

Energizer Station Tips & Hints

What is an Energizer Station?

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

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

If you are hosting an Energizer Station on behalf of a business, that company will be credited on the official Bike to Work Day website, where there will be a map of the Energizer Stations located throughout Silicon Valley.

After looking through this guide, if you have additional questions or concerns regarding running your energizer station or other BTWD details, please contact:
Gladwyn d'Souza, SVBC Program Director
btwd@bikesiliconvalley.org

Thank you for your participation in this event.

Summary of the Tips & Hints

1. Choose a visible location.
2. Determine your hours of business.

3. Plan for set up and tear down.
4. Solicit local donations.
5. Recruit volunteers.
6. Arrange for tables and chairs.
7. Get a canopy.
8. Make banners and posters.
9. Plan for handling trash and recyclable materials.
10. Prepare for minor repairs.
11. Transport materials and supplies to and from the station.
12. Have the permit if located at a Caltrain or Lightrail station.
13. Secure materials on tables.
14. Sign-in and count BTWDers.
15. Talk with BTWDers.

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 BTWDers to your energizer station.

2. Determine your hours of business. 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 6am-9:30am. If your energizer station is located at a Caltrain or Lightrail station, take into account the transit schedule when determining the hours of operation especially with the new bullet schedule.

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 customers. 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. 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 the 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 BTWDers will appreciate. To encourage donations, offer to place donating companies' flyers or coupons at Energizer Stations. 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

Businesses: discount coupons

Corporations: "trade show" goodies

Coffee shops: boxes of coffee

Bagel and bake shops: 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

Most donators want a letter with tax information so they can write off their donation. SVBC's 501©(3) information can be used in the letter you personalize for donators. Please contact us if you would like a donation letter.

5. 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, stuff bags, 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, stuffing musette bags if they are not pre-stuffed, signing in and counting bicyclists, talking with BTWDers, and setting up and tearing down your station. Ask your bicycling friends, co-workers, BPAC 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. BTWD shirts are available through SVBC for \$10 for volunteers (up to 5 per station). If you would like to provide BTWD shirts to your energizer station volunteers, contact shirts@bikesiliconvalley.org.

****Shirt orders must be placed by late April to guarantee delivery before BTWD.**

6. 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 give-aways. 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.

7. Get a canopy. Not only is a canopy a welcome addition to your energizer station in case of rain, it can also make your station more visible and can provide an excellent place for hanging a banner.

8. 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. Many Spanish-speaking bicyclists ride past stations without stopping as they may not understand what the station is for or that they are invited and encouraged to participate.

9. 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, please arrange to recycle as much as possible.

10. 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 to make minor repairs and adjustments. 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!

11. 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.

12. Have the permit if located at a Caltrain or Lightrail station. SVBC will be obtaining all permits needed for energizer stations located at transit stations. If you're at such a location be sure to have your permit with you.

13. 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. Clear, letter-sized plastic bags are great for keeping stacks of paper in place, as well as visible and accessible (and if need be, protected from the rain).

14. Sign-in and count BTWDers. 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. Bicyclists will be entered in a drawing to win prizes just for registering! 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. Note these counts by putting a tick mark on a sign-in sheet. Then these tick marks can be easily tallied as part of the final count. These counts need to be emailed by 11am on BTWD to counts@bikesiliconvalley.org! These 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.

15. Talk with BTWDers. This may be the first time some of these BTWDers 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 (scratch) paper and pens available for writing route notes. If time permits use the opportunity to talk with BTWDers 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 visitor, 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 the bikesiliconvalley.org website as an informational resource on biking in the area. In addition to covering the majority of inquiries, pointing BTWDers 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 BTWD Party 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.