

Enforcement for Bicycle Safety: Q & A

By Peter Flucke
President - WE BIKE®

Many bicycle-motor vehicle crashes can be eliminated through the enforcement of existing laws. Selective enforcement, both for bicyclists and motorists, represents the most immediate opportunity that we have to improve bicycle safety and enjoyment in our communities.

Wisconsin's Enforcement for Bicycle Safety course (EBS) provides law enforcement officers with the additional training that they need to identify and correct behaviors that most commonly lead to bicycle crashes and other bicycle related issues.

What follows is a conversation between Peter Flucke, the creator of the course and lead instructor and a training officer who called to find out more about the course.

Training officer: What exactly is Enforcement for Bicycle Safety?

Flucke: EBS is a course designed to give law enforcement officers the basic bicycle safety information that they need to manage traffic and provide a safe bicycling environment in their communities.

Training officer: Why should my officers attend this course?

Flucke: Bicycles are legal vehicles and, unless specifically prohibited, can be expected on all roadways. Law enforcement officers come in contact with bicyclists on a daily basis and are expected to be experts on bicycle safety. However, most officers have never received any bicycle specific training. Question: How do officers know which laws to enforce, both for bicyclists and motorists, to improve bicycle safety if they don't know what the leading causes of bicycle crashes are? EBS will teach officers which laws to enforce and how to enforce them for young children, teens, adults and motorists to improve bicycle safety.

Training officer: Who should attend?

Flucke: The course is designed for all law enforcement officers who have patrol duties and will encounter bicyclists but, officers who patrol by bicycle and those who teach bicycle safety certainly should attend.

Training officer: Is this the same as cops on bikes training?

Flucke: No. Public safety cyclist courses, like those offered by the International Police Mountain Bike Association (I.P.M.B.A) and the Law Enforcement Bicycle Association

(L.E.B.A.), are designed to teach officers how to do their jobs while using the bicycle as a patrol vehicle. These courses do not, for the most part, teach officers about bicycle safety and related issues, EBS does.

Training officer: How long is the course?

Flucke: The course is 12 hours long and is typically taught on two consecutive days.

Training officer: Do officers need to bring a bicycle to the course?

Flucke: Yes. Each officer needs to have a bicycle in good working condition and a helmet.

Training officer: This sounds like pretty easy duty. Why do you have them go for a bike ride?

Flucke: Bicycling, like shooting a gun, is a skill. It is important for officers to understand, from the seat of a bicycle, what it is like to ride a bicycle under different traffic conditions. Think of it this way, what officer would want to work with a partner who learned to shoot his gun by watching a video?

Training officer: What will my officers be able to do after taking this course?

Flucke: Officers will have the knowledge necessary to enforce laws which, when enforced properly, will prevent the majority of bicycle-motor vehicle crashes from occurring. They will also have a better understanding of how bicycles fit into the total transportation system.

Training officer: How much does the course cost?

Flucke: The cost of the course is about \$100 per officer but departments that sponsor a course may receive a discount, usually free spaces in the course. The course is approved by the Wisconsin Department of Justice and training dollars can be used.

Training officer: How can I sign up my officers for a course?

Flucke: To get course registration information contact Larry Corsi - Bicycle/Pedestrian Safety Program Manager, Wisconsin Department of Transportation - Bureau of Transportation Safety - 4802 Sheboygan Ave. PO Box 7936, Room 551, Madison, WI 53707-7936, (608) 267-3154, E-mail: larry.corsi@dot.state.wi.us

Peter Flucke is the President of WE BIKE[®], a Green Bay, Wisconsin consulting company that specializes in the areas of engineering, education, enforcement and encouragement for bicycling, walking and healthy communities. He is the author of the state's Enforcement for Bicycle Safety curriculum and an instructor trainer for the course. He is a former Minnesota law enforcement officer and bike patrol officer and is a Police

Cyclist certified by the International Police Mountain Bike Association (I.P.M.B.A.) and a League Cycling Instructor (LCI) Trainer certified by the League of American Bicyclists. In 2000 Flucke received the League's National Education Award. Mr. Flucke can be reached at (920) 497-3196 or webike@aol.com.