



Let's ride the Bike Bus!

What is a bike bus?

A bike bus is a group of cyclists, riding together for convenience, safety and fun. A bus rides at a social pace of about 15km/h on the flat.

The 'driver' leads the bus, indicating with hand signals and calls when the group should slow, stop or negotiate road hazards.

The 'conductor' rides at the back, making sure that lane changes occur safely and that riders keep pace with the bus.

Just like a bus there is a scheduled start time and designated bike bus stops along the route to pick up riders.

Why bike bus?

It's a fun way to get to work and it's quick. In a group even experienced riders feel safer. Riding with others is a great way to improve fitness and bike handling skills. The bike bus is more visible to motorists than individual cyclists so we're making life easier for them as well... and of course every cyclist in the bike bus is one less car on the road!

Safety and fitness

There are some simple safety rules to riding in the bike bus, and minimum level of fitness is required. You should be able to maintain a 15 km/h average speed on the flat.

What you'll need

Nothing special is required to catch the bike bus. It is recommended that riders have a bell or horn, and lights if traveling after dark. A rear vision mirror can be useful.

Setting up a bike bus

Step 1: Survey

Explain to your staff how the bike bus works, and ask who is interested. Use the sample survey below.

Step 2: Match riders to routes

Mark each rider's home location on a map. Decide on potential routes, considering the locations of riders and the number of volunteer bus drivers available.

Organise a meeting to match riders to routes. Sort people into bike buses according to their home locations and time of travel.

Decide on the likely route of the bike bus depending on the location of busy roads, potential hazards, and the preferences of riders.

"Bus stops" can be someone's house or a convenient intersection. Remind people that the times and stops can be adjusted later if need be.

Bike buses do not have to run every day. They may operate for just the morning trip to work, or they may do a return trip to and from work.

Step 3: Training bus drivers and riders

Ensure that bus drivers are aware of their responsibilities, such as knowing road rules (e.g. hand signals, what to do at intersections or in the event of a puncture or accident); what to do if a rider is late, hasn't got the right gear, or has an unsafe bicycle.

Riders should be asked to demonstrate their basic riding skills, including using hand signals, the ability to look over the shoulder while riding in a straight line, and riding in a group. A safety check of bicycles could also be conducted.

Remember that the bike bus provides an opportunity to polish skills and increase confidence. If there is *any* concern about people's ability to cope with riding on the bike bus, cycle skills training should be offered. Check with your BUG (Bicycle User Group), local council, bike shop, or bicycle advocacy group about training workshops. They can also advise on choosing quiet routes.

Step 4: Check the route for hazards

Have a couple of experienced cyclists check the preferred route. Ask your Council to fix any problems, or plan a way around them.

Step 5: Launch the bike bus

Choose a launch date and get cycling. You might want to seek sponsorship for brightly coloured vests to increase visibility in traffic – and to celebrate the fact that they are riding and making a contribution to improving our environment. It is helpful to provide a flyer or poster that has a map of the bike bus route and timetable – we've provided a couple in this handout to give you some ideas.

Remind the staff that the bike bus is operating!

Have posters or flyers in the staff rooms and regular reminders in any staff newsletters or bulletins that are sent out. Include information about the bike bus in any 'induction' materials that are put together for new staff. Mention the bike bus at staff meetings.

Step 6: Review

When your bike buses have been going for a month or so, arrange a meeting to check how it is going. Does the bus schedule of stops need adjusting?

Bike bus guidelines

Group bicycling can be very enjoyable. Follow these guidelines for safety:

Teamwork

Watch for problems and help each other to be safe and enjoy the ride.

Ride one or two across

Ride single file or double file as appropriate to the roadway and traffic conditions. Courtesy dictates that you ride in single file when cars are trying to pass you if the lane is wide enough for them to safely do so.

Spacing

Keep enough space in front of and behind you to ensure you can stop safely if you need to. Don't bunch!

Be predictable

Group riding requires more attention to predictability than riding alone. Other riders expect you to ride straight, at a constant speed, unless you indicate differently.

Communicate

Use hand and verbal signals to communicate with members of the bike bus and with other traffic.

Hand signals

You must give a hand signal for at least three seconds before stopping or turning. Look behind to make sure there is room for you to turn, pull out or pass safely.

- To signal a left turn, put your left arm straight out.
- For a right turn, put your right arm straight out.
- To signal slowing or stopping, put your right arm out and up with you palm to the front.



Verbal warnings

Along with hand signals, tell cyclists behind you of your changes in direction or speed. The lead rider should call out "left turn," "right turn," "slowing," "stopping," etc. Announce a turn well in advance of the intersection, so that members of the group have time to position themselves properly.

Announce hazards

When riding in a bike bus, most of the cyclists do not have a good view of the road surface ahead, so it is important to announce holes, gravel, grates, and other hazards. Indicate road hazards by pointing down to the left or right, and by shouting "hole," "bump," etc.

Overtake correctly

Generally, slow traffic stays left, so you should pass others on their right. Say "on your right" to warn a cyclist ahead that you are passing.

Watch for traffic coming from behind

It often helps to know when a car is coming. Since those in front cannot see traffic approaching from the rear, it is the responsibility of the riders in back to inform the others by saying "car back." Around curves, on narrow roads, or when riding in pairs, it is helpful to warn of traffic approaching from the front with "car up."

