Bicycle Parking & Removal

Policy Type: Administrative
Responsible Office: VCU Office of Sustainability, Facilities Management, Division of Administration
Initial Policy Approved: MM/DD/YYYY
Current Revision Approved: MM/DD/YYYY

Policy Statement and Purpose

Virginia Commonwealth University encourages the use of bicycles as a convenient, environmentally sound and efficient means of transportation to, from and around campus.

VCU is working to reduce emissions in all areas of campus life as part of its plan to become climate-neutral by 2050. In 2012, and again in 2016, the League of American Bicyclists designated Virginia Commonwealth University as a Bicycle Friendly University at the Silver level. This award is presented only to colleges and universities with remarkable commitments to bicycling.

The continuation of a sustainable bicycle culture depends on those who ride bicycles to exercise good judgment and courtesy while operating or parking their bicycles. According to the Code of Virginia (VA Code 46.2-800 et seq.) bicycles are considered to be vehicles when operated on highways, and therefore subject to the same traffic laws and ordinances as automobiles.

To promote safe and sustainable bicycle use on campus, VCU sets forth requirements in this policy for parking and other use of bicycles on university property. VCU reserves the right to remove any bicycle found in violation of the requirements of this policy and to dispose of it in compliance with Virginia law governing tangible personal property lost or abandoned at an institution of higher education. Va. Code § 23.1-104(B).

Noncompliance with this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination. VCU supports an environment free from retaliation. Retaliation against any person who brings forth a good faith concern, asks a clarifying question, or participates in an investigation is prohibited.

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Who Should Know This Policy

All members of the university, including faculty, students and staff are responsible for knowing this policy and familiarizing themselves with its contents and provisions.

Definitions

Abandoned
For the purpose of this policy, a bicycle is abandoned if it has not been moved in 30 days.

Bicycle
A device propelled by human power, upon which a person may ride either on or astride a regular seat attached thereto, having one or more wheels in tandem, including children's bicycles, except a toy vehicle intended for use by young children.

Bicycle Rack
An outdoor structure specifically designed for the parking and/or securing of bicycles.

Impounded
Impounded bicycles are secured or removed by VCU because they are determined to be abandoned, stolen, or parked in violation of this policy.

Inoperable
A bicycle is considered inoperable when broken and/or missing components, including but not limited to chains and other major component parts, prevent safe usage for the bike operator.

Non-sanctioned Parking Area
Any area or structure on campus not designed for the parking of bicycles. These areas include, but are not limited to, handicap or building ramps, guide or hand rails, where an entrance or exit door is blocked, posts, lamps, telephone poles, sculptures, benches, trashcans, trees, and shrubbery.

Pedestrian Way
Any area of VCU that prohibits the use of motorized vehicles by the general public. VCU considers Shafer Court and Linden Court to be a pedestrian way.

RamBikes
RamBikes is the VCU Bicycle Program, managed by the Office of Sustainability. It provides free services for students, faculty and staff and manages many of the aspects detailed in this policy. It is located at 201
N. Belvidere. The VCU Bicycle Program will be referred to as RamBikes for the remainder of this document.

**Sharrow**

These are Shared Roadway Bicycle Markings which are intended to help bicyclists position themselves away from parked cars, to avoid being struck by suddenly opened car doors, and to alert car drivers to expect bicyclists to occupy travel lanes. These markings are also used in situations where it may not be obvious where bicyclists should be riding, such as intersections with multiple turn lanes.

**Registered Bicycle**
A bicycle owned by a student, faculty or staff member that has been registered with the VCU police. Information about how to register a bicycle can be found in the Forms and FAQ section of this policy.

**Contacts**
VCU Office of Sustainability officially interprets this policy and is responsible for obtaining approval for any revisions as required by the policy *Creating and Maintaining Policies and Procedures* through the appropriate governance structures. Please direct policy questions to bicycle program coordinator or director of sustainability.

**Policy Specifics and Procedures**

1. **Bicycle Parking:** Any person who desires to park a bicycle on university property must follow these rules:
   - All bicycles must be parked on a designated bicycle rack. It is recommended that they are secured to these bicycle racks to deter theft.
   - A bicycle parked anywhere other than at a designated bicycle rack is in violation of this policy. This includes all non-sanctioned parking areas and bicycles left in a lobby, classroom, hallway, or stairwell of any building or in any location where it may impede access or create a hazard for other individuals. This policy is in accordance with the VCU Reservation and Use of Space Policy, which prohibits the damage of university property, the obstruction of any traffic and the obstruction of any entrance or exit of a building, driveway, path, stairway or walkway.
   - A student living in a residence hall may store a single bike in their assigned room. Residents of suites or apartments may store a bicycle in a shared living space of the suite or apartment only if all residents of that space agree to its storage and the bike does not impede, ingress or egress. A resident may not store more than one bike. Bikes may not be stored or ridden in common spaces within residence halls.
2. **Bicycle Parking Enforcement**: RamBikes, VCU Police, or other designee may remove any bicycle parked in a manner that directly blocks any walkway, entrance or exit, including any emergency exit or accessible entrance, or is abandoned, inoperable, or is reported stolen. Other VCU departments may contact RamBikes to report a bicycle that is in violation of the policy at (804) 828-2453. The following rules apply:
   - Bicycles parked in violation of this policy may be removed immediately and impounded.
   - Bicycles parked on designated bicycle racks that are abandoned or inoperable may be impounded only after a notice has been attached to the bike specifying the removal date, to be no fewer than 10 days after posting the notice.
   - Bicycles removed by RamBikes will be impounded for a period not less than 120 days before disposal.
   - The university assumes no liability for the cost of any damage to the bicycle or securing device incurred during the removal of the bicycle.

