

# BICYCLING TO WORK

in the Washington Metropolitan Region



 **COMMUTER CONNECTIONS.**  
A SMARTER WAY TO WORK

[COMMUTERCONNECTIONS.ORG](http://COMMUTERCONNECTIONS.ORG)



# About This Guide

This guide is designed to ease the transition to bicycle commuting for Washington metropolitan area employees. The flip side of this guide is focused on employers.

## Why bicycle to work?

- Biking to work costs less than driving, especially if you already own a bike.
- Bicycling allows you to stay active and healthier while you commute.
- People who bike to work arrive invigorated and work off the day's stress on the way home.
- Biking to work means less traffic congestion and better air quality.



*"When I initially started biking to work I was intimidated with distances, but after starting I found that it is never too far."*

**—Sterling Stone,  
Gearin' Up Bicycles**

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## How to get started

Here are some suggestions to help you ease into bicycle commuting:

- Try a practice run on a weekend to find a good route and see how long it takes. See center of this guide for bike maps and routing.
- Find a co-worker or friend who bikes and commute together.
- Start by bicycling just one day a week.
- Drive part of the way and bike the rest.
- If you don't own a bike, use Capital Bikeshare, or dockless bike sharing. [www.capitalbikeshare.com](http://www.capitalbikeshare.com).
- Bike to the nearest transit location and secure your bike for the day, or take it with you on bus or rail (see page 10 for more details about bikes on transit).
- Take a class with the Washington Area Bicyclist Association. Classes include Learn to Ride, Basic Skills, and On Street & Trail Riding. [www.waba.org](http://www.waba.org).

# Safely Riding in Traffic

Riding in traffic is not as hard as it looks if you follow the suggestions below.

## Be predictable

Ride so drivers can see you and predict your movements.



### Obey all regulatory signs and traffic lights

Bicyclists must follow the same rules of the road as drivers of other vehicles.



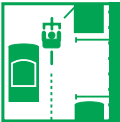
### Never ride against traffic

Motorists aren't looking for bicyclists riding on the wrong side of the road or on the sidewalk. Ride with traffic.



### Use hand signals

Hand signals tell motorists what you intend to do. Signal as a matter of law, courtesy, and self-protection.



### Ride in a straight line

Whenever possible, ride in a straight line at least a car door width away from parked cars.



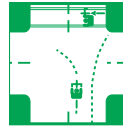
### Don't weave between parked cars

Don't ride out to the curb between parked cars unless they are far apart. Act in a predictable manner.



### Take the lane in slow traffic

Ride in the middle of the lane whenever you are moving at the same pace as traffic.



### Choose the best way to turn left

There are two ways to make a left turn: (1) Look behind, signal, move into the left lane and turn left. (2) Ride straight to the far-side crosswalk. Walk your bike across.



### Avoid or go slow on sidewalks

Pedestrians have the right of way on walkways. Bicyclists should always give pedestrians audible warnings when passing. In some cases local ordinances do not permit bicyclists on sidewalks. (see page Employee-4).

### Bicycling with buses

Avoid blind spots and remain visible to the bus operator. Keep in mind that buses operate in a unique manner compared to other vehicles. Buses make frequent stops and pull in and out of traffic from the right lane. Cyclists should not pass a bus on the right as passengers board and de-board from the curb.

## Be Lawful

Obey traffic laws whether in a car, on a bike, or on foot.

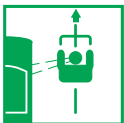
## Be alert

Ride defensively, watch the traffic, and be prepared to react.



### Watch for cars pulling out

Make eye contact with drivers. Assume they don't see you until you are sure they do.



### Scan the road behind you

Learn to look back over your shoulder without losing your balance or swerving left. Some riders use rear-view mirrors.



### Avoid road hazards

Watch out for parallel-slatted sewer grates, slippery manhole covers, oily pavement, gravel, pot holes, and ice. Cross railroad tracks carefully at right angles. For better control as you move across bumps and other hazards, stand up on your pedals.



### Keep both hands ready to brake

You may not stop in time if you brake one-handed. Allow extra distance for stopping in the rain, as brakes are less efficient when wet.

## Be equipped



### Wear a helmet

Always wear a helmet whenever you ride a bicycle. Helmets dramatically reduce the risk of head injury in a bicycle accident.



### Use lights at night

Always use a strong head light and tail light at night and when visibility is poor.

## Bicycle Safety

The Street Smart program raises awareness about traffic safety in the Washington, DC region when bicyclists and pedestrians cross paths with each other and with motor vehicles. The program also works with local police to enforce relevant laws. [www.beststreetsmart.net](http://www.beststreetsmart.net)

## Trail Etiquette

- Stay to the right except when passing.
- Travel at a reasonable speed in a consistent and predictable manner.
- Always look ahead and behind before passing.
- Pass slower traffic on the left; yield to oncoming traffic when passing.
- Give a clear warning signal before passing (ring bell and say "passing on the left").
- Move off the trail when stopped, to allow others room to pass.
- Yield to others when entering and crossing a trail.
- Use a light and reflectors after dusk and before dawn; most trails are not lit.
- Stop for traffic where the trail crosses a road.

## Bicyclist Education

One of the best ways to learn how to be safe and confident while cycling in traffic is to take a bicycling class, [www.waba.org](http://www.waba.org).

© Safety icons courtesy of Metro Regional Services, Portland, Oregon.



