



Bike to Work Day
Thursday, May 14, 2015
Energizer Station Tips & Hints

What is an Energizer Station?

Energizer Stations are made available to the public to provide support and encouragement to Bike to Work Day event participants. They are staffed by a volunteer Energizer Station lead and other volunteers on the morning of Bike to Work Day (BTWD) and are equipped with light refreshments and drinks, musette bags (a small canvas bag with one shoulder strap) and other fun giveaways.

Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition (SVBC) coordinates BTWD in Santa Clara and San Mateo Counties alongside other organizations. SVBC has, through its local sponsorship efforts, gathered some goodies for leads to give away at their stations. Details will be emailed to the Energizer Station leads regarding what will be available.

If you are hosting an Energizer Station on behalf of a business or government agency, they will be credited on the official Bike to Work Day website, where there will be a map of the Energizer Stations located throughout Santa Clara and San Mateo Counties.

After looking through this guide, if you have additional questions or concerns regarding running your Energizer Station or other BTWD details, please contact Marissa Aviña at marissa@bikesiliconvalley.org or (408) 784-0202.

Thank you for your participation in this event.

Summary of the Tips & Hints

1. Choose a visible location
2. Determine your morning hours of business
3. Plan for set up and tear down
4. Order musette bags
5. Solicit local donations
6. Recruit volunteers
7. Arrange for tables and chairs
8. Get a canopy
9. Make banners and posters
10. Plan for handling trash and recyclable materials
11. Prepare for minor repairs
12. Transport supplies to and from the station
13. Have the permit if at a Caltrain or Light Rail station
14. Secure materials on tables
15. Sign-in and count BTWD participants
16. Talk with BTWD participants
17. Best practices
18. Popular giveaways

Details of the Tips & Hints

1. Choose a visible location. It may be easy to miss an Energizer Station placed out of the common path of travel. Before BTWD, spend a little time at your Energizer Station location during the morning commute hours to identify a good spot for your Energizer Station. Also notice other paths of travel where it may be helpful to position volunteers and/or directional posters to point BTWD participants to your Energizer Station.

2. Determine your morning hours of operation. Many commuters are early birds and you won't want to miss supporting and encouraging them on BTWD. Typical hours for an Energizer Station are roughly 6:00am - 10:00am. If your Energizer Station is located at a Caltrain or

VTA Light Rail station, take into account the transit schedule when determining the hours of operation.

3. Plan for set up and tear down. Some set up and tear down time will be needed for your Energizer Station. Allow enough time for you and your volunteers before your advertised opening to get materials and supplies transported to your station location and ready for participants. After the closing time of your station, allow enough time for packing up left-over materials and cleaning up the area around your station.

4. Order musette bags. SVBC supplies the official bags to be given away to cycling commuters. The musette bags are an icon of Bike to Work Day and are filled with goodies. We ask that you please help cover the cost of the bags by making a donation of \$3.50 per bag.

For those of you who are SVBC members or work with non-profits, agencies, or companies who cannot cover this cost in your own budgets, we will certainly provide bags free of charge – we don't want this to be a barrier to your participation.

In the past, we have not always been able to provide the quantity of bags that has been requested by everyone. Purchasing bags helps assure that you will get the quantity of bags you need. Supply is limited.

5. Solicit local donations. Although SVBC will be providing county-wide donations for giveaways, we lack the resources to approach local businesses in the vicinity of each station and encourage you to solicit donations directly from local businesses.

If your company is sponsoring an Energizer Station, you may wish to inquire regarding obtaining a small budget to purchase goodies for your station instead of soliciting donations.

Local donations are a great way to provide exposure for local stores and businesses and to personalize your Energizer Station. Identify

grocery stores, bike shops, corporations, coffee shops, bagel shops, drug stores, and any other places that have goodies BTWD participants will appreciate. It is amazing what can be obtained by simply asking. Here are some ideas...

- Grocery stores: water, juice, other drinks, fruit, baked goods, energy bars, gift cards to allow you to purchase supplies
- Coffee shops: boxes of coffee
- Bagel shops and bakery's: bagels and other baked goods
- Drug stores: water, juice, other drinks, energy bars
- Bike shops: discount coupons, water bottles, patch kits, tubes, leg bands, a mechanic to be at your Energizer Station to offer light mechanic duty
- Corporations: "trade show" goodies
- Businesses: discount coupons

Most donators want a letter with tax information so they can write off their donation. Please contact SVBC if you would like a letter of introduction to present to merchants.

