

Bike rodeo



Organize a fun, educational bicycle safety event for kids



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Bike rodeo



What Is a Bike Rodeo?

A bike rodeo promotes cycling proficiency, safe riding and fun in your community. Bike rodeos are great events for schools, camps, church groups or any organization involving kids! The AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety is committed to promoting safety on our roads and is happy to provide the tools and materials you need to organize an event, set up a course and conduct the rodeo.

AAA can provide you with the bike rodeo materials you need.

Please be sure to return all the items to the container at the end of the rodeo. If you choose, you can buy the materials at a discount store. All the items are readily available, and we've identified everything you need so you can develop your own event with cones, signs, etc.

ONE MORE THING: If you are expecting new riders or children who use training wheels, it's a great idea to have a separate section with volunteers who can help them get off the training wheels. We've included some suggestions for this on page 8.

This manual contains the following:

- **Bike rodeo map:** suggested stations and layout for a smooth event
- **Station details:** equipment and instructions for each station
- **Bike rodeo publicity flyer**
- **Parent/guardian permission slip**
- **Participation certificate**



The manual includes suggested layout and stations, but feel free to modify your own event as needed. The course is designed for ages 4-12, but you may attract a younger crowd and need a simpler course.



GETTING STARTED



1. Find Your Rodeo Grounds

First and foremost, you need a location.

Parking lots and playgrounds are the most popular. Your space needs to be free of cars and should measure **at least 120 by 90 feet**. You can modify the course to fit your lot if it's an unusual shape or has trees or islands. Use the Bike Rodeo-Map on page 9 to see if your space can work.

Be sure to **obtain permission to use the space**. If you are using a school or church, you will need permission from your school district's Building and Grounds Department, or from whoever handles space arrangements at a church.

It's a good idea to plan a rain date. Please schedule this within a day or two of your original date, as the rodeo container needs to be returned promptly.



2. Rustle Up Some Volunteers

We suggest recruiting 18-20 volunteers for each event, but you'll need a minimum of 15. Plan to have 1-2 volunteers at each station; however, if you're expecting more than 50 participants, you'll need additional volunteers. You will need the most help supervising the children who are waiting their turn or who have already completed the course.

Volunteers can be adults from your organization, high school students looking for community service hours, scouts, etc.

3. Lasso a Partner

Outside groups such as bike shops, cycling organizations or your local police can be a great asset. Bike shops can help with maintenance stations and helmet fittings, and police can assist with registering bikes. Contact them well in advance and be prepared to have someone else fill in if they are unable to make it at the last minute. Solicit local businesses to donate prizes or snacks and ask safety groups to provide helmets at low or no cost. AAA will gladly add a partner's name or logo on the **Certificates of Participation** that each child will receive, giving those outside groups some printed recognition for helping.



If using student volunteers, be sure that you have enough adults to provide adequate supervision.

4. Hang Your “Wanted” Posters Around Town

Publicize your event. Ask your school(s) if you can hang posters or talk to the students in their PE class, perhaps they can make an announcement over the PA system. Ask parent groups to help spread the word or put the information in their newsletters; reach out to scouting groups, church groups, camps, day care and after-school care facilities; contact your local newspaper for a listing in the calendar section; put the information on Facebook and Twitter. The more you publicize, the more participants you’ll have. We’ve included a fill-in-the-blanks promotional flyer on page 17 for you to use.



5. Sign Up Your Buckaroos in Advance!

Allowing advance registrations will help your plan for volunteers needed, allow for a few walk-ins as well. We’ve included a sample permission slip on page 18. Feel free to use that or make your own.

6. Wrangle Your Participants

If you are expecting a large number of participants (over 50), **it’s best to schedule times for different ages/grades** — this will help minimize the number of children waiting for their turn or for their friends to finish. Just be sure to have enough help to supervise any waiting children.



JUST BEFORE EVENT DAY



When you confirm the date, you will arrange to pick up the bike rodeo containers from your local AAA branch. The container is actually a large trash can on wheels that will fit easily in vans and larger cars. It may not fit in the trunk of smaller cars but should fit in the back seat.

