

Des Moines Bicycle Collective Shop Volunteer Guidebook

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Hello and welcome to the Des Moines Bicycle Collective. Thank you for volunteering with us! It's people like you who allow us to give away over 300 bikes a year to children and people in need. In this guidebook, you will find the answers to many questions you may have about how things work around here. If you can't find the answer to something in here, you may always ask one of our friendly and knowledgeable staff.

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Code of Conduct

Values

The Des Moines Bicycle Collective is a community space and welcomes all participants equally and enthusiastically. We strive to be a comfortable and welcoming place for everyone, regardless of race, religion, creed, national origin, age, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, class, education level, marital or familial status, physical or mental disability, or other personal characteristics.

History & Barriers

Traditionally, as in many fields, the bicycle-repair industry has been primarily made up of white males. This may also have led to people being treated differently based on their personal characteristics, in subtle or not subtle ways. In such environments, under-represented populations may be hesitant about entering this space or learning this craft. Our goal as an organization is to make bicycling more accessible to everyone—which includes identifying and breaking down barriers. Some barriers in the past have included:

- Making an assumption based on a stereotype that a person needs more help and spending an unreasonable amount of time with them or over-explaining relatively simple concepts
- Not explaining or the nature of technical problems to someone; assuming they are not interested or “won't get it.”
- Making comments about someone's appearance, or making jokes of a sexual nature.

Help Us Make the Des Moines Bicycle Collective a Better Place

With these values in mind, here are some ways you can help make the DMBC welcoming for all:

- Welcome everyone to our shop and help them understand what we are all about.
- Strive to assist each person according to his/her interest, level of bike experience, and needs, without assumptions based on personal characteristics.
- Allow individuals to develop skills at their own pace; offer assistance only if help is requested or if a task is too difficult or dangerous for someone to do alone
- If someone looks confused, lost, or uncomfortable, offer support in a respectful manner suitable to the situation
- Refrain from touching people you do not know personally.
- Sexual harassment and other forms of discrimination can be very subtle and can go unnoticed. The offending person may not realize their actions are inappropriate. If you see behavior that seems disrespectful, inappropriate, or that may make someone feel uncomfortable, say or do something about it. Whenever possible, this should be done in a non-confrontational way that benefits those involved by helping them understand why a behavior is not appreciated.
- Under no circumstances is discriminatory conduct, offensive language, harassment, or threatening action (subtle or otherwise) tolerated. If such behavior is observed (from a customer, volunteer, or staff member), or if you are not sure, report it to any DMBC staff member. Staff members are trained in how to respond to complaints of harassment.

Thank you for helping make sure everyone feels respected and welcome. If you have ideas about how to make the Des Moines Bicycle Collective a better and more welcoming place for all, please share them with a staff person at any time.

Shop Layout/Tool Storage

The shop is organized into five areas: the Front, the Middle, the Back, Staff Area, and the BCycle area.

The Front is the sales floor. This is the area where the shopping customers hang out and has all of the new merchandise. The manager can usually be found in the front, organizing merchandise or using the staff-only computer.

Workstations are located in the Middle. As a volunteer, this is where you will hang out. The stations along the south wall of the building are numbered 1-4 with the numbers displayed on the top of the workstation. Stations 1 and 2 usually reserved for Collective employees while 3-6 are available for public use. The non-numbered stations on the

north wall of the shop have fewer specialty tools; we encourage bike breakdowns to be completed at those station so that bike builders can use stations 3 and 4.

Please leave your station better than you found it. The workbenches all have the tools outlined on the back on the bench; make sure that all those outlines are filled when you leave your bench. If you arrive at your station and tools are missing, please notify a staff member. Wipe off your bench with Simple Green when finished working, and put away any loose parts or extra tools.

