

THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT YOUR SPORT CENTRAL BICYCLE

- 1. Where do Sport Central bicycles come from?** Most bicycles are donated by generous Edmonton and area residents whose own children have outgrown them or no longer require them. Some are also donated by Edmonton area sports stores and municipalities with unclaimed or surplus bikes to dispose of. Sport Central is a registered charity for kids in need. Volunteers collect, inspect, salvage, service, repair, store, and match donated bicycles in such a way that as many kids as possible can be helped with a suitable bike.
- 2. Who can have a Sport Central bicycle?** A bicycle can be requested for any Edmonton area child age 3 to 17, in a financial need situation. There is no charge for the bike. If you have received a bike from Sport Central in the past, you are not eligible to receive a second bike until you have outgrown the first one, and agreed to return it to Sport Central. Once you have received a full-size adult bicycle (26" or 700c wheel) you are no longer eligible for a subsequent trade-up bike. Despite the best efforts of our volunteers and donors, we are still not able to fill all requests in a given year. For this reason, we do not accept requests for bikes for adults.
- 3. Who makes the request for a Sport Central bicycle?** The request is made by a social worker, church official, community league official, sports club official, or school official. They must be in a position to certify that you are not able to acquire a bike by any other means, and that you will make good use of the bike. The request letter should be faxed on referring agency letterhead, or emailed from the referring agency mail server. It must include the job title and contact phone number of the referring official, and the full name, date of birth, and contact phone number for the child receiving the bike. If you are named on a current Alberta Supplemental Health Benefits card, an Alberta Works card, or a City of Edmonton Leisure Access Program card, one of these can be used in place of a referral letter. The latter two cards also require a copy of the letter that delivered the card to

you. Once the referral letter has been sent, call us to make an appointment to be measured for a bike.

- 4. How long does it take to get a Sport Central bike?** Requests are filled on a first come, first served basis. If we can supply a bike at your fitting appointment, we will. There is usually a waiting list, May through September. We will call you when your bike is close to ready, to make an appointment for you to pick it up. A friend or relative can pick the bike up on your behalf. It must be picked up within 2 weeks of our call however, or your request will go to the back of the waiting list again.
- 5. What kind of bike is supplied?** Sport Central bikes are used, reconditioned bikes, typically 5 to 15 years old. The bikes are inspected and rebuilt as necessary by our very proficient volunteer mechanics. Every reasonable effort is made to make them as safe and serviceable as possible. It is not possible to guarantee the performance of used equipment however. In accepting a Sport Central bike, your guardian is agreeing and understands that the bike and associated equipment is supplied on an as is basis, and that Sport Central Association members, directors, staff, and volunteers cannot be held responsible for performance, safety, or any damages caused through use of this equipment. Subject to availability of donations, we try to stock a full range of run bikes, 14 – 16” wheel kiddies bikes, 20” wheel BMX bikes, and 20 – 26” wheel mountain bikes. By request, we will try to supply a competition grade bike, if the request includes a copy of a current competition license, or competition club membership, in your name.
- 6. Can I choose my own Sport Central bike?** No. We don't have the resources to let each kid choose their own. A bike is chosen and set up for you based upon measurements from your fitting appointment. Our volunteers recondition and assign donated bikes on a “best first” basis. The bike selected for you is the best one available in your size and type, at the time of your pick up appointment. Both better and lesser quality bikes will have been given to other kids, at other times.
- 7. Can I get training wheels on my Sport Central bike?** No. We neither fit nor recommend training wheels for beginning riders. They

mostly delay, rather than facilitate, the learn-to-ride process. The key skill to learn is balance. This is best learned on a small, simple “run” bike, a 2 wheel bike without pedals, propelled by foot. Once the rider has found his/her balance, and can “scoot” the run bike with both feet off the ground, it can then be exchanged for a suitable size pedal bike.

- 8. What accessories can I get with my Sport Central bike?** A helmet is available once only (no exchanges) at your first fitting. Our supply of other accessories is limited. We will try to fit accessories requested in advance, in the referral letter. We can't fit accessories at the time of your pickup appointment.
- 9. What if I don't like / need / want my Sport Central bike?** You may certainly refuse the bike that has been selected for you. Since each summer ends with hundreds of kids still waiting for a bike, someone else will be glad to have the bike that was offered to you. If you have other options to obtain a bike, please exercise one of them instead, allowing us to help one more kid who has no options at all. You will not be offered another bike.
- 10. How should I take care of my Sport Central bike?** Lock it up securely at all times. Keep it indoors overnight and stored out of the sun, rain, and snow as much as possible. Don't drop your bike on the ground, and don't lay it down or lean it against objects on the right hand (chain) side of the bike. Once per month, and immediately after washing, check the tires for proper inflation and lubricate the chain, derailleur pivots and pulleys, cable housing entrances, and brake arm pivots with a light water-displacing lubricant like WD 40. Follow up with a heavier oil or wax-based lubricant for the chain, while it's still wet from the WD 40. It needs to get inside the rollers & side plates. Wipe the surface of the chain clean. Keep all nuts and bolts tight and check for loose spokes. Your bike can be cleaned with a sponge or rag, and one or two drops of dish detergent in 2L of warm water. Dry immediately to avoid rust. Metal polish will remove rust from chrome parts. Paint chips can be filled with nail polish or touch-up paint. Any metal parts to be painted must be clean, dry, sanded, and free of rust. Use only paints intended for metal. Google “bicycle repair tips” for

helpful websites, like www.parktool.com . Edmonton Public Libraries also carry a number of excellent repair manuals and handbooks in section 629.28772.

