a circle with a 40-foot diameter.



The lesson in operation. Be careful to keep kids from fooling around.

Station 3: Chaos Corners

Teach kids the reasons for traffic laws.

Allotted time

Allow 12 minutes per group.

What this lesson teaches

The students will ride around randomly within a confined area, watching out for others. In doing so, they will learn the need for traffic laws and regulations.

Then they will decide on some basic traffic rules and put them into practice.

Why it's important

One surprising fact that we've learned from the accident studies is this—while the kids involved in bike-car crashes were most often at fault, they generally knew the traffic law they violated.

They violated them anyway because of competing needs (“Got to get home or Mom will be mad.”) or faulty expectations (“No one ever comes down this street so why stop at the stop sign?”).

For this reason, expecting kids to obey traffic rules simply because we tell them to is unrealistic. The old rote learning

programs that give “dos” and “do nots” will not suffice. The kids need to see first hand why rules help people get where they are going.

Chaos Corners traffic laws

Chaos Corners is a place where there are only five traffic rules. Put these on a cardboard sign at the entrance:

1. Ride chaotic!
2. You better not hit anyone or you'll be sorry!
3. Stay inside the boundaries until we let you out!
4. Keep your speed down so you don't get killed!
5. The mayor can stop traffic at will!

The lesson

As the kids arrive at this station, let them into the square a few at a time. Tell them that Chaos Corners has only five traffic rules; then read the rules on the cardboard sign.

As more and more cyclists enter the square, things will become more and more chaotic. Occasionally the mayor or one of the assistants should shout, “Hey you! You're not chaotic enough!” Cyclists who are riding too fast should be pulled over and given a speeding ticket.

When it has reached the point where people are having a hard time getting around without running into each other, the mayor should jump up and shout, “Stop! I've had enough!”

The mayor should complain about high blood pressure because of the chaos and ask for suggestions on new traffic rules that would bring peace and order to Chaos Corners.

Using a piece of cardboard, an assistant should write down several new rules (the mayor should choose the suggestions that seem likely to bring order to Chaos Corners—“That's a good one! Write that down assistant!”).

After the mayor has chosen the new rules, the traffic ought to start again to

test the rules. If things work well, the mayor should express pleasure, and assistants should start pulling cyclists out of the square and sending them to the next station.

If things don't work well, traffic should be stopped again and new rules solicited. These tests should only take a couple of minutes each; keep track of the time.

Judging performance

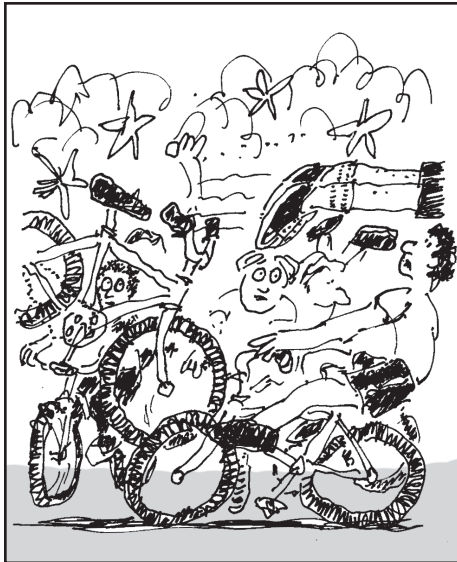
With this lesson, each student will receive a passing grade.

What to tell the kids

Good going—you survived Chaos Corners!

What you'll need

- One instructor (the mayor, suitably dressed up)
- One or two assistants
- Cardboard sign with traffic rules
- Cardboard for other signs
- Several markers
- Four traffic cones to mark the corners
- One easel



Cartoon illustrates what can happen if you're not paying attention to the kids' behavior.

Some straight talk about wrong-way riding

People often misunderstand the real dangers of riding against traffic.

Rear-end crashes—a good reason to ride against traffic

Some people believe that cyclists are like pedestrians and should ride facing the vehicular flow. That way, cyclists can see the cars coming. Parents often give this advice to their kids.

These armchair theoreticians believe that being hit from behind is *the* major bike-car accident problem. It isn't.

Being hit from behind happens mainly on two-lane, high-speed rural roads. Typically, the accident takes place after dark and involves an intoxicated driver and a cyclist riding without lights. These accidents account for a small percentage of all bike-car crashes.

The vast majority of all crashes involve people turning in front of each other or pulling out in front of each other. Riding against traffic contributes to many of these accidents—about 2% of all bike-car collisions are the direct result of wrong-way riding.

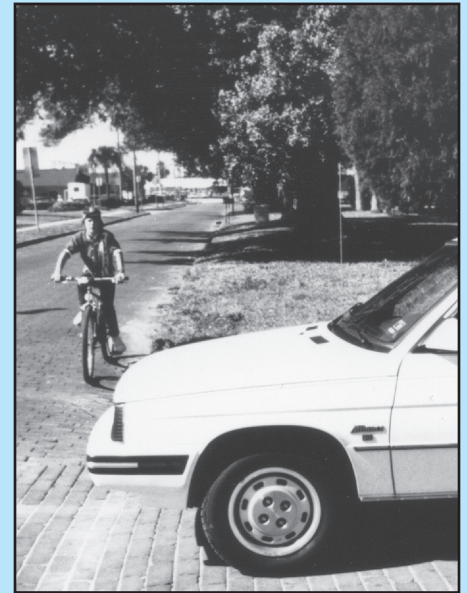
Cyclists who ride facing traffic are often caught in the following trap.

As the cyclist approaches an intersection, a motorist arrives from the cross-street to the left. The motorist looks where traffic normally comes from and seeing none, enters the intersection, hitting the wrong-way rider.

There are many variations on this theme, but they all have one thing in common—a cyclist riding in an unexpected location is not seen by the motorist in time to avoid a crash.

Head-on crashes—a good reason to ride with traffic?

Some safety professionals believe cyclists should ride with traffic because of the danger of head-on collisions when riding against traffic. They argue that a cyclist going 10 mph and a car



going 35 mph will meet at a combined speed of 45 mph.

Unfortunately for this argument, there are very few head-on bike-car crashes. A very small percentage happen this way.

Riding with traffic—some valid reasons.

There are some very good reasons to ride with traffic. Most importantly, law in every state requires cyclists to ride with traffic.

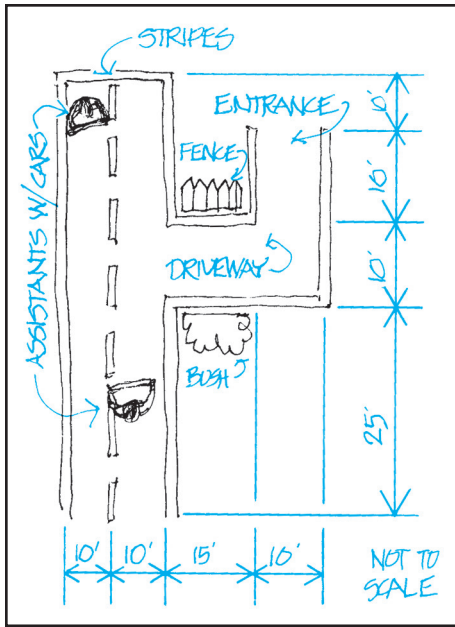
Cyclists who want motorists to see (and avoid hitting) them must ride where motorists expect to see traffic. Traffic travels on the right.

Traffic control devices face the normal flow of traffic. Cyclists who ride against the flow have a hard time seeing signals, stop signs, and warning signs. Since cyclists in every state are required to obey traffic-control devices, they must ride in a position to see the signs and signals—on the right.

Cyclists who ride with traffic are endangered by wrong-way riders. The potential for head-on crashes between cyclists is real, especially when both riders are operating near the edge of the road.

In my experience, bicyclists who ride against traffic are often unpredictable. On which side would you pass a wrong-way cyclist?

—John Williams



Suggested layout for this station. Sample props shown on page 19.



The driveway ride-out is a major cause of bike-car crashes, particularly for riders younger than 10.

Station 4: Demon Driveway

Kids *can* learn to avoid one of the major causes of bike-car accidents for young riders—riding out of the driveway without looking.

Allotted time

Allow about 20 seconds per child per pass.

What this lesson teaches

Students will learn the steps for entering the roadway without accident. They will learn to look back and forth for passing traffic and go when it's clear.

Why it's important

This lesson is for young bike riders (ages 5-8). Seventeen percent of the deaths happen this way—the kids ride onto the road from a driveway or sidewalk, and they are hit by a passing car. They don't look. They don't stop. They don't even slow down.

This type of accident doesn't happen on busy streets. It usually happens in the kids' own neighborhoods on quiet streets they know well. In many cases, some sort of sight obstruction (fence, parked car, or

bushes) blocks the motorists' view. The motorists are seldom speeding.

The maneuver

Cyclists should stop and look both ways before riding into the road. They should yield to any nearby pedestrians and then creep out far enough to see around sight obstructions like bushes or parked cars.

If traffic is coming, they must wait until it's clear, then look again and enter the roadway when safe.

With freewheeling bikes (those without coaster brakes), cyclists should pull one pedal up to about ten o'clock for a fast, smooth takeoff. With coaster brakes, they should stop with the front pedal between nine o'clock and twelve o'clock.

The lesson

As the students approach the station, the instructor gives them instructions and helps them into single-file order, heading

toward the driveway. The car holders stand in the positions shown in the diagram.

The instructor explains the reason for the lesson and demonstrates the use of the cardboard cars. If the car is facing the driveway, that means there is traffic. If the car is turned away, that means it's clear.

Next, send them one at a time to the end of the driveway with the purpose of turning left onto the road. When the kids get to the end of the driveway, they will have to move out far enough to see the cardboard cars.

The instructor should give tips like, "Remember, traffic changes quickly," and ask questions like, "How many cars does it take to get you?"

Since traffic isn't static, the car holders will occasionally turn their cars one way or the other. Where it may have just been clear in one direction, there may be traffic now and vice versa. The kids should look back and forth until there is

no vehicle coming from either direction and then go.

With younger kids, take it easy. With older kids (10 and older), you can make it tough by turning the cars back and forth frequently.

Judging Performance

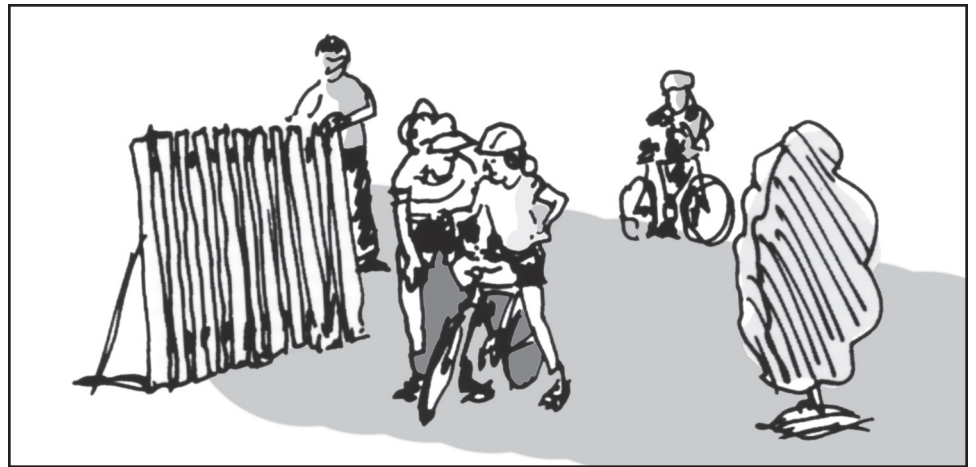
1. **Try again:** The child rides out without stopping. The child stops and looks only one way before riding out.
2. **Good:** The child stops and looks both ways but without checking both directions again when a car is seen. Good because the child got the basic idea but needs to improve.
3. **Better:** The child stops, looks and checks again before going, and gets through without being hit.
4. **Best:** In addition, the child takes off smoothly with good pedal position.

