

Oversat med tilladelse fra
BAR transport og engros



DISTRIBUTION AND DELIVERY BY BICYCLE



Branchearbejdsmiljørådet
for transport og engros



Preface

Jobs involving delivery of items by bicycle are carried out by cycle couriers, newspaper delivery staff, postmen, postwomen and others. A common feature of those occupations is that much of the work involves the use of a bicycle.

These guidelines are for managers who organise work in this field and wish to make sure that they comply with health and safety law and for people who work in one of the jobs mentioned.

You can learn here about how to plan work in such a way that health and safety requirements are met and find out what you and your colleagues can do to achieve a good working environment.

The objective of these guidelines is to prevent health risks and accidents by adopting best practice in the planning and performance of work. The guidelines explain the risks involved in the work and present recommendations for good health and safety practice. They also set out the rights and responsibilities of employers and employees. The guidelines are issued by the Transport and Warehousing Health and Safety Council (BAR Transport), which is a forum for collaboration between employers' associations and trade unions with the aim of promoting health and safety in the industry.

Structure of the guidelines

The first part of the guidelines concerns some of the stresses and strains involved in the work and presents health and safety recommendations that apply to all delivery cyclists. The second part concerns specific challenges and health and safety recommendations for delivery cyclists.

It is important that you read the general information first.

Danish Working Environment Authority

The Working Environment Authority has reviewed the guidelines and found their content to comply with Danish health and safety legislation. The Authority has only reviewed the guidelines in their present form, without assessing whether they cover all relevant aspects of the area in question.

Help us improve the information

BAR Transport uses feedback from users to improve the information provided. Evaluation takes place for a certain period of time after publication. Anyone can provide input to the evaluation at this website: www.bartransport.dk

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Stresses and strains: recommendations

Delivering items by bicycle involves a great deal of physical activity, and people with such jobs therefore tend to be physically fit. The work is also physically strenuous, and someone who has been pedalling for many years, or who cycle at high speed, will often feel it in the knees. Some cyclists develop persistent pain and wear-and-tear injuries. The strain on the knees may be heavy if riding a heavily loaded bicycle or using a high gear. Walking up and down stairs many times is also hard on the knees. Delivery staff who cycle continuously for a long time in the kind of position adopted on a racing bicycle may strain their necks as a result of sitting in a locked position.

Work-related injuries are one of the risks associated with this type of work. Many delivery cyclists have fallen either while on their bicycle or while walking. Injuries mainly occur when roads are slippery because of rain, snow or ice. Road traffic accidents are another risk factor, especially for cycle couriers. Such accidents may have quite serious consequences.

In areas with busy traffic, delivery cyclists may be exposed to pollution from vehicle exhausts. Such exhaust fumes will affect you most if you ride so fast that you become short of breath or if you stay in areas with busy traffic for a long time. You will not be affected to the same extent if you push your bicycle in densely built-up areas, and traffic lights will force you to stop, thus reducing your speed.

Recommendations

- Wear a cycle helmet
- Do not use a high gear and avoid riding too fast
- Follow traffic rules and be considerate towards other road users
- Use a bicycle that is right for you and the job you are doing
- Make sure that your bicycle is regularly checked and well maintained
- Pack your bags appropriately
- Wear clothes that fit you well and are suitable for the weather conditions
- Make sure you are visible: use clothes of a light colour or with a reflective surface
- Avoid main traffic arteries wherever possible to reduce your exposure to vehicle exhausts
- Use devices such as a head torch to see access routes and read your job sheet
- Check the tyre pressures on your bicycle and check the bicycle for defects before you set off. The correct tyre pressure is stated in psi on the tyre wall.

Your health and safety organisation should regularly discuss how you can prevent accidents and fatigue. You can have such discussions during your annual health and safety meetings or workplace assessments. It is useful to involve delivery cyclists in the discussions, as they know what the work is like and are likely to have good ideas about ways of improving health and safety conditions and need to help in putting the solutions into practice.

