

**Bicycle  
Safety  
Program**

# **Bicycle Skills Course Instruction Manual**

**Jesse White  
Secretary of State**



## **Teaching children bike safety through skills courses**

Children often leave their immediate block or neighborhood for the first time on a bicycle, an efficient machine used for transportation and for fun. Learning to ride our first two-wheeler in a street is a milestone for all of us.

Because bicycles are light in weight and are not equipped with safety equipment, young bicyclists are extremely vulnerable in traffic.

The bicycle skills course described on the following pages offers children an opportunity to measure actual riding ability before entering street traffic. Skills such as balance and handling are practiced in a safe, protected environment.

This guide explains how to set up and effectively sponsor a bicycle skills course for children. Also included are suggestions for radio, photo and newspaper opportunities.

I strongly encourage permanent application of the skills course on school playgrounds and other places where children are present. Information, materials and assistance are available from our office's Traffic Safety Division, 2701 S. Dirksen Parkway, Springfield, IL 62723.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jesse White".

Jesse White  
Secretary of State

## A Bicycle Skills Course

This booklet explains the setup and operation of a Bicycle Skills Course, a series of tests in which riders demonstrate their bicycle riding skills. It can be set up as a competitive event using score cards, or as a non-competitive demonstration of skills that is not scored. The course is designed to be operated by the sponsoring group alone.

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## Sponsoring Groups and Volunteers

Suggested sponsoring groups are: police or fire departments, park districts, bicycle shops, schools churches, scout and day camps. A successful course requires at least 10 volunteers. One volunteer judge is needed at each skills test. These judges should familiarize themselves with their test assignments. They must know the scoring process and be able to explain the necessary bike maneuvers and the traffic application of the test. Volunteers must register, organize and direct the participants and tally their scores.

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## Organizing the Skills Course

The success of the program depends upon organization and volunteer workers. Sponsoring groups must arrange the following in advance of the program date:

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|--|-------------------------------|
| 1) Specific date/time  | 5) Prizes                     |
| 2) Participating groups  | 6) Advertising/promotion      |
| 3) Suitable location (accessible and isolated from traffic, preferably a smooth parking lot surface) | 7) Registration/scorecards    |
| 4) 10 volunteers; more for groups over 100   | 8) Bicycle Rules of the Road* |
|  | 9) Prize ribbons              |
- \* Available from the Secretary of State's office
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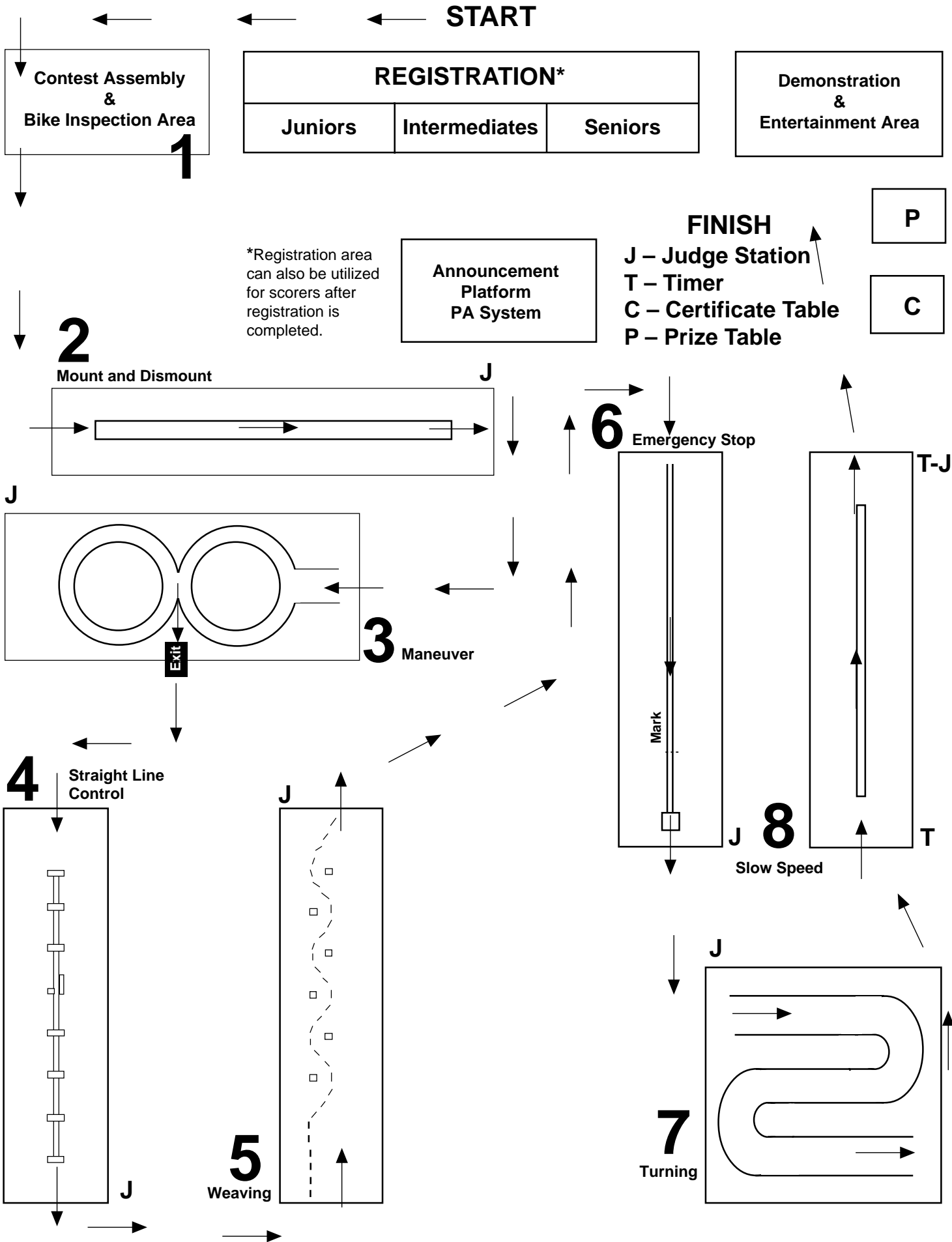
## Materials

