



## **Bike Train Guide**

Bike trains are lots of fun – kids and adults alike really enjoy them! The following is some important information to make your journey to school a smooth and safe one.

### **Bike Train Engineer and Caboose**

- The Bike Train Engineer rides at the front of the “train” and sets an example for safe bicycling behavior. (See “Bike Train Basics” below.) The Engineer knows the route and the stops along the way, and keeps track of the time.
- The Caboose rides at the back of the train as the “sweep,” to keep an eye on the children in front of her/him and make sure no one falls behind.
- Both the Engineer and the Caboose wear bright clothing (or vests) so that the group is highly visible to motorists.

### **Gathering the Group**

- Please arrive at your starting location at least 5 minutes earlier than the gathering time for the children.
- Be sure that the children have a place to gather that is out of the way of motorized traffic.
- As children arrive, check their names off the list provided. If a child is not on the list, but has a permission slip “ticket” in hand, you may allow him/her to ride with the train. If a child is not on the list and does not have a “ticket,” please assign an adult to accompany the child to school; the child will not be “officially” part of the Bike Train (for liability and precedent-setting reasons). Upon arrival at school, the accompanying adult should bring the child to the office so that the parents can be contacted.
- Be sure that the every participant has a helmet. If they do not, they may obtain a free helmet provided by Safe Routes to School.
- Distribute safety vests (if available) to children who are not wearing bright clothing. (Note: this is for SAFETY, not for fashion!) Also make sure that shoelaces are tied, pant legs aren’t flapping, etc.

### **Starting Out**

- Call a “Rider’s Meeting” and review the “Bike Train Basics” (below). Though the children will want to get going, it is worth taking the time to set some basic ground rules for safe bicycle riding; explain that all adult bike rides start this way, too.

### **Guidelines for Bike Train “Engineers” and “Cabooses”**

- Line the children up with their bikes, placing an adult BEHIND every 4 to 5 children. Tell adults that they should keep their eyes on those 4 or 5 children in front of them, and instruct and assist them as needed. Explain that the adults should also watch and listen for signs of communication between adults, such as an indication that a child has a mechanical problem (See “Along the Route.”)
- Leave your starting location a few minutes later than indicated on the schedule to allow for late-comers at each point along the way. (It’s better to be late than early to avoid missing children who want to participate.)
- You might want to begin with a bit of “fanfare”, such as a “Walk and Roll to School, It’s Cool!” chant or an “All Aboard! Bike Train!” Call or a train whistle.

### **Bike Train Basics**

- Adult-supervised Bike Trains travel on the street, not on the sidewalk.
- Ride single file, leaving space between bicycles (just in case of a sudden stop); do not pass.
- Ride on the right side of the street, generally about an arm’s distance from the curb. Stay to the right and ride as straight as you can so that cars can pass.
- Use hand signals to show you are turning, slowing, or stopping. Calling out “Turning right!” “Slowing!” or “Stopping!” is also helpful.
- At major intersections, where there is a traffic light or a crossing guard, GET OFF the BIKE and WALK IT ACROSS. Look for a safe place OFF the road, like a driveway, for the kids to dismount and mount again, if at all possible.

### **Along the Route**

- Stop briefly at the designated Bike Train stops; welcome and check in any waiting students. (Be sure their name is on the list or have a permission slip in hand.) Check the time, then continue on, modifying the pace, if necessary, to reach your next destination just slightly behind schedule.
- If a child lags behind or has mechanical trouble, move off the road and designate an adult to stay with that child and assist him/her to continue on.

### **Arriving at School**

- Provide small incentives and then lock up bikes. Enjoy healthy refreshments provided by SRTS.