## Select Bicycle Rules in the Washington Area

	District of Columbia	Maryland	Virginia
<b>Bicycle Position</b>	No specific provision for bicyclist position, except that slower moving traffic should drive to the right.	When slower than other traffic, bicycle as close to the right as safely practicable, except when turning left, passing, avoiding pedestrians or road hazards, when the right turn lane is right turn only, or on a one-way street. Does not apply in lanes too narrow to share with a motor vehicle.	When slower than other traffic, bike as close to the right as safely practicable, except when turning left, passing, avoiding hazards or traffic in mandatory turn lane, or traveling on a one-way street. Does not apply in lanes too narrow to share with motor vehicle.
<b>Passing Cars</b>	Bicyclists may pass other vehicles on the left or right side, staying in the same lane as the overtaken vehicle, or changing to a different lane, or riding off the roadway, as necessary to pass with safety.	Pass on left; not required to pass on left on one-way street or when passing vehicle turning left.	Bicyclists may pass another vehicle on the right or left, and they may stay in the same lane, change lanes, or ride off the road if necessary for safe passing.
<b>Stop Signs</b>	Bicyclists may yield at stop signs. If a vehicle or pedestrian at intersection has the right of way, bikes must stop then yield.	Bicyclists must stop at stop signs.	Bicyclists must stop at stop signs.
<b>Turning Left</b>	From two-way to two-way streets; enter and leave intersection near center line of roadway. One-way to one-way; keep as close as practicable to left curb.	From two-way to two-way streets; enter and leave intersection near center line of roadway. One-way to one-way; keep as close as practicable to left curb.	A cyclist may turn like a motorist, or use the crosswalk like a pedestrian.
<b>Turning Right</b>	-	Stay as close as practicable to right-hand curb.	Stay as close as practicable to right-hand curb.
<b>Cycling on Sidewalks</b>	Allowed except in the central business district, which is bounded by 23rd St. NW, Massachusetts Ave., 2nd St. NE-SE, D Street SE to 14th Ave NW, and Constitution Ave NW to 23rd St. Bicyclists may use crosswalks and obey the pedestrian walk signal.	Banned except where allowed by local ordinance. Allowed in Montgomery County except the City of Gaithersburg. Allowed in the City of Frederick outside the historic district.	Allowed except where prohibited by local jurisdictions, such as Alexandria. Required to ride on side paths in Manassas.
<b>Mandatory Use of Bike Paths and Lanes</b>	Not required.	Use of bike lanes required when available. No required use of separated paths. Must use paved shoulder when speed limit is over 50 mph.	Not required.
<b>Helmets</b>	Required for cyclists aged 15 and under.	Required for cyclists aged 15 and under.	Required 14 & under in Arlington, Fairfax, Prince William Counties; Alexandria, Falls Church, Leesburg, Manassas, Manassas Park, and Vienna.
<b>Lights</b>	Front light and rear reflector required when dark.	Front light and rear reflector required when dark.	White front light required when dark. Red rear light & reflector required when dark on roads posted for 35 MPH or higher.

# Bicycle Basics

You don't have to be a mechanic to commute by bike, but you should make sure your bicycle is in good working order and safe to ride.

**1) Air:** Tires lose a little air every day. If your gauge says a tire is more than five pounds under the needed pressure (printed on the side of the tire), add air. No gauge? Push each tire hard against a curb. If you can flatten it, add air.

**2) Chain:** A dry chain can lock up or break suddenly. If your chain squeaks when you pedal or it hangs up when you pedal backward, lubricate the chain. Oil will do, but it attracts dirt; a greaseless chain lubricant is best.

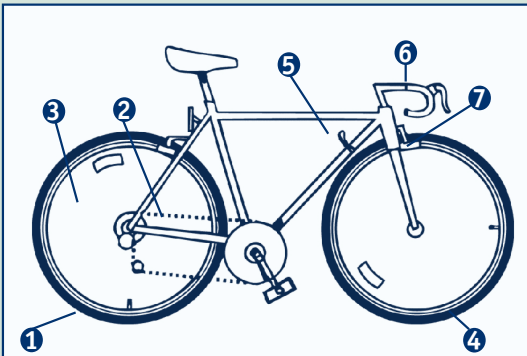
**3) Wheel Spin:**

Lift each wheel up and give it a slow spin. (Spin the back wheel forward so the pedals don't move.) If the wheel won't spin by itself or stops suddenly, see whether it's rubbing against the brake pads, frame, or something else. If the wheel's not rubbing, the problem might be the axle or hub.

**4) Tires:** Turn each wheel very slowly and look for big cuts, bulges, bubbles, or places you can see the inner casing. If you spot any, replace the tire. Remove glass or other debris. If the valve stem doesn't point straight at the middle of the wheel, the rim might cut it; let the air out and straighten the valve.

**5) Shifting:** Try all of your gears, shifting each gear lever from high to low. You have a problem if the lever sticks, you can't shift to all gears, the chain rubs the derailleur, or the chain jumps off the gears. These are usually caused by worn or dirty cables, or a derailleur that needs cleaning or adjustment.

**6) Handlebars:** Hold the front tire between your legs and try to turn the handlebars. If they're loose, tighten the stem bolt.



**7) Brakes:** You should adjust or replace the brake cable or pads if you have any of these problems: (a) when you apply the brake on each wheel, one or both brake pads don't

touch the rim;  
(b) you can squeeze your brake lever all the way to the handlebars;  
(c) on each wheel, the brake can't stop the tire from moving on dry, clean pavement.

