



PA Bike Rodeo Guide



Pennsylvania
Department of Transportation

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Introduction

The PA Bike Rodeo Guide is a comprehensive guide to planning and implementing a successful bike rodeo within your community. It provides detailed instructions, resources, and templates to help plan an event that offers bicycle safety education in a fun and engaging environment for the benefit of children and families throughout Pennsylvania.





What is a bike rodeo?

A bike rodeo is an educational event with the goal of promoting bicycle safety, enhancing bike riding skills, and instilling confidence among participants. Typically, events involve a variety of interactive skills stations and educational activities that participants can complete at their own pace with the help of volunteers.



Planning Your Event

As with any event, proper planning and coordination is key to a smooth and successful bike rodeo. This includes identifying and coordinating with partners/volunteers, procuring supplies, securing a location, and designing your rodeo. Each of these tasks includes several steps that can be thought of as markers on a timeline pointing to the day of your event.

A sample Bike Rodeo Supply Checklist can be found in Appendix A - Event Planning Resources. This list provides a good starting point that can help ensure you have all the right supplies ready to go for your event.

Like most events, bike rodeos involve a lot of moving pieces that require planning and coordination, especially for first time events and when working with multiple partners. Starting the planning process early and staying organized throughout can help keep things from getting overwhelming. The Sample Bike Rodeo Timeline to the right provides some practical milestones and timeframes to consider that can help you plan an effective and memorable bike rodeo.

Sample Bike Rodeo Timeline →

Three Months from Event

- ☐ Contact local PennDOT Safety Press Officer to identify partnership opportunities.
- ☐ Identify location (typical minimum size: approximately one basketball court).
- ☐ Set date and time as well as a rain date.
- ☐ Solicit volunteers.
- ☐ Identify local organizations and businesses for potential giveaways.

Six Weeks from Event

- ☐ Contact local schools, organizations, and news outlets to distribute fliers/announcements.
- ☐ Scout location to get an idea of space constraints.
- ☐ Create layout for event based on available space.
- ☐ Contact local bike shop or cycling organizations to assist with maintenance station.
- ☐ If planning to take photos work with event sponsor to include photo release form.
- ☐ Develop liability waiver.

One Week from Event

- ☐ Meet with volunteers and assign roles.
- ☐ Distribute sample layout.
- ☐ Check supply list.
- ☐ Check weather.

Day of Event

- ☐ Assess weather to determine if rain date is needed.
- ☐ Double check supply list.
- ☐ Arrive at event site ~2 hours before event to set up course.
- ☐ Have volunteers arrive ~1 hour before to set up individual stations.
- ☐ Ensure participants check in and sign releases and/or waivers.
- ☐ Have fun!



Welcome Area

Participants should be directed to a welcome station when they first arrive at the event. This allows for children and parents to sign in, fill out waivers, and receive orientation on the layout and format of the event.

Depending on the number of participants and available volunteers, certain areas of the event could get backed up and lead to delays. Some useful tips that can help streamline the check-in process and help the overall event run more smoothly include:

- **Provide (or require) preregistration:** This not only helps to estimate the number of participants that will be attending the event but can also allow for parents to sign waivers and any other forms prior to their arrival.
- **Use different colored name tags or bracelets to separate participants by skill level:** This can help identify who might need extra assistance or those that are ready for more advanced activities. If you plan on taking photos, this can also be used to identify which families have signed a photo release waiver.
- **Provide educational resources and activities:** This can help participants learn about bicycle safety and other topics to keep in mind while they prepare for the course. Reflective stickers can also be provided for participants to personalize their bicycles and has the added benefit of enhancing visibility when riding.



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Helmet Fitting

Pennsylvania state law requires that anyone under the age of 12 must wear a helmet when riding a bicycle. In addition, the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation strongly recommends that all bicyclists wear helmets whenever they ride.

Ensuring that a helmet fits properly and has not passed its expiration date (typically 3-5 years) is a vital step to safe riding. Each participant should be required to visit the helmet fitting station before proceeding to the course. Volunteers can check a child's helmet using the guidance below to make sure it is in good condition and is being worn properly.



Position



Helmet should sit level on head and allow for two fingers to fit between the rider's eyebrows and the front of helmet.

Fit



Adjust straps so that they form a "V" shape around each ear. Helmet should fit snugly with no movement on head.

Strap



Tighten chin strap until one finger can fit between the strap and chin when buckled.



Hand Signals

Visibility and predictability are two of the most important factors when riding a bicycle, especially on roadways when interacting with motor vehicles. Knowing and utilizing hand signals to indicate your upcoming maneuvers is vital to safe and predictable travel.

Hand signals play a role in several of the skills stations described later in the guide and it is important for participants to have a strong familiarity with how and when to use them in a real world setting. For this reason, it is encouraged to have participants complete the hand signal station before moving on to the rest of the course. There are many ways the signaling station can be set up, but some possible ideas include:

- **Boards with hand signal information:** This can be cumbersome to carry but can help if volunteers are limited.
- **Visual printout with signals on one side and description on back:** Riders can participate in groups and call out descriptions after seeing visual cues.
- **Matching exercise:** Requires printed cards and table space but creates interactive game for participants that can be useful if there are delays in moving participants through the course.
- **“Simon Says”:** Volunteer can call out hand signals and have participants demonstrate in this interactive activity.



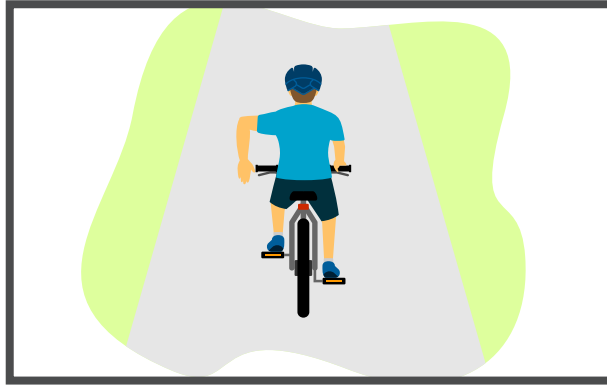
Knowing how and when to use hand signals is an essential part of safe riding.

Left Turn



Extend left arm straight to the left to indicate you are turning left.

Stop



Make a downward L-shape with left arm to indicate you are coming to a stop.

Right Turn



Extend right arm straight to the right to indicate you are turning right.

Or



Make L-shape with left arm to indicate you are turning right.

Tips & Suggestions



Using simple graphics can help illustrate the different hand signals and when to use each in a real world context. These can be accompanied by discussion questions such as:

1. "Why is hand signaling important?" or
2. "Can you think of a situation where you would use hand signals and what might happen if you don't?"

A set of printable graphics and flip cards can be found in Appendix C - Instructional Guides and Activities for use during your event.

Maintenance Station

Ensuring that a bike is in acceptable working condition and properly fits the rider are essential first steps to ensure participants are safe both on the course and in their everyday riding. Providing a maintenance station at this point in the course is a good final check on all bicycle equipment and its suitability and fit for the rider.

Due to the importance of this station, having volunteers with bike maintenance experience is pivotal to keep everyone safe. Local bike shops or police are good partners to work with to provide these services as well as to educate participants on the importance of bicycle care and maintenance. The checklist to the right offers some basic fit and maintenance items to check and consider.



Fit & Maintenance Checklist

Fit

- ☐ Can child place the balls of their feet on the ground while sitting on seat with hands on handle bars?
- ☐ Can child stand with feet flat on ground while straddling center bar?
- ☐ If bike has handbrakes, can child comfortably grasp and apply enough pressure to stop bike?

Maintenance Check

- ☐ ABC Quick Check (see graphic).
- ☐ Make sure handle bars are proper height and are not loose.
- ☐ Ensure quick release levers on wheels and seat are properly tightened.
- ☐ Spin wheels to make sure they rotate smoothly and brake pads do not rub against tire rims.