Rodeo containers must be returned to the AAA location by the date indicated on your contract. During the fall and spring, every available container is often reserved each weekend and we must have time to ship them between branches.

START

Your Bike Rodeo Kit Will Contain:

- **8 traffic cones** – use to mark the start of each station.
- **1 additional traffic cone with a slotted stop sign** – insert the stop sign into the top of a cone, to be used at the “Crazy Crossroad” station.
- **8 flags** – can be slipped into the cones to use as markers or held by the station monitors to alert the next person when to start.
- **28 tennis ball halves** – used as markers on the course (indicated as small circles on your Bike Rodeo Map on page 9).
- **3 laminated cardboard “CAR” signs** – to be used at stations 6, 8 and 9.
- **Laminated course map and station descriptions.**
- **Reflective vests** – for station monitors (rodeo hands) and for the coordinator (rodeo sheriff).
- **Sidewalk chalk** – use to mark the course on the ground. Keep it handy so you can go over the lines later if they wear off during the event. Toss any small, unusable chalk stubs.
- **Tire pump** – use to put air in tires that are flat or low on air.
- **Bike tool** – this item has screwdrivers, wrenches, Allen keys and more. Only use parts of this tool that you know what to do with (there are other items on it that you probably won’t have time to use, like the tire levers).

NOTE



All the above items MUST be returned to AAA in the container after your event.

JUST BEFORE EVENT DAY



Your Bike Kit May Also Include:

- **Certificates of Participation** – for each participant (you fill in the names), customized with your group's name or logo, along with the AAA logo.
- **2 bike helmets** – to raffle off or give away as you see fit (1 helmet if your rodeo is smaller than 25 participants).



Additional Items You Might Need:

While not required, some organizers have found it helpful to also have the following items on hand:

- **Table(s) and chairs** for registration, and possibly your Bike Maintenance and Helmet Check stations.
- **Raffle tickets** if you have chosen to raffle off the bike helmets provided by AAA.
- Supply of **waters and snacks** for volunteers and participants.
- Large outdoor **broom**.
- Additional **sidewalk chalk** to touch up the course if needed.
- **Signs** or **traffic** cones to keep cars from entering the lot during your event.
- **Pens/pencils** for completing certificates.
- **1-2 trash barrels**.
- **Bullhorn** or **microphone** to make announcements, play music and announce the raffle winner.

These materials are yours to use at the event and do not have to be returned.

PRE-RODEO CHECKLIST



Allow some time to prepare your area.

It takes between 30-60 minutes to set up the course. Be sure to block the entrance to the lot so cars don't enter during your event.

Inspect your site.

Sweep the area and make sure it is free of broken glass or other debris. If the course is wet, sweep any puddles. Do not allow participants to ride through any area that is unsafe. If you are unable to remove any dangerous items, adjust your stations so children will not be able to ride through that area.

Set up your course on the pavement.

Each of the stations are outlined on pages 10-16. The Bike Check and Helmet Check stations should be at the beginning of the course — this is to ensure everything is in good working condition before the ride begins.

Familiarize the volunteers with their stations.

Be sure your volunteers are aware of their responsibilities. They should be able to explain the objective of the station to all riding through it. It's often helpful to have copies of the pertinent pages of the *Bike Rodeo Map* and station description at each station.

We recommend that only one or two participants go through a station at a time, so only 8-16 children may be on the riding part of the course at the same time. As one finishes, the next one begins. If you have plenty of extra help, you can allow more children on at a time. Remember, safety is the highest priority. If a volunteer needs to leave early, be sure you have a replacement.

Open the chutes!

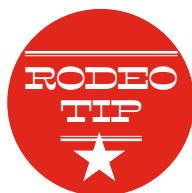
Check in the children as they arrive. Write the name of the participant on a certificate so they'll be ready to be handed over when the child finishes the course.

