

## Tips for Planning a Successful Bike Rodeo



### What is a Bike Rodeo?

Bike Rodeos are an opportunity to teach students the basics of riding a bike. They are usually set up as a series of stations that students rotate through in small groups to learn about helmet safety, bike maintenance and riding skills. Bike Rodeos can vary in length and can be run with or without bikes.

### Who Can Help Me With the Bike Rodeo?

Bike Rodeos are a great occasion to bring community partners to your school. Students will enjoy learning from experts and involving other groups can mean fewer details for you to plan.

**Public Health Nurse:** Your school's public health nurse can help teach students about the importance of having a well-fitting helmet. For liability reasons, Public Health Nurses are not capable of making actual adjustments to student helmets, but they can provide guidance and instruct teachers and adult volunteers on how to adjust helmets. Nurses can bring the popular "Jell-O" brain to show students how delicate their brain is. They also have a video resource (about 7 minutes in length) that can be shown when time permits.



Public Health & helmet safety

**Ottawa Safety Council:** The Ottawa Safety Council is a local non-profit organization that delivers safety education programs to youth. For a small fee, they are able to bring traffic lights, stop signs, extra bikes that can be borrowed by students and more pylons that you can count! They can help you organize and run the bike riding skills stations.

Contact: [info@ottawasafetycouncil.ca](mailto:info@ottawasafetycouncil.ca)



A practice intersection set up by the Ottawa Safety Council

**CAN-BIKE:** The Canadian Cycling Association's CAN-BIKE program provides a series of courses on all aspects of cycling safety. In Ottawa, the program is coordinated by the City of Ottawa's City Wide Sports program. You can invite a CAN-BIKE instructor to help administer the bike riding stations at your bike rodeo. They will bring pylons to set up the stations and will provide instructions to volunteers on how to lead each station.

Contact: [cws-psm@ottawa.ca](mailto:cws-psm@ottawa.ca)

## Tips for Planning a Successful Bike Rodeo

**Local Bike Shop:** Many local bike shops are willing to participate in bike rodeos free of charge. While they are not there to fix bikes (liability and time restraints) they can show students some bike maintenance basics and/or show off some of the fancy and exciting bikes that they have at their stores. This is usually a big hit with students. Of course, there may also be parents at your school who are knowledgeable about bikes and who are keen to help out.



Students learn to identify bicycle parts

**Volunteers:** Bike Rodeos run smoothly when there are lots of volunteers on hand to help out. When the bike rodeo is being run by volunteers, teachers can roam about and address first aid and behavioural issues. Volunteers can also help to make sure that all students have properly fitting helmets.

### Station Ideas

Helmet Safety	Public Health Nurse	Students learn about importance of wearing a helmet, the different types of helmets, helmet certification, the Jell-O Brain and, with longer bike rodeos, watch the “Don’t Use Your Brain for Brakes” video
Bike Maintenance	Bike Shop/Volunteer	Students learn about the ABCs of bike maintenance (air, brakes, chain)
Intersection/Signals	OSC/CAN-BIKE	Students learn to stop at a stop sign, look both ways and how to signal a proper turn
Shoulder Check	OSC/CAN-BIKE	While riding in a straight line, students are asked to look back over their left shoulder and identify the image of a vehicle that is approaching them (see photo)
Slow Bike Race	CAN-BIKE/Volunteer	In the slow bike race, students’ cycle as slowly as they can without touching their feet to the ground. This station is just for fun, but it allows students a chance to practice their balance. The length of the race can vary depending on the available space. You can set it up as a simple start and finish line, or you can put obstacles in the way. Students can race two at a time, or as one big group.



The shoulder check station

## Tips for Planning a Successful Bike Rodeo

### Sample Schedule (1 hour)

9:00 to 9:20	Students meet and get into their groups (gym or outside) Public Health Nurse explains 2-V-1 helmet fit tips Volunteers and teachers circulate to ensure that all helmets fit properly If students are borrowing bikes, this is when they choose them If video equipment is available, nurse could show helmet safety video
9:20 to 9:27	Station #1 (each station allows 5 minutes of instruction and 2 minutes rotation)
9:27 to 9:32	Station #2
9:32 to 9:39	Station #3
9:39 to 9:46	Station #4
9:46 to 9:53	Station #5
9:53 to 10:00	Return bikes and return to class

\* If you have less time, you can run fewer stations

\* You can allot more time for each station if you have more time, or add other stations

\* You can allot more time for each station, and combine some of the riding stations into a circuit so that students don't get bored doing the same thing over and over again

### Some "Must Haves" for a Successful Bike Rodeo

It's a challenge to organize young students on bikes, so here are a few tips (based on experience) to make the bike rodeo as smooth as possible.

