

Cycling

For the purposes of these guidelines, cycling refers to activities undertaken by students on bicycles beyond the school grounds on formed roads or tracks. It does not include mountain biking or competition cycling events. In preparing for the cycling activity, in addition to these guidelines, the teacher undertaking the planning should also refer to:

- Traffic Safety Education Teacher Support Materials (provided on curriculum@work); and
- Administrative Guidelines for Traffic Safety Education 1997.

Environment

Cycling activities will generally be conducted on minor roads and tracks in a diverse range of environments. Where roads and tracks are in relatively undisturbed areas, they offer the opportunity to study unique flora and fauna and, these areas need sensitive use and management. Roadside vegetation is particularly vulnerable to soil compaction and damage to flora which can have long lasting effects.

When preparing for cycling activities, consider ways to minimise the environmental impact of the activity. Further information is available elsewhere on this site.

Location

Due to the unique nature of each location, a specific assessment of suitability should be made by the teacher responsible for the activity prior to the trip.

Your choice of location must be based upon the recent and first hand knowledge of at least one member of the planning and supervising staff. Where this is impractical, planning and supervising staff should be thoroughly familiar with the general characteristics and conditions found in similar locations, and should have consulted with people who can provide recent and first-hand knowledge of the locations being considered.

When assessing the suitability of a location, consider:

- the potential to support your educational objectives
- the level of access to resources, services and facilities that you need or would like to use. These might include campsites, water, walking trails, toilets, shelter from extreme weather, or interpretive information.
- the level of access to communications and external assistance in the event of an emergency, or extreme weather conditions. The more effectively remote your location is, the more self-contained and self-reliant your group must be and this must be taken into account in the planning of the activity.

- the potential exposure to environmental hazards and difficulties
- the activity ability and fitness of students.

Contact with relevant authorities should be made in order to access up-to-date management information and to determine *any* access and permit requirements.

These authorities may include:

- Emergency services
- Parks Victoria (or other land managers)
- Department of Sustainability and Environment

Groups need to be aware that extreme weather conditions may develop prior to or during the proposed trip. Staff should be prepared to cancel, modify or relocate the activity *at any time*.

Staff should have a thorough knowledge of the route to be covered and document any potential hazards and communicate them to students. Choice of route should consider:

- traffic
- dangerous intersections
- excessive gradients
- road surface conditions.

Communication

Your communication strategy should enable you to receive weather forecasts and warnings, communicate with the school, and engage support in the case of an incident or emergency.

- Choose communication equipment based on current communication technology.
- Develop a communication strategy for the group during the program and enable communication with outside parties including the school and emergency services.
- Be aware of the limitations of your communication strategy.

Where support vehicles are used, drivers of the vehicles must have a means of communicating with the cycling group.

Weather

Check the weather forecast for the location in the days leading up to the program and on the day the program commences. If the program extends overnight, monitor and assess the weather throughout and based on that information access daily weather forecasts and warnings.

Weather conditions can change rapidly. Monitor and assess the weather throughout the activity and be prepared to cancel, modify or relocate at anytime.

Weather warning telephone services:

- Coastal, Land Weather and Flood Warnings: 1300 659 217
- Full State Telephone Weather Service: 1900 955 363 (call charge applies)
- Victorian Bushfire Information Line: 1800 240 667

These telephone numbers may be useful to have available on your program.

Web links:

- [Bureau of Meteorology](#)
- [Current weather warnings for Victoria](#)
- [Current fires](#)
- [Telephone weather services directory: Victoria](#)

Weather conditions can have a significant impact on the proposed trip. Cyclists are very prone to windburn, sunburn, and dehydration in warm weather. Where possible, plan the route to take advantage of tail winds, especially at the end of a day's riding. Wet weather can also significantly change braking distances and tyre traction.

Transportation

The transportation of groups to and from activity locations must be carefully considered and planned.

- Vehicles used to transport students must comply with [VicRoads](#) registration requirements.
- Drivers must comply with all licensing requirements.
- Equipment carried inside vehicles must be securely stowed and not create a risk of injury or damage.
- Students must be supervised by a minimum of one adult, in addition to the driver, during travel.

Drivers of vehicles with more than 12 seats (including the driver) require an appropriately endorsed license, and a current Driver's Certificate.

For trips that take the bus beyond a 100km radius from its designated base, drivers must carry and complete a logbook, and comply with [National Driving Hours Regulations](#) and complete and record the [Daily Vehicle Check](#) (pdf file) before the first use each day.

In circumstances where a teacher or staff member is to drive a vehicle transporting students, the program should allow for them to have adequate rest prior to driving, consistent with the National Driving Hours regulations. This is especially the case where the cycling activity includes an overnight component.