**8) Loose Parts:** Pick up the bike and shake it hard. Check and fix anything that rattles.

*Excerpted from "Urban Bikers Tricks and Tips" by Dave Glowacz.*

# Outfitting Your Bike

## Bicycle Fit

Proper bike fit is important. A bicycle that's too large or too small is difficult to control and can lead to discomfort or injury. As a general rule for road bicycles, you should have at least one inch of clearance between the top tube and your crotch as you stand astride the bike. Clearance should be approximately two inches for a hybrid or cross bike and three to four inches for a mountain bike. Ask your bike shop for help fitting your bike.

You don't have to spend a lot of money on gear, but certain accessories can make bike commuting safer and more enjoyable. Prioritize spending on safety-related items. Keep in mind that you get what you pay for, and since bike commuting is very economical, you will save money in the long run. Think about your needs, talk to friends and staff at your local bike shop and read objective equipment reviews.

## Headlights & Taillights

Headlights are required by law for night riding. Taillights are a good addition to the rear red reflector. Lights vary greatly in their quality of construction, mounting design, amount of light supplied and duration. Battery powered headlights can be either rechargeable or non-rechargeable, both have advantages. In general, rechargeable headlights are brighter but also cost more up front. Consider lights that do not require any batteries and are magnet or dynamo powered.

*Don't be intimidated by all the gear. Start with the basics and learn what you need to be safe and comfortable as you go. Most bike commuters start with just a bike, a helmet, a lock, and a back pack.*

## Tools

It's a good idea to carry a basic tool kit with a small set of allen wrenches, a tire patch kit, and tire levers. Flat tire repair is featured in videos available online. Products such as puncture resistant tires, tubes and tire liners can help prevent flats. Inquire at your local bike shop. Including a rag in your tool kit can help you stay clean in the event of a mechanical problem.

## Fenders

Fenders help in wet conditions. They nearly eliminate spray from your wheels, keeping you drier, cleaner, and more comfortable.

## Mirrors

Some cyclists use mirrors to keep track of traffic behind them. Mirrors come in two basic types: head-mounted and bar-mounted. Although mirrors can help you keep tabs on traffic, they are not a substitute for looking behind you before changing lanes.

## Hauling Items

There are practical ways to haul items such as laptops, work files, extra clothes, etc. for daily commuting; or items carted for personal trips to the store for groceries and other purchases. Various methods include the use of messenger bags, backpacks, baskets, racks, and panniers. Each has its own advantage and there are many styles and sizes available, depending on your needs.

## Other Accessories

Some other basic and useful accessories include a bike pump to inflate tires, and a simple bike bell to let pedestrians and slower vehicles know you're approaching. Any water bottle will do, but insulated water bottles will keep water cool in the warmer months. Lastly, while not basic, a smartphone holder mounted to your handlebars is a nice feature for following bike routing directions.

# Outfitting Yourself

## Helmets

Using a helmet is recommended as it can reduce the chance and severity of injury, and may even save your life, if properly sized, adjusted, and consistently worn. Here are some important points about helmet use:

- The helmet should fit snugly and be worn level on your head. If tilted back, it will not protect your head. Side straps should meet in a 'V' below your ear lobes.
- Bicycle helmets are designed to withstand one crash only. Structural damage is not always visible, so always replace a helmet that has been in a crash and never buy used helmets.
- Light or fluorescent-colored helmets make you more visible to motorists, as does reflective tape applied to your helmet.
- You cannot predict when a crash is going to occur, so wear your helmet every time you ride, no matter how short the trip.

## Visible Clothing

Wearing bright clothing or accessories (e.g. reflective arm/leg bands, vests) can help make up for the fact that drivers often are not used to scanning for objects smaller than cars. In daylight conditions, fluorescent or light-colored items are very visible; but at night, reflective items are most visible.

## Bike Shorts

Cycling shorts reduce friction and provide cushioning. For short commutes, they may not be necessary.

## Rain Gear

Riding in the rain is possible, and rain gear makes it easier. Look for breathable fabric, as non-breathable fabric can cause you to overheat and sweat. "Pit-zips" in the jacket allow perspiration to evaporate. An inexpensive waterproof poncho, while not breathable fabric, allows good ventilation. Rain pants should be long enough to cover the top of your footwear to help keep your feet dry. The cuffs of the pants should cinch snugly against your ankles to keep them from getting snagged on anything, such as your bike's chainrings.

## Footwear

Ideal cycling footwear is stiff-soled and comfortable to walk in. Some cyclists use special shoes, but common footwear such as light hiking boots, sneakers, or even dress shoes may suffice. Weatherproof booties fit over most footwear.

*"Biking to work allows me to combine exercise, transportation, and relaxation.*

*For me, it takes the same amount of time as transit or driving"*

**—Rodges Ankrah,  
Arlington**



*"Biking provides me choices I don't have with other forms of transportation; I decide my own pace and route and can choose to sprint or take it easy and unwind and enjoy the trip. Regardless of pace, I am always more relaxed after I get off my bike."*

**—Lizzy McErlean, Arlington**

## Cold Weather Clothing Tips

Cycling, like all exercise, warms you up. In cold weather, put a thin, wicking layer against your skin to keep yourself dry. Then use an insulating layer on top of that. Finally, if needed, a wind or rain jacket. Make sure the jacket has full front zippers and/or pit-zips to allow for ventilation. Your head, hands, and feet tend to get colder faster than the rest of your body. Ear warmers and thin, knit head coverings and gloves allow you to cycle comfortably in cold weather. Avoid cotton, which loses its ability to insulate when wet. Synthetics or wool keep you warm when wet, and dry more quickly.

