

Rice University Department of Public Safety

Bicycle Policy

General Policy

Rice University recognizes there are competing interests within the university community regarding the safe use of bicycles on the campus. Because of the campus layout, it is the current practice that bicycles and pedestrians share many campus sidewalks (meaning all outdoor walkways on campus regardless of how they are surfaced). Pedestrians wish to avoid physical encounters with cyclists, particularly in heavy traffic areas. Cyclists desire bicycle regulations that do not unfairly impair the use of bicycles for transportation on the campus. To balance these and other competing interests, and maintain a safe environment for pedestrians and bicyclists, the university has adopted the following Bicycle Safety Policy and related operational guidelines for all riders in an effort to address the needs of all interested parties. This policy applies to faculty, staff and students who plan to or currently operate a bicycle on campus. This policy applies to only the main campus and nearby Rice Properties such as the Bioscience Research Collaborative (BRC) and graduate student housing.

Definitions

A bicycle, often referred to as a bike, is defined as a human-powered, pedal driven, single-track vehicle having two wheels and attached to a frame.

A pedestrian is defined as a person traveling on foot, whether walking or running.

Implementation

A. Register Your Bike

All bicycles on campus belonging to Rice faculty, staff, or students must be registered with the Rice University Police Department (RUPD). Registration helps RUPD identify owners of lost, stolen or impounded bicycles and to disseminate safety information. Bicycle registration is free. Unregistered bicycles may be ticketed and removed by RUPD. For information on how to register your bicycle, please go to the RUPD website (<http://www.rice.edu/bikesatrice/>), stop by RUPD, or call 713 348-6000.

B. Obey The Rules Of the Road

Cyclists riding in the street are required to comply with motor vehicle traffic regulations. Cyclists should obey traffic signs and always ride in the same direction as automobile traffic. At all stop signs, cyclists must stop and yield the right-of-way to other vehicles and pedestrians

already at the intersection. RUPD will ticket cyclists for right-of-way violations at intersections. Links to traffic laws relevant to cyclists are available on the Bikes at Rice website.

C. Yield To Pedestrians

Pedestrians have the right-of-way on sidewalks, in crosswalks, and around any stopped bus. Pedestrians are encouraged to be aware of their surroundings, but it is the cyclist's responsibility to yield to pedestrians. Cyclists may not pass any bus that has stopped to pick up or discharge passengers.

Rice has adopted a “Bell or Yell” program requiring cyclists to announce their approach when encountering pedestrians. Cyclists should review materials for this program at the RUPD website and comply with “Bell or Yell” requirements.

D. Riding Prohibited In Covered Walkways

Covered walkways are off-limits to bicycle riding. Because covered walkways have blind intersections and are located in front of building entrances, cyclists must walk their bicycles in these areas of the campus.

E. Riding Bicycles On Sidewalks

Cyclists are encouraged to use the streets rather than the sidewalks whenever possible and to walk their bicycles on congested sidewalks. Except for covered walkways and where otherwise posted, such as around the Brochstein Pavilion, bicycle riding is permitted on sidewalks. Every person riding a bicycle on a sidewalk must (i) ride in a careful and prudent manner, (ii) slow to a near walking pace within 10 feet of any pedestrian or building entrance, (iii) yield the right-of-way to pedestrians, and (iv) deliver an audible signal before overtaking and passing any pedestrian. Cyclists should keep in mind that a pedestrian may be visually or hearing impaired, infirm, or a campus visitor and a pedestrian may make sudden, unpredictable movement. Accidental collisions may seriously injure pedestrians or other cyclists. A cyclist who strikes someone may be liable for personal injuries and property damage. Cyclists on sidewalks must obey stop signs.

F. Use of Bicycle Helmets

Cyclists are strongly encouraged to wear bicycle helmets. A cyclist riding without a helmet does so at his/her own risk.

G. Lock Your Bicycles In Racks

Cyclists are expected to secure their bicycles in the bicycle racks. Rice has bicycle racks that are conveniently located throughout the campus. Bicycles shall be parked on campus only in designated racks. Bicycles secured to fences, sign posts, stair railings or locations other than bicycle racks may be ticketed or impounded. Locks damaged in the removal will be the responsibility of the owner. Unsecured bicycles may be impounded for safekeeping.

H. Removal and Disposal Of Abandoned Bicycles

1. On the General Campus

A bicycle left unattended for an extended period of time in the same location (generally two weeks or more) with any combination of missing parts, flat tires or a rusted chain is presumed to be abandoned and as such will be removed by the RUPD. RUPD will make a good faith effort to contact the registered bicycle owner so that they can claim their bicycle. Bicycles suspected of abandonment will be tagged with a removal end date. Abandoned bicycles will be held at RUPD for 60 days before they may be disposed unless prior notification has been made to RUPD.

RUPD is not responsible for the cost of locks, chains, security devices or any other item that may be damaged or destroyed as a result of removing a bicycle. RUPD has no responsibility or liability to replace or compensate for such items. To retrieve an impounded bicycle, the owner must provide proof of ownership.

In order to manage the number of unattended bicycles on campus, RUPD will perform a general sweep of campus for abandoned bikes at least twice a year. (usually at the end of the fall and spring semesters)

2. In Housing and Dining Areas

If a bicycle is left unattended for an extended period of time at any of the residential colleges with any combination of missing parts, flat tires or a rusted chain, it is presumed to be abandoned and as such will be removed by Housing and Dining. Housing and Dining will make a good faith effort to contact the registered bicycle owner so that they can claim their bicycle. Housing and Dining will store impounded bikes at the Housing and Dining Office until either claimed or disposed of in accordance with the disposal of abandoned bikes guideline set forth in the following paragraph.

3. Disposal of Abandoned Bicycles

The university reserves the ability to sell, destroy or otherwise dispose of any removed bike. Due to Rice's commitment to sustainability, RUPD will make a serious effort to recycle all abandoned bicycles. Recycling priorities are the following: (i) if a campus bicycle shop exists, RUPD may provide abandoned bicycles to the shop for repair and use; (ii) abandoned bicycles may be auctioned to the Rice community; (iii) abandoned bicycles may be offered to the Rice community at no cost following public advertisement online or in the Rice Thresher; (iv) abandoned bicycles may be given to a charitable organizations that will use or sell the bicycles; (v) abandoned bicycles may be recycled through the University's scrap metal recycling program; or (vi) abandoned bicycles may be disposed of as trash.

Key Offices to Contact Regarding the Policy and its Implementation

Rice University Police Department

Links to Procedures or Forms Bikes at Rice Website <http://www.rice.edu/bikesatrice/>