11. How do I use the pedal (coaster) brake on my Sport

Central bike? Before every ride you should check that the brakes are operating properly on your bike. If your bike is a single speed bike, or doesn't have hand brakes, then it is likely equipped with a "coaster" rear brake. Simply pedal backwards and press down on the rear pedal when you feel resistance. The harder you press, the more braking force is applied to the rear wheel. The coaster brake is strong enough to skid the back wheel of your bike if you press down too hard. Practice making safe, controlled stops from a variety of speeds, and on a variety of surfaces, until you can make smooth powerful stops, without skidding the rear wheel. Skidding the rear wheel can result in loss of control of the bike, and rapidly wears out the rear tire.

12. How do I use the hand brakes on my Sport Central

bicycle? Before every ride you should check that the brakes are operating properly on your bike. On mountain bikes and many BMX bikes, a hand lever controls the braking force to each wheel. The right hand lever brakes the rear wheel, and the left hand lever brakes the front wheel. Practice making safe, controlled stops from a variety of speeds, and on a variety of surfaces, until you can make smooth powerful stops, without skidding either wheel. The following precautions should be observed when using your hand brakes:

- Push back on the handlebars and pedals with your arms and legs as you apply the brakes, to counteract the tendency of your weight to shift forward under braking.
- Apply the rear (right hand) brake first, a fraction of a second before the front (left hand) brake, to reduce the risk of front wheel skidding.
- Because your body weight transfers forward under braking, the strongest braking force is available from the front wheel, but...

- ONLY use your front brake when upright and travelling in a straight line. Using the front brake while leaning or turning risks skidding the front wheel, resulting in a hard fall.
- If for any reason (dew, rain, puddles, washing) the wheel rims or disc rotors of your bike become wet, carefully test the braking force available, in a safe area that has no other traffic, before proceeding with your ride. Braking force is greatly reduced on most hand brakes under wet conditions, as is tire grip, and you need to adjust your speed and stopping distances accordingly.

13. How do I shift the rear wheel gears on my Sport Central mountain bike? Your mountain bike is equipped with a device on the right hand side of the rear wheel called a “derailleur”. It pushes the chain sideways to “shift” it off of one sprocket onto an adjacent larger or smaller one. The “derailleur” can only do its job when the chain is moving and the sprockets are turning. You need to be pedaling forward, with only light pressure on the pedals, to shift gears. The derailleur is shifted by a lever or twist-grip on the right handlebar. Pushing the shift lever forward (or twisting the twist-grip backward, or pushing the large lever on a 2 lever system) shifts the chain off of the smaller sprockets on the outside of the wheel, up on to the larger sprockets towards the centre of the wheel. The larger rear sprockets give a “lower” gear, useful for climbing hills or riding into a headwind. Pulling the shift lever backward (or twisting the twist grip forward, or pressing the small lever on a 2 lever system) pulls the chain down off the larger sprockets near the centre of the wheel, onto the smaller sprockets on the outside. The smaller rear sprockets give a “higher” gear, useful for going fast down hills or riding with a tailwind. If the chain continues to make a rattling noise, or skips, after the shift, the position of the handlebar lever is not aligned properly with the sprocket that the chain is trying to run on. Continue light forward pedaling while making small adjustments to the shift lever, until the rattling noise has been eliminated. With practice, you will soon develop a “feel” for how much pressure and how much movement on the shift lever is required. If the pedals suddenly go

“hard” underfoot, while you are shifting, DO NOT pedal harder or attempt to force them. Stop immediately, and refer to section 16 below.