## Office Clothes

Cycling in partial or full office attire is often feasible, especially if your trip is relatively short or you maintain a moderate pace. Even in summer, it is seldom very hot in the early morning. You could also buy a garment bag that attaches to a bicycle, and change when you get to work. Rolling clothes instead of folding is a great way to reduce wrinkling. Some health clubs offer "runner's" memberships, where for a reduced rate, you can use the showers and the locker rooms. You could bring in an extra set of work clothes or have them cleaned near work. If your office has a casual day, use that as your first day for bicycling to work.



## Bicycle Security

Nothing is theft-proof and no locking system is perfect, but you can take steps to ensure that your bike is a less-attractive target to a thief:

- Check to see if your office has secure bicycle parking.
- Consider where and how long your bike must be parked when deciding how to secure it. If possible, keep your bicycle in your office or in a secured room at your workplace.
- If your bike must be parked outside, lock your frame and both wheels to an immovable object. Don't lock your bike to an object that can be easily unbolted, bent, cut, or removed. Pick a well-traveled, lighted place; thieves don't like working in exposed areas. Use more than one lock if practical.
- Consider leaving your heavy U-lock at work, locked to the bike parking rack. Carry a light cable lock with you for quick errands, and use both locks at work.
- When not in use, cable locks can be wrapped around the seat post and U-locks can often be carried on a rear rack or bracket.
- Take all easily removed accessories with you when leaving your bicycle unattended.

## Bikeshare

Capital Bikeshare is the region's bikeshare system offering both classic pedal bikes and e-bikes, with 7,000 bikes at 700+ stations in DC; Arlington, Fairfax, Montgomery, and Prince George's Counties; and the Cities of Alexandria, Falls Church, and Fairfax. Choose from a single ride, day pass, or annual membership. [www.capitalbikeshare.com](http://www.capitalbikeshare.com).



Dockless bikesharing is different from fixed-station systems such as Capital Bikeshare, which must be returned to a station dock upon journey's end. Dockless bicycles and scooters are GPS-equipped and are located and unlocked through an app. Fees are typically charged per minute with a nominal start fee. Each jurisdiction regulates and manages their own dockless bikesharing programs through private company contracts.

The District Department of Transportation authorizes the use of public space with four companies to provide dockless e-bikes and e-scooters for short-term rental. Company brands include Lime, Lyft, Spin, and Veo. Dockless e-bikes and e-scooters are also available in Arlington County, the City of Alexandria, and on and around the University of Maryland College Park campus.



# Bicycles and Transit

## Metrorail



Bicycles are welcome on Metrorail during all hours. Board using the doors at either ends of the railcar, not center doors. Metro may restrict bicycle access during special events or crowded conditions. Bike lockers or racks are available at most Metrorail stations. Metro also has a number of “Bike & Rides” at select stations throughout the system that offer free, secure, and sheltered bicycle parking facilities for passengers. Visit [www.wmata.com/service/bikes](http://www.wmata.com/service/bikes).

**Bike & Rides provide:**

- shelter from elements
- 24/7 card-controlled access
- video surveillance
- repair stands equipped with tools and air pumps
- capacity for up to 100 bicycles per location
- bright LED lighting and steel mesh walls
- emergency call boxes

## Metrobus and Local Bus Systems

Heavy-duty racks mounted to the front of each bus will transport your bicycle. Racks can accomodate two bikes.

## MARC

Standard-size bicycles are welcome aboard MARC trains. Identify which railcar to board by looking for the green “Bicycle Entrance” decal or an illuminated green light on the outside of the railcar. Some MARC trains have bike racks, while others do not. For trains without rack systems, secure bikes in the designated area only, using two passenger-supplied bungee cords. Visit [www.mta.maryland.gov/bike](http://www.mta.maryland.gov/bike).



## VRE

Full-size bicycles are welcome on all VRE trains. Check with conductor when boarding, then secure your bicycle to the south end bench seats using passenger-supplied bungee cords attached to the seat frame eyelets. Visit [www.vre.org](http://www.vre.org), click on New Rider, then Bicycle On Board.





## Park & Ride Lots

Many area Park & Ride Lots have bicycle racks and some have lockers. More than 25% have some form of bicycle parking facilities. For more information contact the appropriate county rideshare office or call Commuter Connections (800)-745-RIDE.

For an online Park & Ride map visit [www.commuterconnections.org](http://www.commuterconnections.org). Click on Commute Resources.

For bicycle lockers at Virginia Park & Ride Lots call (703) 383-2233.



**We'll get you home. Guaranteed.**

## What if I need to get home in an emergency?

The Commuter Connections Guaranteed Ride Home Program provides free emergency rides home from work to people who bicycle or take other alternative transportation to work twice a week in the Washington/Baltimore metro areas. Reasons include illness, emergencies, and unexpected overtime. Register at [www.commuterconnections.org](http://www.commuterconnections.org). Some restrictions apply.



# How to Encourage Your Employer to Support Bicycling to Work

You're now well versed in the ways of bike commuting, but you would like to see a few changes at your office to assist you and your colleagues who might like to bike to work. Flip to the other side of this guide to learn about sound investments and policies employers can use to encourage cycling, improve employee health, and save money. Here are some ideas to get you started:

- Show this guide to your human resources representative and building manager.
- Organize a bike-to-work day at your office (see page Employer-7).
- Call the Washington Area Bicyclist Association, (202) 518-0524, or the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, (202) 962-3760 and ask about setting up a bike to work orientation at your work site.
- Use online bicycle routing websites for turn-by-turn directions, listed in the centerfold of this guide.
- Ask your employer to offer a subsidy for bicycling.



