

Last month I wrote an article about how **important bike parking is** (<http://la.streetsblog.org/2010/05/04/all-dressed-up-with-no-place-to-park/>) in our urban environment. As long as there is no standard in bike parking in our city, riding a bike will continue to be considered a sport not a transportation solution.

Since there are so many varieties in bike rack designs and so many ways that bikes can be locked up, I thought it might be a good idea to address the how-to's of bike parking. These tips might not only help those who consider installing racks, but also cyclists, who don't want to take a chance on their bike being stolen or damaged.

Locking up your bike:

When you arrive at your destination, you will need to lock up your bike. Very few places in Los Angeles have bike parking so sometimes we have to be creative if there are no inverted U-racks. Instead, find a rail, a pole or a tree that is stationary. Make sure that whatever you choose is high enough that your bike can't be slipped off (parking meters are not ideal unless you have a U-Lock). If possible, find a place to lock your bike where the frame and the front wheel are both protected.

Location:

Always important, select a location that is visible to the public, that is open and allows "eyes on the street" to serve as a deterrent. Avoid locations that are hidden, tucked away, discrete and remember that it's not just the bike that is vulnerable, that you also need to avoid locations that prevent you from being aware and in control of your personal safety.

How to lock up your bike

DO



Here the front wheels are not locked, which leaves it vulnerable to theft as well as to tampering.

DON'T



Neither the frame nor the front tire is secure here,
so the bike can fall and be tampered with.



This bike would need a cable to lock up the back tire, but this is the right way to secure the frame and the front tire.



Your back wheel and your frame is vulnerable to theft and your bike could fall over.



Locking up your bike this way will protect your frame and your wheels.



Someone could easily steal your front tire! And the tire is in the bushes, which means it can be damaged by thorns, debris, broken glass, or get wet and rusty from sprinklers.



Front tire is exposed, which means it's easily bumped and can be damaged. Also, tire is not secured, and can be easily stolen.



The bikes are better off this way than hanging out into the sidewalk, but the back tires are not protected.

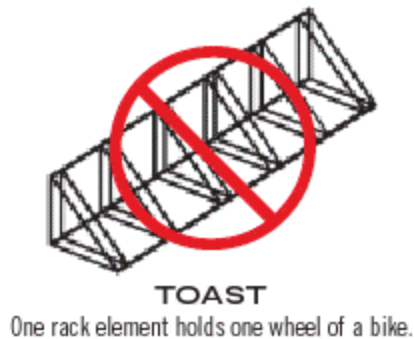
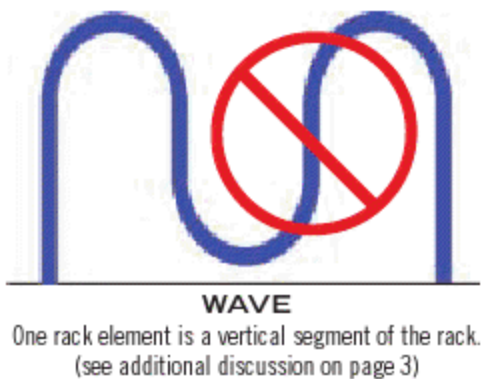
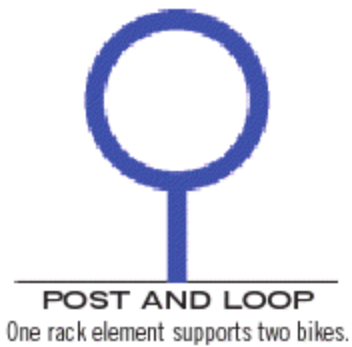
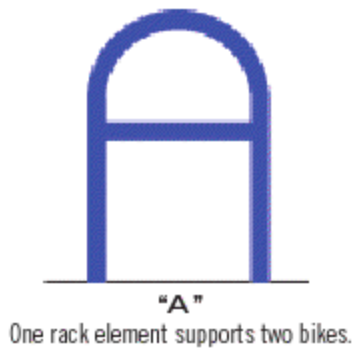
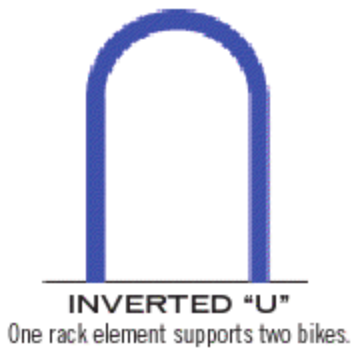
I didn't include the comb or toast bike racks because you shouldn't lock up to those if you care about your bike. I have a bike that has no kickstand, so it can't be locked to a toast rack nor to a comb. The fenders on my bike prevent the tire to even fit into the comb and I can't keep the frame secure at all. So bike racks that are just not safe to lock to, I didn't list.