- 14. How do I shift the front (chain ring) gears on my Sport Central mountain bike?** Your mountain bike may also be equipped with 2 or 3 front sprockets (call chain rings) beside the right hand pedal crank. A “front derailleur” pushes the chain sideways to “shift” it from one chain ring to the next. The front derailleur can only do its job when the chain and chain rings are moving, and you are pedalling forward with light pressure on the pedals. A lever (or twist grip) on the left handlebar shifts the front derailleur. Pushing the lever forward (or twisting the twist grip backward, or pushing the large lever forward on a 2 lever system) pushes the chain up and outward, onto the largest chain ring nearest the pedal crank. The large chain ring gives a “higher” gear for faster road speeds. Pulling the lever backward (or twisting the twist grip forward, or pressing the small lever on a 2 lever system) pulls the chain down off of the larger outside chain ring, onto the smaller inside chain ring(s) giving a “lower” gear for climbs and headwinds. If the chain rattles and skips after a shift, the shift lever and front derailleur positions are mismatched. Small adjustments to the left hand shift lever (twist grip) position while pedalling forward lightly will cure the problem. If the pedals suddenly go “hard” underfoot, while you are shifting, DO NOT pedal harder or attempt to force them. Stop immediately, and refer to section 16 below.
- 15. When should I shift the front gears and when should I shift the back gears on my Sport Central mountain bike?** The purpose of multiple gears on a mountain bike is to allow you to maintain an efficient, consistent, and comfortable pedalling speed (70 – 80 revolutions per minute) whether riding slowly up a steep hill, or fast, on a long smooth downhill run. You should shift gears one at a time (never front and back together) in order to maintain consistent speed and pressure on the pedals, as conditions change. Shifting at the back usually gives a smaller change in ratio, useful for small changes in slope or wind speed. Shifting from one gear to the next at the front usually gives a larger step in ratio, useful for when large or sudden

changes in slope or wind speed are encountered. Try to use front and rear gear combinations that keep the chain line between them as straight as possible. For example, if riding mainly on the 3 largest (inside) sprockets at the back for long durations, you should also be on the smallest (inside) chain ring at the front, for best chain life and performance. Finally, never try to “force” either shift lever if the chain and sprockets are turning slowly under heavy load, stopped, or pedalling backwards. This will only result in a chain jam and/or bent and broken parts.

16. What if the chain comes off the sprockets of my Sport

Central mountain bike? Stop pedalling immediately and dismount. Lean your bike on its left hand side. Do not attempt to force the pedal cranks or rear wheel, as this may further jam and/or bend the chain. To fix it, push the bottom pulley of the rear derailleur forward, towards the front of the bike. This will gain some slack in the bottom chain run and take tension off of the chain. Re-install the chain starting from the bottom of the front chain ring, working slack backwards around to the top of the front chain ring and back to the rear sprockets. If the chain has jammed between the spokes and large rear sprocket, or between the frame and small rear sprocket, work it free by hand, from the top and front side of the sprocket, ‘round to the bottom. Once the chain has been reinstalled on a chain ring and rear sprocket, release the bottom derailleur pulley so that it once again tensions the chain. Lift the rear wheel of your bike off of the ground, and gently turn the pedals forward by hand for at least 2 revolutions, to let the chain realign itself with the front and rear derailleur positions. Your bike is now ready to ride. Sometimes the chain can come off by accident, even when your bike is adjusted and ridden properly. If this happens repeatedly however, your bike has one or more bent or misadjusted parts, and needs the attention of a qualified bike mechanic.

17. Do I own my Sport Central bicycle, or does it belong to my

guardian? Neither. The Sport Central bicycle belongs to Sport Central. It is given to you for your exclusive use however, as if you owned it. You are free to paint, modify, or accessorize the bike as if it were your own. If your residence or guardianship changes, the bike

should go with you to your new home. Please contact your social worker, or Sport Central directly, if this does not happen.

- 18. What if my Sport Central bicycle needs parts, repairs, or adjustments?** If your Sport Central bike gives trouble within 10 days of the date you picked it up, please return it to Sport Central for repair. We will neither return nor replace bikes that have been deliberately abused or stripped of parts. After 10 days, the ongoing repair and maintenance of the bike becomes your responsibility. You must either learn how to take care of the bike yourself (see 10. Above) or take it to a commercial bike shop for repair.
- 19. What if I grow too big for my Sport Central bike?** If you outgrow your current Sport Central bike, and your financial situation remains unchanged, you can request a larger one. You need a new reference letter and a re-measure to do this. Sport Central will notify you when the larger bike is ready. You must return your current Sport Central bike at the time you pick up the new one. If your current bike is a full-size adult bike (26" or 700c wheel), this is your last bike from Sport Central, and you are no longer eligible for the trade up option.
- 20. What if I no longer need my Sport Central bike? Can I sell it?** No. You should return it to Sport Central, so that another child can have the same opportunity that you enjoyed. Bicycle Shops and second hand exchanges will not give you money for a Sport Central bicycle.
- 21. Can I buy from, sell to, or swap with Sport Central for bicycles, parts, or accessories?** No. Sport Central is not a retail bike shop. We don't sell or swap goods or services. Our parts, facilities, and volunteers are wholly engaged in refurbishing bikes for kids in need.
- 22. Where can I get more information on bicycle sports in the Edmonton area?** It's a core Sport Central belief that participation in organized sport is good for kids. Please feel free to contact the Alberta Bicycle Association at www.albertabicycle.ab.ca , (780) 427 6352, for more information on Edmonton and area cycle sports and clubs.