*"Some folks that don't bike to work tell me they think it's 'cool' that I do, but how they could never do it themselves. It's not necessarily 'cool' as much as it's just really practical and fun. As long as you're safe and stay alert, anyone can do it."*

**— Lia Seremetis,  
DC Bike Party founder**

# Resources for Employers and Employees

## Active Prince William

[www.activepw.org](http://www.activepw.org)

## Bike Arlington

[www.bikearlington.com](http://www.bikearlington.com)

## Bike Loudoun

[www.bikeloudoun.org](http://www.bikeloudoun.org)

## Bike Maryland

[www.bikemaryland.org](http://www.bikemaryland.org)

## Bike Washington

[www.bikewashington.org](http://www.bikewashington.org)

## Capital Trails Coalition

[www.capitaltrailscoalition.org](http://www.capitaltrailscoalition.org)

## Fairfax Advocates for Better Bicycling

[www.fabb-bikes.org](http://www.fabb-bikes.org)

## Frederick Bicycle Coalition

[www.bikefrederick.org](http://www.bikefrederick.org)

## Frederick Pedalers

[www.frederickpedalers.org](http://www.frederickpedalers.org)

## League of American Bicyclists

[www.bikeleague.org](http://www.bikeleague.org)

## Metro

[www.wmata.com/service/bikes](http://www.wmata.com/service/bikes)

## Nat'l Hwy Traffic Safety Administration

[www.nhtsa.gov/bicycle-safety](http://www.nhtsa.gov/bicycle-safety)

## National Capital Trail Network

<https://national-l-trail-network-mwcog.hub.arcgis.com>

## Potomac Pedalers

[www.potomacpedalers.org](http://www.potomacpedalers.org)

## Virginia Bicycling Federation

[www.vabike.org](http://www.vabike.org)

## Washcycle

[www.thewashcycle.com](http://www.thewashcycle.com)

## Washington Area Bicyclist Association

[www.waba.org](http://www.waba.org)

## Washington Area Bike Forum

[www.bikearlingtonforum.com](http://www.bikearlingtonforum.com)

## Bicycle Planners

For an up to date listing of bike planner contacts, visit [commuterconnections.org/commuters/bicycling](http://commuterconnections.org/commuters/bicycling)



## Area Bicycle Maps

### Alexandria Bikeways Map

[www.alexandriava.gov/bicycling](http://www.alexandriava.gov/bicycling)

### Arlington County Bicycle Map

[www.BikeArlington.com/maps-and-routes](http://www.BikeArlington.com/maps-and-routes)

### Capital Crescent Trail Map

[www.cttrail.org/map](http://www.cttrail.org/map)

### District of Columbia Map

[www.goDCgo.com/bike](http://www.goDCgo.com/bike)

### Fairfax County Bicycle Map

[www.fairfaxcounty.gov/transportation/bike/map](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/transportation/bike/map)

### Maryland State Bicycle Map

[www.bikemaryland.org/resources/riding/maps](http://www.bikemaryland.org/resources/riding/maps)

### Montgomery County Bicycle Map

[www.montgomerycountymd.gov/DOT/bike.html](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/DOT/bike.html)

### TrailLink

[www.trailink.com](http://www.trailink.com)

### Virginia State Bicycle Map

[www.vdot.virginia.gov/travel-traffic/maps](http://www.vdot.virginia.gov/travel-traffic/maps)

### Washington DC Regional Bike Map

[www.commuterconnections.org/commuters/bicycling](http://www.commuterconnections.org/commuters/bicycling)

## List of Bicycle Parking Equipment Dealers & Manufacturers

### American Bicycle Security Co.

[www.ameribike.com](http://www.ameribike.com)

### BikeLid Systems

[www.bikelid.com](http://www.bikelid.com)

### Cycle Safe

[www.cycle-safe.com](http://www.cycle-safe.com)

### Dero

[www.dero.com](http://www.dero.com)

### eLock Technologies

[www.bikelink.org](http://www.bikelink.org)

### Madrax

[www.madrax.com](http://www.madrax.com)

### Peak Racks

[www.peakracks.com](http://www.peakracks.com)

### Saris

[www.sarisinfrastructure.com](http://www.sarisinfrastructure.com)

### Sunshine U-Lok Corporation

[www.sunshinebikeracks.com](http://www.sunshinebikeracks.com)

### Urban Accessories

[www.urbanaccessories.com](http://www.urbanaccessories.com)

### Bike Sharing

#### Capital Bikeshare

[www.capitalbikeshare.com](http://www.capitalbikeshare.com)

### Veo

[www.veoride.com/university-of-maryland](http://www.veoride.com/university-of-maryland)

### Bike Stations

#### Metro

[www.wmata.com/service/bikes](http://www.wmata.com/service/bikes)

### Bike Rental

#### Unlimited Biking

[www.unlimitedbiking.com](http://www.unlimitedbiking.com)

### Bicycle Routing Sites

#### Car Free A to Z

[www.carfreeatoz.com/planner](http://www.carfreeatoz.com/planner)

### Commuter Connections

[www.commuterconnections.org/commuters/bicycling](http://www.commuterconnections.org/commuters/bicycling)

