

Bike Kitchen Handbook

DRAFT: 21 March 2007

Welcome

The Bike Kitchen can be a pretty chaotic place. That's why we made this handbook. It is meant to be an official source of information on how the Bike Kitchen works. It is created and maintained by Bike Kitchen staff and approved by the Bike Kitchen board of directors. Hopefully this will help new volunteers and patrons understand how to get involved, and help clarify various processes and policies.

Bike Kitchen Mission Statement

The Bike Kitchen teaches people of all ages and backgrounds how to repair bicycles. Through bike repair and bicycle related projects, the Bike Kitchen promotes personal development and provides leadership opportunities. Operating as a cooperative shop, we provide affordable ways to acquire and maintain a bike, offer youth programs, encourage re-use and recycling, and work with community groups to get more people on bikes.

General Policies

When using the Bike Kitchen, please:

- Respect each other.
- Respect the tools. Return them to their proper places when you are finished with them
- Respect the closing time. Stop projects at least 15 minutes prior to closing time and start cleaning up.
- Avoid monopolizing tools and space.

Sometimes people can be disrespectful. Accordingly, the Bike Kitchen reserves the right to refuse service to anyone for any reason.

Open Hours

During open hours, Bike Kitchen volunteer mechanics assist patrons with their personal bike projects. To use the Bike Kitchen during open hours, patrons must either:

- Be a current Bike Kitchen Member
- Pay a "day use" fee. The current day use fee is \$5.

No one is turned away for lack of funds. The day use fee may be waived for patrons who cannot pay it.

Each open hour shift must have a shift leader, should have a few committed supporting mechanics, and should have a committed greeter. New open hour shifts can be launched if the shop is available and if these roles can conceivably be filled.

It is useful to track how many people we serve during open hours, what fraction of them are members, and whether they come in regularly or not. This information allows us to determine our capacity, and may eventually be useful for pursuing funding. To track this information, we have a custom sign-in application that runs on a computer. The Bike Kitchen recognizes that some people who wish to patronize the Bike Kitchen may not be comfortable giving out their information. Therefore, providing personal information is optional.

Membership Policy

Anybody can become a Bike Kitchen member. The benefits of being a member are:

- Unlimited use of the Bike Kitchen during open hours.
- Eligible to enroll in Bike Kitchen classes.
- Eligible to acquire “digging rights.”
- Discount at some bike shops [which ones?].
- Carry a fancy pants membership card.

To become a member, you may either:

- Purchase a one-year membership for \$30-\$100 (sliding scale).
- Earn a one-year membership by volunteering for 6 hours.

Part Sales

No part leaves the shop unless it is on a bike. The point of this policy is that we are not trying to supply the universe with used parts; we're helping people build and repair bikes.

Used parts are for sale to folks working on bikes at the Bike Kitchen. Prices on parts are always subject to the discretion of the mechanics on duty. The price list near the cash register offers a guide of prices which reflects the range in quality of used parts. If you find a part that you want to put on your bike, consult a mechanic for a final price. Mechanics should offer slightly favorable prices to Bike Kitchen members.

Some new parts are also available for sale. These are limited to those that are not easily recycled yet commonly needed to perform basic repair such as brake pads, cables, and housing. The Bike Kitchen buys these parts and sells them at cost. Other new parts should be acquired at local bike shops.

The Bike Kitchen does not buy used parts.

Digging Rights:

“Digging rights” entitle a patron to build a single bike from scratch using parts in the Bike Kitchen junk yard. Only Bike Kitchen members are eligible to acquire digging rights. Further, a member may acquire digging rights only once during his/her entire life. Yes. That's what we said: once during his/her entire life, not once per membership, or once per year, or anything else. To acquire digging rights, a member may either:

- Buy digging rights for \$30-\$80 (sliding scale)
- Earn digging rights by volunteering for 6 hours. This is sometimes called “Earn-a-Bike.” Reserving or digging for parts before earning digging rights is not allowed.

It is likely that you will not find all of the parts that you need to complete your bike in the Bike Kitchen junk yard. If you wish to use parts from the Bike Kitchen that are not in the junk room, you must purchase them separately. You may also wish to purchase parts from outside the Bike Kitchen.

Donations

The Bike Kitchen relies on the generous donations of parts and cash to keep the shop running. All donations are tax-deductible. Due to lack of space, and depending on the demand for certain parts, the Bike Kitchen cannot accept all donations.

Bike Storage

Bike Kitchen members may store up to one “project bike” at the Bike Kitchen as long as s/he makes regular progress on the project. A “project bike” is a bike that a member is building mostly from parts originally acquired from the Bike Kitchen. **The project bike must be clearly labeled with the member's name, the member's phone number, and the date of the last day that the patron worked on the bike.** Members are responsible for keeping their tags up to date. Project bikes will be integrated into the Bike Kitchen junk yard and offered to other patrons if:

- The project bike is not labeled properly
- The latest date on the tag is more than two weeks past. In this case, the Bike Kitchen will try to reach you by phone to warn you that your project bike is going to the junk yard.

Classes

Occasionally, the Bike Kitchen offers classes on topics such as wheel building or tune ups. Only Bike Kitchen members may enroll in classes. If non-members wish to enroll, he/she must first purchase or earn a membership. In addition to the membership requirement, most classes require an extra fee. This fee depends on the class, but is generally offered on a sliding scale.

Loaner Bikes

The Bike Kitchen does not loan bikes.