ABC Quick Check Guide



C

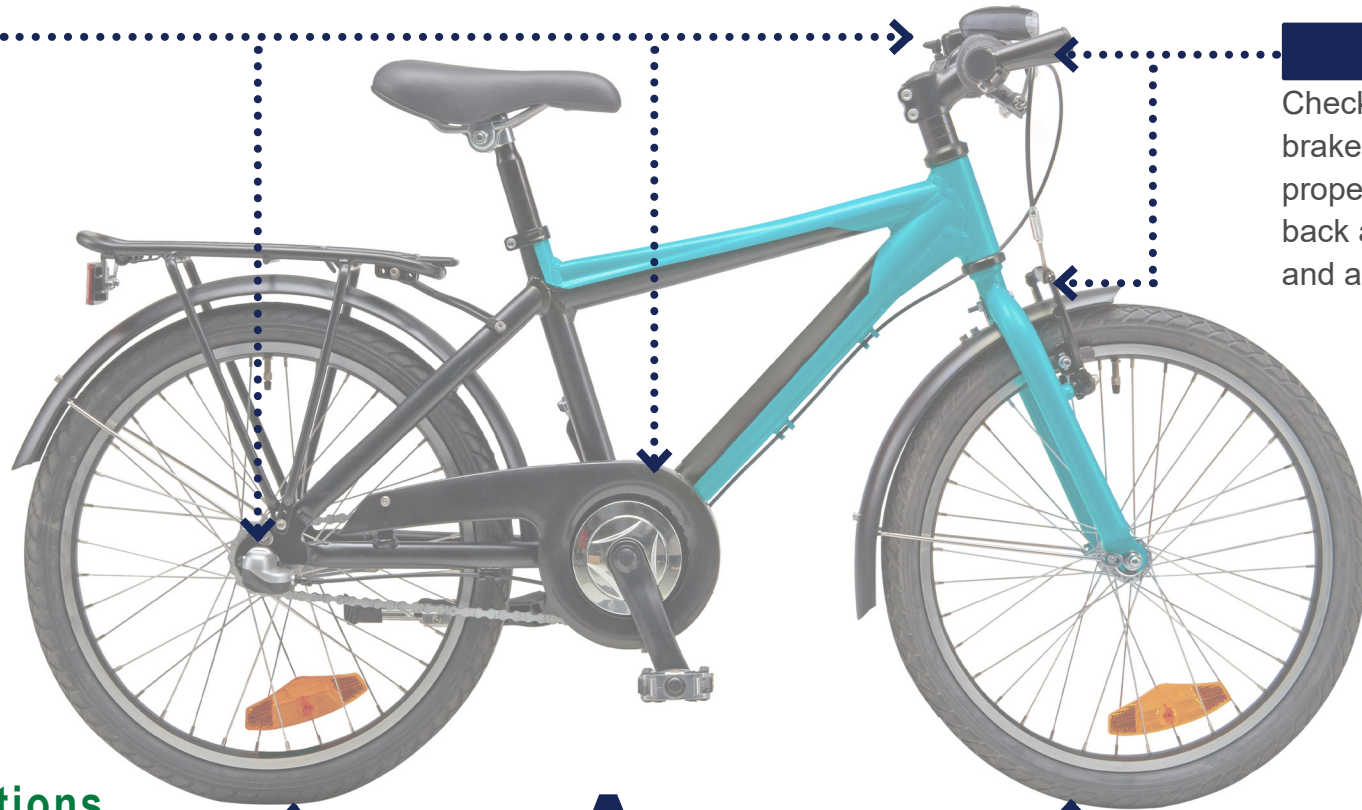
Cranks, Chain, and Cogs

Turn crank and make sure that it turns the back wheel smoothly. Check chain for any rust or gunk. Ensure gears shift properly.

B

Brakes

Check to make sure brakes are functioning properly by spinning back and front wheel and applying brakes.



A

Air

Check air pressure and adjust to meet recommended level listed on side of tire.

Tips & Suggestions

The maintenance station can become a bottleneck with larger groups. Consider separating into two stations:

1. ABC Quick Check to quickly screen for issues; and
2. Repair/adjustment station.

Tips & Suggestions

Make this station educational and explain the importance of each step of the inspection and adjustment process to the rider and their guardian.



Course Setup

Bike rodeos come in all shapes and sizes. The specifications of your event will depend on a variety of factors including the size and dimensions of the available space, the equipment being used, the number of participants and their age and skill levels, and the number of volunteers on hand. Be sure to cater your course setup to best fit your event's unique specifications.

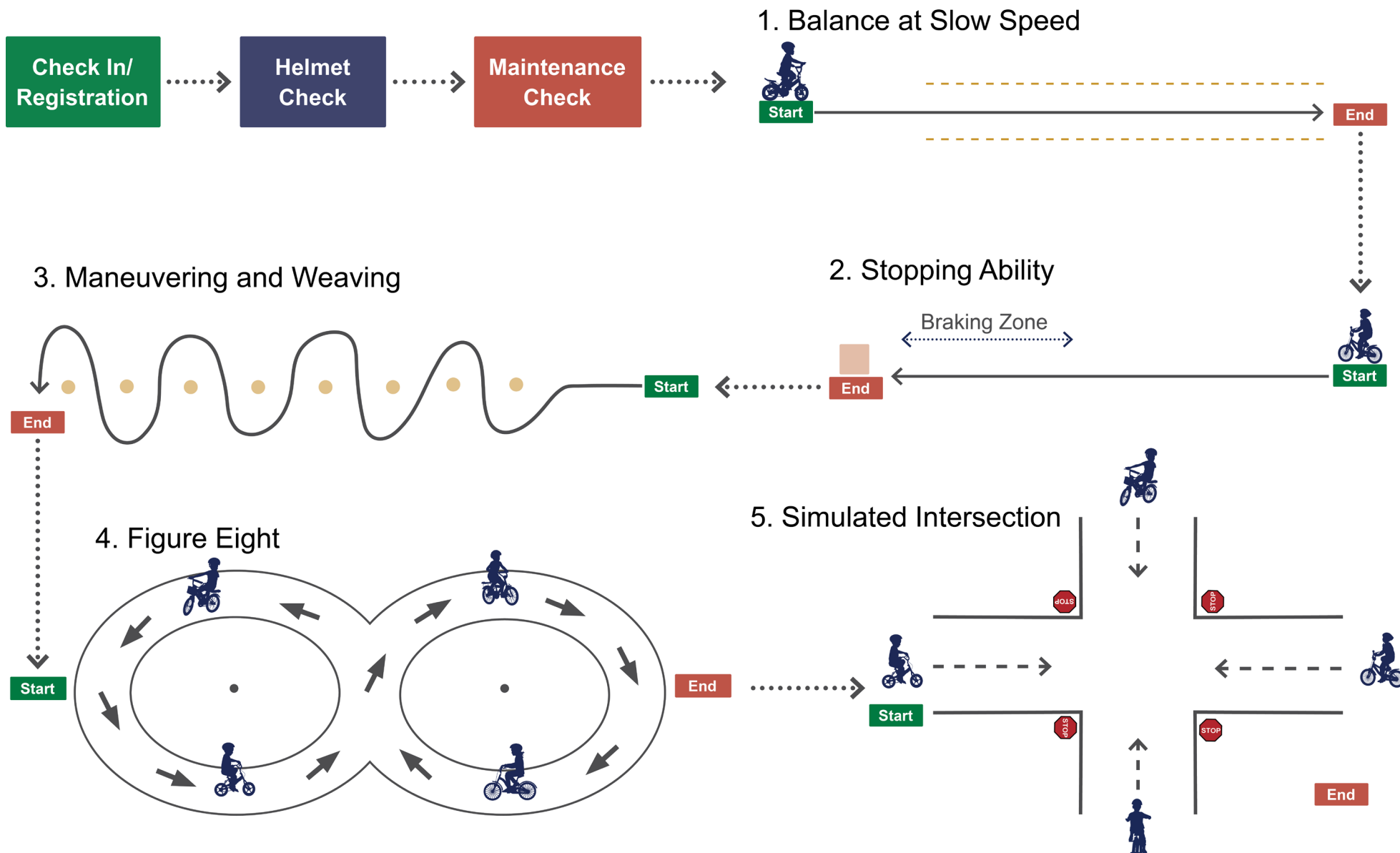
It is a best practice to plan out your riding course in advance of the event based on the space available. It can also be advantageous to scope out the area ahead of time and even mark out the layout the day before if possible. Although each event will differ, this guide provides options for two types of setups:

- 1. Individual Stations:** Course is divided into separate skills stations with a volunteer at each location. Allows riders to repeat stations to practice a particular skill but can lead to backups and down time depending on availability of space and instructors.
- 2. Traffic Garden:** Course is laid out in one continuous track that presents real world scenarios that incorporate different skills throughout. Multiple riders can utilize the course at one time, which can help with flow but also requires a certain minimum level of rider ability. For groups with mixed skill levels, a secondary "beginner" course can be added to practice basic skills if space allows.