#### The Volunteers:

1. Have one adult volunteer (minimum) to stay at each station (in the past, we have had volunteers stay at the station, not rotate around with a group)
2. Have one volunteer who is not responsible for a station. This person will be in charge of keeping track of time and blowing the whistle/ringing the bell when it is time to rotate
3. Have volunteers arrive early for instructions and to help set-up
4. Send out an overview of the bike rodeo to volunteers, teachers and community partners ahead of the bike rodeo so that they know what is going on. If these groups know what is going on, things will run more smoothly

#### Getting Students Organized:

1. Divide students into groups by putting coloured stickers on their hands. It will save a lot of time if students are divided into groups by their teachers ahead of time.
2. Have an area designated for each group at the meeting area so that students can find their groups easily (pylons with coloured signs on them work well).
3. An adult volunteer can be assigned to each group of students. This volunteer will help them fit their helmets and find borrowed bikes (when appropriate). After the introduction is over, the volunteer will walk with the students to their first station (the station that that volunteer is in charge of)

#### Extras:

1. Clearly mark each station with a numbered sign so that volunteers and students know where they are going
2. You could have students fill out an "exit card" indicating one thing they learned OR have them do a mini-quiz the next day in class
3. Designate a few places to lock up all the extra bikes that will be at school that day!

## Tips for Planning a Successful Bike Rodeo

### To Bike or Not to Bike

A Bike Rodeo can be fun and useful with or without bikes. The instructional stations (helmet safety and bike maintenance) are appropriate in either scenario and many of the bike riding stations can be adjusted to suit non-bike riders. To date, 3 different models have been used at schools; (1) all participants on bikes, (2) no participants on bikes, and (3) some students on bikes, others walking/running (usually younger grades). Having all students on bikes means that they get to learn and practice their bike riding skills, however, not all students have or know how to ride bikes. Here are some suggestions to help you decide which bike rodeo model works best for you.



Students learning how to fit helmets with adult help

**All Students on Bikes:** Not every student will be able to bring their bike to school. You can encourage these students to bring their helmets anyway so that they can borrow a bike for the rodeo. For a small fee, the Ottawa Safety Council is able to bring bikes to the school (about 10 to 15 bikes). Students can also be encouraged to bring their scooters! If possible, have extra helmets on hand because students cannot ride a bike/scooter without a helmet. It is important to plan for students who do not know how to ride a bicycle. They could get separate instruction, act as a crossing guard at the intersection, or assume another role, it's up to you.



A Bike Rodeo without bikes

**No Students on Bikes:** This model is purely informational. Students rotate through stations and learn about road safety, bike maintenance and helmet fit. At this bike rodeo, students do not get a chance to practice their skills but they can be encouraged to ride their bicycles to school that day.

**Some with and some without:** This is probably the most popular bike rodeo model and can be arranged in many different ways. Perhaps you would like to encourage junior students to bring their bikes, but have primary students come through on foot. Junior students will not enjoy doing the rodeo on foot, but primary students can actually retain a lot of information about turn signals and stop lights while running through the intersection (and not

being distracted by trying to steer their bike straight). If you are encouraging students to bring their bikes, consider having some extra bikes on hand (ex. from Ottawa Safety Council) for those students who cannot bring bikes from home. They can bring their helmets instead. Students without bike/who do not ride bikes can also act as pedestrians and crossing guards for the bike riding stations. Additionally, you can use cut off hockey sticks or BBQ skewers that have been taped together as pretend handlebars for students without bikes.



Students without bikes learning turn signals

If you have any questions or comments, please contact:

Jamie Stuckless, School Travel Planning Facilitator (Ottawa)  
[jstuckless@greencommunitiescanada.org](mailto:jstuckless@greencommunitiescanada.org) / 613.680.4522