### Google

[www.google.com/maps](http://www.google.com/maps)

### Map My Ride

[www.mapmyride.com/routes](http://www.mapmyride.com/routes)

### e-Bikes and e-Scooters

#### Bird

[www.bird.co](http://www.bird.co)

#### Capital Bikeshare

[www.capitalbikeshare.com](http://www.capitalbikeshare.com)

### Lime

[www.li.me](http://www.li.me)

### Lyft

[www.lyft.com/bikes](http://www.lyft.com/bikes)

### Spin

[www.spin.app](http://www.spin.app)

### Veo

[www.veoride.com](http://www.veoride.com)

### Acknowledgments

Martin Guttentplan, “*Developing Successful Bicycle Pedestrian Commuter Programs: A Handbook for Employers.*”

Energy Outreach Center and the Capital Bicycling Club, of Olympia, Washington, “*Bicycle Commute Guide.*”

COG/TPB Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee.



For electronic version of this guide and for information on all types of alternative commuting throughout the Washington region, contact COG's Commuter Connections program at (800) 745-RIDE, [www.commuterconnections.org/commuters/bicycling](http://www.commuterconnections.org/commuters/bicycling).





Employer Guide

# BICYCLING TO WORK

in the Washington Metropolitan Region



 **COMMUTER CONNECTIONS.**  
— A SMARTER WAY TO WORK —

[COMMUTERCONNECTIONS.ORG](http://COMMUTERCONNECTIONS.ORG)





# About This Guide

Cycling is a clean, fun, inexpensive, and healthy way for your employees to get to work. Thousands of DC area commuters travel by bicycle each day. This guide is designed to help employers provide the encouragement and tools to ease the transition to bicycle commuting for employees.

## Why Your Employees Should Bike To Work?

### Reduced Health Care Costs

According to the Centers for Disease Control, moderate physical activity (such as bicycling to work) saves 5 to 12 percent in annual medical costs, compared with a 6.5 percent savings from employees who don't smoke.

### Decreased Absenteeism & Turnover

A study by the National Center for Health Statistics found that physical activity is one of the few factors that have a statistically significant effect on absenteeism. Physically fit employees are absent an average of two fewer days per year.

### Increased Productivity

Bicyclists and walkers arrive at work with less stress than those who commute by automobile. The Berkeley Wellness Letter reports that chronic exposure to traffic congestion produces an increase in baseline blood pressure, lowering of frustration tolerance, increases in negative mood, and aggressive driving habits. In contrast, bicyclists and walkers often report feeling relaxed and more alert after arriving at work, ready for a more productive day.

### Reduced Parking Costs

Up to a dozen bicycles can fit in the parking space of one motor vehicle. Considerable savings on automobile parking overhead can be achieved when employees bike as a means of getting to work.

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# Auto Parking vs. Bicycle Parking Comparison

	Auto Parking	Bicycle Parking
Space Requirement	Each car needs 150 to 180 sq ft	Each bike needs 2 to 4 sq ft
Cost to Build	High (due to size, pavement, structure)	Low (racks are inexpensive)
Environmental Impact	High (impervious surfaces, car use)	Low (encourages low-emission travel)

Auto parking is space and cost intensive, while bicycle parking is compact, cost-effective, and supports greener transportation options. By placing bicycle lockers in areas not usable for parking or office space, the savings can be increased.

## How to Support Bicycling to Work

### 1. Appoint a Bicycle Coordinator

A fitness/wellness coordinator, employee transportation coordinator (ETC), or someone who currently bikes to work are the logical people to head a bicycle commuter program. The most important attributes are enthusiasm and an interest in cycling. With assistance from the Washington Area Bicyclist Association, the coordinator can evaluate facilities and identify safe routes to your work place. This employee can devote an hour a month to launch and coordinate a bike to work program.

### 2. Provide Bicycle Parking

Employees need to know their bicycles are safe while they work. Ideal bike parking is:

- Clearly marked
- Accessible and well lit
- Located as close to a building entrance and shower facilities as possible
- Sheltered from the elements
- Located where there are people or security personnel or in a locked room
- If it is impractical to provide good bike racks or lockers, consider allowing employees to keep bicycles in their offices or in a locked storage room.

*While planning the relocation of its headquarters office, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency made sure to ask for bike facilities. EPA bike commuters worked with the architects and GSA to design a state of the art bike room with space for 100 bikes as well as locker rooms with showers.*

## ***Bicycle Lockers***

Lockers are generally the most secure and weatherproof means of bicycle storage. Materials range from plastic to metal to particle board. Bike lockers are not efficient users of space compared to bike racks and cages. Since not every bicycle commuter will ride every day, assigned lockers are usually under-utilized on any given day. Lockers are not usually recommended for indoor or garage use.



## ***Racks***

Installing a rack in a covered, locked compound or storage room can provide excellent security. Some racks allow you to store bikes vertically to save space. Racks in an unsecured area should be highly visible.

Even if you provide long-term bicycle parking such as bike lockers or cages, racks should be provided near the entrance for visitors, couriers, and employees who wish to bike to the worksite occasionally.

## ***Bike Rooms and Cages***

Usually located in the basement or on the ground floor, a bike cage is a fenced off secure area for bike storage. Only those who bike to work should have access. Gym lockers can be included to store helmets and other cycling gear. Rooms and cages provide more security than racks alone and usually cost less than bike lockers. Since parking spaces inside the cage are typically not reserved, far more people can be served.