Watch out at intersections

When approaching intersections requiring vehicles to give way or stop, the lead rider will say "slowing" or "stopping" to alert those behind to the change in speed. Each cyclist is responsible for checking that the way is clear before entering the intersection.

Leave a gap for cars

When riding up hills or on narrow roads where you are impeding faster traffic, leave a gap for cars between every three or four bicycles. This way, motorists can take advantage of shorter passing intervals and eventually overtake the bike bus.

Move off the road when you stop

Whether you are stopping because of mechanical problems or to regroup, move off the road so you don't interfere with traffic. It is usually best for the lead rider to pull forward in the stopping area and for other riders to pull in behind the rider in front of them. When you start up again, each cyclist should check for traffic.

Wait at turns

If the group becomes separated, someone should wait at the turn until the next rider arrives, and so on until all riders have made the turn.

What bike bus drivers and conductors need to know

Bike bus drivers and conductors should have a good general knowledge of road rules (see www.ltsa.govt.nz/roadcode) and be skilled at cycling.

Bus drivers and/or conductors should carry a cell phone and contact phone lists in case of emergency.

Drivers and conductors are responsible for ensuring riders stay together without bunching, cross roads safely, and stick to the designated route.

The bike bus should only deviate from the route if it is essential, e.g. if the road is blocked by an accident or road works and a safe alternative is available.

Riders can report hazardous drivers to Community Roadwatch at www.police.govt.nz/service/road/roadwatch.php . You need to have the car registration number!

More information**Bike North**

Bike North is a Bicycle User Group based in Sydney, which runs a bike bus.

<http://www.bikenorth.org.au/cycling/commuting/bikebus/>

Bike Bus Survey

A bike bus is a group of cyclists, riding together for convenience, safety and fun. A bus rides at a social pace of about 15km/h on the flat.

The 'driver' leads the bus, indicating with hand signals and calls when the group should slow down, stop or negotiate road hazards.

The 'conductor' rides at the back, making sure that lane changes occur safely and that riders keep pace with the bus.

Just like a bus there is a scheduled start time and designated bike bus stops along the route to pick up riders.

Section 1: Identifying Bike Bus riders

1. **If a bike bus is organised from your neighbourhood to our workplace, would you use it?** *Tick the appropriate response*

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes → Go to Question 3
<input type="checkbox"/>	No → Go to Question 2
<input type="checkbox"/>	Maybe → Go to Question 3

Thanks, that's all we need to know. End of Survey for those answering 'No' to Q1. Please return to [name] by [date]

2. **Yes** I might be interested in using a bike bus!
Name _____

3. **Home address. This helps us to sort out possible bus routes.**

4. **In a typical week, when would you use the bike bus?** *Tick all days that apply.*

Monday	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tuesday	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wednesday	<input type="checkbox"/>
Thursday	<input type="checkbox"/>
Friday	<input type="checkbox"/>

5. **About what time do you like to...**

Arrive at work	<input type="checkbox"/>
Leave from work	<input type="checkbox"/>
Can you be flexible with these times?	Yes/No (Circle one)

Section 2: Identifying Bike bus drivers and conductors

The success of this scheme depends on having volunteers to be drivers and conductors.

6. Would you volunteer to “drive”/”conduct” a bus? *Tick the appropriate response*

	Yes → Continue survey
	No → Thanks - end of survey. Please return it to [name] by [date]
	Maybe → Continue survey

7. I would be willing to drive/conduct...

One morning or afternoon per fortnight	1
One morning or afternoon per week	2
Two mornings or afternoons per week	3
Three mornings or afternoons per week	4
Four mornings or afternoons per week	5
Five mornings or afternoons per week	6
Don't know	7

8. What are the likely days and times you could drive/conduct the bus?

Day and time		
Any morning or afternoon		0
Monday	morning	1
	afternoon	2
Tuesday	morning	3
	afternoon	4
Wednesday	morning	5
	afternoon	6
Thursday	morning	7
	afternoon	8
Friday	morning	9
	afternoon	10

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.
Please return it to [name] by [date]



. . . take the Bike Bus!

Bike Now is starting two Bike Bus routes in Wellington:

- 1. The “Southern Route”:** Miramar/Seatoun to the CBD
- 2. The “Northern Route”:** Petone to the CBD

What is a Bike Bus?

- *A group of people who cycle to work together*
- *There is a set timetable with stops along the route*
- *Riding is a ‘social pace’, averaging 15 km/h*
- *We have a driver at the front and a conductor at the back*
- *It’s environmentally-friendly, zero emission commuting*
- *It’s sociable, comfortable, and keeps you fit and healthy!*



We’d love you to join in the fun! Please email [name] on [email address] saying:

- *Which bus you’d like to join;*
- *Would you be a conductor/driver or a ‘passenger’;*
- *What day(s) you’d be interested in riding; and*
- *The times you’d prefer to ride.*



.. take the Bike Bus!

Join the Bike Bus route

When?

- *Every Friday! What a way to end the week!*
- *Starts at 730 from the BP Station*
- *More stops are on attached map*

What is a Bike Bus?

- *A group of people who cycle to work together*
- *There is a set timetable with stops along the route*
- *Riding is a 'social pace', averaging 15-20 km/h*
- *We have a driver at the front and a conductor at the back*
- *It's environmentally-friendly, zero emission commuting*
- *It's sociable, comfortable, and keeps you fit and healthy!*



We'd love you to join in the fun!

Please email xx on xx if you want any further information