The sponsoring group must also provide materials to lay out the course. Police, public works departments or local stores may provide the following:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1) 60-foot tape measure                             | 6) 6- and 7 1/2-foot lengths of string |
| 2) Marking or traffic chalk (thick yellow)          | 7) Stopwatch                           |
| 3) Walking chalker (as used on baseball fields)     | 8) Table and chairs for registration   |
| 4) 6 small traffic cones (12 or 18 inches)          | 9) 10 pens or pencils and clipboards   |
| 5) 12 small traffic cones or wood blocks (4 inches) |  |
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## Running the course

- Participants line up at the registration table where they are given a registration/scorecard to fill out. These cards are carried by the children to each test.
- Participants are divided into groups according to grade levels.
- The children are then directed to the first station and subsequent stations by a volunteer. A score is entered by the judge as each test is completed.
- After completing all skills stations, the child returns to the registration table to hand in the scorecard. Bicycle safety literature given to each participant.
- The scores are tallied.
- Ribbons will be awarded to the top three participants in each group.

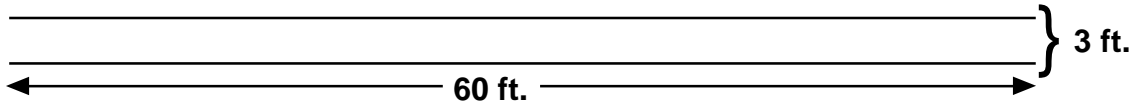


## Test #1 Bicycle Inspection

A local bicycle shop may be contacted to inspect bikes. Bikes should be examined for safety equipment, size and condition. Helmets should also be inspected to ensure they are properly fastened and worn.

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## Test #2 Mounting and Dismounting



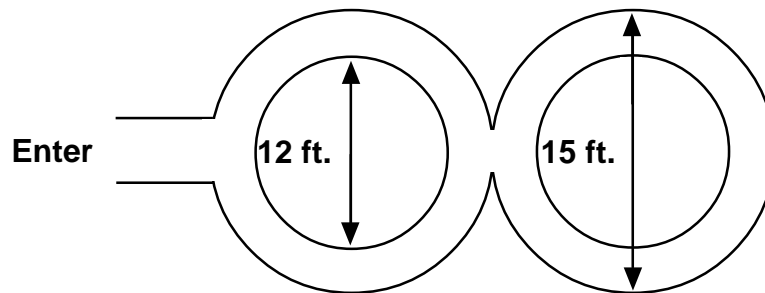
The lane is 60 feet long and three feet wide. In limited space, the lane can be reduced to 40 feet.

**Purpose:** To demonstrate starting and stopping while maintaining control and balance.

**Scoring:** Rider must mount, steer bike without losing balance or swerving out of the lines and then dismount. Ten points maximum. Deduct two points for each incorrect maneuver.