*Vertical racks can save space.*



Credit: American Physical Therapy Association



### ***Shelter***

Most bicyclists are not willing to leave a good bicycle exposed to the elements. Covering outdoor racks with a simple shelter or locating them under an existing covered area can increase the number of days employees will bike to work.

### ***Guidelines for the Correct Number of Parking Facilities***

Surveying your employees will help determine the amount of parking your company will need. Some municipalities have ordinances on the number of bicycle parking spaces employers must provide.

In the District of Columbia, nearly all new office and commercial buildings must include short and long-term bicycle parking in accordance with the zoning code.

Arlington County has bike parking guidelines recommending the number of parking spaces based on the number of employees, visitors, and customers; and shower facilities based on the square footage of the building.

For more details, scan the QR Code:



## **3. Provide On-Site Amenities**

### ***Sponsor Capital Bikeshare***

In addition to making it easier for employees to use their own bicycles, employers can sponsor Capital Bikeshare to give employees access to thousands of bicycles at hundreds of stations in DC; the Cities of Alexandria, Fairfax, and Falls Church; and Arlington, Fairfax, Montgomery, and Prince George's Counties. [www.capitalbikeshare.com](http://www.capitalbikeshare.com)

Employers can choose to:

- Become a corporate member, allowing discounts to employees.
- Sponsor an existing station
- Sponsor a new station
- Sponsor the entire service

## Showers

Employees may consider biking to work knowing that they can shower upon arrival. Showers also allow employees to exercise at lunch. In buildings with 50-100 employees, one shower should be sufficient. In buildings with 100-250 employees, one shower for each gender should be provided. Buildings housing over 250 employees should provide at least four showers with two of them being accessible to the disabled.



## Lockers

Ideally, there should be one secure gym locker available to store work clothes for every long-term bicycle parking space provided. In addition to providing a locker to each regular bicycle commuter, other lockers should be available to encourage potential new bike commuters. These facilities will also encourage lunch-time fitness activities.



## 4. Provide Incentives

The primary incentives to encourage bicycling and walking to work are showers, lockers, and secure bicycle parking. Here are some others:

- Offer flex-time schedules. Make it possible for bicycle commuters to arrange their work schedules to avoid peak-hour traffic congestion and darkness.
- Permit a more relaxed dress code on specified days.
- Provide a company-owned pool of bicycles or access to Capital Bikeshare's fleet of bicycles for short business trips, errands, and recreation.
- Offer financial help to purchase a bicycle or accessories.
- Give cash to bicyclists for part or all of the parking spaces they do not use if your business subsidizes parking. (See Parking Cashout, page Employer-9)
- Allow bicycle commuters time to shower or freshen-up.
- Tell employees about the Commuter Connections *Guaranteed Ride Home* program. It provides free emergency rides home to those who bicycle or take other alternative transportation to work. To sign up, visit [www.commuterconnections.org](http://www.commuterconnections.org) or for questions call 800-745-7433.
- Recognize bicyclists at company-wide functions with certificates emphasizing bicyclists' environmental or health awareness.
- Award points to employees for bicycling to work. These points can accumulate and be redeemed for cash or prizes.
- Provide free or subsidized membership to a gym within walking distance. Employees who bike to work can use those facilities to shower and change clothes.
- Encourage bicyclists to download and use the regional CommuterCash mobile app to earn rewards points for their bike commutes that can be redeemed for cash, up to \$600 a year. Visit [commutercash.org](http://commutercash.org).

*Escuela Key Elementary School is a dual English/Spanish immersion school in Arlington. Administrators encourage staff to choose bicycling and other sustainable commuting options. In addition to ample bike racks, they have commuter showers, bike repair kits, and an employee Capital Bikeshare membership benefit. They celebrate Bike, Walk and Roll to School Day each year with a month-long challenge.*



## 5. Promote Your Program

- Promote the bicycle benefits and amenities at your workplace. Add bicycle related information to your company intranet or internal newsletter. Often employees are unaware of the programs and facilities available to them. With such knowledge, employees are more likely to commute by bike.
- Post about your bicycle commuter program on social media to enhance your company's profile in the community, and to use it as a recruitment tool. Become involved locally in bicycle issues and events such as Bike to Work Day.
- Hold workshops on bicycle commuting, maintenance, safety and other biking and walking topics during lunch hour. Call WABA to schedule a workshop (202) 518-0524.
- Designate a person to coordinate bicycle-related topics and organize an employee biking club. Members can help acclimate new bicyclists. Provide participating employees with club T-shirts displaying the company logo.
- Organize a company-wide "Alternative Transportation Day" to encourage commuters to try bicycling, walking, carpooling, vanpooling, or transit. Commuter Connections can help, 800-745-7433 or [www.commuterconnections.org](http://www.commuterconnections.org).

### How to Organize a Bike to Work Day



1. Appoint a Bike to Work Day coordinator.
2. Provide funds for food and prizes.
3. Publicize your Bike to Work Day through your company intranet, newsletter, email, fliers, etc.
4. Hold a morning event with breakfast for Bike to Work commuters.
5. Hold drawings for prizes.
6. Make information available about company provisions for bicycle parking, changing and shower facilities for employees.
7. Provide copies of this guide; call (800) 745-7433 for free copies.
8. Issue a Bike to Work Day challenge to a neighboring employer or among departments.
9. To inquire about becoming an official Bike to Work Day "pit stop," email [ridematching@mwkog.org](mailto:ridematching@mwkog.org) by October.