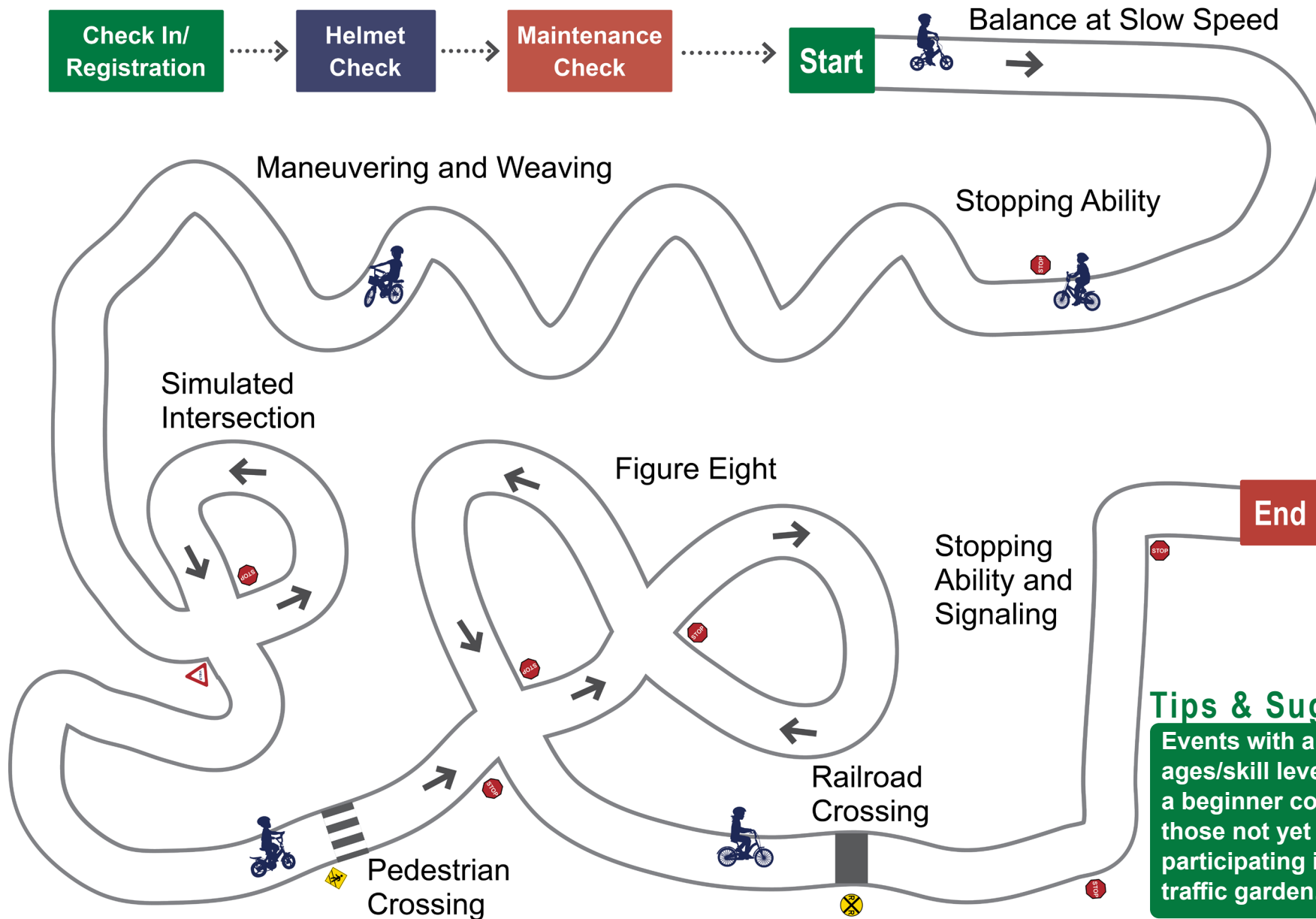


Individual stations allow riders to focus on specific skills with guidance from an instructor. This setup can be challenging with limited volunteers and/or space.

Sample Individual Stations Setup



Sample Traffic Garden Setup



Tips & Suggestions

Events with a variety of ages/skill levels can offer a beginner course to help those not yet comfortable participating in the main traffic garden.

Traffic gardens can help participants combine multiple skills as they navigate the course along with other riders. They are a good option for events with limited space or volunteers but can be challenging for younger or less skilled riders.



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Skills Stations

Bicycle skills stations provide participants the opportunity to practice vital skills under various conditions. Each station focuses on a different set of skills and can be adapted to fit riders of all skill levels.

Just as each course setup will differ by event, so too will the individual stations. Below are items that need to be considered relative to each station that can help when deciding which to include in your event.

1. Objectives: Which skills and abilities are taught and assessed at each station.

2. Estimated Time: Estimated time needed for a rider to complete the station.

3. Materials: What materials you will need to set up each station.

4. Discussion Questions: Sample talking points to help educate participants on why each skill is important in a real world context.

5. Tips and Suggestions: Potential adjustments and advice on how stations can be adapted based on event context.

Tips & Suggestions

Adapting to the elements is always important when hosting outdoor events. For example, using water soaked sponges in place of cones can help features stay in place on a windy day.



Practicing maneuvering and weaving movements helps improve balance while avoiding obstacles.



Learning to balance at a slow speed and look over your shoulder helps reinforce rider control of the bicycle.



Maneuvering & Weaving

Objectives:

Improve rider's ability to maintain balance while changing direction quickly and maintaining focus and stability throughout the course.

Estimated Time:

- 4 - 5 minutes per rider.

Materials Needed:

- Tape measure.
- Chalk.
- 7 - 8 obstacles (cones, wet sponges, etc.)

Discussion Questions:

- Why is it important to be able to maneuver around an obstacle?
- When would you use this skill?

Tips and Suggestions

If space is limited, reduce the number of obstacles. Once participants have become proficient you can increase the difficulty by having them reach down and pick up one of the obstacles while riding.

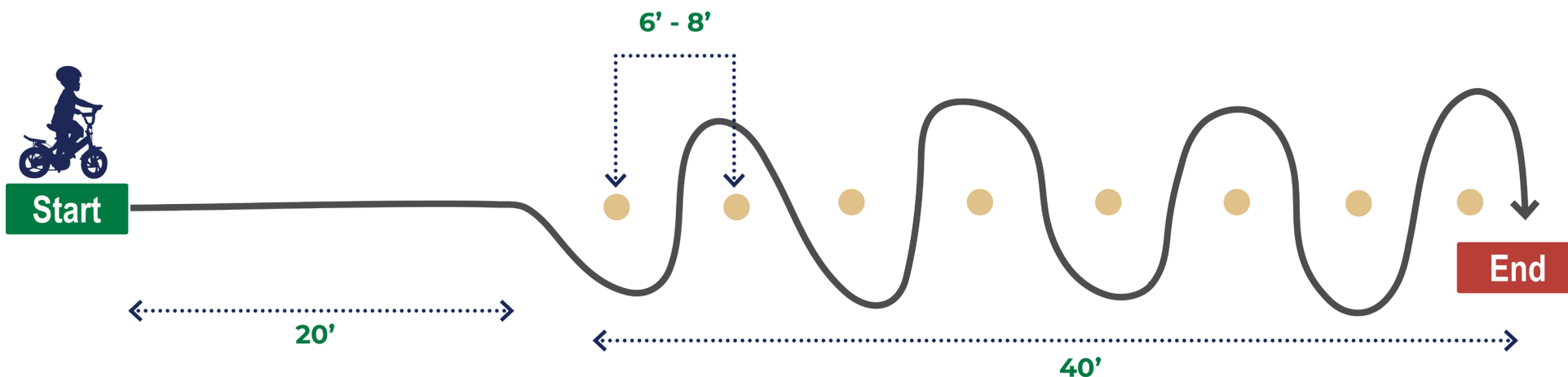


Maneuvering and Weaving



Instructions

Set up a straight line of obstacles around 40' long, spaced approximately 6' - 8' apart. The rider should start 20' from the first obstacle and begin by going to the right side of the first obstacle, then to the left of the second marker, continuing to alternate until the end of the course.





