



Safe Routes
to Schools

Alameda County

Bike Train *Toolkit*

APRIL 2019



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1. Starting a Bike Train

A Bike Train is an organized group of families living in the same neighborhood who form an adult-supervised biking group to and/or from school. In other words, it's like a carpool, minus the car.

A Bike Train can be a structured program with a regular schedule of trained volunteers or it can be more informal, with parents or caregivers taking turns escorting children to school.

Bike Trains can happen on a daily, weekly, or even monthly frequency, depending on volunteer availability and participant interest.

How to use this Guidebook

This guidebook has been developed by Alameda County Safe Routes to Schools (SR2S), a program of Alameda CTC, which promotes healthy habits by working with educators, parents and kids to increase walking, biking and carpooling to school. The program encourages schools to start and sustain their own Bike Train. The guidebook serves as a “how-to” manual when starting a Bike Train or bringing new people onboard, and outlines best practices used in Bike Trains across the country. It includes recommended procedures, template forms, and handouts that schools may use, or choose to adapt. Alameda County SR2S provides initial technical support – outlined in the “Alameda County SR2S Support” section- for new and changing Bike Trains.



Alameda County SR2S provides initial technical support – outlined in the “Alameda County SR2S Support” section - for new and changing Bike Trains. Look for the pencil throughout the toolkit to find the specific activities that the SR2S Program can provide additional training and technical support to your school.

Benefits of a Bike Train

- Saves time and money by sharing transportation responsibilities
- Decreases traffic congestion around school by reducing the number of cars at drop off and pick up
- Encourages healthy living and active lifestyle choices
- Builds community among participants
- Can reduce absenteeism and tardiness by helping students get to school regularly and on time

Steps to a Successful Program

1. RECRUIT ROUTE LEADERS:

Leaders can include parents, caregivers, or community members who feel confident riding a bike and are experienced riding in a city.

2. ESTABLISH ROUTES:

Consider volunteer and potential participants' locations, along with roadway safety, to determine the routes and stops. Also decide how frequently the Bike Train will run.

3. PROMOTE THE PROGRAM:

Contact families, school administration, and community members to recruit interested students and families.

4. PAIR WITH BICYCLE SAFETY:

Participate in Bike Rodeos, Drive Your Bike program, a BikeMobile visit or other bike safety events hosted by Alameda County SR2S and other providers to make sure students continue to practice and improve their bicycle skills.

5. HOP ON THE TRAIN!

Bike Train Roles

Students participate and celebrate the trip to school. Bike Trains are most appropriate for older elementary school students and middle school students.

Parents can volunteer as Route Leaders or in another support role, and encourage their children to participate.

PTA/PTOs, school faculty/staff, neighbors, active seniors or older adults, and other school community members can get involved as Route Leaders or assist in another role.

Schools can provide support by posting information about how to get involved, by hosting meetings to organize the program, and by hosting Bike Rodeos or another bike safety event.

Local businesses can donate materials or food to encourage more people to get involved.

Alameda County SR2S can provide a suite of technical support features, such as mapping potential bike train routes.

2. Recruiting Route Leaders

One of the first important steps in creating a Bike Train is to recruit Route Leaders who supervise students on their bike to and from school. Route Leaders are the driving force behind Bike Trains.

The Alameda County Safe Routes to Schools Program recommends that Bike Trains have one adult for every three to six children. At least one adult should stay at the front of the group and one at the back. Having multiple adults ensures if one is sick or cannot make it there is a backup volunteer. **The Route Leader must be a confident, experienced bike rider and feel comfortable biking on the roadway.** The Alameda County SR2S Program can train Route Leaders to become safe and confident riders.

Route Leader Roles

- ✓ **ENSURE THE SMOOTH OPERATION**
of the Bike Train
- ✓ **COORDINATE SUPPORTING VOLUNTEERS**
on the route if necessary, and provide leadership about biking formations, timing, and safety
- ✓ **SUPERVISE STUDENTS BIKING THE ROUTE**
until the group arrives at school
- ✓ **TEACH AND MODEL SAFE BIKING BEHAVIOR**
- ✓ **RESPOND TO INCIDENTS**
and alert parents of participants, when necessary
- ✓ **HELP CREATE A FUN ATMOSPHERE**
that is welcoming for all students



3. Route Planning

Bike Trains follow an established route. Routes can originate from a particular neighborhood or begin from a designated “park and bike” location, such as a park or parking lot.

