

Riding a bike in traffic during commute hours is dangerous.

If you ride visibly and predictably, take your rightful place in traffic, and obey traffic laws, the risk is no greater than driving. Wear a helmet. With advance planning, you can find a route that avoids heavy traffic and other potential hazards.

I'm not in good enough shape.

You don't need to be an athlete to ride a bike. People of many ages and fitness levels find that biking is a fun way to get around and stay healthy. According to the League of American Bicyclists, 25% of all trips are within a mile of home. Taking these short trips by bike can be the weekly exercise needed to get you into long distance bicycling condition.

Biking will make my commute take even longer.

Most commutes will take slightly longer by bicycle although some people have found it actually cuts down on their travel time. In urban areas, cycling is often faster than driving for trips of three miles or less. If it does take longer, consider that the time you spend on your bicycle is providing exercise and is probably more relaxing and rewarding.

I don't own a bike and my commute is already expensive.

A fancy new bike isn't necessary. A clunker will do if it's mechanically sound and fits you. Inexpensive good used bikes can be found at garage sales, bike shops, and in classified ads. You may need to make an initial investment, but even if you buy a new bike and equipment, it will pay off in lower commute costs in no time.

My job requires dressing well.

Some bike commuters ride in work attire and arrive looking good. For longer rides, you'll find that racks, bike bags, and special panniers are great for carrying a change of clothes to work wrinkle-free. You can also leave your work clothes at the office, or take the bus when you have special meetings that require dress attire.

You're on the road!

Once you discover the freedom, convenience, and fitness benefits of biking to work, you'll wonder why you didn't start riding sooner. Enjoy the ride!



Get Involved

Join a city or county bike committee and help make a change.

Monterey County Bicycle Committee
(831) 755-4800

Salinas Bicycle Committee
(831) 758-7241



Need more information?



P.O. Box 809
Marina, CA 93933-0809

Salinas Area
(831) 422-POOL

Monterey Peninsula
(831) 883-3754

Facsimile
(831) 883-3755

www.commuteralternatives.info
rideshare@ambag.org

Biking is a fun and healthy way to get to work, to transit stops, to your carpool pick-up point, to run errands, or go on a family outing. Biking is a convenient, dependable, and inexpensive mode of transportation.



422-POOL

Before starting out biking to work, take time to consider the following:

What route will you take?

Free bike maps are available for Monterey and Santa Cruz (Call 422-POOL and we'll mail them to you). Bike shops are another good source for information on bike routes and maps. Use a map to draw a potential route that avoids freeways and steep hills. Explore the area for alternate routes.

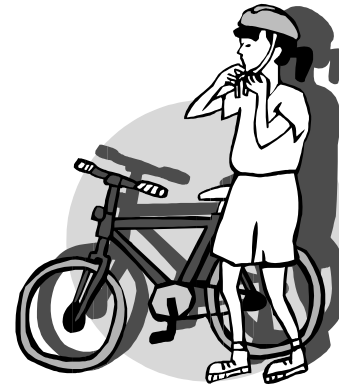
What are your worksite's facilities?

Does your employer offer bike lockers or showers? If not, you could try storing your bike in a nearby building and carrying your work clothes. Many employers want to help employees use alternatives to driving alone, so ask your employer if lockers or showers can be installed or provisions can be made for bicycles inside your building.

What kind of equipment will you need?

Essential items include a sturdy bike that fits you properly, a helmet, front and rear lights, biking gloves, and a strong lock. Depending on the length of your ride, how often you plan to bike, the terrain and the weather, you may need additional equipment.

You'll need a good, comfortable helmet (with "ANSI" or "SNELL" safety certification). Consider a rear-view mirror, repair kit, a mounted water bottle, panniers or garment bag, gloves, a small wash towel, and wet weather gear if you plan to ride in the rain. A headlight is required by law if you ride at night.



Ask neighbors and co-workers if they ride their bikes to work.

Biking with friends is fun. Friends who ride to work can give you tips on routes, safety, and parking. If they live near you, ask if you can ride with them for the first few days while you get used to your route and traffic patterns.

Check your equipment.

Take an inventory of necessary items. If you already have a bike, be sure it's tuned-up and equipped with reflectors. If you don't have a bike, or want recommendations about the best types of equipment, ask friends and co-workers who ride to work. Talk to fellow bicyclists and check with your local bike shop.

Test ride the route on your day off.

Carry the same amount of clothes and other items as you would on a work day. Is the route too steep? Explore alternatives. Imagine traffic conditions during regular commute hours, and remember that your route will look different after dark.

Know the rules of the road.

As a cyclist you are recognized as a legal driver of a vehicle. Therefore, drive your bicycle as you would any vehicle. Obey all traffic laws. Contact the following organizations for cyclists rules for riding:

- Department of Motor Vehicles
www.dmv.ca.gov/about/bicycle.htm
- California State Automobile Association
from Monterey (831) 373-3021
from Salinas (831) 424-2521

Did You Know?

- Our taxes cover car-related costs for police, pollution, congestion, parking, road building, and maintenance.
- If cars really paid their way, gas would cost more than \$10.00 per gallon.
- If 10% of commuters switched to a combination of transit and bikes, the nation's fuel cost savings would be \$1 billion per year.
- Short trips by bike instead of by car eliminate nearly 4 pounds of pollutants per mile.
- Statewide, about 7 tons per day of smog-forming gases and almost a ton of inhalable particles are spared from the air we breathe due to use of bicycles rather than motor vehicles.

- Share the road. Don't assume motorists can see you.
- Ride on the right, but not too close to parked cars. Drivers might open a car door without seeing you.
- Never ride against traffic.
- Follow signs, signals, and pavement markings.
- When turning left, merge with left-turning traffic or walk your bike across as a pedestrian if traffic is heavy.
- Inform others of turns by using hand signals. These are the same as motorists' hand signals except that for turning right you can use your right arm and point.
- Slow down and yield for pedestrians.
- Be predictable. Avoid sudden swerves.
- Common sense, courtesy, and caution are the three C's of good cycling.
- Watch the road. The American Automobile Association suggests using an accident avoidance technique called "SIPDA": scan, identify, predict, decide, and then act.
- For more tips, visit the League of American Bicyclists at www.bikeleague.org/educenter/factsheets.htm