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## Test #3 Circling and Changing Direction



Inner circle is 12 feet across; outer circle is 15 feet across, providing a 1.5-foot inner lane.

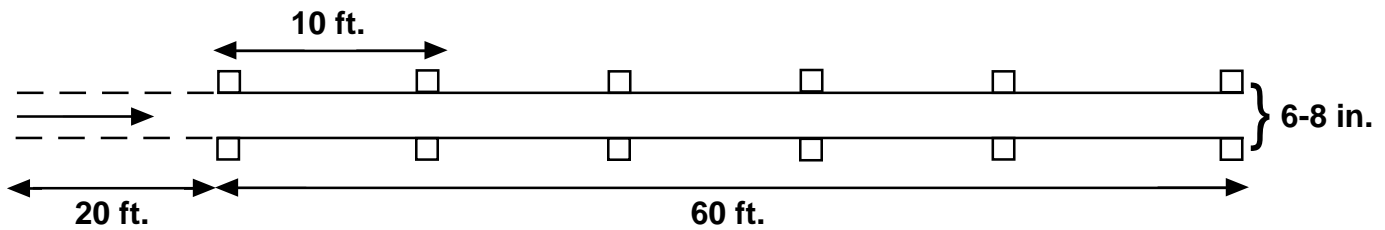
To draw the circles, one person holds the six-foot length of string in one spot, and the drawer pivots around this center point until a complete circle is made with the chalk. Using the same center point, replace the string with the 7 1/2-foot string and follow the same procedure, except do not complete the circle (see *illustration above*).

To draw the other half of the test, hold the end of the 7 1/2-foot string on the edge of the outer circle. After extending it completely, mark an X at the end of the string. This is the center point for the second set of circles. Follow the instruction for drawing the first set again.

**Purpose:** To test balance and steering control while changing directions.

**Scoring:** Rider should start to the right and maneuver through the circles in a figure eight. Ten points is the best possible score. Deduct two points for each time the rider moves off the marked lane or puts a foot down.

## Test #4 Straight Line Control



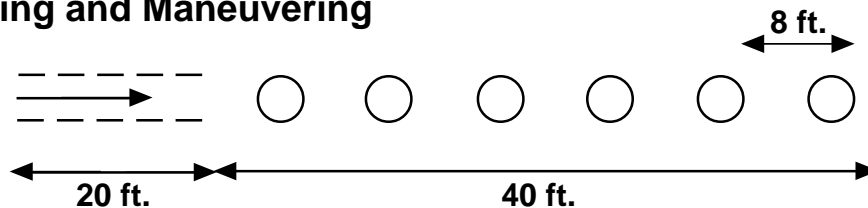
The lane is 60 feet long and six to eight inches wide. There must be 20 feet leading up to the start of the lane for the rider to gain balance, but this does not need to be marked. The length of the lane and balance lane can be reduced if space is limited. Small cones (four-inch) or wood blocks should be placed on the exterior of the lane at 10-foot intervals.

**Purpose:** To test balance and steering coordination.

**Scoring:** Ten points if the rider steers between all markers without veering, touching them with the tires, or stopping. Deduct two points for each faulty move.

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## Test #5 Weaving and Maneuvering



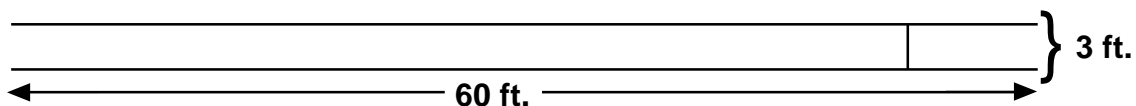
There is no marked lane for this test, but the placement of the cones should be marked in case they are disturbed. Cones should be placed eight feet apart, and riders should be given 20 feet of running room before the first cone.

**Purpose:** To test balance, steering control and the rider's ability to judge distance.

**Scoring:** The rider must not hit any obstacles and must weave alternately to the right and left. Ten points maximum. Deduct one point each time the rider makes a wrong turn, touches an obstacle or puts a foot down for balance.