How to Plan a Route

✓ **IS THERE A SAFE PLACE TO BIKE?**

Choose streets with bike lanes or with traffic-calming elements (such as bike boulevards), even if the trip will take a little longer.

✓ **IS IT EASY TO CROSS THE STREET?**

Minimize the number of street crossings and avoid busy, high-speed, or multi-lane roads. Choose crossing locations with traffic signals, all-way stop signs and/or crossing guards.

✓ **ARE THE STREETS QUIET AND SAFE?**

Where possible, choose streets that are quiet, have slow driving speeds, and are adequately lit.

✓ **DID YOU TEST THE ROUTE?**

Once you have determined a potential route, bike the route without students present.

PUT A HELMET ON YOUR HEAD

The helmet should cover your forehead and rest just above your brow bone.

STRAPS SHOULD FORM A “V”

under ears when buckled.



Is it snug on your chin? If not, **TIGHTEN THE STRAPS**

Children under 18 years old must wear a helmet every time they bike, skate, or scoot.

Sharing resources on correct bike helmet fit can help promote the program and teach good habits.



4. Growing the Train

Enthusiastically promoting the Bike Train program may be one of the most important things a school or Route Leader can do. More participants means a greater chance to recruit more volunteers. With enough enthusiasm for the Bike Train program, new routes can be established.

Promote your Bike Train

- ✓ **ADVERTISE THE BIKE TRAIN**
through school newsletters, e-news, fliers, or announcements
- ✓ **HAND OUT ROUTE MAPS**
to students and parents so they can easily see how they can join in
- ✓ **PROMOTE AT SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOLS EVENTS**
such as Walk and Roll days, BikeMobile events, or Bike Rodeos
- ✓ **FOCUS ON BACK-TO-SCHOOL TIME**
as a opportunity to set transportation habits.
- ✓ **EMPHASIZE THE BENEFITS**
of participating for students, caregivers, and the community.

Mr. DeLeo
Taylor
the train
choochoo
Nikki
I Rode

Shaun
+ the
Sheep
Trenton
the
turtle

Quinn
L.J.
Liana
Jaren
Isabelle
to Harly!

Ayden
Mathias

Daunte

Melanie
Austin
Alyssa

(Ruz J. Godoy)

Elana

Alexa

Russell

Michael

Aurelio

Caroline

Monica

Thomas

School

Jaden

Caitlin

Avery

Aiden

the

ausum

kid

Aiden

Noa

Ian

Aman

Cassidy

Water-Therm!!!
Today!


Ema

Anthony

5. Along the Route

Having students follow a few simple guidelines can help create a safe, yet fun and welcoming environment, all while getting students to school on time.

Student Bike Train Guidelines

- ✓ **ATTEND A BIKE SAFETY REFRESHER** 
Students can attend a Bike Rodeo or Family Biking Class before joining the Bike Train to learn and refresh bicycling handling and rules of the road.
- ✓ **ALWAYS WEAR A HELMET AND BRING A LOCK**
Students should always wear a helmet while riding and should bring a bike lock in order to securely store their bike at school.
- ✓ **FOCUS ON BIKING**
Students should avoid playing with toys or using electronic devices during the bike ride.
- ✓ **WAIT AT INTERSECTIONS**
Students should stop and wait for instructions before crossing the street. Route Leaders will remind students to be aware of car traffic at driveways, intersections, and other thoroughfares.
- ✓ **BE RESPECTFUL**
Of all other students, the Route Leaders, the neighborhood, and neighbors.

Ways to Make the Program Fun!

- Name the train—it's fun and creates a sense of ownership. For example, one route could be "Great Egret," another could be "Steelhead Trout," etc.
- Have a theme day—this can include dress up days, wearing the same colors, and other fun themes.
- Create signs for students to attach to their bikes with "Bike Train" and the school name.
- Decorate helmets—customizing students' helmets makes the ride to school more exciting.
- Create a jingle—work with the kids to create a safety-themed song to a tune such as "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star".