Extra tools are almost always stored in the black toolbox upon which the volunteer computer sits. Most of these tools are available for use, but certain ones will require staff supervision. If you do not know how to use a particular tool, ask a staff member. They will be happy to show you. If you get a tool out of the black toolbox, make sure you put it back when finished. There are often a limited number of these tools, and it is easier for everyone if it is always in the same place when we go to look for it. Advanced tools are stored in the pantry/Staff Area so if you can find what you're looking for; just ask.

Bikes are stored in The Back. There are three piles of bikes in the back: the scrap pile, where the breakdown bikes are stored until they are disassembled, the kid bike-fixer pile, and the adult bike-fixer pile. To save everyone time, please make sure you know which pile is which before moving bikes around. The bike bath and hand wash station are also in the Back.

The Staff Area is in the southeast corner of the shop and is closed to all non-staff unless invited back there by a staff member. Overstock new parts, including cables and housing, are stored in the pantry. If you need more of these items, notify a staff member, and they will retrieve it for you.

The BCycle Area is a staff-only area where the maintenance for the BCycle program takes place. There is no need for volunteers to go back there.

Volunteer Priorities

When coming to volunteer there is always work to be done, no matter your ability or skill level, and we are forever grateful for the help! There are four primary volunteer activities, and who does what is usually based on experience as a mechanic. We understand that many of you are here to learn more about bikes, and we are here to help turn you into master mechanics, but it all depends on your level of interest and

engagement. Ask questions! There is a lot to learn about bikes and asking questions gives us a great place to start! We are all always learning here.

Bike Breakdown

We often have brand new volunteers disassemble bicycles the first few times they come in. Since we have an official policy of “We’ll accept any bike shaped object or anything bike related,” About half of the bikes that get donated to us are repurposed; these bikes will be disassembled and recycled. Disassembly will get a new volunteer familiar with how to put a bike in the stand, where the tools are kept, and basic principles of how a bike is put together, all skills that will be needed as your graduate up the volunteer chain.

When disassembling bikes, there will almost always be a pile in back, just ask a staff member or volunteer which one is the breakdown pile. When disassembling, we’ll save any parts we deem usable (again, ask a staff member) and recycle the rest. The goal is to have a bare frame at the end of the process, but to also leave it in the biggest chunks possible for efficiency’s sake. If it’s all going to the scrapyards we don’t need to take everything off the handlebars. Just remove the stem with the bars attached and toss the whole chunk. Please leave assemblies intact, as we may want to reuse certain parts. Essentially, this means that you shouldn’t completely remove nuts and bolts, just loosen them enough to slide things off. If you must remove a bolt to unclamp something, screw it back through once you have removed it. During this process, you’ll separate the steel from the aluminum from the rubber. We get paid for metal recycling but have to pay to recycle tires so it all about evens out. Generally it will take about 30 minutes to disassemble a bike to a satisfactory level.

Kid Bike Build

Once you have taken apart a few bikes and are starting to pick up on how to use the tools effectively, we will graduate you up to rebuilding kid bikes. This is a great way to learn about the four major bearing systems on a bike, as the kid bikes we rebuild almost never have cable-actuated brakes or derailleurs. There is a pile of fixer kid bikes in the middle of the shop, almost all of which will be given away in the summertime through one of our multiple massive bike giveaway events (which you can also volunteer to help out at).

To rebuild a kid bike, you will start by taking the bike down to the frame, same as if you were to recycle it, but then a staff member or senior volunteer will teach you how to re-grease the bearings in the hubs, bottom bracket, and headset, and put the bike back

together. Once you demonstrate proficiency with the bearing systems, you will be graduated to adult bikes with cables.