What to tell the kids

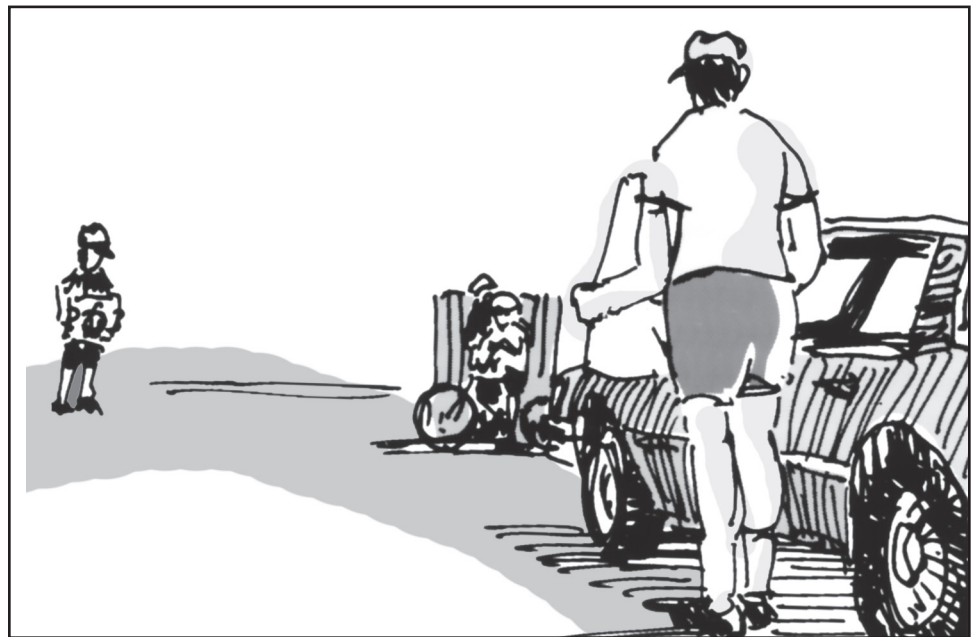
1. **Try again:** Remember to stop at the end of the driveway, look both ways for traffic, and go only when safe.
2. **Good:** Almost—to get better, look back and forth—remember traffic changes—and go only when safe.
3. **Better:** Pretty good. To get better, work on your pedal position. If you stop with your front pedal higher than your rear pedal, you can push off smoothly.
4. **Best:** Not bad at all.

What you'll need

- An instructor to run the lesson, and get the kids lined up
- Two assistants holding the cars
- Two cardboard cars
- One evaluator
- Two sight obstructions (these could be cardboard fences, bushes, or actual cars)
- One cardboard sign that says “Demon Driveway Ahead”
- One sign that says “This Way to Street”



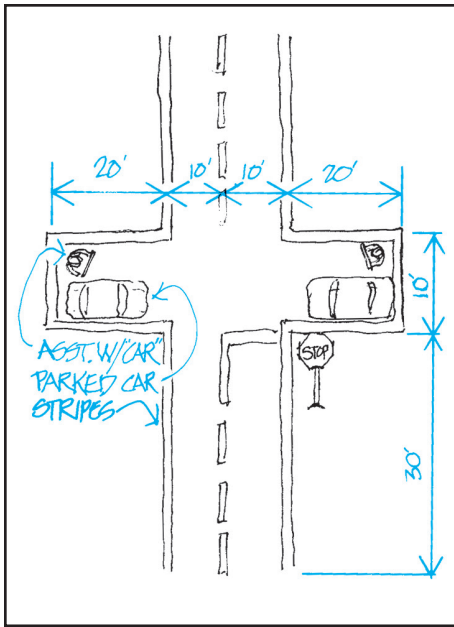
Typical station setup with fence on one side of the driveway and bush on the other. Some kids may need extra coaching to get the idea.



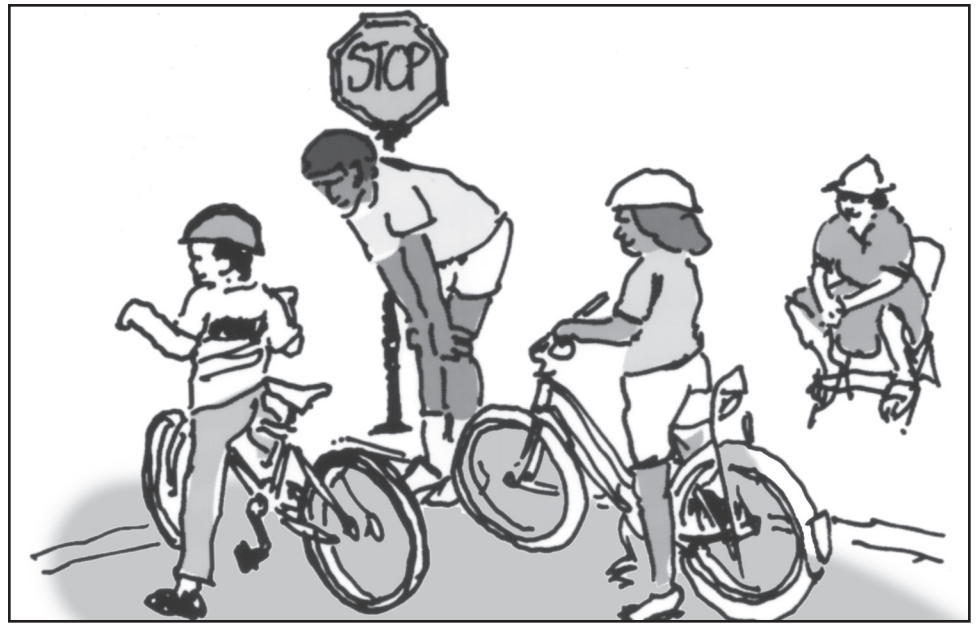
One option is to use a real parked car for a sight obstruction. The child will have to move out far enough to see beyond anything that blocks the view.



When the cardboard car faces the child, that means there's traffic coming. When it is turned to the side, that means there is no traffic.



Suggested layout of this station. Park two real cars as shown for sight obstructions.



Running stop signs is a major problem, yet most cyclists know they are required to stop. They just don't understand the reasons, and they don't know how to stop efficiently.

Station 5: Crazy Crossroads

Teach kids to stop at stop signs.

Allotted time

Allow 15 seconds per student.

What this lesson teaches

Students will learn to pull up to a stop sign, wait for any pedestrians, then stop far enough out to see beyond any obstacles, position their pedals for a powerful takeoff, and go when there's no conflicting traffic.

Why it's important

Cyclists who run stop signs take a big risk. Nationwide, failing to yield the right-of-way is number one cause of cyclist fatalities.

In all states except Idaho*, bike riders have the same responsibilities at a stop sign as other drivers:

1. Stop completely.
2. Yield to all cross traffic.

** Idaho statutes state that a bicyclist approaching a stop sign shall slow down and, if required for safety, stop before entering the intersection.*

The maneuver

As cyclists approach a stop sign, they should scan the nearby sidewalks and crosswalks for pedestrians. They should stop and wait behind the stop line if there are any pedestrians about to cross.

Next, the cyclists should pull far enough forward to get a good view of crossing traffic. They must wait until it's clear and then cross.

Cyclists with coaster brake bikes should pull one pedal up to the two o'clock position while they wait for traffic to clear. This will allow a fast and smooth take-off.

The lesson

Cyclists will arrive here from the Demon Driveway, fresh from dealing with cross traffic at a driveway setting. Here, the task is the same, only the context is slightly different.

As the students approach the station,

arrange them into single-file order, heading toward the stop sign. The car holders should stand in the positions shown in the diagram.

Explain to the kids that, as before, a cardboard car held facing them means traffic is coming while one turned to the side means it's clear. The child must stop, move out far enough to see traffic, look both ways, continue to check until there's no one coming, and then take off.

An option to try

You can make this station more of a challenge and more fun for the older kids if you have four assistants holding cars (two on each side).

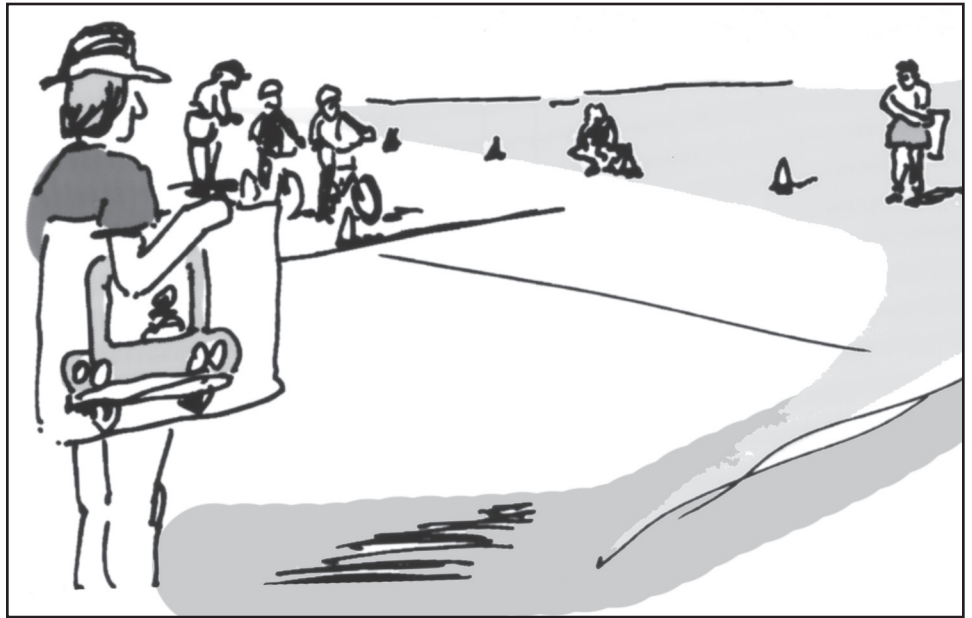
Judging performance

1. **Try again:** The child rides through without stopping *or* ...

The child stops and looks only one way before riding out *or* ...

The child stops and looks both ways and sees a car. The child then waits until that car disappears but doesn't re-check the other direction before going.