Bike Kitchen Meetings

As an entirely volunteer-run organization, everybody doesn't have an opportunity to run into everybody else during a single day or even during a single week. So to keep things up

and running, we've established a few tools and conventions. Foremost, we have general staff meetings on the last Sunday of every odd month. For example, a meeting was held on January 28th, 2007. Usually the meetings are at 7pm. We strive to post details about the next meeting on a bulletin board in the shop. At the meetings, we discuss and vote on various issues related to the shop.

Bike Kitchen Yahoo! Group

In addition to open hours and meetings, much communication happens on the Bike Kitchen Yahoo! group. This is a mailing list to which anybody can subscribe and contribute. In practice, it is used for various announcements, to request help on Bike Kitchen issues, and to materialize ideas about upcoming Bike Kitchen events such as parties and classes. To join the Yahoo! group, simply send an email to bikekitchen@yahoogroups.com and it will send you instructions on how to join.

Bike Kitchen Volunteers

The Bike Kitchen is a volunteer-run organization and welcomes any volunteer contributions. Volunteers with specific skills (i.e., web design, graphics, event organizing, fund raising, woodworking, etc.) are encouraged to contribute using those specific skills. Volunteers with quality bike mechanic experience are encouraged to become volunteer mechanics. Regular volunteers are often needed to greet, wrench, and perform the many mundane tasks that keep the shop going. When a volunteer commits to working consistently at the Bike Kitchen, s/he can become staff, which entails the benefits described below.

Bike Kitchen Staff Members

A Bike Kitchen staff member is a volunteer that makes at least one of the following commitments:

- Consistently volunteering during a specific two-hour open hours shift every week.
- Consistently take responsibility for a specific task related to the Bike Kitchen such as website management, membership management, etc.

Prior to becoming staff, the volunteer must fulfill at least one of the above commitments for three consecutive months. To remain staff, the volunteer's commitment must not be interrupted for more than two consecutive months. If a volunteer resumes his/her commitment after an interruption that exceeds two months, staff benefits will resume six weeks after his/her staff commitment resumes.

Bike Kitchen staff members enjoy the following benefits:

- Free used parts from the Bike Kitchen junkyard for **personal*** use.
- Pay cost+15% for new parts from Bike Kitchen suppliers.
- Vote at staff meetings.
- Enroll in Bike Kitchen classes free of charge.

* Personal use means for your own projects and explicitly excludes any income-generating uses.

Bike Kitchen Mechanics

Bike Kitchen mechanics are Bike Kitchen staff members that assist patrons with bike projects during open hours and/or teach classes. Fundamentally, the more mechanics we have, the more hours we can open, and the more people we can serve. If you want to become a mechanic, you should come to a new mechanic orientation, which happens during the half hour before each meeting, on the last Sunday of every odd month.

- Be familiar with this handbook.
- Know all of the names of all of the parts of a bicycle.
- Be capable of patching and replacing tubes.
- Be capable of overhauling and adjusting all bearing systems on a bicycle including threaded and threadless headsets, bottom brackets, and hubs.
- Be capable of replacing cables, replacing brake pads, and properly adjusting brakes popularly seen in the Bike Kitchen, including side-pull, center-pull, cantilevers, and V-brakes.
- Be capable of replacing cables and properly adjusting front and rear derailleurs with either friction or index shifting.
- Be capable of replacing crank sets and pedals.
- Be capable of inspecting chains for wear, properly breaking them, and properly joining them.
- Be capable of properly truing wheels.

If you lack some of these skills, you can learn them by working on your own bike during open hours, by taking a Bike Kitchen class, by stripping bikes, and by arranging to follow a mechanic around during open hours.

As a mechanic, please keep the following points in mind while assisting patrons with bike projects:

- Be open to teaching. Strive to keep the tools in the hands of the patron, not in your hands. Unlike a traditional shop, the Bike Kitchen's purpose is to empower patrons to fix their own bicycles.
- Be open to learning. If you don't know how to diagnose or repair a problem, are unsure in your diagnosis, or have never performed the necessary repair before, ask another mechanic for help. No mechanic is expected to be omnipotent.
- Use your discretion. As a mechanic knowledgeable of Bike Kitchen operations, you are permitted to adjust prices on used parts depending on their quality, to adjust day use fees, to delegate tasks to capable volunteers, and to award hours to volunteers for their work.

- Wear an apron during open hours. This makes it clear to others that you are a mechanic and available to help.

The Greeter

During open hours, it is immensely helpful to have a greeter who welcomes people, describes how the shop operates, collects money, operates the register, and signs patrons in. Being a greeter is an excellent way to regularly contribute to the Bike Kitchen that does not require mechanical expertise. The greeter may be a volunteer working towards a membership or digging rights, or may be fulfilling the staff requirement of volunteering consistently.

Revising This Handbook

Like any organization, the Bike Kitchen is an ever-growing operation. It's a bit silly to imagine that a brief handbook could embody all important aspects of the Bike Kitchen for all time. That's why this handbook can be edited. If you feel like something is unclear, or unfair, or needs to be added, or needs to be removed, you can get involved and work to change it. Here's how:

1. Become Bike Kitchen staff. Only Bike Kitchen staff members are allowed to propose changes to this handbook.
2. Discuss the proposed change with with other Bike Kitchen staff. This will permit other staff members to start understanding your concern and offering feedback.
3. Propose the change at a staff meeting. After discussing the proposed change, the staff will vote on whether the change should be adopted. If a majority of the staff present at the meeting vote to adopt the change, the change is incorporated into a revised draft of the handbook.