Remember to have each participant start at the non-riding stations (*Bike Check, Helmet Check, and Hand Signals*) and then proceed to the rest of the rodeo. If space and time allow, participants can repeat from station 6 and beyond; or have them exit near where they started (see map on page 9). Be sure to give them their *Certificate of Participation*.

ONCE YOUR COURSE IS SET UP,

please put the rodeo container out of the way with the lid on it. Because we send the items in a trash can, participants and guests often use it as such. You may use the container as a course obstacle, but please don't allow trash to be thrown in it. Mixing trash with rodeo supplies can make them unsuitable for others to use. Rodeo hosts who return the container in an unsuitable condition may be denied use in the future.

Also, we have placed a sticker on the inside of the can with a list of what you need to return. Please count all the cones, tennis balls, etc. to make sure they all made it into the container.



Getting off Training Wheels



Take the Pedals Off!

1. One of the main reasons new cyclists fall off their bikes is because they put their feet on the ground to regain their balance or stop, and the rotating pedals hit them in the legs. Remove the pedals from the bike. They will come off — and go back on — fairly easily.
2. Lower the seat so that the rider's feet are flat on the ground.
3. Have participants straddle their bike and sit on the seat.
4. Holding onto the handlebars, have them push the bike forward using both feet at the same time. With each stride, they should lift their feet just off the ground and try to glide until the bike slows down. Repeat the process.
5. Have them travel in an easy, straight, unobstructed path. If they feel like the bike is unstable, they can easily put both feet back on the ground to regain their balance.

When the child is comfortable and has mastered balancing during a glide, put the pedals back on the bike.

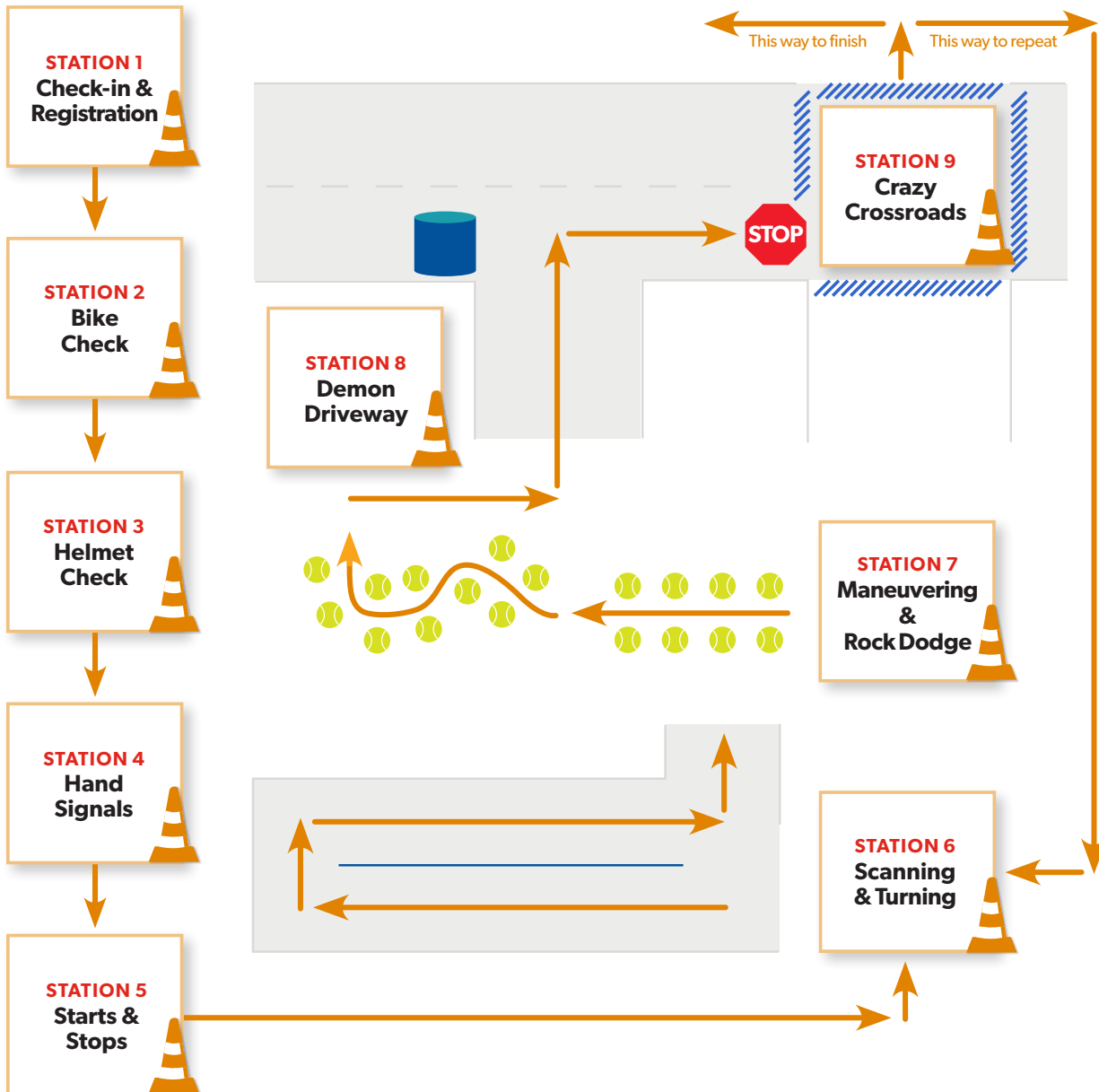
If you have Rodeo participants who are still on training wheels, **consider having a separate course for them**, or add a station to help them learn to ride a two-wheeler.