Organisation and planning

The employer has overall responsibility for health and safety, including providing relevant instructions. As a delivery cyclist you have a duty to help ensure that working conditions are fully in line with good health and safety practice in your field of work, including following instructions that have been given.

Many people consider it important to be able to influence their own work for their job satisfaction. Delivery cyclists should therefore be allowed to have a say in the organisation of their routes and breaks. It is also a good idea to involve them in planning holiday periods and days off work.

The distribution of work assignments is important in making delivery cyclists feel that they are treated fairly. Managers should therefore make sure that the methods governing the allocation of jobs are transparent. Does everyone know how decisions are made and on what basis are jobs allocated? Do the delivery cyclists have an opportunity to express their preferences regarding the allocation of jobs?

When allocating jobs, managers should make sure they can be performed within normal working hours. If this is not possible in exceptional cases, agreements setting out procedures for such scenarios should be in place.

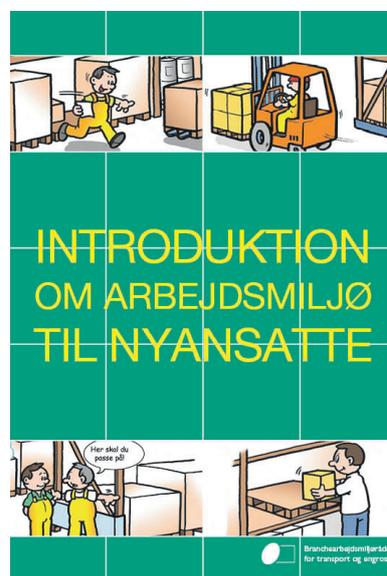
Tips for delivery cyclists

- Organise your routes appropriately so as to save energy
- Cycle at a pace that allows you to cope with your work – including next year

Instructions

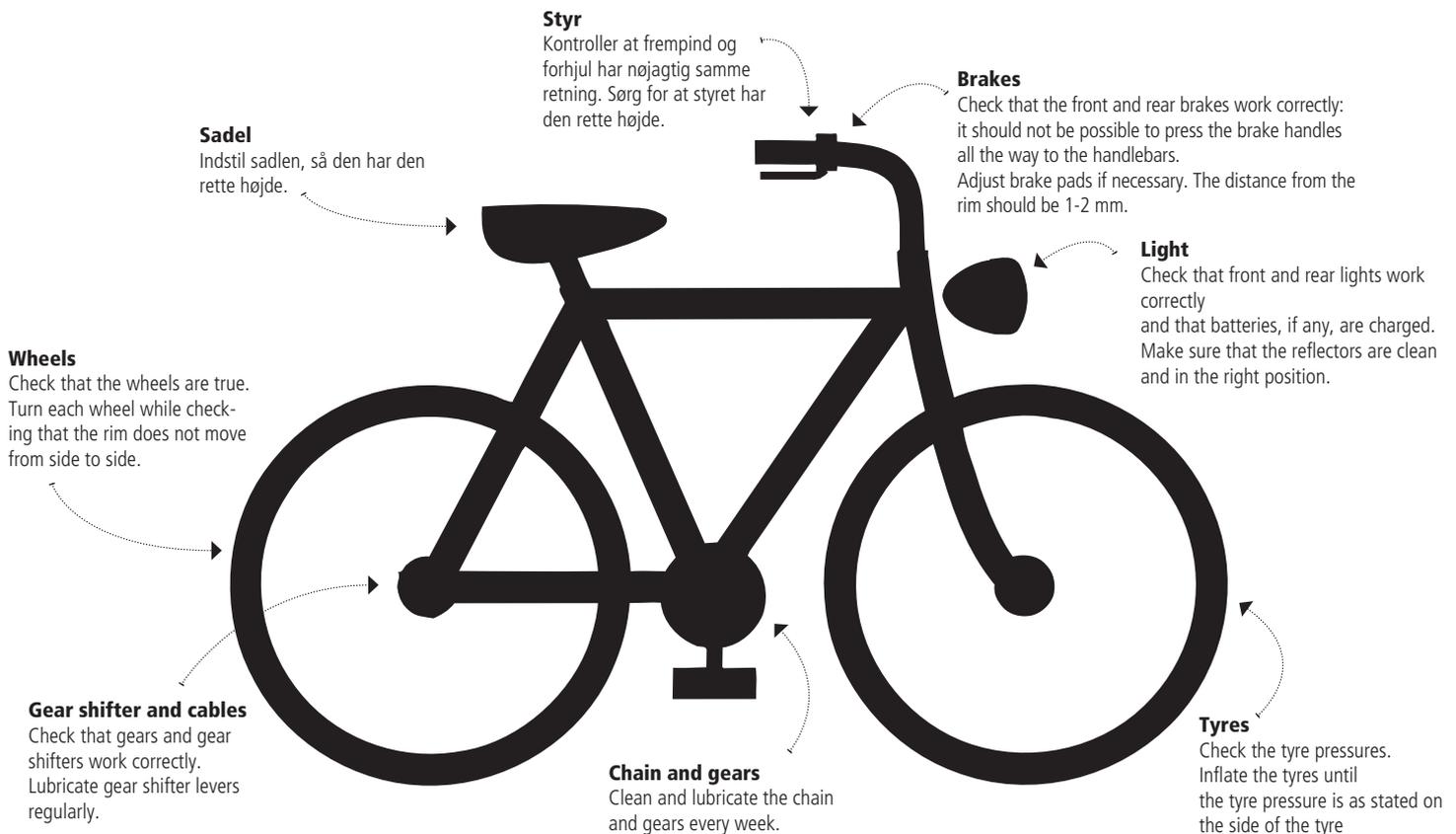
As a manager, you should make sure that new delivery cyclists are informed about specific health and safety risks associated with their work, and issue them with instructions so that they know what to do, for example regarding appropriate work methods and proper use of equipment. In addition, you must regularly follow up on the instructions. New employees must be informed about health and safety work in the company.