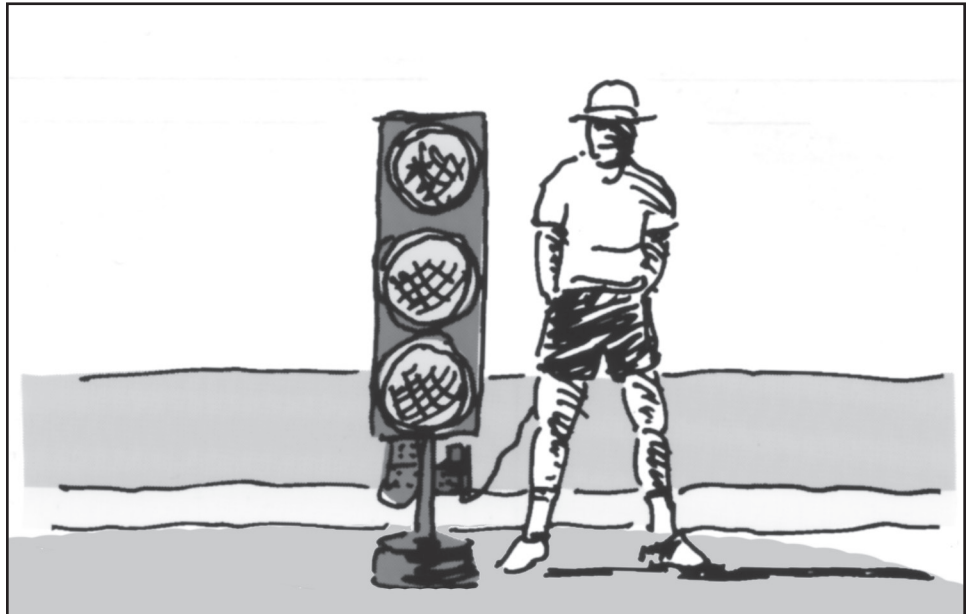
2. **Good:** The cyclist pulls far to the right and stops at the stop sign, looks and checks again before going, and gets through without a collision. Pulling over to the right when going straight puts the cyclist out of the motorist's view and is a mistake.
3. **Better:** The child rides straight up and stops, looks and checks again before going, and gets through without a crash.
4. **Best:** In addition, the child takes off smoothly with good pedal position.



A view of the station. In many respects, it is identical to Station 4. Part of the lesson involves dealing with the frustration of having to wait for heavy traffic.

What to tell the kids

1. **Try again:** Remember to stop at the stop sign, look both ways for traffic, and go only when safe.
2. **Good:** Good going! To get better, don't pull far right as you approach, and work on your pedal position. If you stop with your front pedal higher than your rear pedal, you can push off smoothly.
3. **Better:** Pretty good! To get better, work on your pedal position. If you stop with your front pedal higher than your rear pedal, you can push off smoothly.
4. **Best:** Not bad at all!



What you'll need

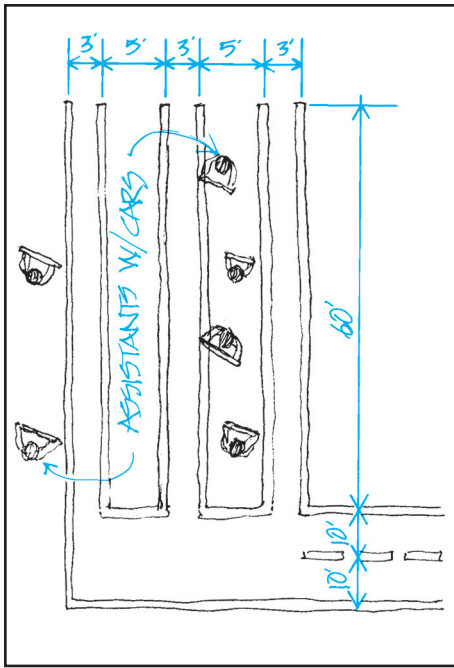
- An instructor to run the lesson and line up the kids
- Two assistants holding the cars
- Two cardboard cars
- One evaluator
- Two sight obstructions (use actual cars, parked as shown)
- One sign that says Crazy Crossroads
- One cardboard stop sign and a pole to hold it up

An option to consider ...

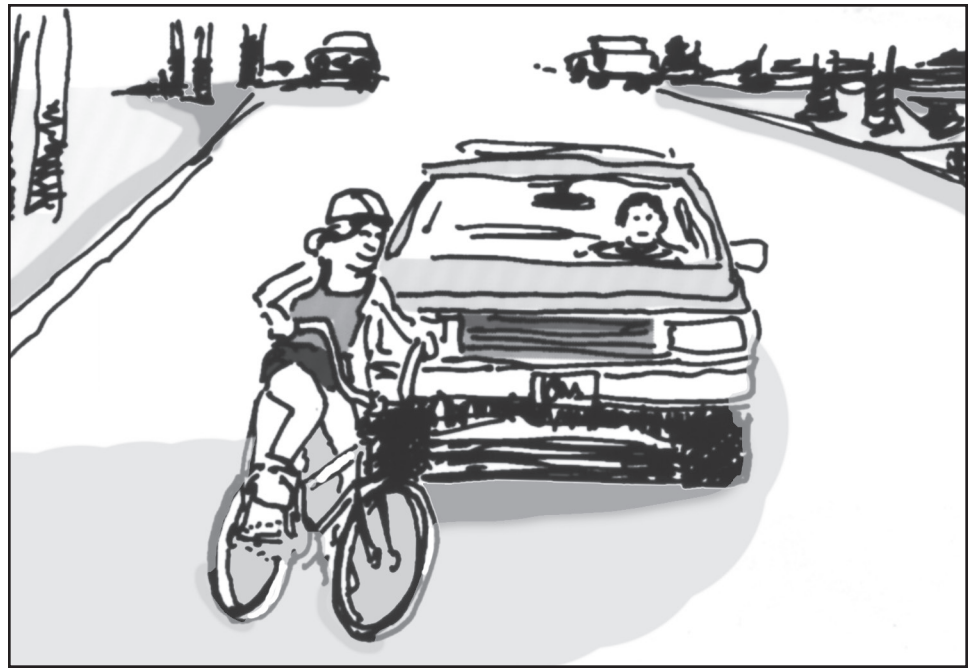
If you have access to the local traffic signal office, you might try setting up a signalized intersection (shown on course layout, page 17).

Get an outdated signal head, mount it on a pole, and wire it to a push button. Have an instructor sit next to the signal and turn the light red occasionally.

If you do use this option, add one extra evaluator to the station in order to judge the kids' performances. If the light turns yellow as they approach, they should stop and wait.



Suggested layout for this station. You can add inner lanes if you like—make them 1½ feet wide.



One of the biggest causes of bike-car accidents for young riders is the unexpected left turn or swerve. Kids need to be taught to look back every time they move left or turn left.

Station 6: Who's There?

Teach kids to look behind for traffic.

Allotted time

Allow about 15 seconds per pass, three passes per student.

What this lesson teaches

Students will learn to look back for traffic without swerving more than one foot to either side and without falling.

Why it's important

Making left turns or swerves without looking back is a mistake that leads to bike-car accidents. It doesn't rank as a top contributor of fatal crashes, yet it is an important skill to learn and use.

Cyclists often complain that looking back makes them swerve about. As this lesson proves, cyclists can learn to look behind and ride a straight line. Learning to do so should increase a cyclist's confidence and safety on the road.

The maneuver

There are several ways to look back. Cyclists can look over their shoulders (most common) or under their arms (sometimes used on bikes with dropped handlebars).

Unskilled cyclists often find themselves swerving in the direction they look. If they look over their left shoulders, they swerve out into traffic.

However, if they ease their grip on the handlebars and hold their shoulders steady when they look back, cyclists can ride straight. Interestingly enough, kids seem to have less trouble learning this skill than adults do.

Hint: An easy way to look back is to drop your left hand to your thigh and coast; then look back over that shoulder.

The lesson

As the students arrive at the station, describe the following situation for them.

"You are riding down the street and decide to turn left at the next corner. What's the most important thing to do before making that left turn?"

Most likely, the answer will be to give hand signals. Tell them signaling is important, but there is something much more important. If no one guesses, ask, "Would you just hold out your hand and go?" If they still don't guess the answer, tell them that looking behind themselves is the right answer. Then ask why it's important.

The kids will probably know one answer—cars—but ask for others. Other types of traffic may approach from behind—buses, trucks, motorcycles, and of course other bicycles.

Next, describe the actual lesson. The kids will ride one at a time down the three-foot wide lanes you've laid out. They should stay within the lines.

Your assistants will wait until each child passes by and then shout, "Look!". They will either be holding up a small cardboard car or have it hidden. The kids should look back and shout, "Car" or "No car" depending on what they see.

Judging performance

Scoring

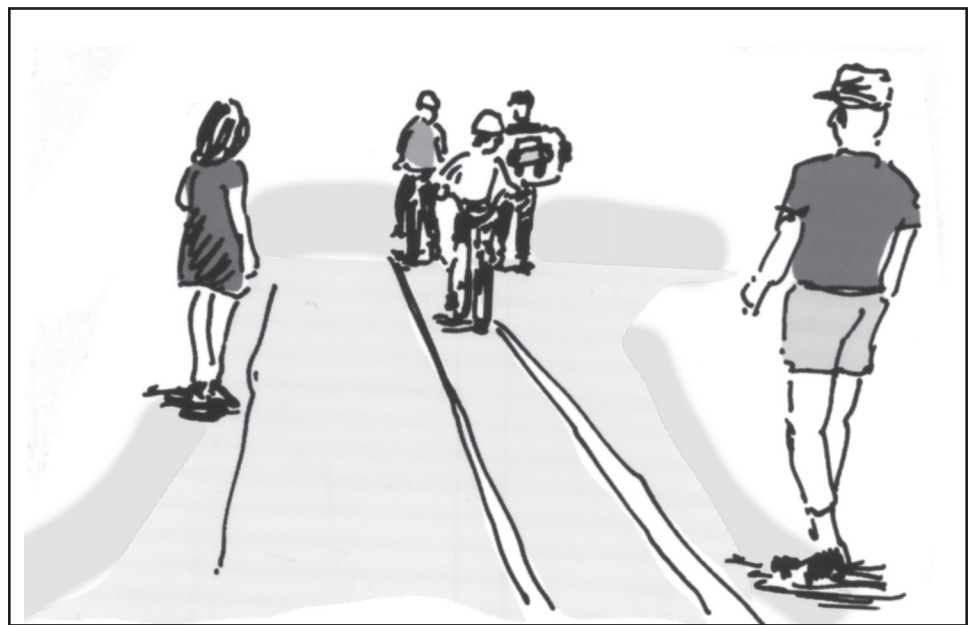
1. **Try again:** The child weaves outside the lane. The child shouts the wrong answer, "Car" or "No car."
2. **Good:** The child weaves about a foot in one direction or the other but stays within the boundary and shouts the right answer.
3. **Better:** The child weaves or wobbles some but generally rides straight and shouts the right answer.
4. **Best:** The child rides very straight and shouts the right answer.