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## Test #6 Stopping Ability

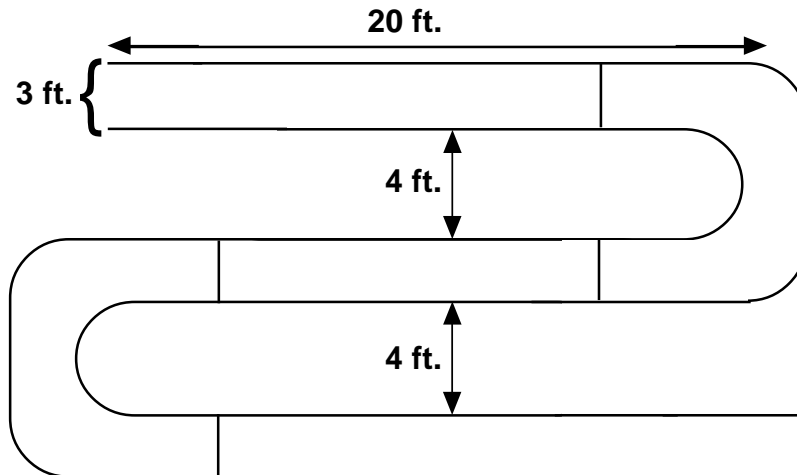


The lane is 60 feet long and three feet wide. A cross mark should be made at 50 feet. If space is limited, this test can be done on the same lane as Test #2.

**Purpose:** To test judgment and braking control.

**Scoring:** Rider should ride through the first 50 feet of the lane and be able to bring the bike to a complete stop within the last 10 feet. Ten points maximum. Deduct two points if the rider touches the ground with either foot before bringing the bike to a complete stop using the brakes.

## Test #7 Short Radius Turning



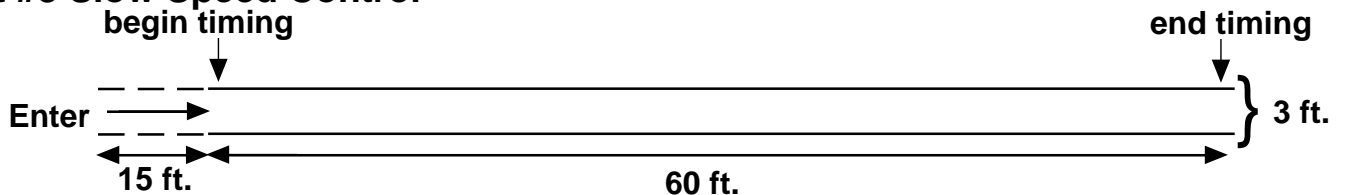
The lane is 3 feet wide, with each straight section 20 feet long. Draw all straight sections first and then connect them with an arc. Each lane is separated by four feet (*see diagram*).

**Purpose:** To test balance, speed control and steering coordination.

**Scoring:** Rider should maneuver through the course without veering over the lines or putting a foot down for balance. Ten points maximum. Deduct one point each time the rider touches the ground or rides over the line.

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## Test #8 Slow Speed Control



The lane is 60 feet long and three feet wide. A 15-foot running lane should be provided but need not be marked. If space is limited, this test can be done on the course for Test #2.

**Purpose:** To test balance and speed control.

**Scoring:** Rider should maneuver the bike at a slow speed, requiring at least 30 seconds to move from start to finish. Record the stopwatch time on the score sheet.

## Sample 30—Second Public Service Announcement

“Young bike riders are invited to participate in a bicycle skills course in/at (town or school) this (day and date) beginning at (time). The event is sponsored by (name of organization) in cooperation with Secretary of State Jesse White. A bicycle skills course provides an opportunity for children to test their bicycle skills and creates a greater awareness of bicycle laws and the importance of defensive cycling.”

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### Sample Photo Assignment

What: (Sponsoring organization) will hold a bicycle skills course for area young people.

When: (Day, Date, Time)

Where: (Facility, Town, Address)

Photo Possibility: Local youngsters maneuvering through a series of skills tests.

Contact: (Name) will be present at the skills course and can be reached at (phone number).

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### Sample Press Release

On (day and date), (sponsoring group) will hold a bicycle skills course for young people, ages six to 14, of (school or town) at (facility and address) between the hours of (times). Participants who show exceptional bike-riding skills will receive awards. The event will provide an opportunity for bicyclists to measure their own capabilities and increase their awareness of bicycle laws and the importance of defensive cycling.

(Name and title of spokesman for sponsoring organization) said, “In order to make this bicycle skills course an event the participants will enjoy and remember, many people and organizations have contributed time and resources. We join Secretary of State Jesse White in providing early education as an effective method of improving traffic safety.”

Anyone interested in taking advantage of this service may do so by contacting:

Secretary of State Jesse White  
Bicycle Safety Program  
2701 S. Dirksen Parkway  
Springfield, IL 62723  
(217) 785-0440  
1-800-252-2904 (TTY)