BAR Transport has published a leaflet on how to introduce health and safety practices to new employees. At bar-transport.dk there are Word files containing checklists and other information that can easily be adapted to your own organisation.



The bicycle

The bicycle is the most important tool of the delivery cyclist. The bicycle and other equipment used must be suitable for the job to be done and the right fit for the cyclist. Postal delivery workers have bicycles provided by their employer, while cycle couriers and newspaper deliverers use their own bicycles and are responsible for ensuring that their bicycle is well maintained and legally compliant.



A legally compliant bicycle has:

- Two amber pedal reflectors
- A red rear reflector
- A visible white front reflector
- At least one amber wheel reflector on each wheel or white tyre/rim reflectors
- Brakes on both wheels
- White or amber front light that is visible from a distance of 300 metres, including side-on
- Red, ideally flashing, rear light that is visible from a distance of 300 metres, including side-on
- Loud and clear bell
- Maximum width: 1 metre; maximum length: 3 metres

If you are a cycle courier or newspaper deliverer and wish to buy a bicycle, make sure you are given a user manual by the supplier. The manual should include information such as maximum loads on the bicycle and instructions about maintenance. When you buy a bicycle you should also make sure that it

- can withstand the weight it has to carry
- is the right size for you (if you wish to ride in an upright position, an adjustable stem may be useful)
- has a height-adjustable saddle (it is useful if the saddle height can be adjusted quickly, for example using a quick release lever, so that it is easy for you to change between different riding positions)
- has height-adjustable handlebars offering a range of hand positions
- is easy to maintain

The employer has a duty to provide employees with information about appropriate working methods before and during the delivery of items, including information about ergonomically sound riding positions.