What to tell the kids

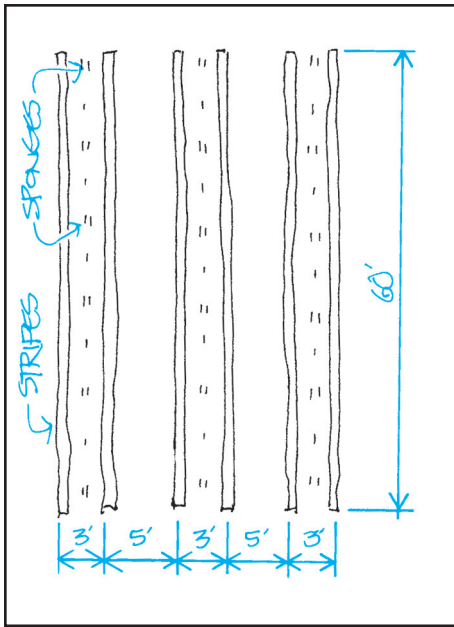
1. **Try again:** *Remember to ease up on your handlebars and get a good look at what's behind you.*
2. **Good:** *Good going! To get better, ride a straight line.*
3. **Better:** *Pretty good! To get better, ride a straight line.*
4. **Best:** *Not bad at all! Don't forget this skill when you're on the road.*

What you'll need

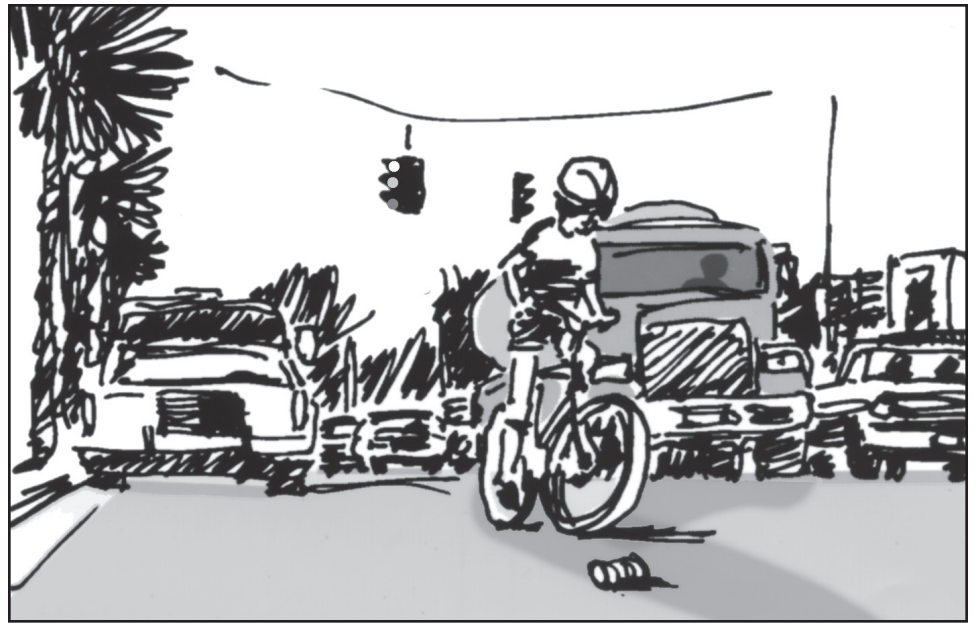
- One instructor to talk to the kids at the entrance
- Six assistants to hold the cardboard cars
- One evaluator to judge performance
- Three striped lanes (3 feet wide)
- Six small cardboard cars



Two views of this station. You may be surprised how quickly kids learn this lesson. It's often harder to teach adults this lesson than it is to teach kids.



Suggested layout for this station. It's harder than it looks.



A cyclist who doesn't know the rock dodge may swerve wildly into traffic.

Station 7: Rock Dodge/ Thread the Needle

Teach kids control and balance.

Allotted time

Allow about 30-45 seconds per pass per child.

What this lesson teaches

Students will learn to dodge their front wheels around a rock at the last moment without veering more than one foot to either side and without falling. They will also learn to drive between two close objects without hitting either.

Why it's important

With so much to pay attention to, cyclists sometimes fail to notice a rock or other roadway hazard until it's almost too late. Then they either hit it, or they swerve wildly to avoid it. Neither approach is correct.

This lesson will hone the cyclists' skills at staying upright and avoiding roadway obstacles. The kids will also learn to thread

the needle between several obstacles ... after all, rocks on the road often come in groups.

There is also another purpose to this lesson. Cyclists who can maneuver their bikes just where they want them are more confident riders. The more confident they are, the more attention they can pay to other things—like traffic.

The maneuver

In the rock dodge, cyclists ride straight toward an object and steer around it at the last moment. They steer by turning their handlebars first one way (to avoid the object), then turning back the other way (to keep from falling), then turning straight ahead (to continue going straight). The diagram shows what's involved.

We've added a complication to this maneuver. It is amazingly difficult to get most students to wait until the last moment before starting their turn. Instead

of a last-moment dodge, they do a time-consuming but graceful weave. That's not the idea.

So we've added a thread-the-needle maneuver before and after the rock dodge. This is good practice for balance, and it ensures that the cyclists ride straight toward the rock as they are supposed to.

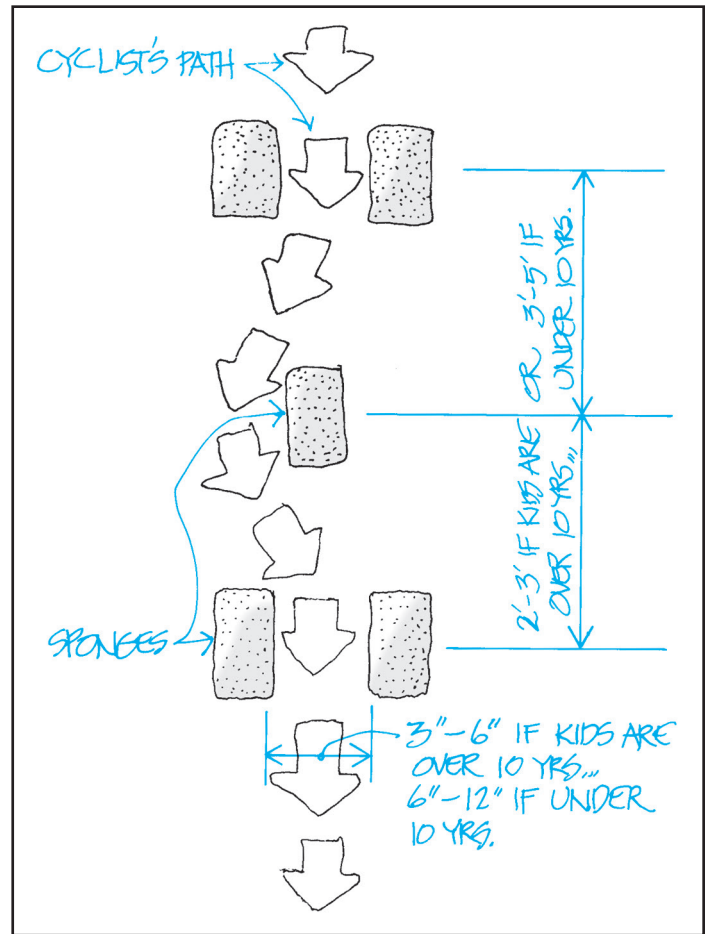
When threading the needle, cyclists purposely ignore the obstacles and concentrate instead on the clear path ahead. With practice, they develop a sense for just where their wheels are and almost instinctively steer through what would look to others like an obstacle course easily.

The lesson

Explain the maneuver, using the information from above. Then have a skilled rider demonstrate the maneuver, using the setup shown in the sketch. (Use sponges or pieces of plastic in place of rocks.) Have



A cyclist riding through the course. Sponge layout is shown to right.



your skilled rider go through the entire course before having the group try it.

This will be necessary with only the first group of riders. After that, students will be able to grasp the idea from watching the kids ahead of them and from your tips.

Then send them through one at a time at a modest speed—this isn't a race. For the first lane, keep the clearances loose. One assistant's task is to watch the kids closely and give tips. At the next lane, the needles are closer to each other and to the rock. Again, the assistant should help with tips. The kids will be tested at the last lane.

Note: The front wheel is the important one to negotiate around a rock because it's the wheel that steers. If you hit an obstacle with your rear wheel, you may get a flat or dent your rim.

If you hit it with your front wheel, you will probably fall to the pavement quickly, and that's no fun. (This is worth mentioning because kids almost always say something if your demonstrator hits the rock with the rear wheel.)

Judging performance

(only judge third lane)

1. **Try again:** The child hits at least three sponges with the front wheel in one pass.
2. **Good:** The child gets through the first needle and around the rock but can't get back through the second needle.
3. **Better:** The child gets the front wheel through both needles and around the rock.
4. **Best:** The child gets both wheels through both needles and around the rock.

What to tell the kids

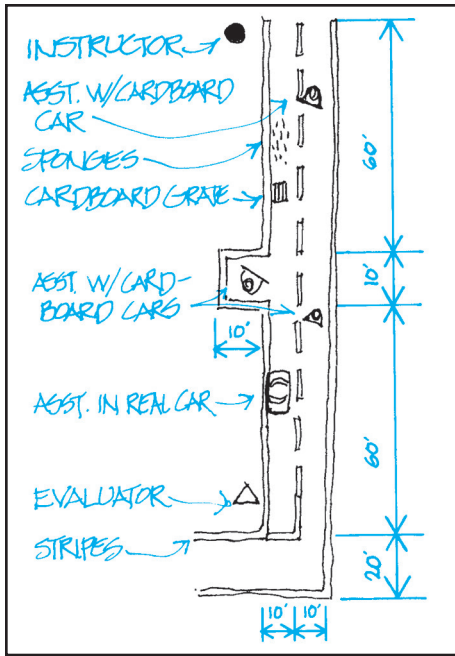
1. **Try again:** Remember to watch where you're going.
2. **Good:** Good going! To get better, get your front wheel around the sponge and don't swing too far around the sponge.
3. **Better:** Pretty good! To get better, see if you can keep your rear wheel from hitting the sponges.

4. **Best:** Not bad at all! Can you bunny hop too? (Or something funny like that.)

Note: It is possible for a cyclist to fall while trying these maneuvers. Tell the kids, and if you see any racing or goofing around, take action immediately.

What you'll need

- One instructor
- One or two helpers to direct traffic and coach the kids
- One evaluator
- Thirty to forty sponges or pieces of plastic stair tread (approx. 3" x 5" each).
- **An option:** The plastic sold for stair treads works great in place of sponges. Cut a piece into 3" x 5" pieces.



Suggested layout for this station



Dealing with roadside hazards is a problem for many cyclists. Cyclists need to look back before moving around many such hazards.

Station 8: Dodge-em Drive

Teach kids to deal with assorted roadway hazards.

Allotted time

Allow about a minute per student per pass.

What this lesson teaches

Students will apply what they learned in the “Who’s There?” lesson to a road-type situation. They will learn to look ahead for hazards, decide how to deal with them, and if they need to move left, to look behind for traffic before doing so.

Why it’s important

When presented with obstacles near the right edge of the road—for example, potholes or drain grates—cyclists have two main choices. They can either move left to go around them or ride over them.

