



# HELPFUL HINTS

## The Smart Route for Bicycle Security

Learn more at [alamedacountysr2s.org](http://alamedacountysr2s.org)



Alameda County  
Transportation Commission

Having your bike stolen is a terrible feeling! The tips below will help you guard against it happening to you.

- 1. Register your bike at [BikeEastBay.org/.register](http://BikeEastBay.org/.register).** Having bike registration info on file will make it easy to file a police report if it is stolen. It also allows you to flag it as stolen so that anyone who finds it can let you know. It even makes it easy to Google search your bike's serial number to find out if it is listed as stolen or not. In addition to registering your bike online, you can also:
  - **Write down your bicycle's serial number**, make model, color, and other distinguishing characteristics, and keep this information in a safe location.
  - **Take photos** of your bicycle. They will come in handy if you have to describe your bicycle to the police and spread the word about a theft.
- 2. Use a quality locking device (Don't just use a cable!)**

**The facts:** Over 80% of bike stolen at BART stations were secured using only a cable lock, which can be cut in just a few seconds. Instead of a cable, use a high-quality U-lock designed for bicycles or motorcycles. Also, try to use a keyed lock and not a combination lock. These types of locks will likely cost around \$40 or more. [Try this guide](#) when considering purchasing a quality lock.

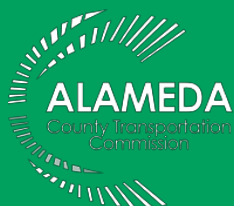
**We also recommend considering:**

  - **A second U-lock, chain, or cable** to make sure the frame and both wheels are protected and secured
  - **Locking skewers** to secure your wheels to the frame
  - **An additional chain or cable lock** to secure the bike seat to the frame.
  - **Take easily removable items with you** when you park your bike. (lights, bags, bottles, helmet etc.)
  - **Keeping your locks clean and working smoothly** by cleaning and lubricating them
  - **Going to your local bike shop** and talking to an employee about these and other security options
- 3. Know where to lock your bicycle safely (Don't lock it outside overnight!!!)**

**The Facts:** About 20% of bikes stolen from BART stations were locked outside overnight. If you must leave your bike out overnight, use one of the [BikeLink lockers or rooms](#) available at BART stations and other East Bay locations (5¢ per hour). Or you purchase a \$20 [BikeLink card](#) to get access to all of these secure facilities. Some BART stations provide free valet bike parking, and others have BikeLink card accessed rooms and lockers

**Other recommendations:**

  - **Lock your bike to a solid metal object.** Don't lock it to a chain link fence, tree, or wooden railing, and make sure it isn't blocking sidewalks, curb ramps, or railings.
  - **Use a bike rack.** If none are available, permanent metal poles or parking meters work as long as it's not possible to lift your bike over the top. Also, shake the bike rack, pole, or parking meter to ensure that it is secured to the ground.



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*The Alameda County Safe Routes to Schools Program is a program of the Alameda County Transportation Commission ([alamedactc.org](http://alamedactc.org)) and is funded with Alameda County's local sales tax Measure B, regional, state and federal funds.*

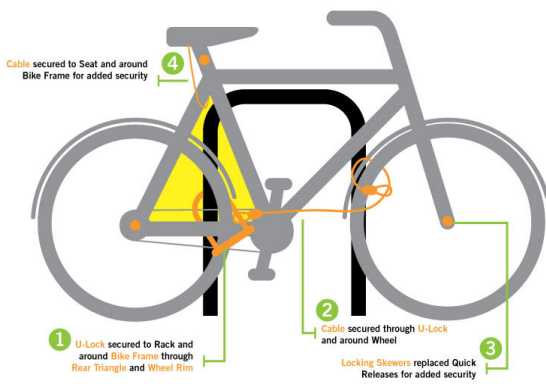
### To avoid bike theft at home:

- **Lock your bike securely** to non-moveable metal fixtures if storing your bicycle in a garage or shed.
- **Don't store your bicycle outside** in a yard or common space.
- **Find out if bike theft is covered** in your homeowner's or renter's insurance policy. Make sure you know whether coverage applies for bikes stored indoors, in garages, in bike rooms, or elsewhere.
- **If you live in an apartment**, ask you landlord or management company to provide a secure bike room. If there is one, use it, but still use a U-lock for your bike.

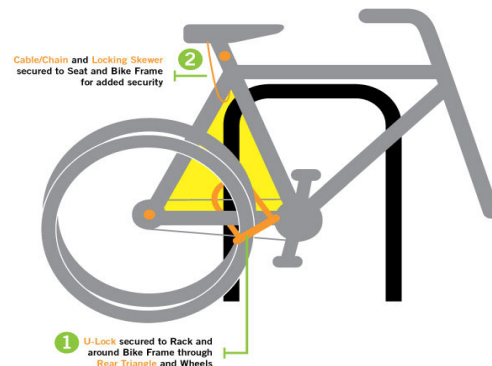
4. **Know how to lock your bike safely.** While no lock can offer 100% security, using a locking strategy that has multiple layers of security can make your bike less of a target. At the very least, your locking strategy should **secure the frame and rear wheel directly to the rack**, with the front wheel secured to the frame or rack.

### Here are 2 options;

#### Using the Rear Triangle



#### Removing the Front Wheel



(images from [sfbike.org](http://sfbike.org))

Ultimately, you can just use two u-locks: one for the front wheel and one through the rear triangle of your frame that also secures your rear wheel. Make sure the lock encircles the rim and not just the spokes of the wheel. You can find a demonstration of correct ways to lock your bike on [YouTube \(Hal Grades Your Bike Locking 2014\)](#).

5. **What if your bike still gets stolen anyway?** Unfortunately, despite our best efforts, a thief can still make off with a bike.

### Here are some tips you can use to try to recover your bike:

- **First, file a police report.** Stolen bicycles are often recovered, but without the proper documentation they can't be returned to their owners. Reporting also helps cities better know how to allocate resources and where to install bike parking facilities.
- **Visit local flea markets or pawn shops to look for your bike immediately.**
- **Scan local Craigslist and eBay listings** for your bike using [Google Alerts](#).
- **Post your bike's information here:** [Stolen Bicycles Bay Area Google Group](#), [Stolen Bikes Oakland \(Facebook\)](#), [East Bay Bike Shop Vigilantes \(Facebook\)](#), or list and flag your bike as stolen here at the free [Bikeindex](#) database. Bikeindex also auto-posts to [Twitter](#).

**Note:** If you find your bike through these recommendations, please don't confront the person yourself. They could be dangerous or may not be the actual person who stole your bike originally. They have no claims on your bike and don't have to be compensated to return your bike to you. Instead, ask for police assistance.

Thank you to [BikeEastBay](#) for originally creating this fact sheet!