Stopping Ability

Objectives:

Improve rider's reaction time and ability to safely stop when encountering an unexpected obstacle or situation.

Estimated Time:

- 2 - 3 minutes per rider.

Materials Needed:

- Tape measure.
- Chalk, tape, or markers to create lane.
- Empty cardboard box.

Discussion Questions:

- Why is it important to be able to stop quickly?
- What should you keep in mind when practicing this skill?
- When would you use this skill?

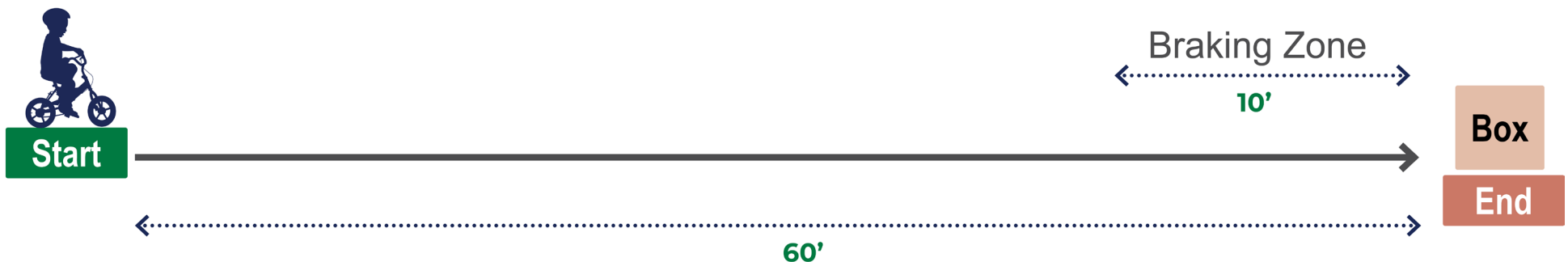


Stopping Ability



Instructions

Draw a line of 60' from the start of the station to the empty cardboard box. Rider should pedal bicycle at a moderate speed in a straight line towards the box. Rider should apply the brakes after riding approximately 50', allowing 10' of stopping distance. The rider's front wheel should stop 10"-14" from the box.





Balance at Slow Speed

Objectives:

Improve rider's primary sense of balance when riding and ability to maintain control at slow speeds.

Estimated Time:

- 2 - 3 minutes per rider.

Materials Needed:

- Tape measure.
- Chalk, tape, or markers to create lane.
- Timer (watch, stopwatch, phone, etc.)

Discussion Questions:

- Why is it important to be able to control your bicycle at low speeds?
- When would you use this skill?

Tips and Suggestions

To increase difficulty, this activity can be combined with the "Look Behind" activity where a volunteer holds up an image and the rider must look behind while riding and call out what they see.



Balance at Slow Speed



Instructions

Set up two dashed lines 3' apart and 60' feet in length to create a lane. Rider should start 15' away from the lane and ride as slow as possible without touching either line or putting their feet down on the pavement. Riders should be instructed to take at least 30 seconds to travel from the entrance to the exit of the lane.

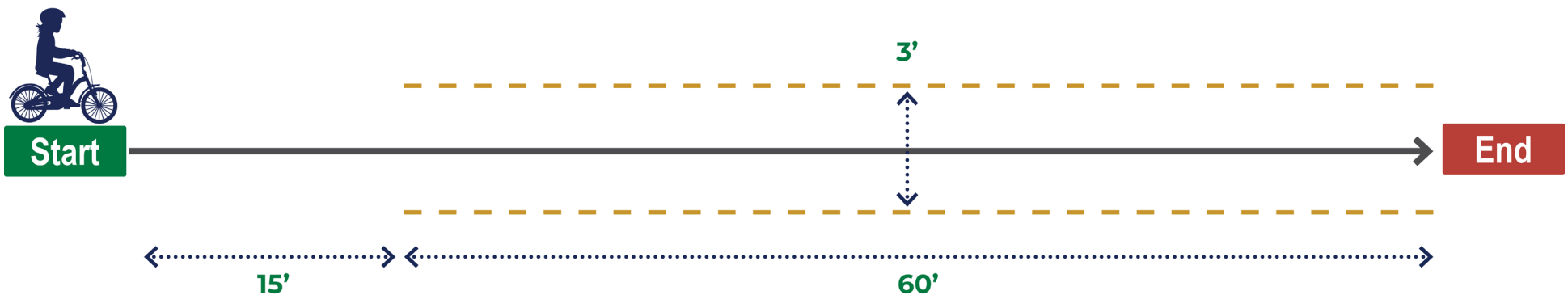




Figure Eight

Objectives:

Improve rider's primary sense of balance when riding and ability to maintain control while making turning movements.

Estimated Time:

- 2-3 minutes per rider.

Materials Needed:

- Tape measure.
- Chalk, tape, or markers.
- String to help draw circles.

Discussion Questions:

- Why is it important to communicate with other riders when on the road?
- When would you use this skill?

Tips and Suggestions

Once participants are comfortable navigating the figure eight you can allow more than one rider on the course at a time to practice riding with others in a confined space.



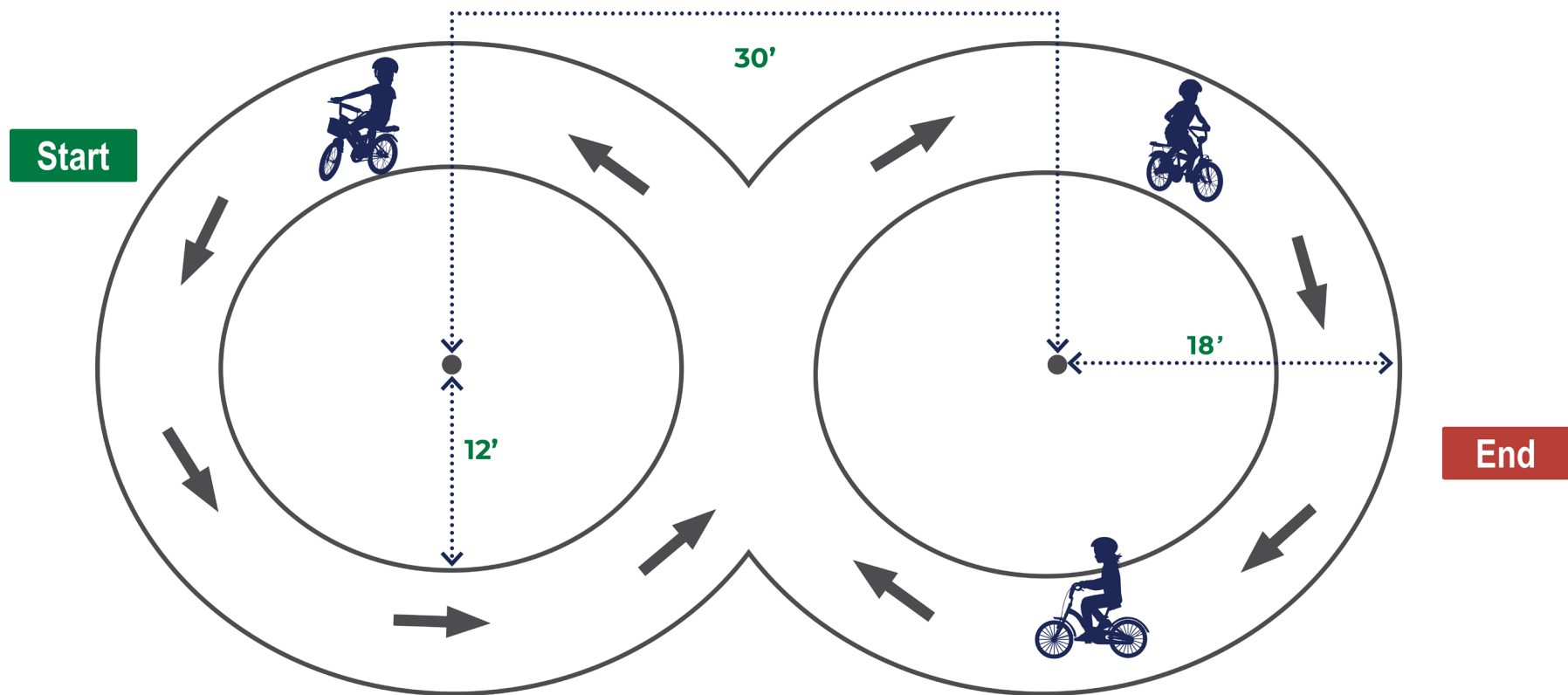
Figure Eight Station Setup



Instructions

Cut two pieces of string at 12' and 18'. Have another volunteer hold the 12' string and use the other end to draw a circle around them. Repeat the process approximately

30' away to make a second 12' circle. Then use the 18' string to do the same to make two additional circles and create an "8". Use chalk to indicate the travel direction.