Since riding over a hazard could throw the cyclists to the ground, the best option is usually to go around. Unfortunately, there’s a catch ...

More than 16% of the fatal bike-car

crashes happen when a cyclist either swerves to the left or turns left without looking back or yielding.

These accidents happen most often during daytime on two-lane residential streets. In many of the cases, the cyclist didn’t look back before moving left. Many assume they can hear the cars well enough without looking. That’s a big mistake.

Sometimes a bicyclist can hear an approaching car, but occasionally the wind will mask the noise of a nearby car.

Some cars are very quiet, and a passing bicycle makes even less noise than a car. Before moving left on the roadway, a cyclist always must look back.

Another similar bike-car crash happens when bicyclists swerve left to go around parked cars. Again, the cyclist forgets to look back before moving left.

The maneuver

When cyclists see roadway hazards in

their paths, they need to determine first if they can ride through or have to go around. Skilled cyclists often can weave through a group of potholes without difficulty.

On the other hand, if cyclists decide to move left and go around, they should slow down, look back, and move left when safe.

If traffic is coming from behind, the cyclists need to decide if the traffic is far enough back to pose no hazard. If it is far enough back, they signal a left merge and move out around the obstacle.

If the traffic is close, they can either slow down and wait until it passes, or they can attempt to negotiate a merge. The merge maneuver cannot be taught effectively in a bike rodeo setting. It must be taught on the road.

For this reason, the Dodge-em Drive lesson does not attempt to teach merge negotiation.

The lesson

As cyclists enter Dodge-em Drive, explain that they will be facing roadway hazards ahead. Remind them of the lessons they've already had—particularly the “Rock Dodge” and “Who’s There?” lessons.

Emphasize the points mentioned previously. Also introduce the subject of parked cars. Tell them that a cyclist always should give a parked car three feet of clearance. Mention that there is a parked car in this station. Then let the kids go through one at a time.

Near each of the roadway hazards, assign an assistant as shown in the diagram. As the kids pass, the assistants will either hold up the cardboard cars (meaning there is overtaking traffic) or hold the cars at their sides.

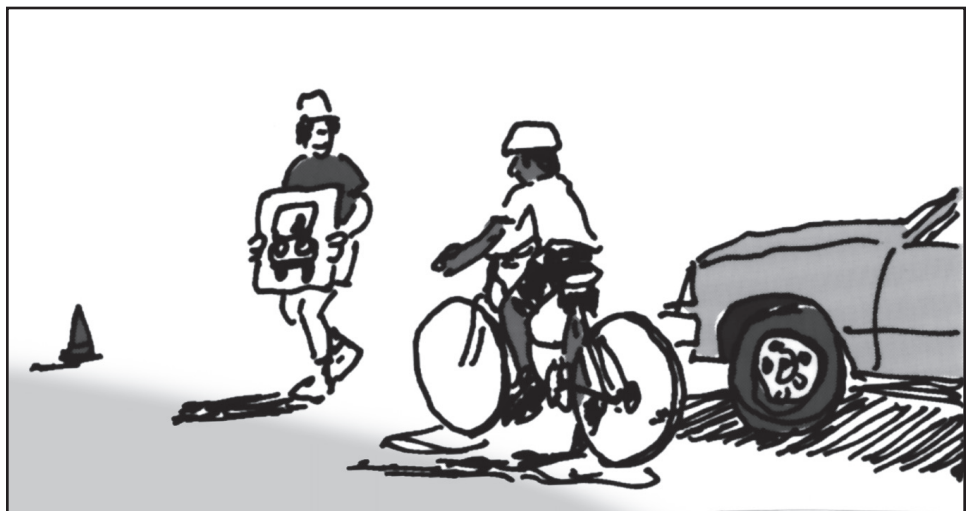
The kids should look back for traffic as they approach the hazards and move left when safe.

If they see the car, they should slow or stop, and wait until it disappears before moving left around the potholes. If they don't see a car, they may move left and go around.

In this lesson, going over the hazards (potholes, etc.) should not be an option. Set up the station in such a way that it is impossible to dodge the hazard areas.



A cyclist is confronted by an opening parked car door.



Cars coming out of driveways are sometimes hazardous for cyclists.

Judging Performance

1. **Try again:** The child swerves left around the hazards without looking back or without yielding. The child rides straight through, going over the hazards. The child rides too close to the parked car (within three feet).
2. **Good:** The child rides up to the hazard and stops, then looks back and goes around when clear.
3. **Better:** The child looks back just before getting to the hazard, sees the car, and stops or slows to wait for the car to pass before moving left.
4. **Best:** The child looks back well before getting to the hazards, sees the car, slows or stops until the car is gone, then proceeds around.

What to tell the kids

1. **Try again:** *Remember to look behind, plan ahead, and move left only when safe.*
2. **Good:** *Good going! To improve, look behind before you get to the hazard.*
3. **Better:** *Pretty good! To improve, look back early, and go around when it is safe.*
4. **Best:** *Not bad at all!*

What you'll need

- One instructor to brief the kids
- Three assistants with cardboard cars
- One assistant to sit in a real car
- One evaluator
- Three cardboard cars
- One real car
- One cardboard drain grate
- Twenty to thirty sponges for potholes

Station 9: The Hazard Quiz

Identify the hazards in a cartoon traffic scene.

Allotted time

Allow two or three minutes per child.

What this lesson teaches

The purpose of this station is to get the kids thinking about roadway hazards. They will be asked to identify 12 different kinds of hazards and tell how they would avoid them.

Why this lesson is important

Cyclists must be able to tell which parts of the traffic scene are important to their survival and which are merely interesting.

For example, a colorful hot rod passing safely on the left may be more interesting than a drab sedan about to pull out from a side street. But the drab sedan may be the one the cyclist ought to watch.

On the other hand, if the hot rod slows down last and starts making a right turn, it becomes the one to watch.

The information

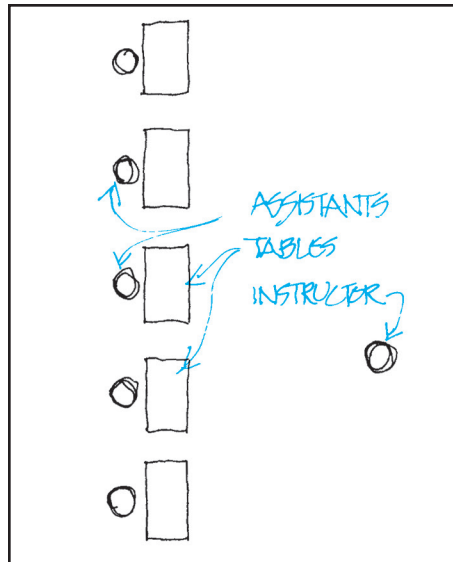
Good cyclists watch the road at least 12 seconds ahead, looking for hazardous situations or situations that could become hazardous. If they see a parked car or a dangerous drain grate ahead, they look back for traffic and safely merge left well before getting there.

If they see a car ahead waiting to pull onto the road, they watch it closely and get ready to take evasive action if it moves.

If they see a pedestrian running toward the street, they slow down and pay close attention to the person's actions.

The poster on the opposite page shows a cyclist facing 12 hazards. These, along with strategies for dealing with them, are presented below.

1. **Wrong-way cyclist:** Slow down, look back, and pass the cyclist on the left when it is safe. Wrong-way cyclists tend to drive towards the curb.



2. **Pedestrian:** Slow down, and be ready to stop if he or she walks out in front of you.
3. **Parked car door:** Slow down, look back, and move left around the car when safe. Allow three feet of clearance to parked cars.
4. **Crack on the roadway:** Don't ride over it if possible. If you have to cross it, do so as near to 90 degrees as you can.
5. **Pothole:** Look back, and go around when it is safe.
6. **Leaves:** Look back, and go around when it is safe.
7. **Dog:** Watch it closely. If it moves toward you yell, "Go home." If that doesn't work, get off the bike on the side opposite the dog and walk away. Keep the bike between you and the dog. When you get home, tell your parents.
8. **Railroad tracks:** Look back, and cross as near to 90 degrees as you can.
9. **Train:** Wait for the train to go by.
10. **Car backing out:** Watch it closely. Be prepared to stop.
11. **Car passing unsafely:** Slow down and watch the car closely. It may turn right.

12. **Drain grate:** Look back, and move left to go around when it is safe.

The lesson

As the kids arrive at this station, direct them one at a time toward the tables. Each table will be staffed by one of your assistants and will have a laminated copy of the poster (enlarged 200%) and some watercolor markers.

The kids will park their bikes next to the tables and will have to identify the hazards. They can use the markers to draw an "X" on each one. They will also be asked to talk about possible strategies for dealing with each one.

At this station, the assistants at the tables will do the evaluating. They should mark the children's scores on their scorecards. The assistants also should review any mistakes with the kids.

Judging performance

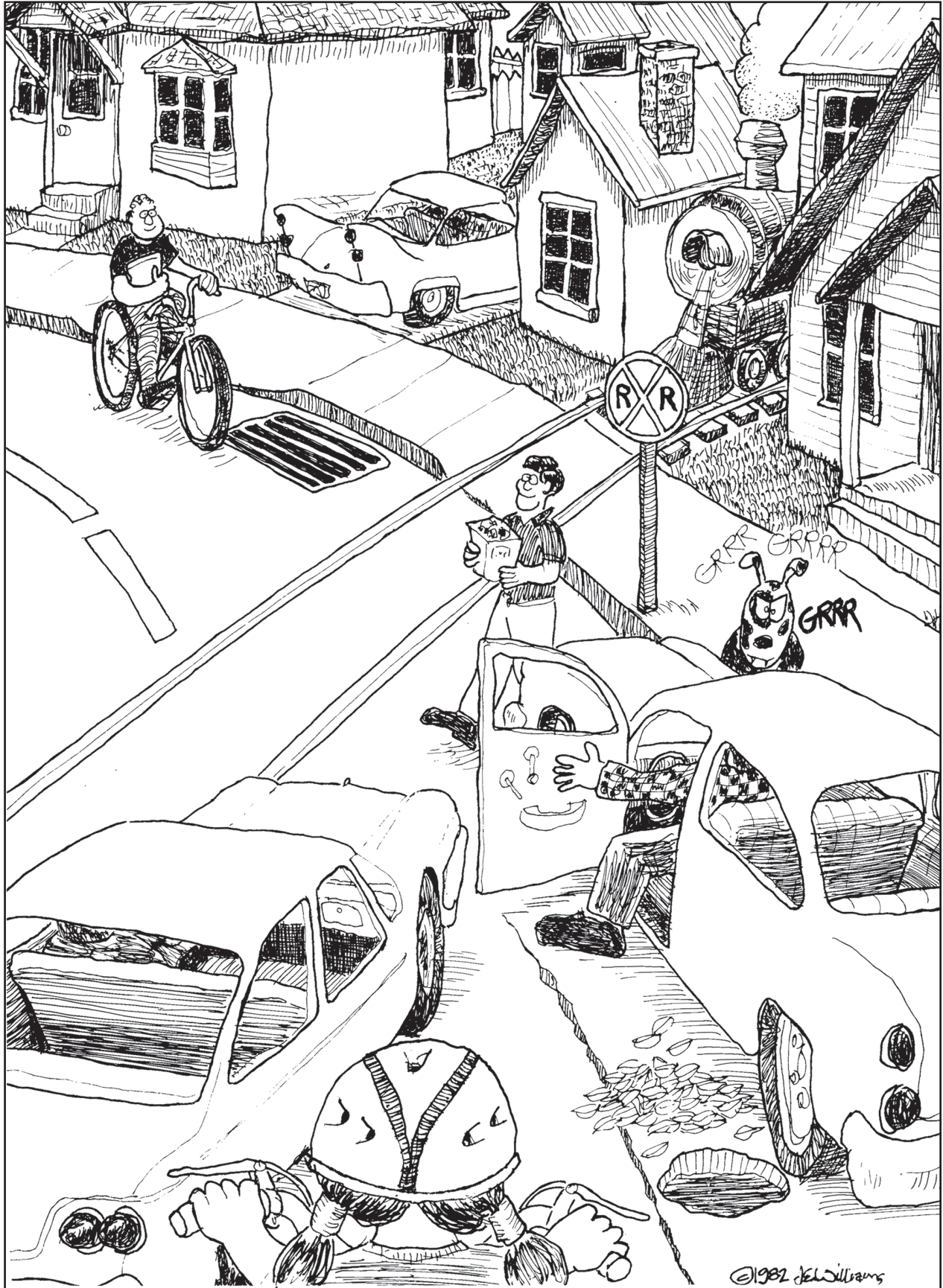
1. **Not good:** Four or fewer right
2. **Good:** Five to seven right
3. **Better:** Eight to ten right
4. **Best:** Eleven to twelve right