Preparing for the Unexpected

What if a student is late?

If the student is late before school, it is the parent's responsibility to get the student to school. In order to ensure students arrive on campus on-time, Bike Trains cannot wait for students who may be running behind. The family is responsible for getting the student to or from school if they are late.

What if there is an emergency?

Route Leaders should carry a charged cell phone and emergency contact information for each student participating in the Bike Train. Alert parents in the event that anything out of the normal occurs. If there is a life threatening emergency or someone is in danger, dial 9-1-1.

What if it's raining, too cold, or too hot?

Encourage students to wear weather appropriate clothing and shoes. Consider organizing a carpool for days with very bad weather.

What if the Route Leader is sick?

Establish a procedure for communicating if the Route Leader needs to cancel. Identify an alternate Route Leader or a single point of contact who can alert families.

What if a student misbehaves?

Establish a procedure for when a student misbehaves. For example, if a student does not listen to the directions of the adults, he or she may be given a warning and their family will be informed. If the student acts in a way that creates a persistent danger to themselves or other students, the student will not be allowed to continue participating in the Bike Train.

What if a bike gets a flat tire or has another mechanical problem?

Parents should be responsible for ensuring their child's bike is in good working order. However, it is important to establish a procedure for handling a bike mechanical problem. A Route Leader may be in charge of carrying a small set of tools to make simple fixes when possible. Or, there may be a parent on call who can pick up the child and their bike in a car and take them to school if the fix cannot be handled relatively quickly.

6. At the School

Before your school starts a Bike Train, consider hosting a school-wide bike education event. This can be a good way to promote the Bike Train, and will prepare students who may be interested in participating to have proper bicycle skills and a bike that is in good shape to ride.

BIKE RODEO

Rodeos are fun-filled courses that focus on introducing elementary and middle school students to safe bicycle handling skills and riding techniques on the road.

DRIVE YOUR BIKE

The Drive Your Bike program is ideal for PE teachers who want to provide intensive bike safety education and training to middle and high school students.

BIKEMOBILE

The BikeMobile is like combining a bookmobile and a bicycle repair shop. The BikeMobile makes visits all around the county to repair bicycles for students and reinforce safe bicycling.



LOCK YOUR BIKE

All students should lock their bike to a rack inside school grounds.

When locking a bike outside of school be sure to lock both the front wheel and the bike frame to the rack.

Secure Bike Parking

- Schools can also help incentivize Bike Trains by providing a safe place for students to store their bike.
- Bike parking should be located in visible areas and near school entrances.
- Schools may consider providing bike storage areas that can be locked during the school day.
- Look into the Bay Area Air Quality District's "Bicycle Rack Voucher Program" that provides schools with funding for bike rack infrastructure every few years:
<http://www.baaqmd.gov/grant-funding/public-agencies/brvp>



7. Alameda County SR2S Support

Alameda County SR2S provides technical support for new and existing Bike Trains. The long term goal is for Bike Trains to be self-sustaining and renewing among individual school communities.

✓ **BIKE TRAIN TOOLKIT AND FORMS**

This guidebook and the corresponding forms serve as a “how-to” manual when starting a Bike Train or bringing new people onboard.

✓ **BIKE TRAIN COORDINATION MEETINGS**

The Alameda County SR2S Team can attend Bike Train coordination meetings at the school. The purpose of these meetings is to identify parents interested in being Route Leaders and explain the initial logistics and safety components of running a Bike Train.

✓ **ROUTE PLANNING**

The Alameda County SR2S Team can provide initial support in determining routes and creating route maps.

✓ **SUPPORT MATERIALS**

The Alameda County SR2S Team has a limited number of high visibility vests to provide to Route Leaders and Bike Train Yard Signs to alert participants of the meet-up locations.

✓ **BIKE TRAIN SAFETY**

Upon request, the Alameda County SR2S Team can provide a refresher bicycle skills and bicycle safety training for Route Leaders and participants.