It is recommended that a support vehicle trail a short distance behind any cycling group, displaying a clearly visible notice indicating the presence of the cycling group

ahead. If there are two vehicles available, the second may precede the group, preferably with some warning device, for example, signage or hazard lights. The drivers of the vehicles must have a means of communicating with the cycling group.

Whether or not a support vehicle is used, where practicable, consideration should be given to placing signs to warn other road users that there will be cyclists on the road. Signs should be placed on the roadside at the start and finish of the section of road being ridden and on significant roads entering the proposed route

Activity

Student skills

Students should not be taken onto public roads until they have demonstrated an adequate understanding of the likely traffic conditions and the ability to respond appropriately to potential hazards. Students below Year 4 should not be allowed to ride on public roads at all.

Where possible, designated bicycle paths should be used in preference to public roads.

Students should finish riding before dusk.

For extended tours, students need to demonstrate appropriate fitness and technique. Before riding, students need to be briefed on:

- effective use of brakes
- the effective use of gears
- safe group riding techniques

Equipment and clothing

Equipment must be in a safe condition and suitable for the activity.

Bicycles

Immediately prior to the activity, bicycles should be checked for roadworthiness to undertake the proposed trip. As a minimum, a check should review:

- brakes
- tyre pressure
- tyre condition
- gear system operation
- steering
- pedals.

Bicycles should also be checked for suitability for individual riders. As a minimum a check should review:

- frame size
- reach - seat to handlebar distance to ensure the rider can operate the controls effectively (ie. brakes and gears)
- seat (height and position)

Carriage of equipment

Loads carried by students should be kept to a minimum. Small day-packs are recommended for this purpose.

Where students are to carry a substantial quantity of gear, they must be experienced cyclists. Gear should be carried directly on the bicycle itself in a pannier or rear rack bag.

Helmets

Helmets complying with AS/NZS 2063 must be worn during all cycling activities. Students must be briefed on correct fit and adjustment of their helmet. Prior to and during the cycling, it is prudent to check that the students have their helmet correctly fitted. Hats should not be worn under helmets.

Repair kits

Repair kits are to be carried by staff or be immediately available from support vehicles. Staff should be able to carry out repairs to most parts of a bicycle. Basic repair materials may include:

- puncture repair kit (including tyre levers)
- spare tubes and tyres
- Allen keys appropriate to the bicycles being used
- adjustable spanner
- pump
- spoke key
- chain breaker
- screw-driver
- pliers

When repairs are being made during the ride, the remainder of the group must be supervised. The group should either stay in a safe environment or, whilst the repair is performed, undertake activity under appropriate supervision.

Clothing is the individual's primary protection against severe and variable weather conditions.

Clothing lists need to be appropriate for the activity, the environment and the season.

Enclosed footwear must always be worn while riding.

Highly visible clothing is recommended.

Bicycle knicks with chamois are recommended for any long distance riding.

Gloves are recommended, to absorb vibration and protect hands.

To protect against sunburn use broad-spectrum, water-resistant SPF 30+ sunscreen on all exposed parts of the body, applied according to manufacturer's recommendations. Students who own sunglasses should be encouraged to bring them and wear them.

Identification

Staff and students must be easily identifiable. A bright top or a conspicuous vest must be worn if a bright flag is not attached to the student's bicycle. (This is in accordance with Departmental policy.)

People

Staff

Staff members are those adults who provide the supervisory, instructional and educational elements of the program. All staff members must be approved by the school council.

All staff members must comply with either current Department of Education police check requirements or [Working With Children Check](#).

A teacher registered with the Victorian Institute of Teaching and either employed by the Department of Education or endorsed by the school council must be present and have overall responsibility for the activity.

Where not directly responsible for the instruction of the activity or assisting the instructor, the teacher present must understand the activity and the environment in which it will be conducted. This teacher must confer with the designated instructor about their supervisory role and establish areas of responsibility. If the teacher is not the designated instructor, he/she is to act on the advice of the designated instructor on technical safety issues.

Any staff member with a known medical condition that might compromise the group's risk management plan should make accompanying staff aware of this condition. Be aware that issues of confidentiality will be involved in any such disclosure.

Experience and qualifications

Staff involved in the planning and conduct of the activity should have sufficient knowledge and experience of the activity and the activity environment to operate in all foreseeable conditions.

