

# Tips for Organizing Successful Bike Rodeos



**Ontario Active  
School Travel**



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## What is a Bike Rodeo and Why have one?

While riding a bike is a healthy, affordable, environmentally friendly, convenient, and fun way of getting around, there are many things about cycling that may make people afraid or uncomfortable: falling, going up hills, manoeuvring through the streets alongside other forms of transportation without knowing the rules, or riding in certain weather conditions. Bike rodeos are events with activities to teach students basic cycling skills to overcome these challenges and enable them to bike on a frequent basis. The time duration, type of activities, number of activities, and complexity of implementing Bike Rodeos can vary depending on the available resources, time, and organizational capacity.

These tips were created based on the experiences of bike rodeos coordinated by Green Communities Canada in Ottawa and Toronto.



## Student Engagement

Get students involved in planning the event to promote the event and to find out what is needed and what is enjoyable. Answering these questions will help you decide which model to use, which skills to teach, and who to ask for assistance.

- What are the current levels of cycling skills among students? Are there older students who cannot balance on a bike? Are there students seeking to be more challenged?
- What prevents students from cycling?
- What can be done to make cycling more interesting?

## Bike Rodeo Models: To Bike or Not to Bike

Bike Rodeos can be fun and useful with or without bikes. See which model fits your school.

### All Students on Bikes

In this model, all activities require students to ride bicycles. Schools can make the Bike Rodeo open only to students who have bikes OR find ways of renting, or sharing bikes with students who do not have them.

### No Students on Bikes

This model contains activities that are purely informational. Students can learn about road safety, bike maintenance, and helmet fit. There are no organized activities for students to practice their skills but they can be encouraged to ride their bicycles to school that day.

### Some with and some without Bikes

Bike Rodeos under this model contain a range of activities: some that require bicycles, and some that do not.

To accommodate for **students who do not have bicycles**, you can:

- Reach out to local bicycle shops and organizations for bicycle rentals.
- Ask parents of older children who have outgrown their bicycles if they would be interested in donating them.
- Encourage students who do not have bicycles to bring in other types of wheels (scooters, skateboards, rollerblades, etc.).
- Have students who do not have bicycles volunteer (i.e. timing bicycle races, patrolling intersections, holding signs at obstacles, distributing snacks/stickers or other giveaways, etc.).

If there are not enough rental bicycles for every student to use throughout the event, make sure you have a way of determining the length of time in which students can use them. Come prepared with tools to adjust the seats of rental bikes to accommodate for different sizes.



## Types of Activities



Instructional



Practical (requires a Bike)

## Assemblies



- These can include presentations, hype-up activities, videos, or more interactive activities.
- To stay on schedule, have signs warning people about their time left over (ex. “2 minutes”, “1 minute”, “wrap-up”).

## Stations/Exhibits/Information Tables

- Depending on the skill or theme, you can teach by addressing a large group (requires just one volunteer) or using a one-on-one approach (which requires more volunteers).
- If stations are teaching skills that require a one-on-one approach, it is best to let students go to any station at any time during the event rather than have groups of students stay at each station for a specific amount of time.



## Obstacle/Race Course

These allow students to practice skills on school property using either

- Different sections of the school track for students to practice using different skills (i.e. signalling, stopping) or for a **slow bicycle race**.<sup>1</sup>
- An obstacle course created using pylons and other equipment.
  - Pylons set-up in one line can help students get used to turning and avoiding road hazards (potholes, litter, etc.).
  - Pylons set-up in two lines and having students go in between them can help students learn to travel in a straight line. Put the two lines of pylons closer to make it more challenging.
  - You can also set-up pylons to create lanes for a slow bicycle race.



Be creative and set up an obstacle or race course that challenges students and resembles situations they may encounter on the road. These activities can be made more challenging by asking students to go slower or by adjusting the obstacle/race course.

<sup>1</sup> **Slow Bicycle Race:** a game where the participant who goes the slowest without falling wins. You can keep the race at a certain time limit or make it more challenging and fun by seeing if students can set a record for balancing on their bike for a long time. This cannot be done with bicycles that have training wheels.



## Bikeabouts/Bike Trains



- These allow students to practice cycling skills off of school property. It can be used to teach students how to navigate through traffic or to identify challenges with cycling in the area.
- Bikeabouts/bike trains can be led by teachers, police, or CAN-BIKE instructors.
- Ask Principal about any liability concerns/issues.
- See the [Ontario Physical Education Association Safety Guidelines for Cycling](#) for supervision guidelines.

## Prizes/Giveaways

- The school can give prizes or other giveaways to students who bike to school and encourage them to use their bicycles in a section of school property.



## Who can Help

In addition to school staff and teachers, here is a list of people, professionals, and local groups who you can reach out to and what they can teach and do at the Bike Rodeo:

- **Public Health Nurse:** helmet fitting, health benefits, wheeling safety
- **Police:** road rules, protecting cycle groups off property, bicycle theft
- **Parent Council:** set-up, outreach, bicycle registration, lead/time races and obstacles or teach about inspection, bicycle fitting, repairs, and other themes depending on their cycling skills
- **CAN-BIKE Instructor:** bicycle handling, obstacles/road hazards, riding in traffic
- **Local Bike Shop:** rentals, bicycle maintenance, bicycle fitting, locks
- **Bike Clubs from Nearby High Schools/Universities:** bicycle maintenance, locks, lead/time races and obstacles, bicycle fitting, repairs, and other themes depending on their cycling skills
- **Neighbourhood Associations and other Local Organizations:** bicycle rentals, environmental/health benefits, lead/time races and obstacles, and other themes depending on their cycling skills
- **Transit Commission Representative:** parking and bicycle storage on transit
- **Trustee, Councillor, or other Politicians:** environmental/health benefits, lead/time races and obstacles
- **Student Volunteers:** set-up, outreach, bicycle registration, lead/time races and obstacles or teach about cycling themes/skills depending on their cycling knowledge
- **School Alumni:** set-up, bicycle registration, lead/time races and obstacles or teach about inspection, bicycle fitting, repairs, and other themes depending on their cycling skills





## **Additional Resources**

Ontario's Guide to Safe Cycling

<http://www.mto.gov.on.ca/english/safety/pdfs/cycling-skills.pdf>

Ontario Physical Education Association Safety Guidelines for Cycling

<http://safety.ophea.net/safety-plan/168/1782>

iSchoolTravel Tool

<http://ischooltravel.org/>

Toronto Transit Commission and Bicycles

[https://www.ttc.ca/Riding\\_the\\_TTC/Bicycles.jsp](https://www.ttc.ca/Riding_the_TTC/Bicycles.jsp)

Bike, Walk, Roll: Tracking Active Transportation

<http://bikewalkroll.org/>

Region of Peel's Bike Rodeo Community Kit

[http://www.peelsafetyvillage.on.ca/Bike\\_Rodeo\\_Information\\_Kit%20V9.pdf](http://www.peelsafetyvillage.on.ca/Bike_Rodeo_Information_Kit%20V9.pdf)

Ontario Active School Travel School Travel Planning Toolkit

<http://ontarioactiveschooltravel.ca/school-travel-planning/school-travel-planning-toolkit/>