BIKE RODEO MAP



See descriptions of each station on the following pages.
Use the suggested map to draw your course on the pavement.



LEGEND



Cone



Tennis ball halves



Stop sign



AAA container

BIKE RODEO STATION DESCRIPTIONS



Volunteers at each station should be able to clearly explain what participants need to do and be able to maintain a safe number of riders at each station.

STATION 1 Check-in



EQUIPMENT: permission slips, Certificates of Participation, table or clipboard

- Check-in pre-registered participants and walk-ins. Everyone must have a signed permission slip.
- Use permission slips as raffle tickets for the bike helmet or use your own.
- Write the name of each participant on the Certificate of Participation.

STATION 2 Bike Check



EQUIPMENT: tire pump, bike tool

Bike checks can be basic or more involved, depending on the time and number of volunteers and participants. Tell the rider if you see anything that needs further repair or attention.

AT A MINIMUM, CHECK THE FOLLOWING:

- **Tire air pressure.** Use the pump to add air if needed.
- **Seat height.** The feet should just reach the ground when sitting.
- **Brakes.** Push the bike and check how smoothly the brakes stop it.
- **Condition.** Everything should be tight, rust-free and in good working order.
- **Safety.** Confirm any reflectors are on securely.
- **Size of bike.** The chart below will guide you, but the child should feel comfortable and safe.



| Wheel Size (Diameter) | Approx. Age | Height | Notes |
|-----------------------|-------------|----------------|--|
| 12" | 2-3 | 2'10" – 3'4" | Designed for kids starting off on a bike |
| 14" | 3-4 | 3'1" – 3'7" | |
| 16" | 4-5 | 3'7" – 4'0" | |
| 20" | 5-8 | 4'0" – 4'5" | |
| 24" | 8-11 | 4'5" – 4'9" | |
| 26" | 11+ | 4'9" or taller | Standard size adult bike wheel |

BIKE RODEO STATION DESCRIPTIONS



STATION 3 Helmet Check



EQUIPMENT: none



Helmets save lives. In the majority of bicyclist fatalities, the most serious injuries are to the head — and properly fitted helmets can reduce the odds of head injury by 50%.

