

**EFFECTIVE BICYCLE REGISTRATION
TO DECREASE**

BICYCLE THEFTS

AND

BICYCLE CHOP SHOPS



Over the last few years, criminals have become knowledgeable of how to sell and where to sell bicycles without questioning. This has resulted in many individuals, centered in the Downtown Salt Lake City area, working on many bicycles to try to put together parts or to try to hide a stolen bicycle's identity. This has led to piles of bicycles and parts of bicycles.



Picture courtesy of SLTRIB



The reputation of the bicycle chop shops near the homeless shelters has resulted in several cases where individuals have confronted homeless individuals who had their stolen bikes in order to recover them.



Police are allowed to stop bicyclists operating unsafe bicycles or for negligent operation. Using the registration requirements allow the police to verify registration which usually results in the rider walking away if they don't own the bicycle. The percentage of bicycles registered and appearing on the SLCPD's database is minimal. About 1500 bicycles are registered in Salt Lake City every year despite the sale of many times more bicycles.



Many victims do not report the theft since the police are not likely to be able to recover their stolen bicycle. Law enforcement priorities tend to be directed at higher public safety threats due to limited resources.

In 2017, Salt Lake City Police recovered 1406 bicycles that were either stolen or abandoned. The Department was able to return 83 bicycles to their owners.



Other law enforcement departments throughout Utah have similar difficulties returning recovered bicycles to owners. In one recent case, a stolen bicycle was recovered from the non-profit that had it donated by the police.

Many of the recovered bicycles are donated to various charities in the State. The Salt Lake City Police Department donates about 400 bicycles a year to various non profits.



According to the SLCPD: "The current paperwork-heavy process is “cumbersome and antiquated” and “discourages licensing and registration by both bicycle dealers and bicycle owners.” The SLCPD also has found the old system hard for officers to access.

The new procedures do not just lower the barrier to registration but also encourages registration since it can be done on a phone in a couple of minutes.



Other cities have also experienced the proliferation of bicycle parts lying around and bicycle chop shops near homeless areas or next to individuals engaging in criminal activity.



Seattle, San Francisco and Long Beach have been trying to control the problem with a ban on selling, trading, dealing, storing or distributing more than five bicycles or parts on public grounds. In addition banning "putting together, taking apart, distributing or storing more than five bicycles or parts of bicycles in this manner". Five bicycles is the accepted definition of a chop shop.

Many municipal public works departments are empowered to seize the bicycle and bike parts that meet the definition of a chop shop.



But various organizations have contended that the "seizures seem unwarranted and unconstitutional. Much like stop and frisk, it assumes guilt without cause and relies on profiling."



SLC Code sections 5.18 and 12.80 was changed in April to:

Ended requiring bicycle retailers to provide 3 copies of bicycle registration paper forms and returning them to Salt Lake City

Required the SLCPD to facilitate licensing through a bicycle licensing link on its website, www.slcpd.com website that all users and retailers can use to license bicycles

Eliminated the \$2 fee

Required reports every year on the number of bicycles recovered and returned to owners.

The estimated cost is expected to be about \$3000.

The SLCPD is also suggesting a picture of the bicycle, possibly with the owner.

11-21-1 Cities and counties to require licensing of cycles by dealers -- "Cycle" defined.

(1) All county, city and town governments shall by ordinance or otherwise require all cycle dealers operating within their jurisdiction:

(a) to license, or arrange to have licensed at the time of purchase all cycles sold by them;

(b) to keep records on all cycles sold and to furnish, within 30 days of sale, their respective city or county police departments with the following information:

(i) name and address of the retailer;

(ii) year and make of the cycle;

(iii) general description of the cycle;

(iv) frame number; and

(v) name and address of the purchaser;

(c) to not sell any cycle which does not have a serial number on its frame. Where the cycle has no serial or frame numbers the dealer shall be required to stamp or have stamped on the frame the number of the license to be issued for that cycle, the year in which the license was issued or year of expiration of license and the abbreviation for the city or county regulating the dealer.

(2) As used in this section, "cycle" means a device upon which any person may ride, propelled by human power through a belt, chain or gears and having one or more wheels in tandem or other arrangement. Cycles with wheels of at least 20 inches in diameter and frame size of at least 14 inches shall be subject to this section. Others may be licensed by owner upon request.

Amended by Chapter 10, 1997 General Session

Note the year of expiration of license in paragraph c.

The Legislative intent was to create a tool to verify bicycle ownership but the system does not work.

The police need an easy accessible way of checking the owner of bicycles. Since there are many municipalities in the many counties in Utah, the system needs to be accessible to all Utah law enforcement patrol officers and have the same information systemwide.