What you'll need

- One instructor to direct the kids toward the tables
- Four to eight sets of tables and chairs, depending on how large an event you are holding
- Four to eight assistants at the tables
- Four to eight laminated copies of the poster (enlarged 200%) (find a copy shop with an enlarging copy machine)
- Plenty of watercolor markers to last all day
- A sign saying "Hazard Quiz! Try your luck"
- A sponge and can of water to wipe poster clean

Find the 12 hazards

Pretend you're the cyclist at the bottom of this picture. Can you see 12 hazards that could cause an accident?



Note: above poster ©1984, Bicycle Forum; all rights reserved. Users of this Guide allowed to make up to 20 copies.

Add Ons

Include these extra lessons if you have time and staffing.

The handling skills taught in this event are fairly basic. You may find that older kids—say, 11 years and older—can learn them easily.

For them, you might want to add some additional tests that will challenge their skills. If you do decide to add these tests, find an experienced cyclist to demonstrate the maneuvers. Local bike clubs should be able to help.

We've also included some extra stations for younger kids, in case you want to hold a larger event.

For older kids—11 years and older

Panic Stop: Older kids, particularly those riding road bikes with hand brakes can benefit from this lesson. Being able to handle a panic stop safely can save a cyclist's life. Unfortunately, few cyclists seem to know how to use their brakes correctly.

In a panic stop, the cyclist applies both brakes while moving back on the bike and positioning low. This stance lowers the rider's center of gravity and puts more weight on the rear wheel. Both help keep the rider from flying over the handlebars.

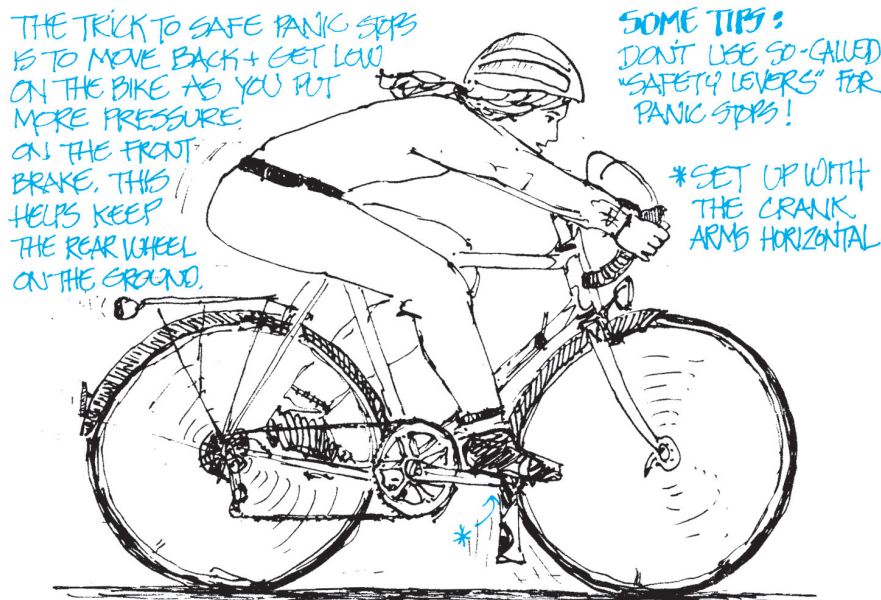
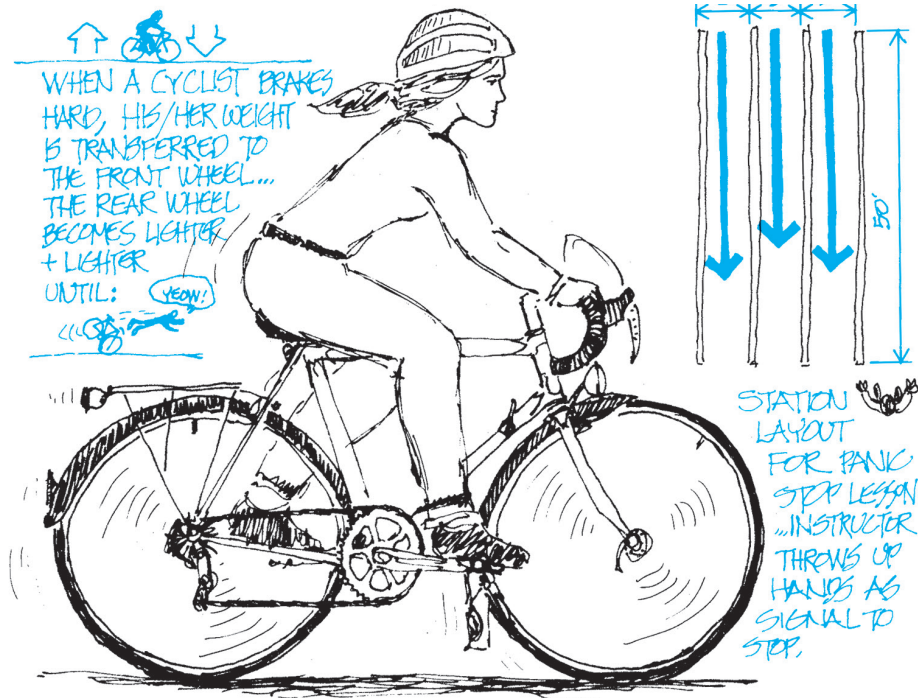
Once in position, the cyclist can increase the pressure on the front brake to about twice that of the rear brake.

During the panic stop, the rear wheel acts as a warning signal. If it starts to skid, the bicyclist is putting too much pressure on the front brake. More pressure will lift the rear wheel off the ground. At that point, it's best to ease up on the front brake to keep from going head first over the handlebars.

To run a panic stop lesson, gather the kids together for a demonstration. Show them how it's done and why it's important.

Next, stage them in three lines. Stand out front from 50 to 100 feet away. At

Panic Stops



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Caution: It's important that the kids take this one easy, especially until they learn how. No one should be racing or showboating. The cyclists should concentrate on getting the maneuver right at fairly low speeds.

your signal, the first three kids should ride toward you at a moderate pace. When they get close, throw up your hands and shout, "Stop!"

After the kids have stopped, give any necessary advice and signal the next group. After three or so tries, send them to the next station.

Quick Turn: Once the kids have mastered the rock dodge (station eight), they can move to the quick-turn maneuver. A quick turn is a lot like a rock dodge—the cyclist must steer the bike by force rather than letting it take its natural course.

This can become an important skill when a motorist on the cyclist's left decides to turn right. In the quick turn, the cyclist first steers briefly toward the object he/she is trying to avoid. That sets up the proper lean. The next step is to turn hard in the opposite direction. In this fashion, a cyclist can turn very quickly.

Two suggestions for the cyclist

1. Keep your inside pedal up as you turn hard. Otherwise, you may hit the pedal on the pavement and fall.
2. Throw your inside knee in the direction you are turning. This gives you more stability in the corner.

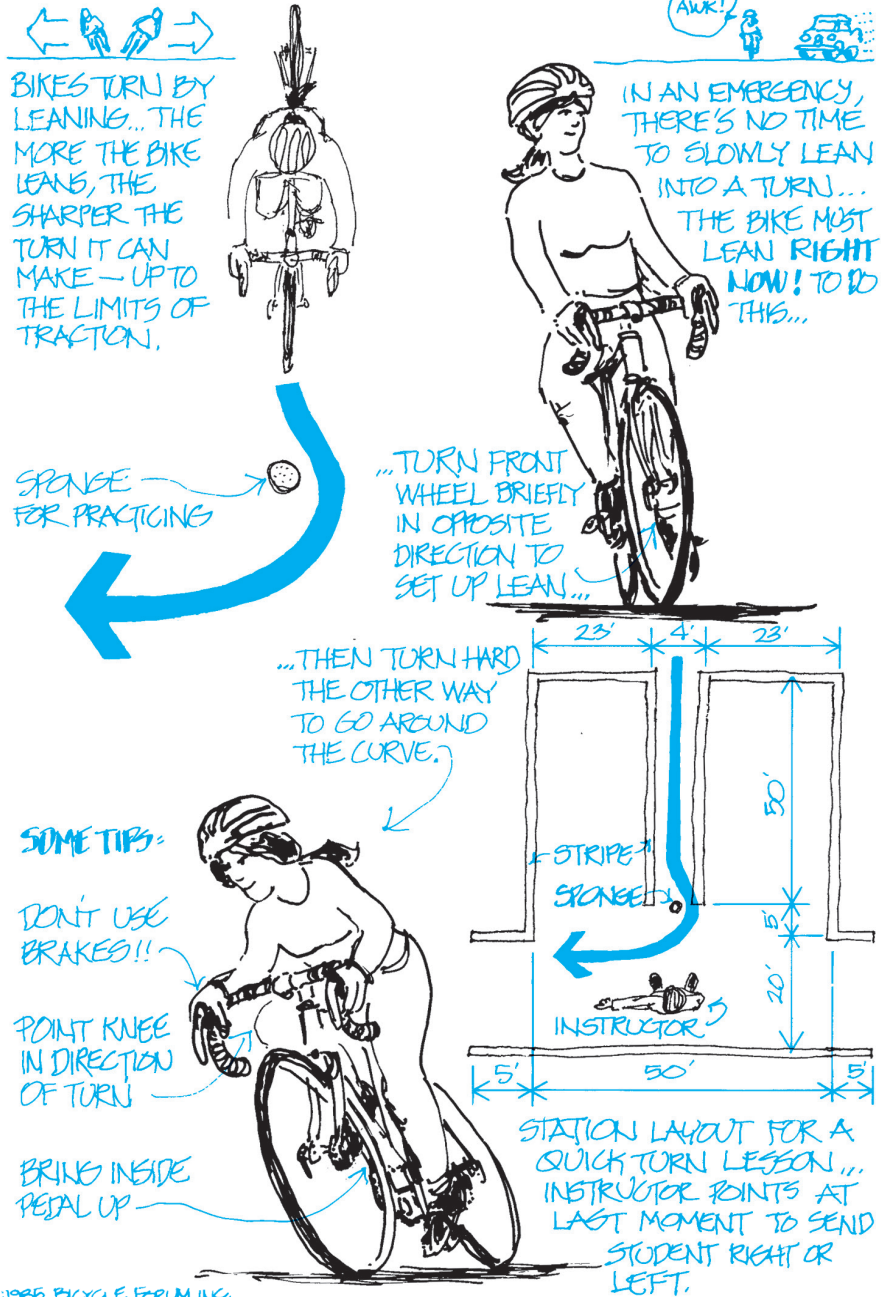
To conduct the lesson, line the kids up at the start. Demonstrate the maneuver, mentioning the points described above. Next, have the kids ride one at a time toward a sponge.