8. Helpful Links

The following links offer additional information about Bike Trains:

Consent Forms

"Bike Bentonville Walk + Bike School Train."
Bike Bentonville. <http://bit.ly/2H4cmBi> (PDF)

Evaluation Tools

"Student Survey." Safe Routes to Schools:
Marin County <http://bit.ly/J67TbH> (PDF)

National Bike to School Events

Bike to School Day in the USA
<http://www.walkbiketoschool.org/>

May is National Bike Month
<https://bikeleague.org/bikemonth>

Liability

"Safe Routes to School: Minimizing Your
Liability Risk in California." Public Health Law &
Policy. <http://bit.ly/2oLc2Ar> (PDF)

Example Bike Train Programs

"Bike to School in the Excelsior." San Francisco,
CA. <http://bit.ly/2D1ubyf>

"Bike Train PDX." Portland, Oregon.
<http://www.biketrainpdx.org/>

Bike Train Guide and General Resources

"Bicycling to School Together: A Bike Train
Planning Guide" <http://bit.ly/2H4mdqH> (PDF)

"Tip Sheet #2 Organizing Bike Trains"
<http://bit.ly/2H9Pb8F> (PDF)

"Get on the Bike Train." Maine DOT.
<http://bit.ly/2oPTiz0> (PDF)

Route Planning

"Bikeability Checklist." Bicycle and Pedestrian
Information Center <http://bit.ly/2oJGiMe>

Safety Tips

"10 Smart Routes to Bicycle Safety."
[https://one.nhtsa.gov/people/injury/
pedbimot/bike/10smartroutesbicycle/pages/
smartroutes.htm](https://one.nhtsa.gov/people/injury/pedbimot/bike/10smartroutesbicycle/pages/smartroutes.htm)

"Choosing the Right Size Bicycle For Your
Child." The Injury Prevention Program.
<http://bit.ly/2FgEx3z>

"Tips For Getting Your Children To Wear
Bicycle Helmets." The Injury Prevention
Program. <http://bit.ly/2FfKc9Y>

"How to Lock Your Bike." SF Bicycle Coalition.
<http://bit.ly/2FVoKnE>

APPENDIX A

Sample Resources

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Bike Train Route Sign-up Form
Bike Train Recruitment Flyer
Student Participant Agreement Form
Route Leader/Volunteer Agreement Form
Bike Train Safety Tips
Bike Train Game Ideas
Bike Train Scenario Planning Activity

The Bike Train Sample Resources are available in Word format for easy editing.
Please visit <http://alamedacountysr2s.org/plan-an-event/walking-school-bus-bike-train/>
to access these resources.

(Materials adapted from the Safe Routes to School National Partnership)

Bike Train Route Sign-up Form Sample

Tentative Bike Train Routes

Join the Bike Train at XXXX Elementary

A Bike Train is a group of students biking to and/or from school with trusted adults. A Bike Train improves children's safety by biking in a supervised group and it saves parents time and money by sharing the responsibility of taking kids to school.

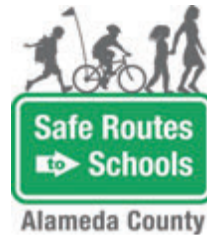
We have two tentative routes planned for the Bike Train - the yellow route and the blue route (see the map on the back). We anticipate that the Bike Train will happen once a month, starting in February 2018.

Are you interested in leading a Bike Train route, volunteering, or having your child participate? Fill out the form below!

Questions? Please email info@alamedacountysr2s.org



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Contact Us

At info@alamedacountysr2s.org

PLEASE fill out and return this form to the Main Office.

1. Are you interested in **volunteering** for the Bike Train? If so, which route?

(see map on back). Yellow Route _____ Blue Route _____ No _____

2. Is your child interested in **participating** in a Bike Train? If so, which route?

(see map on back). Yellow Route _____ Blue Route _____ No _____

Parent or Caregiver Name: _____

Student(s) Name(s): _____

Phone Number: _____

Email: _____

Home Address (or nearby intersection): _____

Rutas Tentativas para el Tren de Bicicletas

¡Cómo iniciar un Tren de Bicicletas en XXXX Elementary!