- **Inspect the helmet.** Make sure the child’s helmet is in good condition and not damaged prior to fitting.
- **Position helmet correctly on the head.** The helmet should be level from side to side and cover the forehead. Helmets that sit too far back or too far forward do not provide adequate coverage. There should be no more than 1 to 2 fingers-width between the eyebrows and the front rim of the helmet.
- **Adjust the knob in the back** (if it has one), to make the fit around the forehead tighter or looser, as necessary.
- **Adjust the side straps.** The “V’s” should come to a point right at the bottom of the earlobes. Many riders NEVER adjust these straps, which can lead to a poor fit.
- **Adjust the buckle strap or chin strap.** The chin strap must be comfortable but also prevent the helmet from moving.
- **Test the fit of the helmet.** Instruct the child to shake their head to test the security of the helmet. If it wiggles, it needs further adjustment.

AAA encourages all bicyclists, regardless of age, to wear properly fitted helmets when using a bike, scooter, skateboard or rollerblades.

THE MANDATORY AGE FOR HELMET USE VARIES BY STATE:

MASSACHUSETTS: all cyclists **16 years** and younger

RHODE ISLAND: all cyclists **15 years** and younger

CONNECTICUT: all cyclists **16 years** and younger

NEW YORK: all cyclists **14 years** and younger

NEW JERSEY: all cyclists **17 years** and younger

*Local ordinances may be more stringent in some areas.



BIKE RODEO STATION DESCRIPTIONS



STATION 4 Hand Signals



EQUIPMENT: none

A bicycle is considered a vehicle, so all cyclists must know how to signal in traffic. Using these hand signals will increase the safety of the bicyclist:



Level =
LEFT

Left turn – left arm extended straight out and parallel to the road.

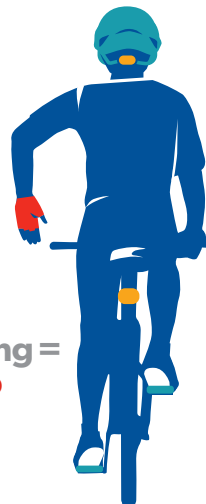


Raised =
RIGHT

Right turn – left upper arm extended straight out and parallel to the road. The forearm and hand should be pointed straight up and perpendicular to the road.



Level = **L**eft
Raised = **R**ight
Sagging = **S**top



Sagging =
STOP

Have participants practice correct hand signals while sitting on their stationary bikes.

Stopping or slowing down – left upper arm extended straight out and parallel to the road. The forearm and hand should be pointed straight down and perpendicular to the road.

BIKE RODEO STATION DESCRIPTIONS



STATION 5 Starts & Stops



Starting and stopping are skills that are often overlooked; we seem to think that kids will just figure it out. The result can be poorly controlled and unbalanced starts, skidding stops or even crashes. This is the time to introduce safer, more efficient maneuvers.

EQUIPMENT: none

STARTS

1. Straddle the bicycle with both feet on the ground; do not sit on the seat.
2. Raise the right pedal to the 2 o'clock position and put your right foot on the pedal (left foot still on the ground).
3. Push off with the left foot and at the same time stand on the raised pedal; do not pedal after pushing off.
4. Coast to a stop while standing on the pedal that has been pushed down.
5. When the cyclist is comfortable with this procedure, have them place their second foot on the other pedal, their backside on the seat and keep pedaling.

STOPS

1. Discourage stops that are executed by dragging feet.
2. For coaster brake bikes, make sure the rider knows how to pedal backward to apply pressure that stops the bike.
3. For hand brakes, make sure the rider squeezes the brake levers evenly with both hands. They need to know that using only one brake is not the best way to stop and can be dangerous (pitching over or skidding out of control). Hand brakes are not the best choice for small children.

How to stop and dismount a bicycle:

Slow down by using the brakes. As the bike nears a stop, slide off the seat and put your weight on a pedal in the "down" position. Take your other foot off the pedal and prepare to place it on the ground when you're going slowly enough. If you're using hand brakes, be sure and keep pressure on the brake levers.



TO START

The right pedal is at the 2 o'clock position. The left pedal can be used to push off, depending on the rider's preference.