Tips for delivery cyclists

- The saddle height should be such that there is full contact between the pedals and the soles of your shoes when you are riding, and safe contact with the road surface with your foot in any other situation.
- You expend less energy cycling and reduce the risk of flat tyres or punctures if the tyre pressure is high. However, when you cycle on slippery roads, the tyre pressure should ideally be lower in order to avoid skidding.
- Lubricate the chain and check you brakes, cables and lights regularly. You are at risk of becoming involved in an accident if the chain comes off, the brake cables break or the brake pads stick to the wheels while you are cycling.
- Follow the general recommendations in the user manual provided by the manufacturer.

Clothing

The industry recommends using workwear appropriate to different seasons and different weather conditions. As the clothes will need washing, you should have several changes.

As a delivery cyclist you have to be outdoors in all kinds of weather. You therefore need clothes for warm days and for rainy and windy days. When you cycle at high speed or carry heavy loads you are likely to perspire, and you will therefore need clothes that can cope with this.

Your workwear should be a good fit and comfortably loose. The back of your top should not be too tight when you ride with your back bent forward. The sleeves should be long enough to cover your arms when you stretch them to reach the handlebar. The risk of accidents can be reduced by wearing garments that are visible to other road users such as high-visibility vests and good safety reflectors on trousers and shorts.

Gloves and footwear

Gloves should be windproof and either of the 'hunting glove' type or be thin at the tips of the fingers so that it is easy to take letters, newspapers and other items out of the cycle bag or rucksack. Shoes should be suitable for walking on different surfaces and in different weather conditions. It is also important that they can keep your feet warm in the wintertime.

Tips

- Wear a helmet.
- Wear windproof and rainproof clothes when the weather demands
- The layer of clothes closest to your body should transport perspiration away from your body. If the weather is very cold it is a good idea to wear a tight-fitting hat under the helmet.
- Make sure that your footwear has good grip and is warm in the winter, possibly with protectors.

Road accidents and other accidents

Delivery cyclists travel around in busy traffic and during the rush hour. Road accidents can happen when couriers and other cyclists come too close to one another, when a car door is opened into the cycle lane or when a car hits a courier in the road. The most serious injuries in such accidents are to the head.

Couriers are also at great risk of tripping and falling, for example on roads that are slippery because of rain, ice or leaves. Cobblestones become particularly slippery when it rains or snows. Other hazards are uneven surfaces, wobbly pavement slabs or potholes in the road.

If you use a headset, use only one earbud so that you can hear the traffic.

Policy on correct behaviour in traffic

Management should state very clearly how it expects cycle couriers to ride in traffic. The couriers are moving advertisements in the cityscape and people's perception of the company is partly based on how the couriers act in traffic.

As a postman or postwoman, newspaper deliverer or cycle courier you are an ambassador for your company. Besides, taking risks in traffic is dangerous not only for yourself, but also for other people. You must make sure that you can hear what is going on around you so that you can react properly.

Your health and safety organisation should prepare a policy for behaviour in traffic. When doing so, a good starting point would be to think of other road users as being on the same side as you and not as your adversaries.

Points that may be included in policy for behaviour in traffic:

- Compliance with the Road Safety Act
- Wearing a cycle helmet
- Wearing high-visibility clothing
- Legally compliant cycle reflectors and lights
- Use of mobile phones and other communications equipment, including headphones, while cycling
- Showing consideration for other road users
- Precautions to be taken in particular weather conditions, for example slippery roads
- Situations in which it would be legal to decline to deliver items, for example where there are dogs on the loose or where access roads have not been cleared of snow

The industry recommends that employers provide cycle helmets for all cycle couriers, postal delivery staff etc working for them



Work-related injuries, liability and insurance

Work-related injuries must be reported in the Easy.dk electronic system. This system ensures that injuries are correctly reported to the Danish Working Environment Authority and to the insurance company. Work-related injuries must be reported to the Working Environment Authority if they lead to more than one day's absence from work or to the insurance company if the nature of the accident is such that treatment by a chiropractor, physiotherapist or optician, for example, is necessary.

