Bike to Work Day
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 an Energizer Station lead and 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. Energizer stations will also be posted on a map that will be available on the official Bike to Work Day website.

https://bayareabiketowork.com/about/

Commute.org coordinates BTWD in San Mateo County in partnership with the Silicon Valley Bike Coalition, https://bikesiliconvalley.org/btwd/energizer-stations/

And we couldn’t do it without the coordination by dedicated Energizer Station leads.

Following are some tips on making your Energizer Station a success. But ultimately only you know what is best for your community and station, so feel free to be creative and have fun!

After looking through this guide, if you have additional questions or concerns regarding running your Energizer Station or other BTWD details, please contact: Bill Bright at bike2work@commute.org.

Thank you for your participation in this event.
Summary of the Tips & Hints

1. Choose a visible and safe location but don't block the bikers route.
2. Determine the hours of business.
3. Determine refreshments to be offered and consider soliciting donations
4. Musette bags. To pre-stuff or not pre-stuff, that is the question.
5. Plan for set up and tear down (usually 30 min.)
6. Recruit volunteers.
7. Arrange for tables and chairs.
8. Get a canopy (optional).
11. It’s helpful to prepare for minor bike repairs.
12. Transport supplies to and from the station.
13. Permits will be provided, if at a Caltrain or BART station.
15. Count participants, those who stop by and ride by: VERY IMPORTANT!

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 BTWD participants to your Energizer Station. Be sure to not block or constrict bike routes. Try to be off the route a bit to allow enough room for those stopping by keep routes clear. Do not setup on both sides of a route, this constricts the route for those wanting to ride through without stopping.

2. **Determine your morning 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 6:30am-10:00am. If your Energizer Station is located at a Caltrain station, take into account the transit schedule when determining the hours of operation. See point 13: Permit needed, if at a Caltrain Station
3. **Refreshments and consider soliciting donations.** A good basic selection of refreshments would include 2-bite size cuts of bananas, other fruit like grapes or orange wedges, energy bars cut in half, water in paper cups from a gallon or other large container, maybe coffee.

To augment the refreshment offers, stations may choose 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 refreshments 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 BTWD participants 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
- **Coffee shops:** boxes of coffee
- **Bagel shops and bakery’s:** bagels and other baked goods
- **Drug stores:** water, juice, other drinks, energy bars
- **Businesses:** discount coupons
- **Corporations:** “trade show” goodies
- **Bike shops:** discount coupons, water bottles, patch kits, tubes, leg bands, a mechanic to be at your Energizer Station to offer light repairs

Most donors want a letter with tax information so they can write off their donation. Please contact Commute.org if necessary. Additionally, Commute.org has been able to offer Safeway Gift Cards to those self-funded stations to offset the cost or need for donations for food and beverages.

4. **Musette bags:** Commute.org provides musette bags for each of the Energizer Stations. Amounts are typically determined by historical counts at each station. Decide if you want the bags pre-stuffed with samples, free gifts and advocacy literature. We’ve received feedback that repeat BTWD participants don’t pickup a bag every year and may be missing out on receiving the free samples, gifts and literature. You decide and let us know.
5. **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 participants. After the closing time of your station, allow enough time for packing up leftover materials and cleaning up the area around your station.

6. **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 cheer and yell friendly encouragements to passing bicyclists get many more to stop than do passive volunteers. You may also need help before the big day to solicit local donations, 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, **counting bicyclists**, talking with BTWD participants, 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 will be to support those bicycling to work for their first time! **In counting bicyclists, you’ll need a dedicated volunteer. It’s best to have two if possible.**

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, or perhaps a volunteer dinner. Commute.org will provide 2 free BTWD shirts to each station and additional shirts for $12 each.

7. **Arrange for tables and chairs.** You will need to identify a 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 giveaways. 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.

8. **Get a canopy (optional).** A canopy can be a welcome addition to your Energizer Station by adding host branding; rain cover; increasing visibility; hanging a banner.
9. **Banners and posters.** Display banners in as obvious a manner as possible. 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. Commute.org can provide one banner per station.

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.

10. **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 and compost as much as possible.

11. **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! We suggest the bicyclist pump their own tires - unless you are knowledgeable in this area.

12. **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.

13. **Permit needed, if located at a Caltrain or BART station.** Commute.org will be obtaining all permits needed for Energizer Stations located at transit stations and will be included in your station kit delivered to you before the event. If you’re at such a location be sure to have your permit with you.
14. **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).

15. **Count BTWD participants. ** **IMPORTANT** We ask that you count those that stop by and well as those that ride-by, passing bicyclists who do not stop at your Energizer Station. A counting form will be provided where you will note these counts by putting a tick mark in the appropriate category: stop-by or ride-by. Then these tick marks can be easily tallied as part of the final count. **Its essential** that these counts are reported by **11am on BTWD by completing a survey link we'll provide, or e-mailed to biketowork@commute.org or texted to a number we'll provide.**

The 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 in expanding BTWD year to year. 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 Commute.org is greatly appreciated.