Adult Bike Build

For the purposes of this guidebook, 'adult bike' will simply mean a bike that has cable actuated brakes and derailleurs, they will not always be only for adults but that is the parlance we use when discussing the bikes in the shop. In addition to having the same four bearing systems as kid bikes, adult bikes also have four cable actuated systems, two brakes, and two derailleurs. Adult bikes will usually be sold on the salesfloor, sometimes given away, and as a result will have to meet a higher standard. They will usually take quite a bit longer to complete as well so make sure you have the time to complete a rebuild before tearing into a project, as a multitude of half-finished project bikes is not something we have the room to store for more than a week at a time. If you leave a project unfinished at the shop for more than a week, do not be surprised if you come back and someone else has completed it. It is at the discretion of the staff if you are taking too long and they will move to make room and expedite the process as they see fit.

A staff member will let you know when you are eligible to work on adult bikes based on your performance working on kid bikes. Please be patient when starting the process as there is much more to learn because there is much more variety when it comes to adult bikes, but if you have the patience and perseverance to stick with it, we will make a bike mechanic out of you yet!

If you have demonstrated proficiency and will begin to work on adult bikes please refer to the whiteboard above the sign-in computer to determine what kind of bikes we need. There will always be a list of upcoming Habitat for Humanity giveaways and bikes needed for the floor. The board will have the high priority bikes needed, these should always be completed first before working on other projects. When searching for bikes to work on, always grab from the outer edges of the fixer pile. Digging bikes out of the middle of the pile risks damaging the bike and is almost always entirely unnecessary as there will usually be a similar bike that is more accessible and doesn't require tearing apart the whole pile and then rearranging it afterward.

Other Activities

Other activities are for volunteers who may not have the time to complete a whole bike rebuild project, but still would like to help out in some way. Any help offered in the shop

is always appreciated. Some of the biggest ones are cleaning, sorting, and organizing. If you have little experience, the shop almost always needs to be swept, the Middle gets dirty very quickly from all the bikes being rolled through, breakdown bike parts dropping to the floor, or benches not being left as people find them. Sweeping the Middle, putting away tools and wiping down benches, taking out the trash, all these things are invaluable tasks that free up time for our staff to devote to teaching people how to fix bikes.

For the more experienced volunteer who may not have a ton of time, parts always need sorting. The milk crates in the parts area get stuffed with parts by well-meaning disassemblers who may not always be able to tell the difference between a good shifter and a bad one. If you know the difference (and with staff approval), feel free to go through the parts bins on a regular basis and remove and dispose of the non-working parts that often get stuffed in there. This greatly speeds up the bike building process by making sure that when we go to get a replacement part, we can rest assured that it works.

Organization is another helpful task that can be done, specifically in reference to wheel storage. We now have storage for over 100 wheels in the shop, but unfortunately they are not often checked before they are stored. If you know how to repack hub bearings and true a wheel, or you want to learn, going through the wheels hung in the Middle is an invaluable task that all of the staff and core volunteers would greatly appreciate.

Volunteer Benefits

After meeting certain requirements, volunteers are eligible for certain benefits for volunteering with the Collective. There are four levels of volunteer, Newbie, Kinda-Sorta, Gettin' There, and Grease Monkey

Newbie - a new volunteer with less than 20 hours on record. Probably spent most of those 20 hours doing breakdowns or building kid bikes, but on their way to becoming the ultimate Master Mechanic. Eligible for the standard Earn-a-Bike through completion of the program. Doesn't have a nametag

Kinda-Sorta - a volunteer who kinda-sorta knows what they're doing. Would be able to help disassemble and re-grease a full bike, but probably has some questions about exactly where the cables are supposed to run. A volunteer with 20+ hours who hasn't been graduated to a Gettin' There yet. Eligible for a 20% discount on used parts from the shop and free bench time. Has a yellow name tag.

Gettin' There - a volunteer who's gettin' there. Can rebuild an adult bike and will only need to ask a few questions on how to do it. Eligible for a 30% discount on used parts, free bench time, and cost+20% on new parts ordered from any of our wholesale accounts. Has a blue name tag.

Grease Monkey - someone with a whole bunch of hours donated to the shop. Eligible for steep discounts on used merchandise, cost+10% on parts ordered from distributors, and outside open hours access to the shop. Has a Green name tag.