As they approach the sponge, they should dodge their front wheels to the left around the sponge and then turn hard to the right. Next, have them try it dodging right and turning left.

When the kids understand the idea, have them ride directly toward you, and at the last moment give them an arm signal showing which way to turn.

Bicycle Exchange: This is the super test of balance and control. Basically, two bike riders of similar ages and with the same size bicycles approach one another on a grassy field, after having agreed which side each will pass on.

Quick Turns



Caution: As with the panic stop, a cyclist can fall while trying this lesson. Have the kids try it at a moderate speed (five or so mph) until they become comfortable. They can gradually increase speed when they practice on their own.

Another caution: Make sure the area where you are conducting this lesson is smooth and free from debris.

As they come together they will carefully stop in parallel but opposite directions, holding on to both bikes and not putting their feet to the ground. From this balanced position the riders will attempt to switch bikes without either rider falling over or touching a foot to the ground.

Although this sounds impossible, older bike riders can practice this several times until they become accomplished. (Note: this can only be attempted on perfectly flat ground.) Consider having two local TV or radio personalities attempt this exchange.

We suggest that they practice the event several days in advance until they feel comfortable doing this in public. It is a tough act, but immense fun for a group to watch. It is also possible to time various teams and award a prize to the team with the best time

For kids of all ages

Slow Race: This can be a really fun event. In a slow race, the last cyclist across the finish line is the winner.

The slow race helps cyclists hone their low-speed balance skills, which will contribute to their control at all speeds.

To set up the course, mark off an area 100 feet wide and 75 feet long. Create 10 lanes 10 feet wide and 35 to 40 feet long. Allow 25 feet just before each lane, and another 10 feet at the far end.

To run the slow race, line up your contestants at the start and, when everyone is ready yell, "Go".

Any contestants who weave out of their lanes or put a foot down are disqualified. Some bicyclists will be able to come to a complete stop, balancing in place while their opponents are advancing to the finish line. Such a maneuver is called a track stand and is often used in velodrome type sprint races.

Tight-Bay Turns: In this test, the students will ride into successively smaller boxes striped on the pavement and will try to turn around without putting a foot down.

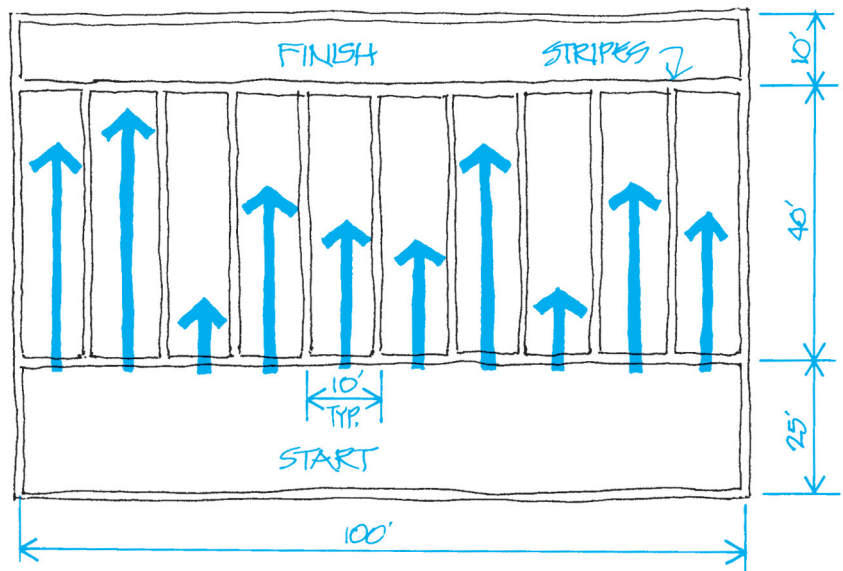
Like the slow race, this event places a premium on balancing skill.

To set up the course, stripe either one or two sets of bays, depending on the size of your event. Stripe them 12 feet deep and with varying widths starting at 10 feet and reducing them to 4 feet in two-foot increments.

The kids will first enter the widest bay. If they successfully turn around without putting a foot down, they will go on to smaller and smaller bays.

You may wish to have one or two assistants here offering encouragement, tips, etc. A skilled BMX rider (age 14 to 17) may be an excellent helper here.

Slow Race



Tight-Bay Turn

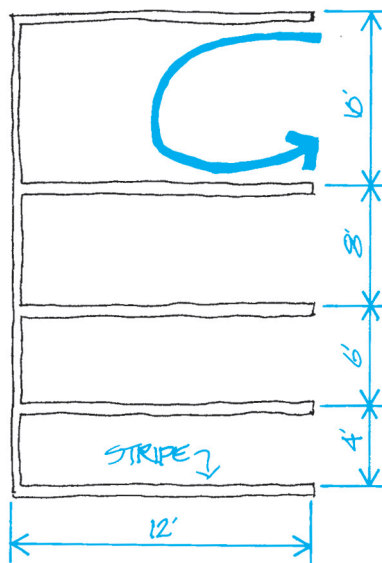
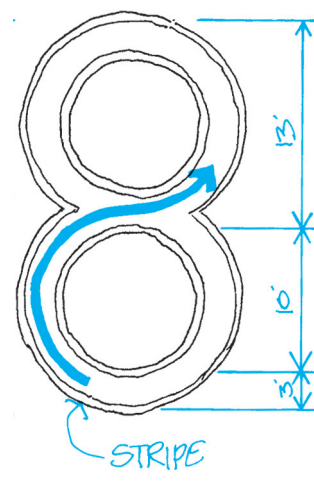
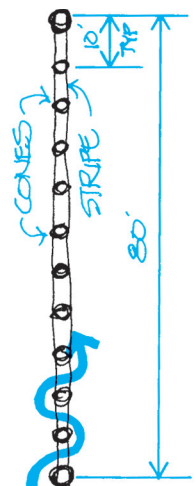


Figure Eight



Slalom



*Layout of several extra stations
Note: Drawings are not to scale.*

Figure Eight: This is a basic exercise in bike control and is suitable for very young riders.

Stripe four circles, two with diameters of 10 feet and two with diameters of 13 feet, to give two intersecting circular lanes three feet wide.

Have the kids enter the figure eight one at a time. The idea is for them to ride around several times in each direction without going outside the lanes and without touching a foot down.

Slalom: This is another basic bike control exercise. It tests the child's ability to weave between traffic cones without hitting them.

Place ten traffic cones in a line, each approximately eight feet from the next one. Have the kids ride around the cones—first to the left and then to the right as they ride down the lane.

They should be able to complete the control exercise. This one tests the child's ability to weave between traffic cones without hitting them.

Bicycle Inspection Form

Make/model: _____
 Serial number: _____
 License number: _____

Owner's name: _____
 Address: _____

Size:	<input type="checkbox"/> too tall	<input type="checkbox"/> too small			
Saddle:	<input type="checkbox"/> too low	<input type="checkbox"/> too high			
Frame bent:	<input type="checkbox"/> fork	<input type="checkbox"/> top tube	<input type="checkbox"/> down tube	<input type="checkbox"/> rear stays	<input type="checkbox"/> head tube
Bearings L(<i>loose</i>) or T(<i>tight</i>):	<input type="checkbox"/> headset	<input type="checkbox"/> front wheel	<input type="checkbox"/> rear wheel	<input type="checkbox"/> pedals	<input type="checkbox"/> bottom bracket
Handbrakes F(<i>front</i>) or R(<i>rear</i>):	<input type="checkbox"/> worn pads	<input type="checkbox"/> adjust	<input type="checkbox"/> rough action	<input type="checkbox"/> doesn't work	<input type="checkbox"/> levers loose <input type="checkbox"/> frayed cable
Footbrakes:	<input type="checkbox"/> not hooked up	<input type="checkbox"/> doesn't work	<input type="checkbox"/> chain too loose		
Front wheel needs:	<input type="checkbox"/> truing	<input type="checkbox"/> spokes	<input type="checkbox"/> new tire	<input type="checkbox"/> new rim	
Rear wheel needs:	<input type="checkbox"/> truing	<input type="checkbox"/> spokes	<input type="checkbox"/> new tire	<input type="checkbox"/> new rim	
Handlebars:	<input type="checkbox"/> loose	<input type="checkbox"/> crooked	<input type="checkbox"/> no end plugs	<input type="checkbox"/> grips or tape loose	

Remarks _____

Approved for nighttime: _____

Front

Bike Rodeo Score Card

(hang tag)

Have this card checked at each station.

Station #	Score		
	Try 1	Try 2	Try 3
1	_____	_____	_____
2	_____	_____	_____
3	_____	_____	_____
4	_____	_____	_____
5	_____	_____	_____
6	_____	_____	_____
7	_____	_____	_____
8	_____	_____	_____
9	_____	_____	_____
Total Score:	_____		

Back



In this rodeo, you will get points for going through the exercises. The better you do, the more points you will earn.

Here's what the points mean:

1 point: Try again

2 points: Good

3 points: Better

4 points: Best

Four Successful Programs

In cities across America, people are creating new and exciting bike safety campaigns.

They are revising their rodeos after reading the new accident studies. They are conducting bike helmet drives, encouraging cyclists of all ages to protect their heads. They are taking young cyclists out on the road for training, and they are conducting bike safety awareness campaigns.

Here are some persuasive case studies from the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT).

Reno, Nevada: Kids on Bikes

The Kids on Bikes program targets upper-elementary age children. The standard program consists of one hour indoors and one hour of on-bike activities outdoors. The indoors presentation includes a discussion about crashes and head injuries and the importance of wearing helmets and fitting them correctly. The egg-drop demonstration in a box of Styrofoam illustrates how helmets can protect the head. The videotape *Jello in a Jar* is shown and discussed. Helmets are then provided to children who do not have them. They are sold at wholesale cost and given to underprivileged participants. Proper helmet fitting and bicycle fitting are taught. Loaner bicycles are provided to children who do not have them.