Simulated Intersection

Objectives:

Practice combination of skills and knowledge (braking, signaling, balance, etc.) in simulated real world scenario.

Estimated Time:

- 2-3 minutes per rider.

Materials Needed:

- Tape measure.
- Chalk or tape to create lanes.
- Stop signs.

Discussion Questions:

- What should you be aware of when you approach an intersection?
- When would you use this skill?

Tips and Suggestions

Once riders are comfortable with a 4-way stop, consider removing a stop on two legs of the intersection to simulate how to navigate turning into free flow traffic from a stopped position.

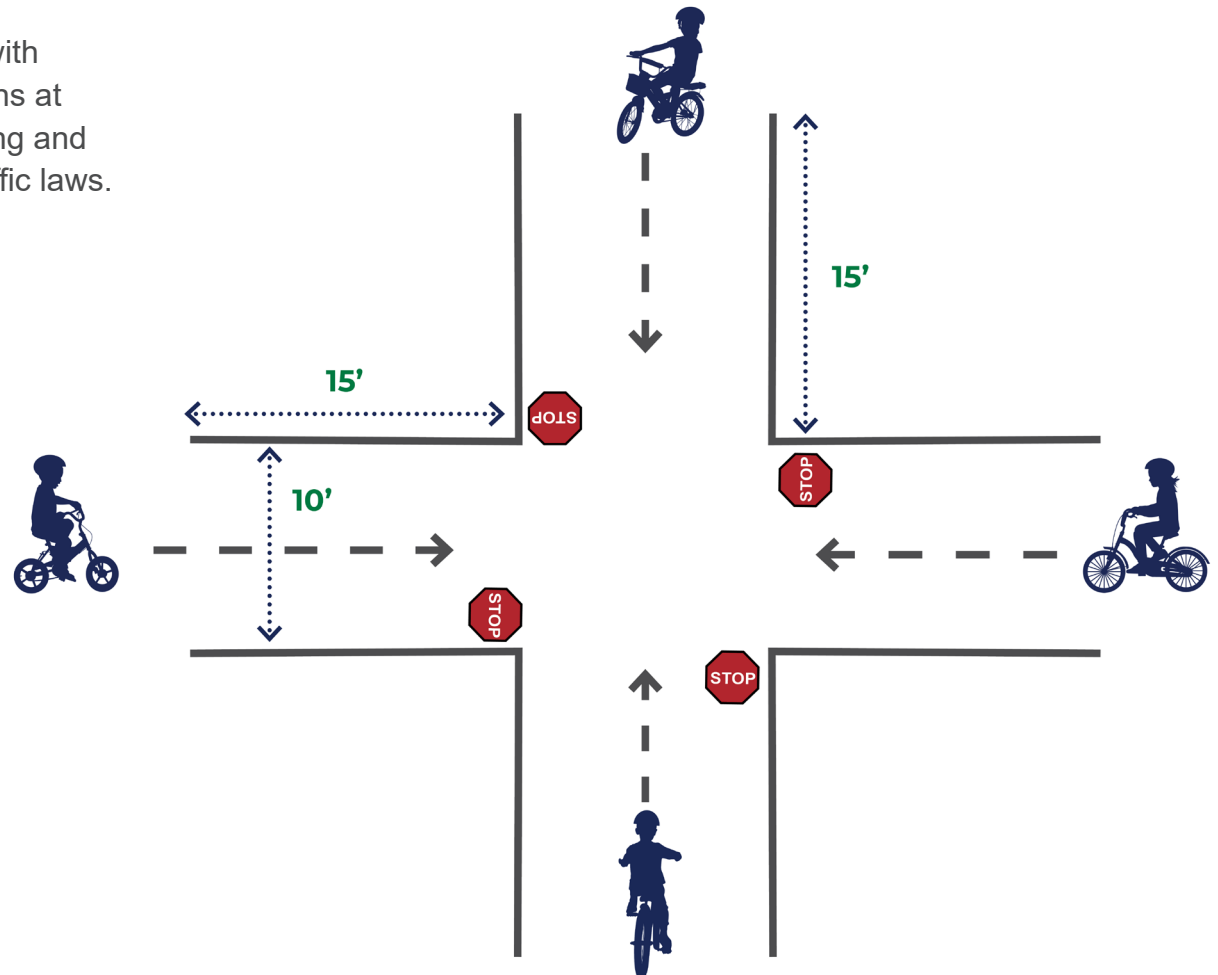


Simulated Intersection



Instructions

Use chalk or tape to set up a 4-way intersection with lanes that are 10' wide and 15' long. Add stop signs at each approach and have riders take turns signaling and navigating the intersections based on existing traffic laws.





Look Back

Objectives:

Improve rider's ability to maintain balance while looking backward over their shoulder to check surroundings.

Estimated Time:

- 2-3 minutes per rider.

Materials Needed:

- Tape measure.
- Chalk or tape.
- Signs or different color sponges for rider to identify over shoulder.

Discussion Questions:

- Why is it important to be able to look behind you while riding?
- When would you use this skill?

Tips and Suggestions

This activity can be scaled in difficulty by using different types of objects so that participants can be asked to recognize additional features such as the number of items or the color of items to help improve focus.

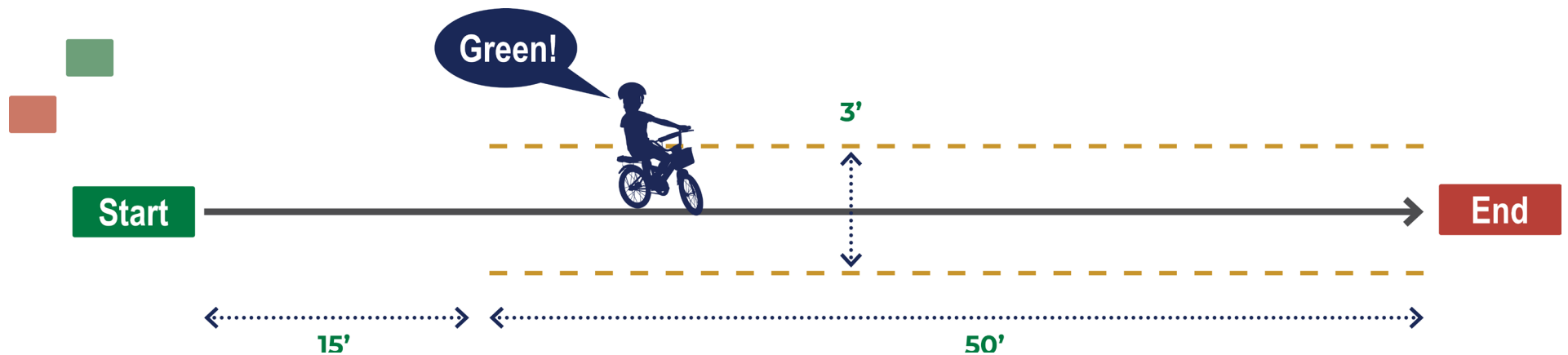


Look Back



Instructions

Set up two dashed lines 3' apart and 50' feet in length to create a lane. Rider should start 15' away from the lane and ride toward the lane. After reaching the lane, the rider should look over their shoulder to see what image (or color of sponge) is being held up while maintaining balance traveling forward.





Appendices

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APPENDIX A

Event Planning Resources



Bike Rodeo Supply Checklist



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- ☐ Mini Disc Cones.
- ☐ Large Cones.
- ☐ Sponges.
- ☐ Bucket.
- ☐ Timer (watch, stopwatch, phone, etc.)
- ☐ Empty Cardboard Box.
- ☐ Sidewalk Chalk.
- ☐ Bike Floor Pump.
- ☐ Bike Multi Tool.
- ☐ Tire Levers (set of 2).
- ☐ Tube Repair Kit (Touring).