If there is no bike parking or no safe bike parking at your destination, take your bike inside. It is not worth taking a chance if you care about your transportation. There are bike standards that developers need to adhere to. Putting up with bad bike parking just reinforces those responsible that cyclists don't matter and that the laws and municipalities can be bent and ignored. Don't let developers get away with it. You have a voice and have it

be heard, just like **we let our voices be heard** (<http://soapboxla.blogspot.com/2010/06/trader-joes-sets-tod-standard-bike.html>) at the Trader Joe's on Hollywood & Vine.

For a comprehensive guide on locking up your bike, visit my friends at cicle.org, check out the [Kryptonite site](#) or find tips on [National Bike Registry](#).

Bike Rack Guidelines (recommendations from the Association of Pedestrian and Bicycle Professionals):



The Rack element should:

- Support the bicycle upright by its frame in two places
- Prevent the wheel of the bicycle from tipping over
- Enable the frame and one or both wheels to be secured
- Support bicycles without a diamond-shaped frame with a horizontal top tube (e.g. a mixte frame)
- Allow front-in parking: a U-lock should be able to lock the front wheel and the down tube of an upright bicycle
- Allow back-in parking: a U-lock should be able to lock the rear wheel and seat tube of

Comb, toast, school-yard, and other wheel-bending racks that provide no support for the bicycle frame are NOT recommended.

the bicycle

The rack element should resist being cut or detached using common hand tools, especially those that can be concealed in a backpack. Such tools include bolt cutters, pipe cutters, wrenches, and pry bars.

The rack should consist of a grouping of rack element. The rack elements may be attached to a single frame or remain single elements mounted within close proximity to each other. The rack elements should not be easily detachable from the rack frame or easily removed from the mounting surface. The rack should be anchored so that it cannot be stolen with the bikes attached—vandal-resistant fasteners can be used to anchor a rack in the ground. An exception is a rack that is so large and heavy that it cannot be easily moved or lifted with the bicycles attached.

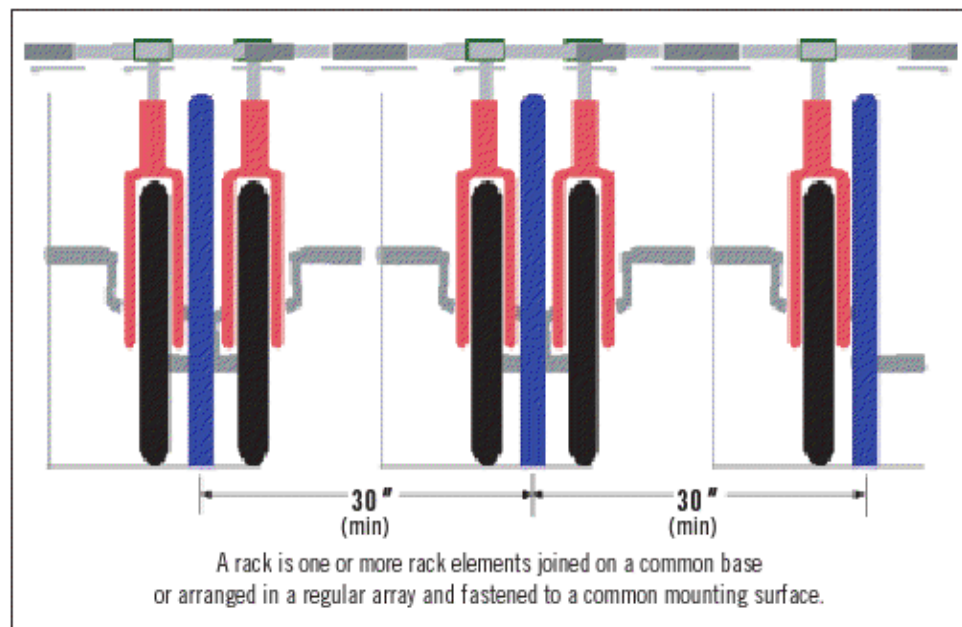
The rack should provide easy, independent bike access. Inverted “U” rack elements mounted in a row should be placed on 30” centers. This allows enough room for two bicycles to be secured to each rack element. Normally, the handlebar and seat heights will allow two bicycles to line up side-by-side if one of them is reversed. When there is a conflict, the bikes can be placed slightly offset from one another as shown. If the elements are placed too close together, it becomes difficult to attach two bikes to the same element. If it is too inconvenient and time consuming to squeeze the bikes into the space and attach a lock, cyclists will look for an alternative place to park or use one rack element per bike and reduce the projected parking capacity by 50 percent.