The designated cycling instructor(s) must hold one of the following:

- documented cycle instructor training and experience from a training provider or education institution which can be benchmarked against relevant modules

from the Outdoor Recreation Industry Training Package SRO03. Details of this Training Package are available from the National Training Information Service at www.ntis.gov.au: [Training Package](#)

Competencies would include SROCYT005A Guide on-road cycle tours and SROCYT006A Guide overnight and extended cycle tours

- equivalent documented experience in lieu of qualifications/accreditation. This experience must be reported in [Proforma; Staff Qualifications / Experience](#)

The designated assistant to the instructor must:

- have experience in the activity at the level being offered to students
- be able to assume a supervisory role during the activity
- have the ability to participate competently in emergency response procedures
- have conferred with the instructor to establish the emergency response and supervision responsibilities.

[Proforma; Staff Qualifications / Experience](#) can be used to document staff qualifications/experience in lieu of qualifications.

Supervision

Effective supervision is a critical factor in managing risk in the outdoors.

A minimum of two staff members must be present for each activity, one with responsibility for activity instruction and the other able to assist the instructor.

The following table shows the minimum staff to student ratio for cycling. It must be applied when establishing the instructional and supervision strategy for the activity.

| Staff required | Student numbers |
|-----------------------|------------------------|
| 2 | 1-16 |
| 3 | 17-24 |

Determining staff numbers and suitability should be based on:

- age, maturity and gender of students
- ability and experience of students
- individual needs
- group dynamics of the student group
- experience, qualifications and skills of staff
- location of the activity
- anticipated conditions at the location.

The teacher in charge is responsible for the supervision strategy, which must be endorsed by the school council as part of the excursion approval process. Staff members will supervise students according to that strategy.

The above are the minimum requirements for staff-student ratios for this activity.

Overnight excursions

If the program has an overnight component refer to the [overnight camping](#) guidelines.

Informed consent

The school must receive informed consent from parents or guardians that their child may participate in adventure activities.

Informed consent should be based on an understanding of:

- the educational purpose of the activity
- the nature and details of the activity
- the supervision strategy
- other information deemed relevant by the school or by parents/guardians.

Informed consent must be given in writing, and signed by parents or guardians.

First aid

At least one member of staff responsible for each group of students must hold, as a minimum, a Level Two First Aid qualification, and have a first aid kit applicable to the level of training.

Staff members must carefully consider the nature and location of the excursion as well as the medical history of the students to determine the level of first aid training required by staff.

Common risks in cycling

This list identifies risks inherent in any cycling activity. A program-specific risk management plan must be completed which takes account of the specific conditions and unique participants of the excursion/program.

| Risk | Minimum controls |
|---|---|
| Poor or limited cycling skills leading to accident and injury | Student riding skills to be assessed before the program. All students to wear helmets. Students to be briefed on effective use of brakes and gears. Appropriate time must be allowed for students to practise these skills. |

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| | <p>Students not to be taken into traffic until they have demonstrated an adequate understanding of likely traffic conditions and the ability to respond safely to potential hazards.</p> <p>Students below year 4 not to be allowed to ride on public roads at all.</p> |
| Large group leading to poor supervision resulting in accident and injury | <p>Ensure supervising staff are able to communicate directly with students.</p> <p>At least one member of the supervising staff is to ride with the leading cyclists.</p> <p>In determining an optimum group size, staff must consider rider ability, riding conditions and visibility.</p> |
| Rider fatigue leading to accident and injury | <p>Prior to extended tours, students' fitness and technique to be assessed</p> <p>Route selection appropriate to the entire group.</p> <p>Appropriate rest stops and food and water intake during the trip.</p> |
| Steep descent leads to excessive speed and/or lack of control resulting in accident and injury | <p>Staff member to ride ahead to check for any hazards.</p> <p>Those with limited confidence not to undertake steep descents. These students should walk their bike down the descent, on the shoulder of the road, after cyclists have descended.</p> <p>Students to wear helmets.</p> <p>In steep sections, students to be separated before descent, using time interval departures.</p> |
| A bicycle component failure leads to an accident and injury | <p>Roadworthiness check of bicycles prior to use</p> <p>All adjustments to bicycles to be checked by the instructor or other qualified staff member</p> <p>Students to wear helmets</p> <p>Where a support vehicle is not being used, staff to develop a plan to cope with accident or breakdowns.</p> |
| A passing vehicle causes or is involved in, a bike accident/collision. | <p>For all activities using public roads, students to be instructed in basic road rules and any specific requirements for that location.</p> <p>Students to be briefed on procedures to cope with</p> |