It is important that you inform your employer about everything that has happened immediately after the accident, as the employer's industrial injury insurance policy may cover expenses incurred for treatment, damage to glasses, etc. Normally, the employer's industrial injury insurance only covers accidents that have taken place during normal working hours and not accidents that have happened on the way to or from work. Check whether you are covered by a group personal accident insurance policy. If you are not, you should take out personal accident insurance yourself. Ask your employer if you do not know how you are covered as an employee.

In your health and safety organisation you must analyse accidents at work and prepare a plan for how to reduce accidents. You should also record and analyse near-misses. Could you prevent accidents through better planning, instructions and equipment? Involve the delivery cyclists, as they may have some ideas for improvement.

The employer is generally liable for damage caused by employees during performance of their work, which normally means that the employer's insurers will meet claims. However, this does not apply if the employer can substantiate that the employee causing the damage acted negligently or with intent.

As a delivery cyclist it is your responsibility to comply with road safety rules and regulations.

Psychological working environment and job satisfaction

Delivery cyclists mainly work alone, and many of them value the freedom associated with their work. However, the health and safety organisation should be aware that working alone can be stressful. It is therefore very important to consider how the health and safety organisation and management can provide social and professional support to delivery cyclists.

A meeting and gathering point can provide a shared base for delivery cyclists, as they spend most of their working time alone. In addition, cyclists should meet with their managers on a regular basis so that they have an opportunity to talk about their work, for example the planning and allocation of jobs, special requests for equipment or holiday arrangements.

Electronic planning equipment is useful for the planning of jobs and for communicating information about them. However, there are both pros and cons to systems that involve an element of monitoring, and management should be aware that SatNav systems, PDAs and similar devices may be perceived as a way of checking and controlling delivery cyclists. Make sure you have guidelines in place for and an open dialogue on the planning of work and use of systems. BAR Transport has prepared a leaflet entitled *10 gode råd til dig, der overvejer at indføre overvågning* (Ten tips for companies considering the introduction of monitoring systems). You can download the leaflet at www.bartransport.dk

Customers may complain. This can be a very unpleasant experience for the delivery cyclist the complaint is about, even if the complaint is not justified. It is advisable to have some procedures in place for handling customer complaints. If a customer complains, it is important that management also hear the delivery cyclist's version of the incident and provides support.

Fortunately, delivery cyclists rarely face threats and violence. The risk is greatest for newspaper deliverers who work at night. In acute cases of threats or violence it must be possible for the cyclist to contact a responsible manager at any time, day or night. Delivery cyclists should therefore be given a mobile phone number to call for help.

BAR Transport has issued a publication entitled *Bliv køreklar igen efter en voldsom oplevelse* (Getting ready to cycle again after experiencing threat or violence). It contains advice for people who have had a traumatic experience as well as for the employer, colleagues and family members.



Tips

- Make local agreements setting out how to deal with unpleasant situations that have occurred
- If you work alone, it must be possible for you to get help if something goes wrong
- It must be ensured that you can contact a responsible manager

Health

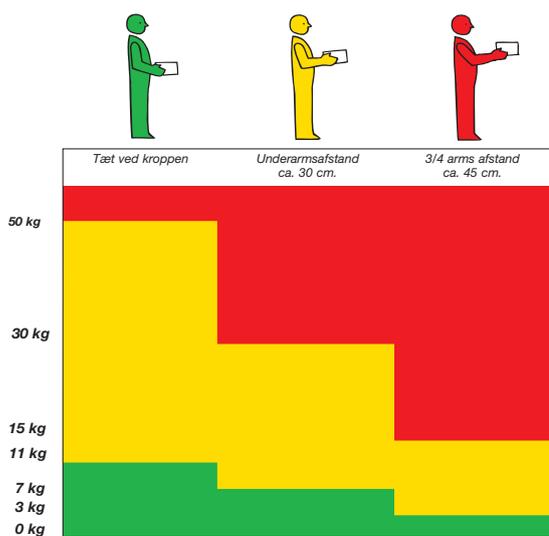
Working as a delivery cyclist is physically demanding. It is therefore important that you eat healthily, drink plenty of fluids and take breaks during your working day.