- ☐ Reflective Tape Rolls.
- ☐ Tape Measure.
- ☐ Masking Tape.
- ☐ String.
- ☐ Clipboards.
- ☐ Pencil Case.
- ☐ Pens.
- ☐ Permanent Markers.
- ☐ Scissors.
- ☐ First Aid Kit.
- ☐ Hand Sanitizer Wipes.

Optional Items

- ☐ Rolling Box for Transport.
- ☐ Name Tags.
- ☐ Concussion Goggles.
- ☐ Sorting Game to use with Concussion Goggles.
- ☐ Newspaper Carrier Bag.
- ☐ Tyvek Bracelets.
- ☐ Mini Stop Sign.
- ☐ Mini Yield Sign.
- ☐ Mini Crosswalk Mat.
- ☐ Mini Traffic Signal.

Notes

Sample Bike Rodeo Timeline →

Three Months from Event

- ☐ Contact local PennDOT Safety Press Officer to identify partnership opportunities.
- ☐ Identify location (typical minimum size: approximately one basketball court).
- ☐ Set date and time as well as a rain date.
- ☐ Solicit volunteers.
- ☐ Identify local organizations and businesses for potential giveaways.

Six Weeks from Event

- ☐ Contact local schools, organizations, and news outlets to distribute fliers/announcements.
- ☐ Scout location to get an idea of space constraints.
- ☐ Create layout for event based on available space.
- ☐ Contact local bike shop or cycling organizations to assist with maintenance station.
- ☐ If planning to take photos work with event sponsor to include photo release form.
- ☐ Develop liability waiver.

One Week from Event

- ☐ Meet with volunteers and assign roles.
- ☐ Distribute sample layout.
- ☐ Check supply list.
- ☐ Check weather.

Day of Event

- ☐ Assess weather to determine if rain date is needed.
- ☐ Double check supply list.
- ☐ Arrive at event site ~2 hours before event to set up course.
- ☐ Have volunteers arrive ~1 hour before to set up individual stations.
- ☐ Ensure participants check in and sign releases and/or waivers.
- ☐ Have fun!

Bike Rodeo Event



Location:



Date:

Time:



**Bike Safety
Check**



**Helmet
Fittings**



**Skills
Course**



**Bike
Education**

Hosted By:



APPENDIX B

Skill Station Signage

Welcome & Sign in Station



Helmet Fitting Station



Maintenance Station





APPENDIX C

Instructional Guides and Activities



ABC QUICK CHECK GUIDE



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C

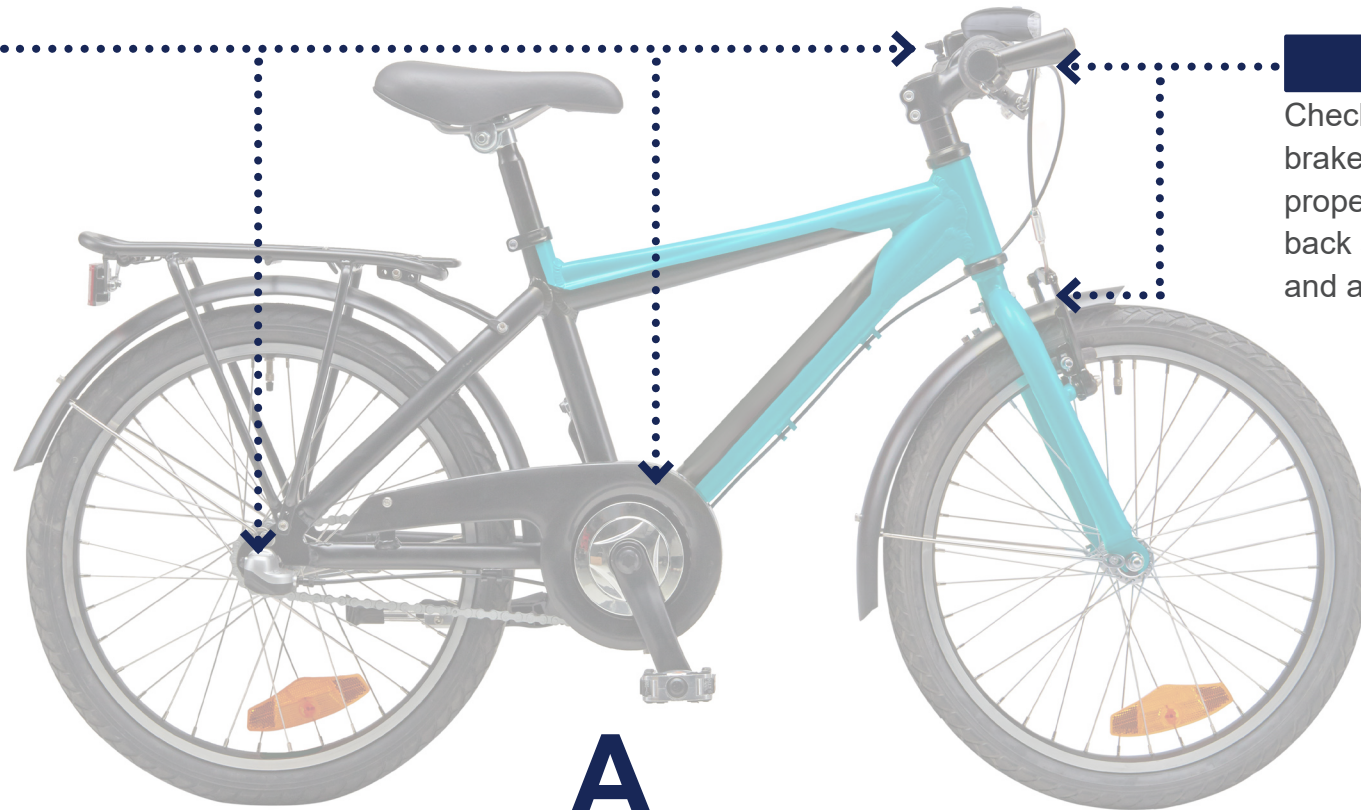
Cranks, Chain, and Cogs

Turn crank and make sure that it turns the back wheel smoothly. Check chain for any rust or gunk. Ensure gears shift properly.

B

Brakes

Check to make sure brakes are functioning properly by spinning back and front wheel and applying brakes.



A

Air

Check air pressure and adjust to meet recommended level listed on side of tire.



HELMET FITTING GUIDE



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Position



Helmet should sit level on head and allow for two fingers to fit between the rider's eyebrows and the front of helmet.

Fit



Adjust straps so that they form a "V" shape around each ear. Helmet should fit snugly with no movement on head.

Strap

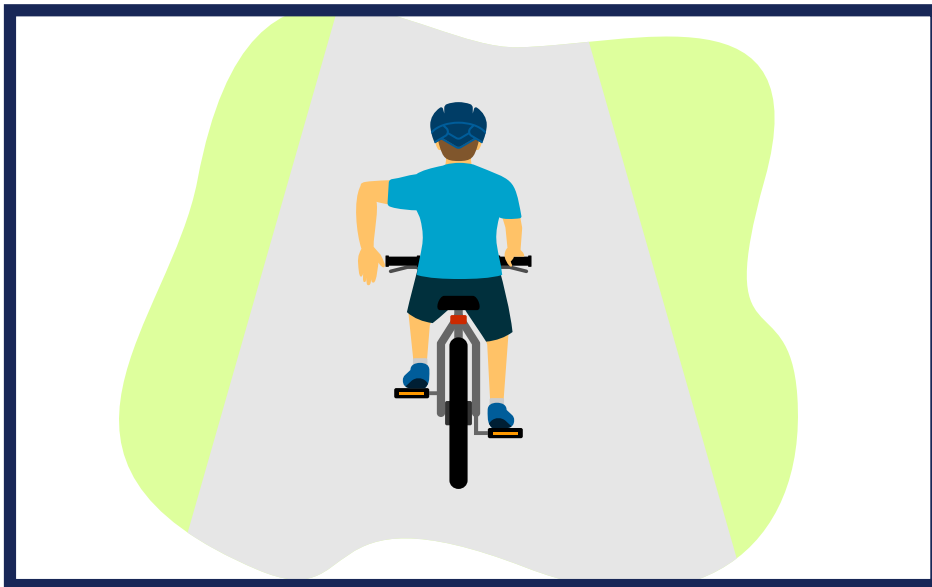


Tighten chin strap until one finger can fit between the strap and chin when buckled.