The outside session is a bicycle rodeo that consists of nine skills stations:

- Left turn, right turn and stop
- Quick stop
- Controlled straight line through cones
- Look over left shoulder for traffic
- Emergency obstacle dodge
- Maneuver through congested traffic conditions (other bicycles, children, cones, etc.) and figure eight turning in limited space
- Multiple bicyclists maneuvering in a figure eight
- Slow race (balancing)

The winner is the last child to finish without his or her feet touching the ground.

During 2001, Kids on Bikes placed almost 200 bicycles and trained 975 children in seven months.

Madison, Wisconsin: After-School Bike Club

The After-School Bike Club was developed to teach safe bicycling skills and to promote bicycling as a fun and lifelong activity. The program is targeted to middle school aged children because this group tends to use bicycles more frequently than children in other age groups.

The main orientation of this program is to learn bicycle safety while having fun riding bicycles. Students bring their bikes to the After-School Bike Club, and the lead instructor works with the students aided by adult volunteers.

The club consists of eight one and one-half hour sessions. The sessions consist primarily of bicycle rides, some pre-ride discussion, and frequent stop-and-talk teaching opportunities. Each session builds upon the previous one. Topics covered are bicycle safety inspections, proper helmet fitting, basic rules of the road, lane positioning, hazard identification, on-bike team scavenger hunt, repairing a flat tire, planning routes, reading maps, and operational procedures such as shifting, braking, etc.

The program's success was not formally measured, but the lead instructor noted basic skill improvements and observed students using their bicycles safely throughout the city during the summer.

Throughout Florida: Florida Traffic and Bicycle Safety Education Program

This is a train-the-trainer program and is targeted to school teachers and community trainers.

Four courses were created within this program for various age categories focusing on developing pedestrian and bicycle skills appropriate for physical education classes. These are provided at no cost to teachers by a grant from the Florida Department of Transportation Safety Office.

On-bike practice lessons include learning traffic skills such as signaling, avoiding hazards, scanning left and right and to the rear, stopping at the edge, and proper helmet fitting.

An eight-hour community workshop provides community law enforcement officials, youth group leaders, community safety specialists, and school resource officers with bicycle safety procedures and rules of the road appropriate for the elementary level. Participants learn to conduct successful bicycle safety rodeos and present bicycle safety information to the public. For a small fee, participants also receive a copy of this manual.

The program evolved and expanded since its inception in 1982. The Florida state government deemed the program worthy to fund as part of its annual budget. This is due in part to its ability to consistently reach hundreds of thousands of children across Florida, and it successfully acquired Section 402 funding repeatedly during the late 1980s and early 1990s. The program's continued appeal to schools is partially a result of its growth and evolution, a resistance to stagnancy, the ongoing training of new teachers, and a state law requiring bicycle helmets for children that was implemented in 1997.

Walnut Creek, California: *Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Program*

The City of Walnut Creek, California, historically has had a bicycle crash rate that averaged higher than crash rates of other, comparable jurisdictions within the state. Collision statistics for 1996 revealed that motor vehicle crashes in Walnut Creek involved 41 bicyclists. The majority of these cases involved bicyclists traveling the wrong way on a major arterial roadway system.

Walnut Creek's Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Program was developed in 1998 to reduce bicycle and pedestrian fatalities and injuries. Objectives associated with the program included the following:

- Establishing a comprehensive continuing public education program

- Developing an ongoing bicycle rodeo program for the elementary schools
- Creating a diversion program for adult bicyclists who violate bicycle-related laws
- Increasing the use of safety equipment by bicyclists, in-line skaters, skateboarders, and pedestrians

The Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Program was kicked-off in October 1998 with a week-long Safety Connection Fair and Festival. The Safety Connection events were publicized at the beginning of the week with banners, newspaper advertising, and the dissemination of event calendars at a bicycle helmet distribution event. The program's kick-off was sponsored by local businesses, by Formerly Employed Mothers at the Leading Edge (F.E.M.A.L.E.), and by a local chapter of Girl Scouts of the USA®. Live music

and free food was provided during the kick-off, and scheduled events included the federally created Pedestrian Safety Road Show program, a bicycle safety and maintenance clinic, a senior citizens' forum on driver safety, and educational programs at the local schools. The week ended with several highly publicized special events, such as an in-line skate and skateboard competition and a bicycle stunt competition.

More recently, Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Program officials developed and implemented a bicycle diversion program, a bicycle rodeo program, senior citizen education classes, and permanent educational signs for major arterial roadways. These programs now have been incorporated into Walnut Creek's annual work plan.



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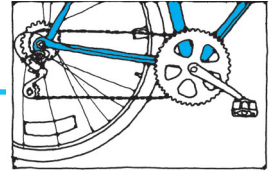
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NOTES



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Resources

These resources may be helpful.

Adventure Cycling Association

150 E. Pine St.
Missoula, MT 59802
phone: 800-755-2453
www.adventurecycling.org

Bicycle Helmet Safety Institute

4611 Seventh St. South
Arlington, VA 22204-1419
voice and fax: 703-486-0100
www.helmets.org

Bicycle Safety Education Resource Center

www.bicyclinginfo.org/education

Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)

Bicycle & Pedestrian Program Manager
FHWA HEPN-50 Rm E74-477
1200 New Jersey Ave. SE
Washington, DC 20590-0001
phone: 202-366-8044
fax: 202-366-3409
www.fhwa.dot.gov

League of American Bicyclists

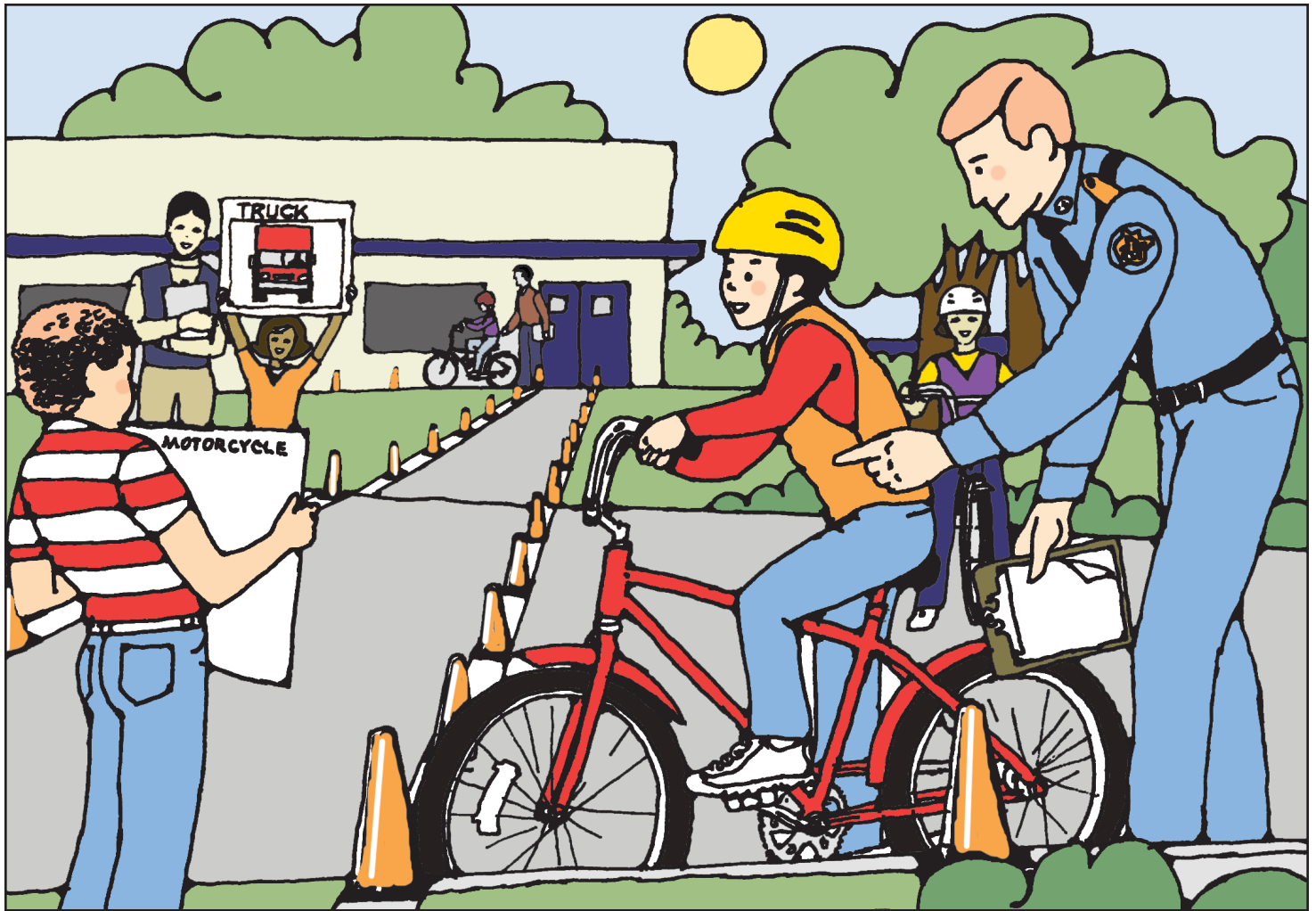
1612 K Street NW, Suite 800
Washington, DC 20006-2850
phone: 202-822-1333
fax: 202-822-1334
www.bikeleague.org

National Center for Bicycling & Walking

8120 Woodmont Ave., Suite 520
Bethesda, MD 20814
phone: 301.656.4220
fax: 301.656.4225
www.bikewalk.org

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA)

1200 New Jersey Ave., SE
West Building
Washington, DC 20590
phone: 1-888-327-4236
www.nhtsa.gov



Need help with your bike rodeo?

Try the Bicycle Rodeo Kit from Kalkomey Enterprises, Inc. It includes enough materials for up to 100 participants. The focal point of this kit is the workbook, *The Best Bicyclist on Earth*, written by Dan Burden. It is a colorful text, which

can be utilized both for the rodeo and the classroom. Parents are encouraged to be with their children and interact with them during the rodeo. A special section for them has been included.

Here is what you receive in the Bicycle Rodeo Kit. Kits can be ordered by contacting Kalkomey Enterprises, Inc. at the number or website listed below.

- 100 *Best Bicyclist on Earth* workbooks
- 100 Helmet Habit—Get Into It! brochures
- 100 Bicycle Inspection Forms (check list for maintenance of mechanical items)
- 100 Ten Little Bike Riders brochures (accordion-fold, cartoon-style, with rhymed safety message)
- 100 Certificates of Achievement
- 100 Bicycle Driver's Licenses
- 1 *The Guide to Bicycle Rodeos*
- 15 Bicycle Reaction Test Rulers (test kids' braking reaction time)
- 27 Station Posters (plastic laminated, illustrating key rodeo stations)

For more information, please contact:

Kalkomey Enterprises, Inc., 14086 Proton Road, Dallas, TX 75244

www.kalkomey.com Telephone: 214-351-0461