Tips

- Eat a proper meal during the day. If you work at night, you should have several small meals.
- Have some snacks several times throughout the day, for example nuts, dried fruit, bananas, a wholemeal roll or a yoghurt.
- Take one long break and several short breaks during your working day.
- Always have a bottle of water with you when you are cycling.

Welfare

The employer must designate a place where delivery cyclists can go to the toilet and wash their hands. They should also be able to take their meals there if they have food breaks during the working day. Delivery cyclists should be able to keep their lunchboxes and spare clothes there, and there should also be facilities for drying their clothes. The break room should be centrally located in relation to the area covered. A communal place at which to take breaks and eat together enhances the sense of community.



Heavy lifting

Lifting heavy weights will always put strain on joints, muscles and ligaments in the back.

Danish Working Environment Authority Guidelines D.3.1 include an illustration showing maximum lifts relative to reach with limits indicated in red, yellow and green.

- Loads kept within close reach:
The weight of the load should not exceed 50 kg
- Loads kept within reach of the forearm:
The weight of the load should not exceed 30 kg
- Loads kept within reach of three-quarters of the arm:
The weight of the load should not exceed 15 kg

It is very important that you lift heavy loads correctly. BAR Transport has prepared information about good lifting techniques as well as videos and instruction sheets about typical lifting tasks. All the material is available at www.bevarryggen.dk.

Health and safety for newspaper delivery staff

Newspaper delivery staff deliver morning newspapers, trade journals and magazines at night. They collect/pack the newspapers at a depot and deliver them to private individuals and businesses. During the night, they may go back to the depot several times to collect more newspapers and magazines. Alternatively, the newspapers may have been brought to various pick-up points along the route, such as bus stops. Newspaper deliverers use their own bicycles and are typically responsible for keeping them in a good state of repair.

Night work puts a strain on health, and the work of newspaper delivery staff may also be physically strenuous, especially when there is a full load on the bicycle and when packing newspapers. You should therefore make sure that you have workplace assessment procedures and instructions for these tasks.

Language and cultural barriers: different instruction requirements

New newspaper deliverers should be informed about health and safety risks and about the company's health and safety efforts. This involves instructing the newspaper deliverers about safe working methods and the proper distribution of loads on the bicycle.

Many newspaper delivery staff are of non-Danish ethnicity. Language and culture make differing demands on instructions and follow-up. The employer should pay particular attention to ensuring that the delivery staff understand work instructions as well as health and safety rules.

The employer should also ensure that delivery staff are able to cycle safely and are familiar with Danish road culture. There should be regular follow-up of instructions.

Night work: sleep and food

Night work disrupts people's natural daily rhythm. Night workers should therefore be offered free health checks before they start working nights. Subsequently, they should be offered regular health checks at intervals of less than three years.





As a night worker you can help prevent the adverse health effects of night work. Make sure you have regular sleep patterns and avoid eating large meals at night.

Many newspaper delivery staff find it difficult to sleep sufficiently well during the day. However, lack of sleep increases the risk of accidents. Go to bed as soon as possible after the end of your night work and make sure that you sleep for a least four hours at a stretch. Have a couple of hours' sleep before you go to work and keep a regular sleep schedule. Good, regular sleeping habits and a healthy diet are important.

Tips

- Take several small meals during the night
- Take a long break and several short breaks during your night shift
- Drink plenty of fluids
- Make sure that you sleep for at least four hours at a stretch

Policy on threats and violence

At night, streets and roads may be desolate and newspaper deliverers may be attacked. It should be possible for them to contact a responsible manager at any time during their working hours, and the employer should prepare a workplace violence policy. The policy should set out rights and duties relating to the prevention of violence and the management of incidents where a newspaper deliverer has faced violence or threats of violence.