HAND SIGNALS MATCHING GAME



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Right Turn

Left Turn

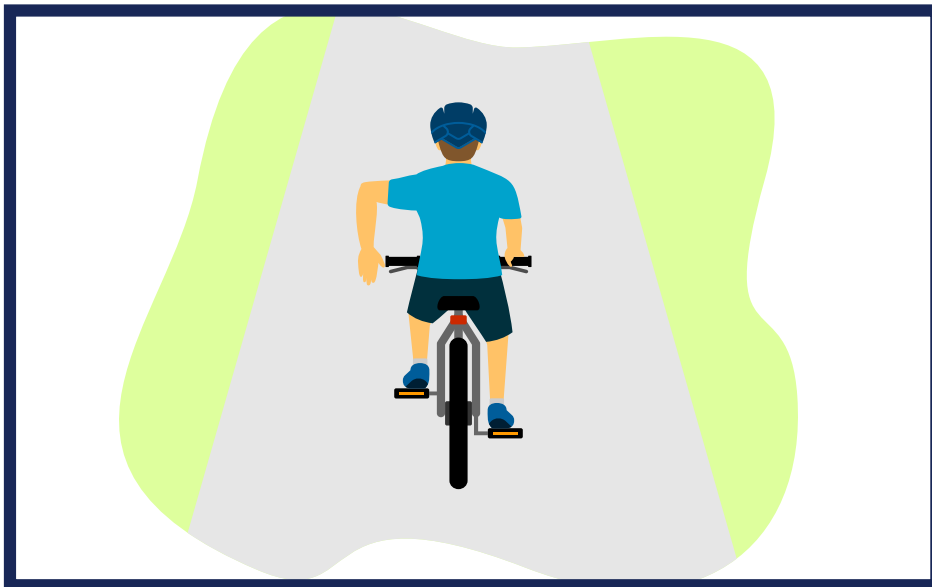
Right Turn

Stop

HAND SIGNALS FLASH CARDS



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Right Turn

Extend right arm straight to the right to indicate you are turning right.

Left Turn

Extend left arm straight to the left to indicate you are turning left.

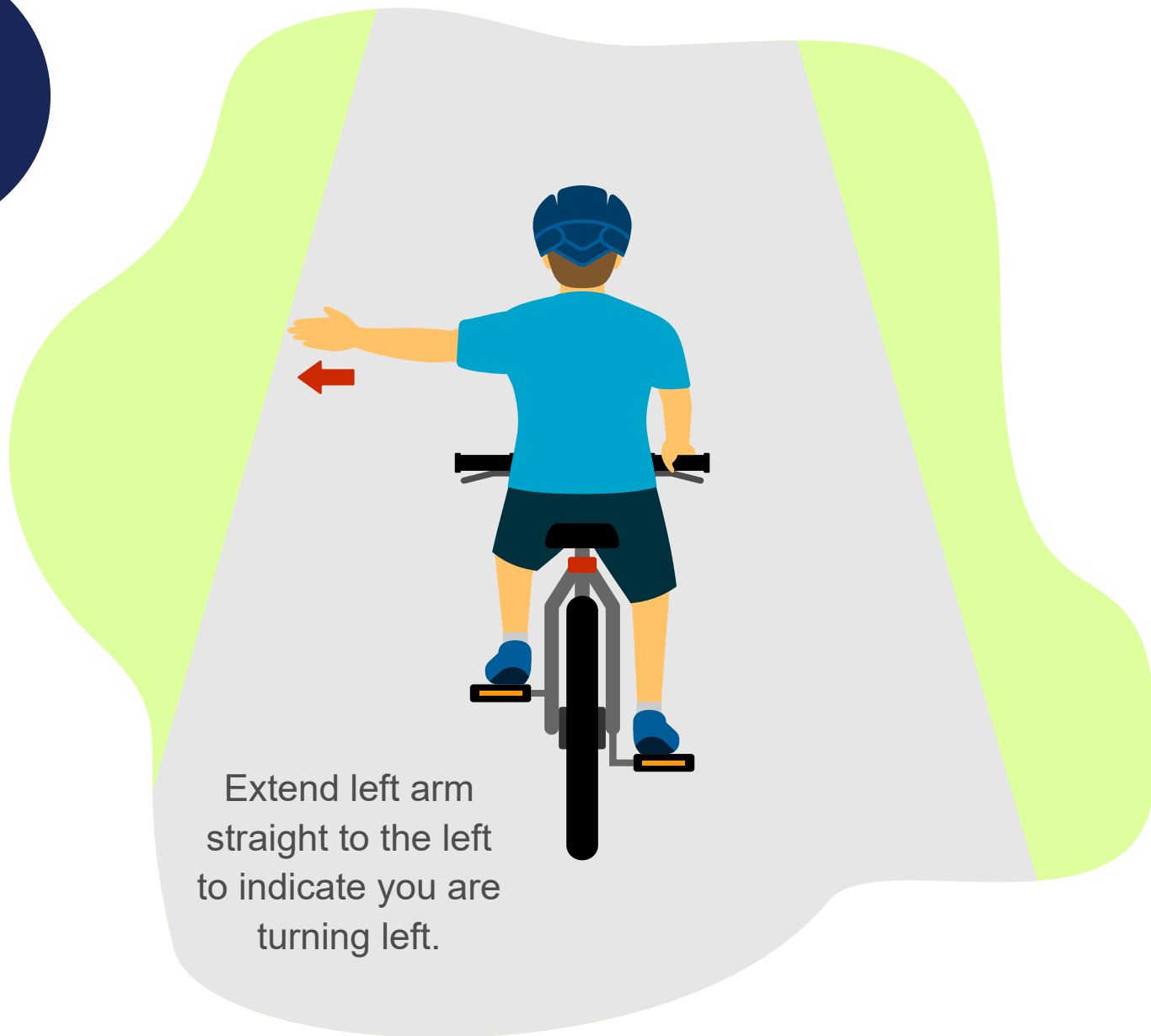
Right Turn

Make L-shape with left arm to indicate you are turning right.

Stop

Make a downward L-shape with left arm to indicate you are coming to a stop.