## 6. Find Out About Cycling Near Your Work Site

- Contact your local city or county planning agency and ask about bicycle infrastructure near your office. See list of area bicycle planners on the center resources page.
- To help identify good bike routes to and from your site, use the bicycling routing websites listed on the center resource page.

## Funding for Bicycle Programs

The District Department of Transportation (DDOT) offers free publicly accessible bicycle racks by request through <https://311.dc.gov>. DDOT will locate and install racks outside of your building and provide free consultation on interior long-term bicycle parking solutions. For more information, please visit [www.ddot.dc.gov/service/bicycle-parking](http://www.ddot.dc.gov/service/bicycle-parking).



*"A few years ago, I reacquainted myself with bike commuting and rode to my Alexandria office. I loved every second of it, and wondered why I ever stopped? Bicycling is faster than transit, cheaper, and I don't need to spend time and money at a health club. Plus it helps me clear my head. With Capital Bikeshare, bikes capable of any weather condition are available year-round."*

**—Richard Williams, Alexandria**

## LEED Certification

The U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design or LEED rating system provides certification for green buildings. Employees that bike can help contribute to LEED certification points for the building. Points can also be gained by providing shower facilities, lockers, or racks for bicyclists.

## Parking Cash Out

Employers unintentionally encourage driving alone to the workplace when they offer free or subsidized parking to employees. Parking Cashout is when an employer offers monetary compensation to employees in exchange for giving up their parking space. Maryland employers who offer Cash in Lieu of Parking can claim a tax credit, up to or equal to \$100 per person. Visit [mdot.maryland.gov/commuter](http://mdot.maryland.gov/commuter). District of Columbia employers with 20 or more employees who work in the District of Columbia for at least 50 percent of their work time must offer parking cashout to employees or an equivalent transit benefit. Visit [godcgo.com/dc-parking-cashout-law-basics](http://godcgo.com/dc-parking-cashout-law-basics).

*"Bike commuting helps address both traffic congestion and the parking shortage in downtown D.C. Our bike room at Metro Square provides employees with secure, convenient bike parking and eliminates the need to bring bikes into the building's lobby and elevators."*

**—Jeff Nokes,  
Senior Property Manager,  
Boston Properties.**

## Negotiate Bicycle Facilities In Your Lease

When you renew your lease, ask building owners to install bicycle facilities. They can then market these amenities to prospective tenants and save on parking spaces. If there's a gym within walking distance of your office, it may be cheaper and/or more practical to pay the gym to allow your employees to use their facilities.



## Federal Employees

The federal government is the largest employer in the Washington area. In 1993, Congress passed the Federal Employees Clean Air Incentives Act which encourages alternative commuting at federal worksites. According to the Act, Public Law 103-172, the head of each agency may establish a program to encourage employees of such agency

to use means other than single-occupancy vehicles to commute to or from work [including] furnishing space, facilities or services to bicyclists. Each agency must report on the progress of their program (number of racks, lockers, etc.) every two years.

# Why Bicycling to Work is Good for Your Employees

- 1. Provides Fitness.** Biking to work is one of the best all-round exercises and it doesn't put as much strain on the knees and ankles as running.
- 2. Strengthens Lower Back.** Lower back pain is a common cause of visits to physicians. Bicycling exercises the small muscles that surround the spine which are important in keeping the back strong and preventing injuries.
- 3. Keeps Minds Young.** A report from the Baltimore Longitudinal Study of Aging has shown that exercise helps maintain mental agility.
- 4. Creates Free Time.** Employees can save time by combining exercise and commuting.
- 5. Increased Longevity.** Health benefits from bicycling to work outweigh the traffic safety risk by a factor of 20 to 1.





## Washington Area Bicycling Facts:

### *According to the Commuter Connections 2022 State of the Commute Survey:*

- 16% of all commuters live less than five miles from work.
- The average bike commute is 4.5 miles each way, and 25 minutes.
- The average number of days per week for bicycle commuting is 2.5.
- Rates of men and women who walk/bike as their primary commute mode are female: 3% and male: 4%.
- Bike/walk as primary commute mode based on State of Residence: District of Columbia 16%, Maryland 1%, and Virginia 3%.
- 23% of respondents said their employers offered support services for bicyclists and walkers.
- 90% of bicyclists and walkers are satisfied with their commute, compared to 51% who drive alone.

***According to the 2021 US Census American Community Survey:***

- 0.45% of work trips in the greater Washington region are by bicycle.
- The District has the highest bike commute mode share at 2.12%, followed by Arlington at 1.13%, and Alexandria at 1.05%.

***Bike to Work Day May 2022 Washington Region Event Survey***

- The Bike to Work Day event increases bicycle commuting- 14% of survey respondents said they never commuted by bicycle before participating in the annual event.
- The Bike to Work Day event expands the frequency of bicycle commuting- 20% of survey respondents said they started or increased bicycling after participating in the event.
- Bike to Work Day participants traveled an average of 8.5 miles one-way to work.

***BicyclePed Portal Dashboard***

Bicycle Counts from automated counters on trails in Arlington, Alexandria, the District of Columbia, and Montgomery County can be found at [bikeped.trec.pdx.edu/dashboard](https://bikeped.trec.pdx.edu/dashboard).



For additional copies of this guide call Commuter Connections at (800) 745-7433, or see the online version at [www.commuterconnections.org](http://www.commuterconnections.org).

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