Un Tren de Bicicletas es un grupo de estudiantes que andan en bicicleta de o a la escuela con adultos de confianza. Hillside Elementary está estableciendo rutas de Tren de Bicicletas para el año escolar 2017-2018.

Un Tren de Bicicletas mejora la seguridad de los niños y niñas al andar en bicicleta en un grupo supervisado y ahorra a los padres tiempo y dinero al compartir la responsabilidad de llevar a los niños a la escuela. Los niños pueden ejercitarse y divertirse con sus amigos mientras ayudan a salvar el planeta.

¿Está interesado en dirigir una ruta de Tren de Bicicletas, ser voluntario o hacer que su hijo/a participe? ¡Venga a conocer más en esta reunión inicial!

¿Preguntas? Envían un correo electrónico a info@alamedacountysr2s.org



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Contáctenos

info@alamedacountysr2s.org

POR FAVOR llene y llene y regrese este formulario a la oficina principal.

1. ¿Está interesado en ser voluntario para el Tren de Bicicletas?

Sí _____ No _____

2. ¿Cree que su hijo/a está interesado en participar en el Tren de Bicicletas?

Sí _____ No _____

Nombre del Padre, Madre o Tutor: _____

Nombre(s) de estudiante(s): _____

Número de teléfono: _____

Email: _____

Dirección de su casa (o intersección cercana): _____

Bike Train Recruitment Flyer Sample

Join other families and students biking to school
Únete a otras familias y estudiantes andando en bicicleta a escuela

Bike Train

WHO? Students, Route Leaders, and Volunteers
QUIÉN? Estudiantes y padres que quieren ser líderes

WHAT? A Bike Train is a group of students biking to and from school with friends and trusted adults.

QUÉ? Un Tren de Bicicletas es un grupo de estudiantes que andan en bicicleta a y de escuela con padres que sirven como guías estudiantes

WHEN? Beginning fall 2017 for the 2017-18 school year.

¿CUÁNDO? Empezando otoño de 2017 para el año escolar 2017-18

WHY? Have fun with friends, exercise, explore outdoor activity, and save the planet!

¿POR QUÉ? Diviértete con tus amigos, haz ejercicio, explora actividades afuera y salva el planeta



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Questions? ¿Preguntas?

Contact/Contacto:

info@alamedacountysr2s.org

1. Are you interested in participating as a Bike Train Route Leader or Volunteer?

¿Esta interesado en participar como guía/líder de un Tren de Bicicletas?

Yes/Sí _____ No _____

2. Is your child interested in participating in a Bike Train?

¿Crees que su hijo/hija está interesado en participar en un Tren de Bicicletas?

Yes/Sí _____ No _____

Parent Name/Nombre del Padre o Madre: _____

Phone Number/Número de teléfono: _____

Student Participant Agreement Form Sample

Bike Train

Student Participation Form



Parent Name: _____ Today's Date: _____
Student Name: _____ School: _____
Parent Phone Number: _____ Grade: _____
Parent Email: _____ Classroom: _____
Preferred way to be reached: _____

Before you join us on a Bike Train, please review the following rules and expectations with your family. Bike Trains can be a fun and safe way to get to school if you follow these simple rules! Your Route Leader will give you a warning if you forget any of these rules. If the behavior persists, the Route Leader will alert the school and your family.

I agree to the following expectations:

- **BE ON TIME.** Be on time to join my assigned Bike Train.
- **WEAR MY HELMET.** Wear my helmet every time I ride my bike.
- **STAY WITH THE GROUP.** Bike behind the Route Leader in the front and in front of the Leader in the back.
- **STOP AND WAIT AT INTERSECTIONS.** At street corners or stop signs, wait for the group and then look left, look right, and look left again before crossing.
- **FOLLOW DIRECTIONS.** Always listen to your Route Leaders and don't bike off at any time.
- **BE AWARE.** Pay attention to car traffic at driveways and intersections; don't play with electronic devices while you bike.
- **BE RESPECTFUL.** Be considerate of other students, the neighborhood, and neighbors.

I have read and understood the expectations of a participant in the Bike Train and agree to follow these rules. Please return to the school office.

