



Educational Approaches and Strategies

Law Enforcement and Bicycle Safety

What roles can Law Enforcement Play in Bicycle Safety?

- 🚲 Most crashes can be avoided if both bicyclists and motorists follow the rules of the road. Heightened awareness among law officers of these rules, can lead to: enforcing of laws, modeling of good behaviors and recognizing and taking advantage of teachable moments with both bicyclists and motorists. The ultimate goal is to prevent crashes and enhance traffic safety.
- 🚲 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.
- 🚲 Law enforcement officers are the only ones who can enforce laws, both for bicyclists and motorists to improve bicycle safety.
- 🚲 Law enforcement officers are in a unique position to assist with and add credibility to community efforts to encourage bicycling and improve bicycle safety. However, most officers do not possess the bicycle safety knowledge or the community assessment skills necessary to do this job.

What is the value of Law Enforcement Training?

- 🚲 Most officers have never received any bicycle specific training. How do police officers know which laws to enforce, both for bicyclists and motorists, to improve bicycle safety if they do not know about the leading causes of bicycle crashes?
- 🚲 By increasing knowledge of the rules of the road for bicyclists and for motorists relating to bicyclists, law enforcement officers can better serve the community and potentially save a life.

Challenges to Taking Action — Common Beliefs

Police have better things to worry about: terrorism, gangs, crashes, and crimes — what's the big deal? Why bring bicycles into this?

- 🚲 Law Enforcement must also include PREVENTION. Anticipating high-risk behaviors that can lead to terrorism, gang behavior, crimes, and crashes, INCLUDING crashes involving BICYCLES is part of their mission.
- 🚲 A bicycle is considered a vehicle and is bound by the same laws as other vehicles, e.g. riding with traffic, obeying red lights and stop signs.
- 🚲 Motorists must treat a bicyclist with the same rights as other motorists.

Police Officers are already overworked — why give these folks more to worry about? There are only so many hours in a day and they can be better spent.

- 🚲 Knowledge leads to thinking about every day in a different light. In this case, it means greater awareness of situations that could lead to a crash. Since bicyclists are more vulnerable if they are hit — no safety belt, no steel exterior to take the brunt of a hit — safe behavior by all is essential.
- 🚲 With more knowledge, police can incorporate the laws as they apply to their everyday activity in law enforcement and direct bicyclists and motorists to safer behaviors that can prevent crashes.

What are you asking a police officer to do — ticket a kid?

- 🚲 Most enforcement actions do not result in a citation. Law enforcement officers are trained to use the least amount of force necessary to gain compliance with the law. Enforcement options include; positive reinforcement, verbal and written warnings and yes, finally citations.
- 🚲 Tickets are seldom effective in changing a child's behavior, especially young children. A firm reminder about the rules of the road from an officer is generally sufficient.

Adults aren't wearing helmets — I didn't wear a helmet when I was a kid — it should be up to the parents to decide; Government and law enforcement should stay out of it.

- 🚲 Bicycling is not unreasonably dangerous but it is not without its risks. Regardless of the law in your area, bicycle helmets do save lives and prevent traumatic brain injury (TBI).
- 🚲 According to National Institutes of Health (NIH), each case of TBI costs \$125,000 in rehabilitation, social services, insurance and other disability costs. These are costs we all have to pay because someone did not put a bicycle helmet on AND wear it correctly.



So... Why is it important to involve Law Enforcement in Bicycle Safety?

Because... it's all about SAVING LIVES.

Law Enforcement and Bicycle Safety — It Begins With Education

The following training programs for law enforcement are a start — training opportunities allow Law Enforcement Officers to be better prepared to think in the best interest of the community they serve.

A Law Officer's Good Practices Guide to Bicycle Safety and Enforcement

What: This two to three hour multi-media training combines a PowerPoint presentation and video clips that can be administered in a variety of ways. The presentation should be taught by law enforcement (i.e., training officers) to law enforcement (without need for any bicycle safety background or special training). It may be offered in one of three ways: divided into six separate roll-call trainings; one training; or delivered and reviewed by an individual via a personal computer. This training tool will give police officers a solid basis for understanding the laws pertaining to cyclists and can be easily adapted according to the varying state laws. The PowerPoint presentation will be helpful for those officers who wish to do community outreach (including parents and traffic safety schools) about bicycle safety for both bicyclists and motorists.

The curriculum includes six core sections and two optional sections. The core sections are: (1) Overview, (2) Crash data and Statistics, (3) Specific traffic safety laws, (4) Real world situations, (5) Enforcement suggestions, and (6) Crash investigations. The two optional sections include: (1) The basics of bicycling, and (2) Community outreach ideas.

Format: CD-ROM course — instructor led or self directed. It is intended for all law enforcement entities, whether they serve on foot, by bicycle, or patrol car. It will be FREE when available. (Expected Spring 2005)

Contact:

National Highway Safety Administration
(NHTSA)
Safety Countermeasures Division (NTI-121)
Bicycle Safety Program
400 7th St. S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20590
www.nhtsa.dot.gov

Enforcement for Bicycle Safety

What: This two-day instructor led course is 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. This course teaches officers which laws to enforce and how to enforce them to improve bicycle safety.

Topics include: bicycle history, bicycle types, why and where people bicycle, the highway safety triangle, engineering, bicycle crashes, enforcement, laws, crash investigation and reporting, education, bicycle theft, bicycle registration police bike patrols on-bike training, organizations and contacts.

Format: Instructor led course — includes both classroom and on-bike sessions. It is open to all law enforcement entities for a fee, which covers instruction and materials.

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Community Bicycle Safety for Law Enforcement

What: This is a two-day course for law enforcement officers who are interested in learning to work with the various groups, organizations and individuals in their communities that are working to improve bicycle safety.

Topics covered include: Day One) Why and where people bicycle, the highway safety triangle, engineering for bicycle safety, education for bicycle safety, enforcement for bicycle safety, bicycle handling skills, your roll in bicycle safety, Day Two) Problem identification, bicycle safety self-assessment, department bicycle safety assessment, characteristics of good bicycle safety programs, creating a community bicycle safety program, building community partnerships, and promoting your bicycle safety program.

Format: Instructor led course — open to all law enforcement officers interested in working with their communities to encourage bicycling and to improving bicycle safety.

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Bicycle Safety Roll Call Video

What: This is a new initiative for FY05 and will be a five to six minute video to be utilized for law enforcements roll call.

Format: Video (Expected Fall 2005)

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In Conclusion — SAVING LIVES...

A Police Officer is in a unique position to save a life through enforcement of lawful behaviors that could or might just save a life — YOURS, Your Child, Your Friend, Your Family or Your Neighbor.

It starts with education for everyone — including law enforcement. By enhancing law enforcement's understanding of bicycle safety and the Rules of the Road, they are more likely to enforce those rules and do so correctly — that makes us all safer.

Not recognizing or turning and looking away from behavior today could mean behavior that could cause a major injury or death tomorrow.