6. Recruit volunteers. It is important to recruit outgoing, assertive, and friendly volunteers to help at your Energizer Station. This has proven to be a key to success. Volunteers willing to holler friendly calls to passing bicyclists get many more to stop than do passive volunteers. You'll need help not only on the big day but to solicit local donations, organize materials, distribute posters, and to help advertise BTWD and your Energizer Station.

On BTWD, you'll need volunteers staffing your Energizer Station, handing out supplies, signing in and counting bicyclists, talking with BTWD participants, and setting up and tearing down your station. Ask your bicycling friends, co-workers, local city Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission members, family members, etc. to provide a little of their time to make BTWD and your Energizer Station a big success. Tell them how much fun and how rewarding it'll be to

support those bicycling to work for their first time!

Be sure to show your appreciation to your Energizer Station volunteers. This can be in the way of a gift, a hand written thank you note, a volunteer bike ride, a BTWD shirt, or perhaps a volunteer dinner.

7. Arrange for tables and chairs. SVBC is not providing tables and chairs so you will need to identify your source for tables and chairs. Depending on how many goodies you'll have and the layout of your Energizer Station location, more than one table might be needed. Be sure to factor in where you'll place food and drinks in addition to the musette bags and other giveaways. Chairs will come in handy as the volunteers will be staffing the Energizer Station for a few hours. If your station is at a transit location, the chairs will be a welcome convenience during the time between trains when rider traffic is slower.

8. Get a canopy. Not only is a canopy a functional addition to your Energizer Station in case of rain or to protect you from the sun, it can also make your station more visible and can provide an excellent place for hanging a banner.

9. Make banners and posters. Display banners in as obvious a manner as is feasible. Across the top of the awning is ideal if you have one, or across the front of the table. Remember to bring tape and/or string to secure the banners.

Depending on the general area around your Energizer Station, you may want or need to set up directional posters to your station. Remember that for someone riding their bike to work for the first time, they may not know where your station was positioned last year or be familiar with the Energizer Station area. Consider making a Spanish language poster(s) for your station. Consider making poster(s) in Spanish (or another language of choice) to encourage non-English-reading bicyclists to stop by.

10. Plan for handling trash and recyclable materials. Some bicyclists will stay at your Energizer Station for a while enjoying refreshments and your company. It'll be important to have a receptacle for those banana peels, juice and water containers, and energy bar wrappers. It is also important to show our environmental commitment by not creating litter and leaving trash. Cyclists are usually environmentally conscious, so please arrange to recycle as much as possible.

11. Prepare for minor repairs. If you can't get a mechanic from a local bike shop to be at your Energizer Station, be prepared for those needing minor adjustments. It's a good idea to have some basic tools on hand. This can make a big difference to new riders who dug an old bike out of the garage or borrowed one from a neighbor. Be careful about pumping up tires – hidden damage can result in a blowout if any significant pressure is applied!

12. Transport materials and supplies to and from the station. No matter where your station is or how many bicyclists you are anticipating on BTWD, you will need to arrange for transporting materials and supplies to and from your station. This could be a motorized vehicle and/or a bike trailer.

13. Have the permit if located at a Caltrain station, along an Expressway or along a City bike path. SVBC will be obtaining all permits needed for Energizer Stations. If you're at such a location, be sure to have your permit with you.

14. Secure materials on tables. In addition to the possibility of a windy BTWD, trains at transit locations create quite a breeze. Regardless of the cause, you don't want all your great goodies blowing away so they'll need to be secured. Plus we don't want to litter. Some of the possibilities for securing materials are using stones as paperweights, large paper clips, or rubber bands. Sheet protectors are great for keeping stacks of paper in place, as well as visible and accessible (and if need be, protected from the rain).

15. Sign-in and count BTWD participants. Sign-in sheets will be provided by SVBC. We ask that you encourage bicyclists to sign in when they stop at your station. Be sure to have a few clipboards and pens for the sign-in sheets. We also ask that you count passing bicyclists who do not stop at your Energizer Station and those that stop, but do not sign in. You will need to keep the “passed by” and “stopped” counts separate. Note these counts by putting a tick mark on a separate sign-in sheet. Then these tick marks can be easily tallied as part of the final count. These counts will need to be emailed to SVBC by 11am on BTWD.

