



Children's Bicycle Rodeo Overview

INTRODUCTION

A bicycle rodeo (also “bike rodeo”) is a fun and educational event designed to teach children valuable bicycling skills to help them become better bicyclists. These events provide an opportunity to learn, practice, and demonstrate bicycle handling skills in a noncompetitive atmosphere, building competence and confidence. This document is intended to provide a brief overview of bike rodeo elements. For detailed guidance, please refer to the list below in the *Sources* section.

KEY DETAILS

- **Target Audience:** School-age children.
- **Format:** Small class events up to large municipal gatherings.
- **Participation Limit:** Typically, 20 students at a time. A maximum of six students per instructor is recommended for skill stations.

ORGANIZERS

The following groups often help organize bike rodeos:

- Parents
- Bicycle clubs
- School groups
- Scout leaders
- Non-profit organizations
- Parent Teacher Associations
- Parks and Recreation leaders
- Youth group leaders
- Government agencies
- Community-based organizations
- Public health organizations



Photo credit: Injury Prevention Program, Butte County Public Health

BIKE RODEO PLANNING AND PREPARATION

LOCATION

Secure a large, flat, paved area like a school blacktop, playground, gym, or parking lot.

TIME AND DATE

Consider school schedules, weather conditions, locale, and staff/volunteer availability when scheduling program activities.

TARGET AUDIENCE

School-age children, tailoring activities to their skill levels.

ORGANIZING COMMITTEE, VOLUNTEERS, AND INSTRUCTORS

Recruit staff and/or volunteers as the committee for planning, setting up the course, and running the event; include skilled cyclists, parents, service organizations, and teachers. Orient staff and/or volunteers to bike rodeo objectives and station procedures.



Photo credit: City of Menlo Park



Photo credit: Injury Prevention Program, Butte County Public Health

INSURANCE AND WAIVERS

Confirm organizational insurance coverage and have all participants sign waivers.

BIKE MECHANIC

If possible, have a bike mechanic on-site for bike safety checks and making bicycle adjustments.



Photo credit: Transform, Alameda County

PARTNERSHIPS AND SPONSORSHIPS

Reach out to schools, bike shops, bike clubs, law enforcement, hospitals, Rotary Clubs, and local libraries for support, volunteers, helmet and/or incentive item donations, and promotion.

PROMOTION

Promote the event through flyers, social media, school newsletters, and local news outlets. Follow up with photos and videos of the event for continued engagement at the school and in the community.

STATION TYPES

A warm-up area can provide some diversion in your course. Staffing this station can work with those needing special attention. Participants who need to improve balance and control can focus on slowly riding in a winding “S” shaped pattern to build confidence and enhance their skills. This can be a good station to have a balance bike (a bicycle with no pedals) for beginners. Keep traffic flow in mind. As you set up the course, note carefully where each station starts and finishes. You may find it necessary to limit access to the course by using natural boundaries or putting a ribbon or caution tape around the perimeter.



Photo credit: Manteca Bicycle Coalition

TIP: If you have limited space, time and support, consider expanding upon the intermediate station. They can practice starts, stops, yielding to others, making turns, and riding in a straight line.



Photo credit: Injury Prevention Program, Butte County Public Health

STATION DETAILS

Station Name	Objective	Skill Level	Materials Needed	Space Needs	Staff Needs
Registration	• Orient participants and families • Prepare participant and family for the event	All	• Station Sign • Waivers/Liability Forms • Table(s) • Chairs (s) • Tire Pump • Rags, Lubricants • Wrenches, Pliers, Screwdrivers • Bicycle Repair Stand (Optional)	410 sq. ft.	One station leader and at least one additional staff/volunteer
Bike & Helmet Fit	• To explain and demonstrate the proper fit and way to wear a bicycle helmet. • Encourage a child to wear a properly fitted bicycle helmet every ride. • To check the proper fit and safety of the bicycle before riding.	All	• Station Sign • Seat Adjustment Tools (Allen wrench/Pliers)	560 sq. ft.	One station leader and at least one additional staff/volunteer
Starts and Stops	• Teach safe starting and stopping • Show how to stop and dismount safely • Avoid a moving obstacle	All	• Station Sign • Cones • Chalk • Tennis balls	1,120 sq. ft.	One station leader and at least one additional staff/volunteer
Scan and Signal	• To teach standard turn signals. • To demonstrate control of the bicycle (riding in a straight line) while scanning for potential dangers (traffic or obstacles). • To demonstrate control of the bicycle while scanning over the left shoulder and then the right shoulder to identify an object.	All	• Station Sign • Cones • Chalk • Cardboard "Car"	1,320 sq. ft.	One station leader and at least one additional staff/volunteer
Avoid Hazards	• To teach control and balance, and how to avoid hazards in their path while riding.	Intermediate/Advanced	• Station Sign • Obstacles (Cones, Sponges, half tennis balls, beanbags)	640 sq. ft.	One station leader and at least one additional staff/volunteer
Entering a Roadway	• Practice turning and yielding to vehicles.	Intermediate/Advanced	• Station Sign • Cardboard "car" • One cardboard bush for sight obstruction	1,645 sq. ft.	One station leader and one additional staff/volunteer
Intersections	• To learn to negotiate roadway intersections and driveways by stopping, scanning traffic, being seen, and signaling.	Intermediate/Advanced	• Station Sign • Cardboard "Car" • Stop Sign • Two real cars or bushes for Sight barriers	3,560 sq. ft.	One station leader and at least two additional staff/volunteers
Putting It Together	• To allow participants to combine bicycling skills, by practicing all learned skills. • To reinforce the importance of safe bicycling behavior and skills needed to prevent some of the most common causes bicycle crashes.	Advanced	• Station Sign • Cardboard "Car" • Stop Sign • Chairs or other means to hold stop sign • Hazards (Sponges, beanbags, etc.) • Real cars or bushes for sight obstructions • Pedestrians crossing street	Dependent on location available (long driveway, closed section of roadway, etc.)	One station leader and at least one additional staff/volunteer depending on what elements you include

EVALUATION AND FEEDBACK

Assess whether your goals were achieved by identifying what went well and what did not work well with your team. Gather feedback from participants and volunteers via evaluation forms to improve future events. Consider if the location provided enough space and a realistic environment, examine the overall course design, and each station set-up for potential improvements.

CONCLUSION

Hosting a successful bicycle rodeo involves detailed planning with a committee and volunteers, gathering the right supplies, organizing effective activities, and evaluating the event to ensure a lasting impact on bike safety and skills in your community. By tailoring these steps to local needs, you can create a bike rodeo that significantly improves cycling skills, encourages safe riding, and fosters a love for cycling.

SOURCES

1. [Smart Cycling Youth Skills Instructor's Manual](#)
2. [Cycling Skills Clinic Guide](#)
3. [An Organizer's Guide to Bicycle Rodeos](#)
4. [North Natomas Jibe](#) (Mellissa Meng and Anya McCann)
5. [Ecology Action](#) (Leann Leon and Youth Bike Safety staff)

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