Accidents at work

There are many examples of hazardous obstacles on newspaper rounds, for example unmarked potholes in garden paths and toys left lying around so that they can cause delivery staff to trip. There is a greater risk of falls at night because of the lack of lighting: many house owners switch off garden lighting at night, and several local authorities have decided to reduce street lighting. Delivery cyclists are therefore advised to use extra lighting such as a head torch or a pocket torch so that they can see access routes and read addresses on their order sheets, and as a result reduce the risk of tripping over.

It also happens that newspaper delivery staff fall off their bicycles because their bags become caught up in the wheels while they are cycling.

Newspaper deliverers are often the first to go out on the road when it has been snowing during the night. They have to cycle before the snow has been cleared and there is therefore a particularly great risk of falling off on surfaces made slippery by snow and ice.

Packing bags and bicycles

Newspaper delivery staff should have proper facilities for packing newspapers, for example a room with plenty of space and packing tables. The tables must be suitable for the task (tabletop at hip height, when standing) and for the people using them so as to ensure that the work can be carried out correctly with appropriate work postures. The newspaper deliverer must be able to pack newspapers standing up, at a good working height and with a good working posture and good movements and under cover.

Newspaper deliverers generally pack their own bags. The bags are typically made of fabric and hung on either side of the handlebars. They can easily become caught up in the front wheel of the bicycle, which means that there is a risk of crashing the bicycle, especially when the bags are almost empty or if they begin to sway from side to side, for example when taking a corner. Another drawback of these bags is that newspapers become wet when it rains or snows.

A skirt guard on the wheels may be useful in keeping bags away from the wheels. Another option is to use cycle bags attached to a front or rear carrier rack. These bags will be fixed to the bicycle and will not sway from side to side. This means that less energy is needed to control the bicycle and maintain balance.

The employer must issue instructions on good work postures and should ensure that lifting of loads by newspaper delivery staff falls within the limits recommended by the Danish Working Environment Authority.

Tips: bags

The size, material and durability of newspaper delivery bags should be suited to the job. In addition, the bag should:

- have a shape suited to the pile of newspapers/magazines and be easy to load
- be possible to mount on a carrier rack or have adjustable straps
- be waterproof
- be easy to pack

Newspaper delivery staff must ensure that the bicycle complies with regulations and that newspaper bags are correctly packed.





Recommendations on loading a bicycle

- Distribute weight evenly on the bicycle (front, rear and sides)
- Ensure that your bicycle is balanced and that you are able to use one hand to indicate your intention to turn or stop
- Make sure you can pick up the bicycle if it falls over
- Do not over-fill your bicycle or place excessively heavy loads on its
- Make sure that you take newspapers from bags on both sides of your bicycle so that you keep the weight in balance while you are delivering

Packing newspapers at pick-up points

Pick-up points along your route may be a bus stop, a staircase landing in a building or the pavement. Your health and safety organisation should be consulted before the pick-up points are chosen in order to ensure the best possible conditions for newspaper deliverers when they pack bags or load their bicycles. Consider whether actual packing is to take place at the pick-up point or whether newspaper delivery staff will only have to stop briefly to re-fill their bags. It is recommended that newspaper delivery staff should be able to stand while packing the newspapers and to work at an appropriate height and under cover, for example at a small table under a lean-to. If this is not possible, an alternative could be a cabinet, a bench or something similar on which the newspapers can be placed.

A place to meet

A meeting point is a good shared base for newspaper delivery staff. It should be centrally located in the area covered. You can use the meeting place to eat, dry clothes, get warm, wash your hands, go to the toilet and spend time with colleagues. If you have eating breaks during your working hours, your employer must ensure that there is a place where you can eat food you have brought with you.

You should have regular meetings with your manager to talk about your work and exchange information. The subject may be the planning and distribution of jobs, requests regarding equipment or arranging time off for holidays.



Adresser

Branchevejledningen kan bestilles af organisationernes medlemmer gennem egen organisation eller downloades fra www.bartransportogengros.dk

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Arbejdstagersekretariatet

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www.arbejdsmiljobutikken.dk



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