The counts will be reported to local and regional media outlets to help generate more press for BTWD. This counting is a crucial function of the Energizer Stations. Not only are the numbers used in media promotion, they also allow us to track our progress towards promoting BTWD. Accurate counting provides the numbers we will give out next year to potential sponsors, which in turn helps the event become an even bigger success. Your timely cooperation on passing this data back to SVBC is greatly appreciated.

16. Talk with BTWD participants. This may be the first time some of these participants have ridden to work. Be prepared to help them with routes and directions. Having a set of local bike maps and regular road maps at your Energizer Station will come in handy (SVBC will provide you with some subject to availability). Also have paper and pens available for writing route notes. If time permits, use the opportunity to talk with participants about their routes. SVBC will appreciate any information you gather.

Note information on issues or problem sections along their routes in addition to sections of their routes they find especially enjoyable. Remember that you won't have time for extended discussions with each participant, so be prepared to provide and get the maximum information in the minimum time. One of the best ways to respond to the most common questions is to show them a copy of the SVBC brochure and point out the website and email information. Through

the email list, they can request route and equipment assistance in addition to asking other questions or raising concerns.

You can also encourage them to use bikesiliconvalley.org as an informational resource on biking in the area. In addition to covering the majority of inquiries, pointing participants to these SVBC resources is an effective way to help SVBC grow our membership—something we greatly appreciate your assistance with.

Be sure to mention the Bike Away from Work Bash that SVBC is hosting and show them the flyer. Unless your location is on a route that only expert cyclists would contemplate, you'll almost certainly see novice riders who made a special effort to come out that day. In turn, you should make a special effort to encourage them because they are the greatest potential source to become regular cyclists if you help them have a pleasant experience.

17. Best practices

- Make sure you have enough volunteers and it's helpful to assign them roles. It's a decent amount of work and you don't want to miss counting cyclists that may or may not stop at your Energizer Station. It's recommended to have at least one person do the counting as their only assignment. Some stations have additional counters to be extra certain not to miss riders.
- Don't forget trash cans, especially if you are providing food and drinks.
- Use a megaphone, cow bells, costumes or something catchy to attract attention, and be sure to place that person or object on a main corner.
- Create signage to make it easier for cyclists to spot and also alert them that you are an official Energizer Station. Put out balloons or a reusable string of flags/banner (like at a car sales lot).

- If your location allows, have space for bicyclists to "pull over" at your Energizer Station.
- Always have at least one floor pump, some chain lube, rags, and Allen wrenches for quick, simple repairs.
- Invite a local bike shop to help with minor maintenance.
- Ask local businesses to support your Energizer Station by way of donations. You'll find that they are excited to be a part of such a fun, healthy community event. Be sure to ask early, 30-60 days prior to the event.
- If available, acquire local bike maps from surrounding cities by contacting the local city's transportation or public works departments or the city's Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commissions.
- Best practices for companies trying to encourage employees to participate.
 - i. Connect with SVBC and host a bike commute workshop in March or April.
 - ii. Encourage your employees to bike with a buddy to work or organize caravans to encourage more people to ride together.
 - iii. Set a participation goal for employees to foster a sense of competition within the company.
 - iv. Hold a drawing for all employees that stop by your station. Drawing items can include the BTWD t-shirts along with some other prizes you purchase for the event.
 - v. Host a ride and lunch two days before Bike to Work Day. The ride will raise awareness of Bike to Work month, raise awareness of access roads in the immediate area of

the business, and connect employees with other employees who ride.

- vi. Compete in the Company Bike Challenge to create a fun competitive spirit among employees.

18. Popular giveaways

- Beverages: WATER, orange juice, coffee, chocolate milk, liquid Sqwincher (a pouch that you add water to for a quick flavored energy drink).
- Food: fruit, muffins, pastries, energy bars, dried fruit and nut packs, breakfast burritos.
- Company schwag with logo, e.g., bike bells, reflectors, reflective strap for pant leg, lip balm, socks.
- For companies that have cafeterias, you could give out a free breakfast or lunch coupon to employees that ride to work, if it's not already subsidized.
- Free 5 minute massages.
- Local city bike route maps.

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