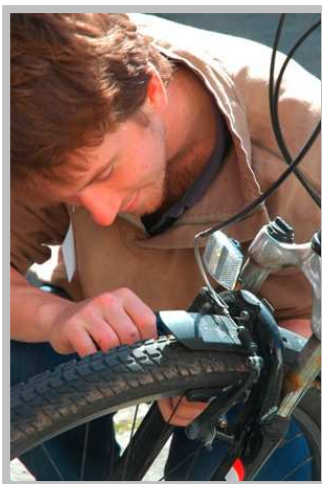


Maintenance for Pool Bikes

Where do I start?

There are two levels of bike maintenance that you will need to consider and have a system in place for. These are:

1. Bike-checks and basic maintenance



The basic 'M' check will need to be done on a regular basis. This involves conducting a safety check of all the main working parts of a bike (a checklist is included at the end of this document) and with practice, should take no more than between one and two minutes per bike. Ideally, you should train at least one or two staff members in conducting this check, and these should be the same people who have responsibility for running the scheme. The people running the scheme will also need to be able to brief new pool bike users in carrying out the 'M' check, so that they can take some responsibility for ensuring the bike is in a safe condition before they ride.

The people carrying out the 'M' check will need to be trained to repair minor faults. These will include punctures, brake adjustments and seat height changes.

2. More demanding maintenance jobs

Occasionally, the 'M' check will highlight more complex faults such as gear misalignment or loose cranks, worn brake pads or buckled rims. These types of repair will need attention either from a member of your staff who has received more extensive training in bike maintenance, or will need referring to a cycle repair shop.



You don't need to be able to take a bike apart in order to maintain a pool-bike fleet. Most routine repair jobs can be covered in a one-day bike maintenance course.

I have been offered free servicing for the first year from my bike supplier, should I accept?

Whilst it would be inadvisable to turn down the offer of a free service, there are a number of things to bear in mind here. The first and most important is that a finite agreement with your supplier should not replace the development of a comprehensive maintenance plan. Your supplier will not be able to take care of the regular checks and responsive repairs you need to do on a regular basis. The

other consideration is that in all likelihood, your scheme will take a while to get up and running, and by the time your first service is due, some of the bikes may still hardly have been used. For this reason, it is best to negotiate to choose the timing of the free service so as to get the most benefit from it. It is not uncommon, however, for minor faults to occur soon after purchase, as the bike parts 'settle in'. For this reason, look for a minimum of one-year warranty with the bikes as well as a free service.

What kind of maintenance training is available for staff?

A one-day maintenance course should be sufficient to enable a staff member to become proficient in carrying out an 'M' check and minor repairs (although this may vary according to experience and natural aptitude). Cycle Training Wales (see contact details below) offer a one-day maintenance course designed especially for people running pool bike schemes and cycle hire projects. Prices vary according to location and number of participants. You may be able to team up with another organisation to run a joint training event for staff.



Photograph courtesy of Cycle Training Wales

You may find that having basic cycle maintenance training may also be popular with users of the pool bikes. In addition to helping build people's general bike skills, this will help allay fears new or returning cyclists may have about getting caught out with a puncture.

A more intensive maintenance course 'Cytech' is available through some providers in England. This is very much aimed at professionals in the bike maintenance industry however, and may be more detailed than you require in order to run your scheme.

How much space will we need to carry out maintenance?

The maintenance should ideally be carried out in the same place, or very close to where the bikes are stored, for maximum convenience and efficiency. You will need to establish an area where you can store tools and spares, and where there is room to manoeuvre a bike (a minimum space of roughly 3m x 6m). You will need room to comfortably turn the bike upside down without knocking all your tools over and ideally there will be room to place a bike on a maintenance stand. If your bikes are in a container outside, you could do maintenance in an outside area, but this has obvious limitations in bad weather.

What kinds of tools and equipment will we need to buy?

You will not need much equipment to perform basic repairs. The following will be essential:

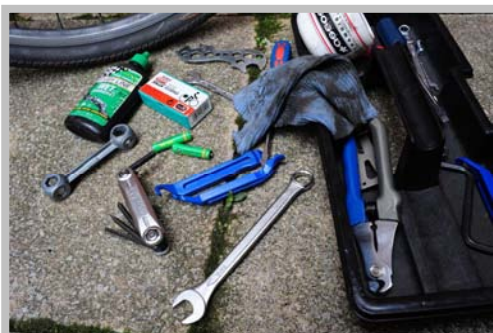
Bicycle tyre pumps: you should purchase a pump for each bike, to be mounted on the frame. In addition, you may like to purchase a 'track pump' for general use in the office - these are less labour intensive to use.

Spare inner tubes: you should have a supply of spare inner tubes which will allow punctures to be repaired quickly.



Puncture repair kits: each bike should have its own puncture repair kit, which should be attached to the bike along with an inner tube (small bags can be purchased for this purpose, and attached to the seat post).

Allen keys: many fittings on bikes require allen keys of various sizes, e.g. for brake adjustment.



Spanner sets: if you have wheel or seat fittings without quick release settings you will need a spanner set.

Bike chain oil: you will need to lubricate the chains periodically, especially if the bikes are getting wet a lot.

It may also be useful to purchase a bike repair stand, which allows you to mount the bike off the ground to perform repairs, although this is not essential as all basic repairs can be performed by turning the bike upside down.

You shouldn't need any more equipment than this to perform day-to-day maintenance. Replacement of brake cables, brake pads and gear cables should be done by a qualified bike mechanic, so you won't need to keep these items in stock.

The 'M' check or Safety Check

A template form for recording your 'M' check is available, along with other information at www.activetravelcymru.org.uk/toolkit.

Contact Details

If you would like to discuss the information provided here, or any other element of setting up an active travel or pool bike scheme, you can contact:

Sandra Booth, Active Travel Coordinator
Tel: 029 2065 0602 Email: sandra.booth@sustrans.org.uk

The Active Travel Workplace Toolkit has been developed by Sustrans in partnership with the Sports Council for Wales.



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