Wave style racks are not recommended. Bicyclists commonly use a “wave” rack as if it were a single inverted “U.” This limits the actual capacity of the rack to two bikes regardless of the potential or stated capacity. Bicycles parked perpendicular to a wave rack (as intended by the manufacturer) are not supported in two places and are more likely to fall over in the rack. The advertised capacity of a wave rack is usually much higher than the practical capacity.

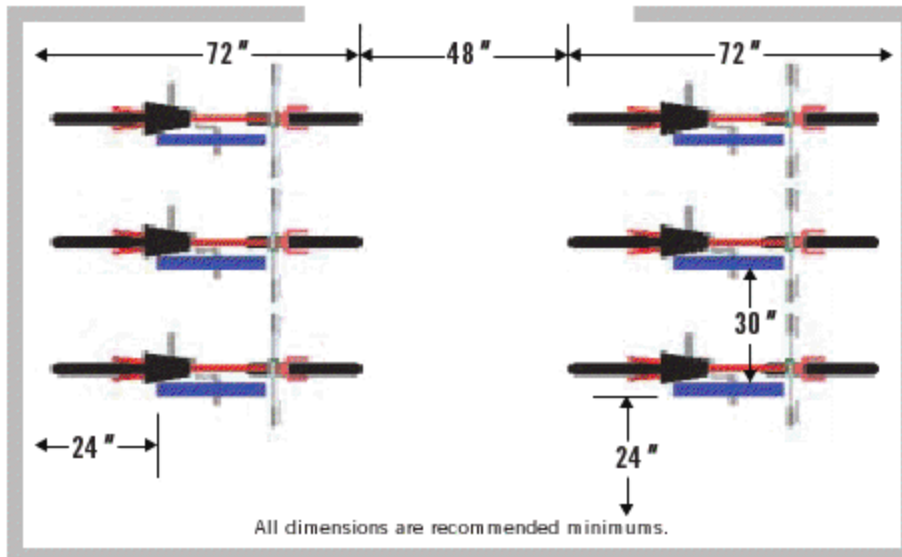
An empty rack should not create a tripping hazard for visually impaired individuals.

The Bike Rack Area:

A rack area or “bicycle parking lot” is an area where more than one rack is installed. Aisles separate the racks. The aisle is measured from tip to tip of bike tires across the space between racks. The minimum separation between aisles should be 48 inches. This provides enough space for one person to walk one bike.



In high traffic areas where many users park or retrieve bikes at the same time, such as a college classroom, the recommended minimum aisle width is 72 inches.



72 inches (six feet) of depth should be allowed for each row of parked bicycles. Conventional upright bicycles are just less than 72 inches long and can easily be accommodated in that space. Some rack types will allow the racks to be mounted closer to the wall. This will not change the space required by the bicycles or the aisles.

The rack area is a bicycle parking lot where racks are separated by aisles.

Large rack areas with a high turnover rate

should have more than one entrance. This will help facilitate the arriving and departing of cyclists and pedestrians.

If possible, the rack area should be protected from the elements. Racks along building walls can be sheltered by an awning. Even though cyclists are exposed to sun, rain, and snow while en route, covering the rack area keeps the cyclist more comfortable while parking, locking the bike, and loading or unloading cargo. An awning will also help keep the bicycle dry, especially the saddle.

The Bike Rack Area Site:

The location of a rack area in relationship to the building it serves is very important. The best location for a rack area is immediately adjacent to the entrance it serves. Racks should not be placed so that they block the entrance or inhibit pedestrian flow in or out of the building. Racks that are far from the entrance, hard to find, or perceived to be vulnerable to vandalism will not be used by most cyclists.

It is important to understand the transition a cyclist makes from vehicle to pedestrian. The cyclist approaches the building mounted on the bicycle.

At some point, the cyclist stops, dismounts, and walks the bike to a rack. The bicycle is attached to the rack and any cargo is removed. The cyclist now walks into the building carrying the cargo. Adequate space must be provided to allow for this transition. The rack area should be located along a major building approach line and clearly visible from the approach. The rack area should be no more than a 30-second walk (120 feet) from the entrance it serves and should preferably be within 50 feet.

A rack area should be as close or closer than the nearest car parking space. A rack area should be clearly visible from the entrance it serves. A rack area should be provided near

each actively used entrance. In general, multiple buildings should not be served with a combined, distant rack area. It is preferred to place smaller rack areas in locations that are more convenient.

You can [download the Guidelines with more information here](#). You can also check out the [Bikeoff guidelines online](#).