Left Turn

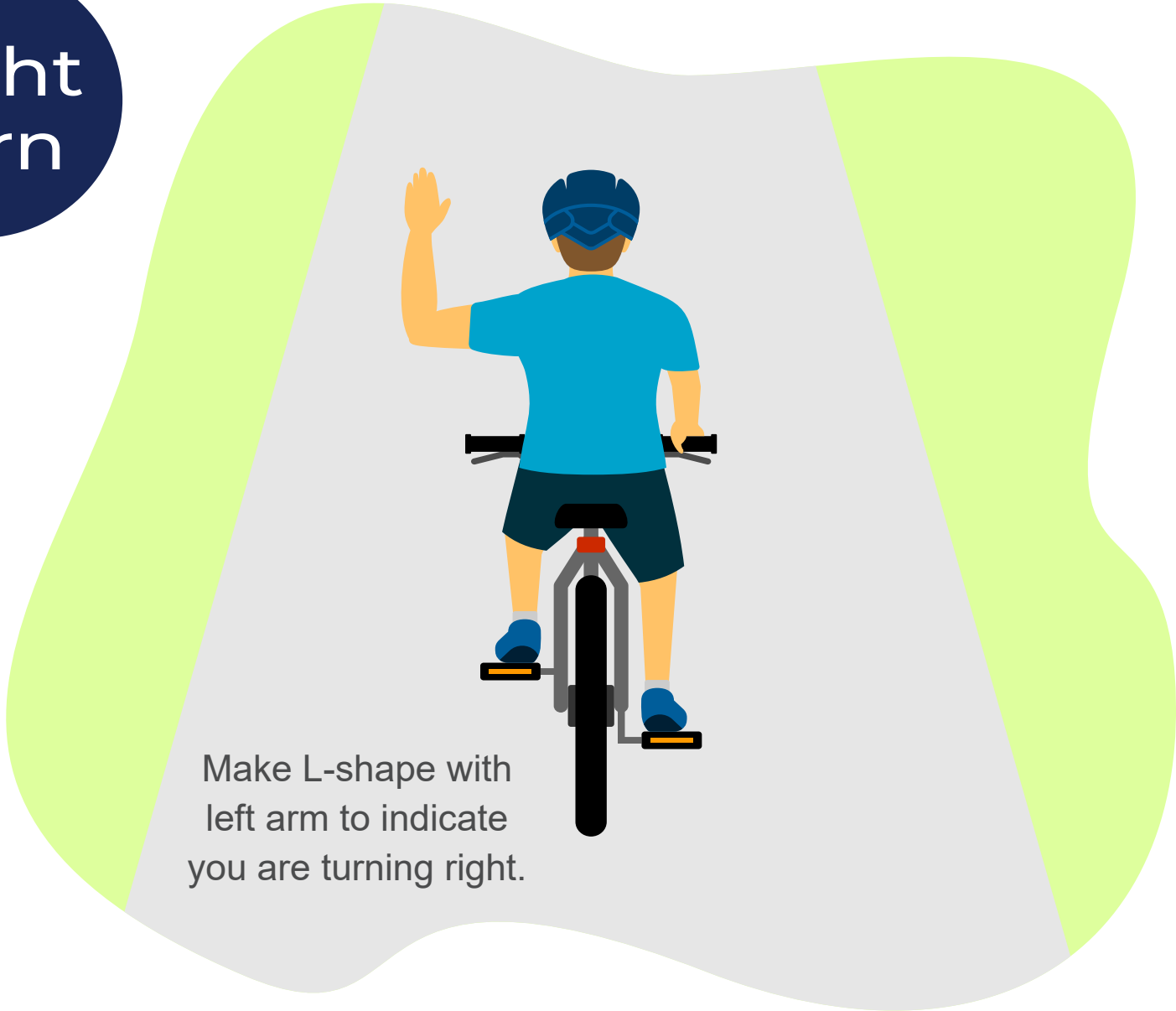


Extend left arm
straight to the left
to indicate you are
turning left.

Right Turn



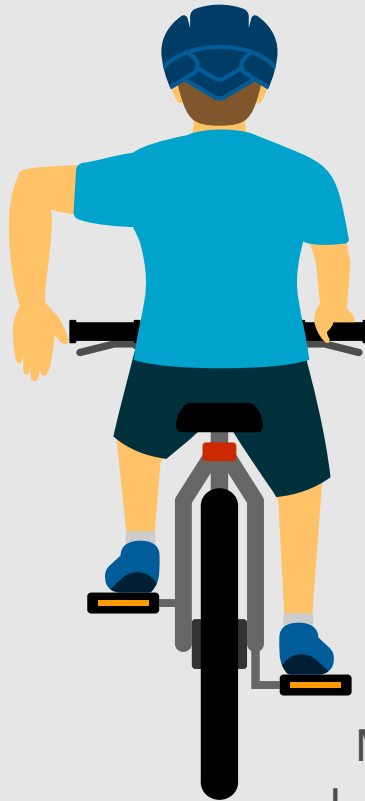
Right Turn



Make L-shape with left arm to indicate you are turning right.

The illustration shows a person from behind, riding a bicycle on a light gray path. The person is wearing a blue helmet, a blue t-shirt, dark blue shorts, and blue shoes. Their left arm is extended straight out to the side, forming an L-shape with their torso. The path is flanked by light green areas. The text 'Make L-shape with left arm to indicate you are turning right.' is written in a dark gray font at the bottom left of the path.

Stop



Make a downward
L-shape with left arm
to indicate you are
coming to a stop.



GET TO KNOW YOUR BIKE!

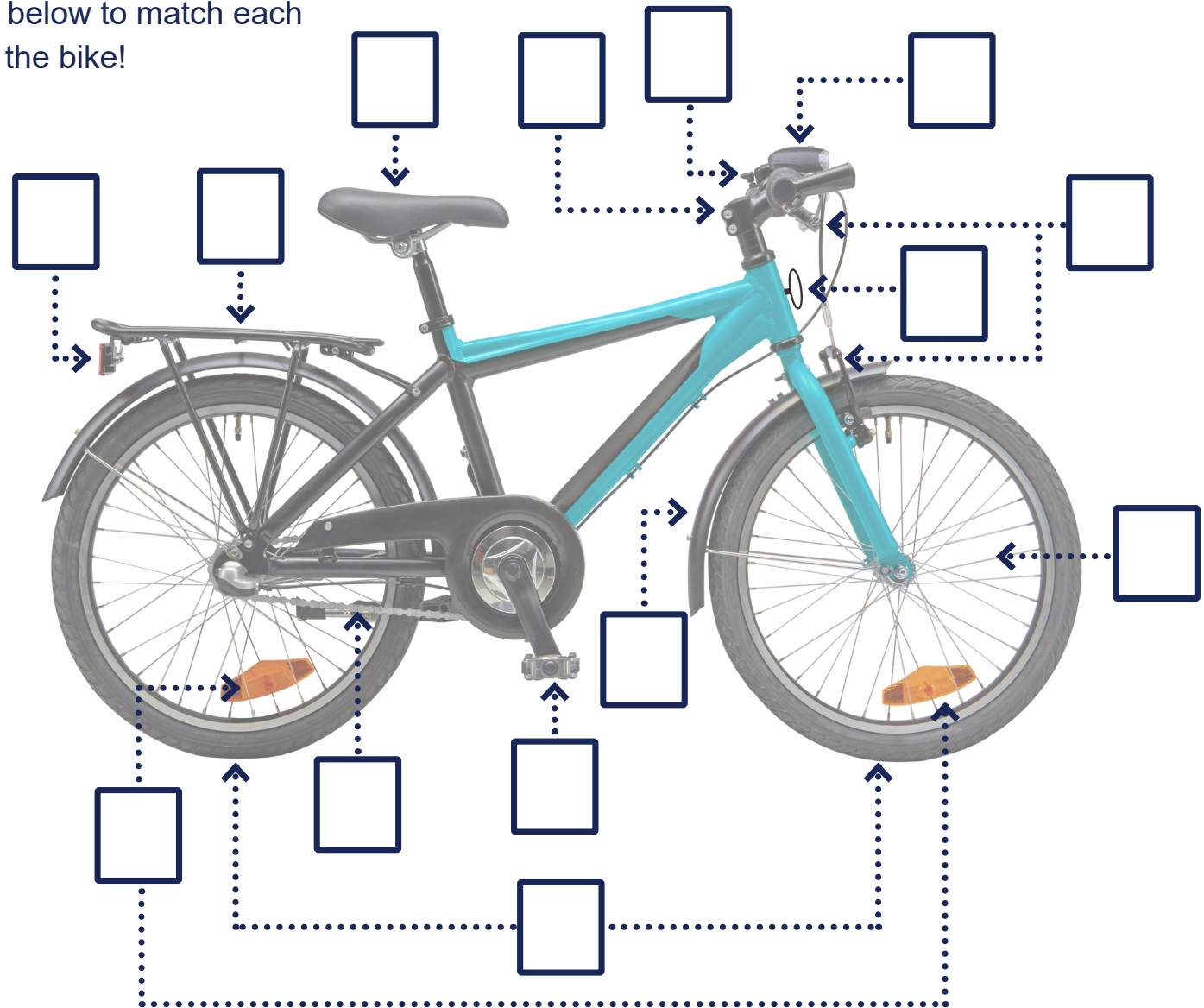


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It is important to be familiar with your bike before you go for a ride! Use the list below to match each component to its location on the bike!

Bike Components

- A. Tires
- B. Brakes
- C. Bell
- D. Pedals
- E. Fenders
- F. Headlight
- G. Handlebars
- H. Spokes
- I. Rear Reflector
- J. Wheel Reflectors
- K. Chain
- L. Carrying Rack
- M. Saddle
- N. Front Reflector





KNOW YOUR ROAD SIGNS



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Recognizing traffic road signs and knowing what to do when you see them is essential when riding on the road. Draw a line below to match each sign with the action you should take when you see it.



Pedestrian Crossing

Used at a marked crosswalk or in advance of locations where pedestrians may be crossing your path. Slow down and stop, if necessary.

Rail Crossing

When you see this sign, begin looking and listening for a train. This sign is placed far enough in advance to allow you to stop before you reach the tracks, if necessary.

Yield Sign

When you see this sign, you must slow down and check for traffic and give the right-of-way to pedestrians and approaching cross traffic.

Stop Sign

You must stop completely, check for pedestrians and cross traffic to clear the intersection before you go again.



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