Student Signature: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

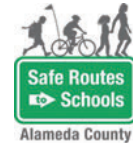


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Route Leader/Volunteer Agreement Form Sample

Bike Train

Volunteer Agreement



Parent Name: _____ Today's Date: _____
Parent Phone Number: _____ School: _____
Parent Email: _____ Are you interested in being a (circle one):
Preferred way to be reached: _____ Route Leader Volunteer

I agree to the following expectations:

- **TRAINING.** Attend a Bike Train volunteer training.
- **BE ON TIME.** Be on time to join my assigned Bike Train.
- **ASSIST THE ROUTE LEADER.** Help the Route Leader manage the students along the route.
- **MODEL SAFE BIKING BEHAVIOR.** Model appropriate biking behavior, following the rules of the road and practicing guides such as "look left, look right, and look left again" before crossing an intersection.
- **COMMUNICATE.** Inform my Bike Train Leader if I am unable to attend my designated Bike Train or if I am running late

I have read and understood the expectations of a volunteer and agree to follow these rules. Please return to the school office.

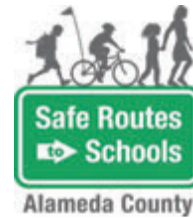
Volunteer Signature: _____



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Bike Train

Safety Tips



- **WEAR YOUR HELMET.** Always wear a properly-fitted helmet. No helmet, no ride.
- **KNOW YOUR SKILLS.** Be able to start and stop smoothly, ride in a straight line without weaving, and use hand signals while maintaining your balance.
- **CHECK YOUR BIKE.** Before riding, make sure your tires have enough air, your brakes work and your pedals spin smoothly. Take a test ride to make sure everything works well.
- **GO WITH THE FLOW.** Always ride in the street going the same direction as traffic — never against.
- **AVOID THE DOOR ZONE.** When riding near parked cars, stay 3-5 feet away in order to avoid hitting open car doors.
- **TAKE THE LANE.** Where the lane is too narrow to share safely with a car, feel free to ride in the center of the travel lane. It's safer for you and people driving.
- **RIDE SINGLE FILE.** Leave space between you and the person in front of you in case of a sudden stop.
- **STOP AT SIGNS AND LIGHTS.** Always come to a full stop at stop signs or red lights. Only proceed when it is safe or the light turns green.
- **PEOPLE WALKING HAVE THE RIGHT OF WAY.** Always yield to your friends on foot.
- **COMMUNICATE.** Use hand signals to indicate turns, slowing and stopping. Calling out "slowing," "turning," or "stopping" can also be helpful when riding in a group.
- **DRESS TO BE SEEN.** Bright colors are more visible during the day, and light colors are more visible in the evening or at night. Reflective clothing is always a good idea, too!
- **BRING YOUR LOCK.** Always use a hardened steel U-lock to secure your bicycle once at school. Attach the frame and front wheel of the bike to the bike rack.

Questions? Contact:

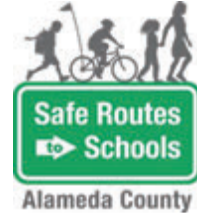
Safe Routes to Schools at
info@alamedacountysr2s.org



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Bike Train

Game Ideas



- **THEME DAYS:** Children and adults can come up with themes that go along with each day of the week. For example, Mondays can be “yellow day” when everyone wears yellow; Tuesdays can be “stripe day” when everyone wears stripes; Wednesdays can be “sports day,” etc.
- **NAME YOUR BUS:** Name your walking school bus group. Solicit input from the students and ask them to vote.
- **HELMET DECORATING:** Have a helmet-decorating party before beginning your Bike Train to get kids excited about wearing their helmets to school.

Questions? Contact:

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Bike Train Scenario Planning Activity Sample

Bike Train

Scenario Planning



Scenario	Route Leader response
Imagine a child in the bike train hit a pothole and fell off his bike. He has a scraped elbow and is crying.	
There is one child in the bike train with a lot of energy. She continuously bikes in circles around the other students in the train.	
One of the children in the train is not following proper biking safety rules. He does not stop at stop signs and doesn't communicate when he slows, stops or turns.	
One day, on your normal route, you find construction has started that blocks the entire roadway.	



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