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| | <p>identified hazards on the route.</p> <p>Other road users alerted to the presence of cyclists through use of signage.</p> <p>Students to wear helmets</p> <p>Students to be briefed that all riders and cycles to be completely off the road during rest stops.</p> |
| <p>Due to uncertain cycle route and/or varying riding speeds, the group becomes separated.</p> | <p>Students to be briefed on the need to stay in contact with the group. Specific protocols for breakdowns and road intersections to be established.</p> <p>One staff member to cycle at or near the front and another (or a support vehicle) at the rear of the group.</p> <p>Frequent rest stops, head counts and waiting for the entire group at road intersections.</p> |
| <p>Wet and/or windy weather conditions</p> | <p>Anticipation of adverse weather conditions by monitoring weather conditions and through direct observation.</p> <p>Students to be briefed on the difficulty of straight steering in a crosswind, the increase in braking distance in wet weather and the decrease in visibility and tyre traction in wet weather.</p> <p>Group management that requires seeking shelter and/or not proceeding if weather conditions are severe.</p> |
| <p>A student or staff member is already ill or becomes sick whilst on ride.</p> | <p>Prior to activity, staff will collect current and confidential medical information for each student and this will be used to determine whether the activity matches each student's health status.</p> <p>At the start of excursion staff will ensure there is no new illness that may have an effect over the ability for that student to participate. Consideration should also be given to whether that illness might spread to others in the group. Staff should be aware illness may affect energy levels and ability to cope with the activity.</p> <p>Staff will carry current and confidential medical details for each student.</p> <p>Staff will be aware of food safety as described in the Schools Reference Guide. 4.4.6.11 (Sections 1-5)</p> <p>Staff must ensure food storage practices are safe. Staff will be clear about any food allergies amongst the</p> |

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| | <p>group and have first aid supplies to respond to known reactions.</p> <p>During pre-activity planning, staff will develop emergency response strategy. This strategy will consider actions should a group member require outside or medical assistance.</p> |
| <p>A group is caught in a bushfire and faces the danger of equipment damage, personal injury or death.</p> | <p>Pre-activity planning should consider the possible fire risk and potential for bushfire. Alternatives should be planned to allow for last minute change in the event of severe fire danger.</p> <p>Stoves, flames and open fireplaces are to be used in accordance with the requirements of the fire and/or land management authorities.</p> <p>Students to be briefed about safe use of fuel stoves and alerted to risks associated with open flames in a bush setting.</p> <p>Communication strategy will include mechanisms to allow group to be alerted of a pending Total Fire Ban. In addition, staff will consider prevailing local conditions and adjust activity accordingly. Adjustments could include further consultation with school and/or land management authorities, amending walk, evacuation, changing location, or cancellation.</p> |
| <p>An extreme weather event for example, lightning, wind, flood, rain and heatwave threatens or takes place, endangering safety of the group.</p> | <p>Pre-activity planning will consider strategies should an extreme weather event occur. This will include options ranging from adjustment of activity through to complete cancellation and evacuation from the area.</p> <p>If an unexpected weather event occurs during a trip, staff will endeavour to reduce exposure to the risk by altering the activity, seeking a refuge, seeking outside support or cancelling a trip</p> <p>Staff should examine resources describing recommended responses in the event of extreme weather. This website provides recommended practices in the event of severe weather events.</p> |

Downloads and Weblinks

Documents downloadable from this site (in PDF or Word)

[Proforma for Adventure Activities or Overnight Excursions](#)

[Confidential Medical Information](#)

[Proforma: Documentation of Participant Preparation Pre-requisite Skills/Knowledge](#)

[Proforma; Staff Qualifications / Experience](#)

[The Crux of Risk Management in Outdoor Programs](#)

External weblinks

Bicycle Victoria

<http://www.bv.com.au/>

Bureau of Meteorology

<http://www.bom.gov.au/weather/vic>

Camping Association of Australia

<http://www.auscamps.asn.au>

Christian Camping International Australia

<http://www.cciaus.org.au>

Department of Sustainability and Environment

<http://www.dse.vic.gov.au>

First aid information

<http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/referenceguide/pdf/4-5.pdf>

NARTA - National Accommodation, Recreation and Tourism Accreditation

<http://www.narta.org.au>

National Driving Hours Regulations

<http://www.vicroads.vic.gov.au>

Parks Victoria

<http://www.parkweb.vic.gov.au>

State Emergency Service

<http://www.ses.vic.gov.au>

Student care and supervision

<http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/referenceguide/pdf/4-6.pdf>

Student safety and risk management

<http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/referenceguide/pdf/4-4.pdf>

SunSmart

<http://www.sunsmart.org.au>

VicRoads

<http://www.vicroads.vic.gov.au>

Victorian Government Schools Reference Guide

<http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/referenceguide>

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