BIKE RODEO STATION DESCRIPTIONS



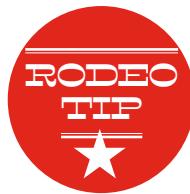
STATION 6 Scanning & Turning



EQUIPMENT: cardboard "CAR" sign

Sudden swerves and left-hand turns without looking are **major causes of crashes**. Children must learn to scan while not deviating from their path of intended travel. Looking to the rear is even more important than hand signals; the natural tendency is to swerve left when scanning behind.

Ask participants to ride through the station, concentrating on staying in a straight line. Tell them you will say "LOOK" and they are to look over their left shoulder and tell you if a car is coming. Hold the cardboard "CAR" sign up to indicate there is a car, or keep it behind you to indicate there is no car. Stay 5-10 feet behind the cyclist. For more proficient riders, ask them to also use hand signals when approaching the turns.

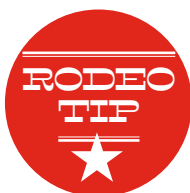


Remind riders that when riding on the side of the road, they must ride on the right side with the flow of traffic, not against it. It's the law. Younger riders may ride on the sidewalk but must still practice scanning for cars as they cross over driveways and street crossings.

STATION 7 Maneuvering & Rock Dodge



EQUIPMENT: tennis ball halves (place the first 8 halves in a straight line in pairs, about 6-8 inches apart from each other. The other halves should be placed randomly with an arrow showing the desired way around them).



If you have enough space, set up two courses side-by-side with different spacing between the ball halves to handle two proficiency groups.

Cyclists often fail to notice roadway hazards until it's too late.

For every reported bicycle/vehicle crash, there are between 7-10 crashes with the pavement that require medical attention. Children either fail to notice a hazard, notice a hazard too late or — in an attempt to avoid a hazard — swerve too far, lose control, and crash or end up in traffic.

Hazards might include rocks, grates, potholes, sand, glass, etc. It is important to be alert and know how to get around them without sudden swerving.

- **Direct participant** to ride straight through the first set of tennis balls, at a fairly quick speed.
- **Ride straight** toward the first "hazard" tennis ball and steer around it at the last moment.
- **Follow the arrows** to maneuver around and through the "hazards" without hitting any tennis balls.

The biggest mistake people make with this is not going fast enough toward the obstacle or making the maneuver too slowly. It is designed to simulate a situation where a cyclist is traveling at a good speed down the roadway and suddenly encounters an obstacle. It happens fast and can't be practiced slowly. The placement of pairs of tennis balls close together is designed to make sure the cyclist doesn't simply make a big swerve around the "rocks."

BIKE RODEO STATION DESCRIPTIONS



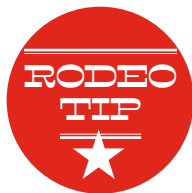
STATION 8 Demon Driveway



EQUIPMENT: AAA Rodeo container, stop sign on a cone, cardboard "CAR" sign, or (if you have space) park a real car on the "street" part of this station.

Most young bicyclists who are seriously injured or killed ride out into the path of an oncoming car. Children become accustomed to not having much traffic on residential streets; they ride out of their driveway without looking because they don't expect traffic. Visual obstructions can also be a contributing factor. **Children should be taught to always stop and look for traffic before entering any street.**

Station 8 simulates the cyclist starting in the driveway, entering the street and turning to the right. You can create a visual obstacle by placing the *AAA Rodeo container* on the left corner of the driveway to simulate a bush or tree; or even better, if you have space, park an actual car on that corner. *(For safety, be sure the car has the parking brake on, and the keys are not in the car during the rodeo.)* If you do not have enough space for a real car, use the cardboard "CAR" sign to simulate an approaching vehicle.



Walking the bike to the end of the driveway removes the temptation to continue riding out into the road without first stopping and checking for traffic. Traffic conditions can change quickly, so a fumble at the takeoff can result in a hazardous situation.



- Tell participant this station simulates a driveway.
- Walk the bicycle to the end of the driveway — look left, right and left again for traffic and pedestrians.
- Volunteer can hold the "CAR" sign up or behind back to simulate oncoming traffic.
- If there is no traffic, proceed to the right, practicing a good start; stay to the right and approach the next station.