3. **Bicycle Retrieval**: The owner of any bicycle that has been impounded by RamBikes must provide a description of where the bicycle was left as well as personal identification by matching VCU bicycle registration or proof of purchase to include manufacturer, model, color, size and/or serial numbers in order to retrieve the bicycle. Upon satisfactory proof of a claim of ownership, VCU shall return a claimed bicycle to its owner.
   - Call RamBikes: (804) 828-2453
   - If VCU Police has impounded a bicycle in connection with a crime or current investigation, call (804) 828-1196. Impounded bicycles reported stolen may be returned to their owner, as authorized by VCU Police.
   - If neither office has the bicycle, it may be in the possession of Richmond City. In this case, the owner of the bicycle should call Richmond Police Department at (804) 646-6727 with the same information as described above.

4. **Disposal of impounded bicycles**: RamBikes will dispose of bicycles not claimed from impound within 120 days in accordance with Code of Virginia, section 23.1-104(B)(2)4, which may include sale, reuse by VCU or donation to an appropriate charitable organization.

**Forms**

1. Bike Registration Instructions: [https://police.vcu.edu/services/bike-registration/](https://police.vcu.edu/services/bike-registration/)

**Related Documents**

1. [RamBikes website](https://police.vcu.edu/services/bike-registration/)
4. VCU Office of Sustainability website
5. Bicycle locking laws for the City of Richmond:

Revision History
This policy supersedes the following archived policies:

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FAQ

1. How do I register my bike?

   Bicycle registration is recommended for all faculty, staff and students who ride or park a bicycle on the VCU campuses. Registering bicycles will help VCU Police identify the owners of bikes if lost, stolen, recovered, or impounded. Registrations are valid for four years.

   Visit the VCU Police website for the Registration Form:
   https://police.vcu.edu/services/bike-registration/

   - Once your bike is registered, you have the option to receive a registration decal from the VCU police department, which may help deter theft.
   - In the event that your bike is stolen, bike registration information may help in recovering your bike.
   - If your bike is impounded, the Office of Sustainability will attempt to contact you based on the registration information provided for your bike.

2. What should I do if my bike is missing?

   Call the VCU Police Department at (804)-828-1196 or RamBikes at (804) 828-2453.

3. What are the City of Richmond’s policies on bicycle parking?

   The City of Richmond has its own policies about securing bicycles. Your bicycle must be locked to a designated bicycle rack. If your bike is locked to a tree, it may be removed immediately. If you bicycle is inoperable and locked to city property, it may be removed after three days. Bikes are considered abandoned by Richmond City after they are locked to city property for a period of ten consecutive days. It may be removed after this period of time. The City of Richmond holds impounded bicycles for 30 days, during which you may call and retrieve it at (804) 646-6727. After 30 days, your bicycle may be sold or donated to a non-profit organization.
4. Who should I call if I lose the key to my bike lock and need to have it removed?

Call the VCU Police Department at (804)-828-1196.

5. Where can I find information about loaner bikes?

http://www.bikes.vcu.edu/about/bike-loan-program/

6. What are the expectations of bicycling safely at VCU?

- Cyclists are expected to operate their bikes with all due consideration for the rights of other cyclists, motor vehicles and pedestrians.
- In order to bike safely and lawfully at VCU, it is recommended that all cyclists familiarize themselves with state and local ordinances pertaining to riding a bicycle.
- The Code of Virginia (46.2-800 et seq.) considers bicycles to be vehicles when operated on highways.
- Unless otherwise noted, bicycle operators may operate bicycles on sidewalks but must yield the right of way to pedestrians at all times. If pedestrian ways have marked bike travel lanes, or streets are designated “sharrows”, bike riders should utilize these marked bike travel lanes. Individual facilities may have other restrictions that apply.
- Riding a bicycle inside a VCU parking deck is not permitted.
- Cyclists are required by law to use front and rear lights at night.
- Riding with a helmet is encouraged while operating a bicycle on a VCU campus.

7. How can I donate my personal bicycle?

VCU students, faculty and staff may donate their gently used bikes (e.g. cruisers, road, mountain and BMX bikes) to RamBikes at 201 N. Belvidere Street. A RamBikes technician will carefully evaluate the condition of each donated bike. Bikes determined to be in good condition may be cleaned and refurbished. Bikes determined to be in poor condition are dismantled and usable parts are salvaged. For more information about this service contact VCU RamBikes at rambikes@vcu.edu or call (804) 828-BIKE.

8. How can I ride safely at VCU?

Riding with a helmet is encouraged while operating a bicycle on a VCU campus. VCU RamBikes conducts safety seminars and bike maintenance workshops throughout the fall and spring semesters. A complete listing of the Virginia laws regulating bicycle use and operation can be found online at http://www.vdot.virginia.gov/programs/bk-laws.asp

9. Where can I learn how to maintain my bicycle?

VCU offers a full-service bike shop where students can repair their bikes themselves or get assistance from our experienced staff, as well as learn about upcoming workshops and group rides. Students will have to provide their own replacement parts if necessary. For more information about these services contact VCU RamBikes at rambikes@vcu.edu or at (804) 828-BIKE.
10. Where can I find bicycle self-repair stands at VCU?

VCU’s Fixit Bike Self-Repair Stands provide another measure of reliability to VCU bike commuters. Should one need to make minor adjustments or repairs, tools suspended from cables at each of these stands can help you get to class or home.

For commuters with basic bike maintenance repair skills, the stands are free to use, available 24 hours a day/seven days a week, and simple to use. They are conveniently located on either campus and are easily accessed by a short walk.

Fixit station locations can be found by visiting bikes.vcu.edu.