If a bicycle is stolen in Bountiful and ridden into Salt Lake City, the SLCPD have no way of finding out if the bicycle is stolen unless the bicycle is registered and is the data is accessible to all police officers in Salt Lake County.

This Committee and the Legislature have several options:

DO NOTHING

**SET UP AN ONLINE PORTAL FOR REGISTERING BICYCLES IN UTAH AND
MAKING THE INFORMATION ACCESSIBLE TO EVERY LAW
ENFORCEMENT ORGANIZATION IN UTAH**

**NEGOTIATE WITH THE SLCPD TO USE THEIR SYSTEM WITH
COMPENSATION**

**CHANGE UTAH LAW TO REQUIRE A STANDARD ONLINE REGISTRATION
SYSTEM HOSTED BY EACH LAW ENFORCEMENT ENTITY IN UTAH THAT
WILL HAVE DATA ACCESSIBLE TO ALL LAW ENFORCEMENT IN THE
STATE**

**ENSURE THAT THE COST IS NOTHING AND THE SYSTEM IS ONLINE TO
ENCOURAGE REGISTRATION**

5.18.030: Bicycle Licensing Required:

It is unlawful for any bicycle dealer to fail to license any used or new bicycle sold, bartered, given away, exchanged or repaired by such dealer. The licensing shall be completed as follows:

A. Licensing shall be required of all bicycles sold in Salt Lake City. The Salt Lake City Police Department will facilitate licensing through a bicycle licensing link on its website at www.slcpd.com. Licensing will require the following information:

1. Name and address of bicycle dealer;
2. Name and address of purchaser;
3. Make and model year of the bicycle;
4. General description of the bicycle; and
5. Frame and/or serial number of the bicycle.

B. There shall be no cost to bicycle dealers or purchasers to license a bicycle through the Salt Lake City Police Department.

5.18.040: Serial Numbers on Bicycles:

No dealer may sell, give away, or otherwise dispose of any bicycle which does not contain a serial number. If the bicycle does not have a serial number, the dealer shall impress in the metal frame a serial number consisting of the license number and followed by the NCIC number for the police department in the user's area.

5.18.060: Selling Bicycles Without Title Prohibited:

It is unlawful for any bicycle dealer to sell or otherwise dispose of any bicycle unless the dealer can show a good title thereto, either by bill of sale from a seller, or from the former owner, or by licensure.

12.80.010: Licensing for Owners:

A. It is unlawful for any person to operate or ride a bicycle upon any of the streets, alleys, sidewalks or public ways of this city:

1. If such bicycle has not been licensed; or
2. If the license for such bicycle has been duly suspended or revoked.

B. Any license issued under the provisions of this chapter shall be valid until either:

1. the transfer of ownership of the bicycle; or
2. the suspension or revocation of the license.

C. No fee will be charged to license a bicycle through the Salt Lake City Police Department.

D. Owners may license a bicycle through the bicycle licensing link on the Salt Lake City Police Department's website at www.slcpd.com. Licensing will require the following information:

1. Name and address of bicycle dealer where bicycle purchased, if available;
2. Name and address of owner;
3. Make and model year of the bicycle;
4. General description of the bicycle; and
5. Frame and/or serial number of the bicycle.

12.80.020: Dealer Licensing:

All dealers required to obtain a license pursuant to the provisions of section 5.18.020 et seq., of this code, or successor sections, will, at the time of sale of a new or used bicycle, license such bicycle in accord with the provisions of section 5.18.030 of this code, or its successor.

12.80.030: Police Licensing Powers and Duties:

The chief of police is authorized and directed to prepare and issue regulations governing the inspection and licensing of bicycles required to be licensed but not validly licensed by dealers as above required; provided, that any such license so issued or heretofore issued by the police department shall, unless revoked or suspended, be valid for the life of such bicycle or until the transfer of ownership thereof. No fee will be charged to license a bicycle under the provisions of this section.

12.80.180: Alteration of License or Frame Number Prohibited:

No person shall willfully or maliciously destroy, mutilate or alter the number of any bicycle frame number or any bicycle license issued pursuant to this code.

12.80.190: License; Suspension or Revocation When; Impoundment:

A. The city judges or judges of juvenile courts who hear traffic cases are hereby empowered to revoke or suspend the license of any bicycle when it appears that the owner of any bicycle is not the licensee of record, or that the owner of the bicycle or the licensee thereof has used or knowingly permitted the bicycle to be used in violation of this code.

B. The police department is hereby directed and authorized to impound any bicycle so used in violation of this code for a reasonable period of time pending investigation of any alleged violation of this code, or until such bicycle is licensed by the owner thereof and equipped as herein provided.