Station 8 leads right into station 9 at the stop sign, where of course, the cyclist should stop and wait for instruction. Children should be encouraged to use the appropriate hand signal for stopping.

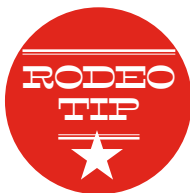
BIKE RODEO STATION DESCRIPTIONS



STATION 9 Crazy Crossroads



EQUIPMENT: simulated crosswalks, drawn in chalk on the pavement, cardboard “CAR” signs



Although traffic lights and pedestrian signals are not part of your AAA Bike Rodeo kit, the Crazy Crossroads station is the perfect place to mention the importance of paying attention to signals. Drivers frequently speed up through yellow lights, so cyclists should wait until a light is clearly green, and only proceed after looking left, right, left and over the shoulder. Adults at this station can choose to verbalize a green light, a WALK signal, a flashing red hand, etc.

Nationwide, running stop signs is the #1 cause of injury-producing bicycle/car crashes for children. Too often, children don't think through the risk of not stopping at an intersection or the importance of scanning in all directions for oncoming traffic. They should learn to negotiate intersections safely by stopping, scanning for traffic, being seen, and signaling, if necessary, before going through an intersection.

- While at the stop sign, tell participants they need to make a left turn.
- Dismount the bicycle, scan left, right, left and over their shoulder. Listen for traffic as well.
- **Volunteer can show “CAR” sign to simulate traffic coming from any direction, if desired.**
- Cyclist should WALK the bicycle across the CROSSWALK, as depicted by the arrow in the *Bike Rodeo Map*.



Walking your bike across the intersection makes you more visible and predictable to vehicles, and there is less chance of falling or skidding. Repeat the same procedure at the second corner, taking the cyclist to the end of the course.

Older, more experienced riders can practice riding across, but should still stop at the corner, look and listen, and proceed across the crosswalks by riding smoothly and predictably to the other side.

COMPLETION

If you have enough volunteers and space on the course, have cyclists repeat the course by going to the right, back to **Station 6** (Scanning and Turning). Once they have completed the course again, or are finished for good, they can walk their bike back to **Station 1** to pick up their **Certificate of Participation**. Be sure to have a volunteer or two at the end to direct cyclists — to either repeat the course or to complete it.



COME AND TEST YOUR BIKE-HANDLING SKILLS on a specially designed Bike Rodeo course!

Bike rodeos teach children various bike safety skills by using simulated real-life situations. Children will have their bicycles and helmets inspected and fitted, then ride through a skills course to learn bike safety techniques.

DATE:

TIME:

LOCATION:

CALL FOR MORE INFORMATION:

★ **BIKE RODEO** ★

WHO CAN COME:

DO YOU NEED TO REGISTER IN ADVANCE?

BROUGHT TO YOU BY AAA and

**Participants must bring their own bike and helmet
to take part in this event.**



★ BIKE RODEO ★

PERMISSION SLIP

Participant's Name _____ Phone _____

Rodeo Host/Sponsor _____ Rodeo Date _____

- I voluntarily allow my child to participate in the AAA Bike Rodeo program.
- I understand participation in the Bike Rodeo program involves riding a bicycle through various obstacles to increase riding skills and knowledge.
- My child will take all safety precautions recommended by the program's sponsors to try and avoid danger to themselves or others.
- My child will wear a helmet through the riding components of the Bike Rodeo program or will not be allowed to participate.
- I have read this release, and hereby release AAA from any liability.

Name of Parent or Guardian (printed) _____

Signature of Parent or Guardian _____

Date _____

SEE YOU SOON, PARTNER!



BIKE SAFETY
★ RODEO ★

CERTIFICATE OF PARTICIPATION



AWARDED TO

.....

For recognizing the importance of wearing
a helmet, demonstrating good bicycle-handling skills
and learning the rules of the road.

.....

DATE

Always wear a bicycle helmet and ride safely!