



# Participant Packet

Pedal Across Lower Michigan (PALM) is a non-profit group dedicated to encouraging family bicycling and the promotion of bicycling safety.

- ▶ PALM is open to all cyclists able to ride 40-50 miles per day for six days. The tour is limited to 700 participants.

Pedal Across Lower Michigan begins near Lake Michigan and meanders east, passing scenic, cultural, and historic sites. Many attractions will lure you from your bicycle — and you will have plenty of time to enjoy them. The route, which changes each year, generally avoids major urban areas. Sometimes a small downtown may be included for special interest, or for finding lunch or a snack. We use paved routes geared to the novice and intermediate touring rider. The daily distances and terrain combine to make PALM well suited to family bicycling. Optional longer routes are provided to challenge more experienced riders, including a "century" (100 mile route) each tour.

- ▶ PALM is not a race, but a tour with emphasis on the social and recreational aspects of everyday cycling.

The tour gathers Saturday afternoon for check-in and orientation. Riders depart Sunday morning. There is no mass start — proceed to the route after you've put your tent and gear on the truck and had your breakfast. We have designated camping areas in open spaces such as school athletic fields, with nearby toilet and shower facilities. We end our tour on Friday with a shorter route and a PALM-provided group lunch.

- ▶ PALM is held the last full week in June.

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Monthly updates posted at [palmbiketour.org](http://palmbiketour.org)

# PRE-REGISTRATION

## ONLINE REGISTRATION

PALM uses the services of **BikeSignUp**, better known as RunSignup. The regular time frame for accepting registrations is January-May or until the ride is full at 700 participants.

## TOUR COST (SEE WEBSITE FOR PRICING)

<b>ADULT</b>	\$__
<b>MINOR 11-17</b>	\$__
<b>MINOR 0-10</b>	\$__
<b>PRIVATE SAG/CAMPER DRIVER</b>	\$__
<b>PALM SAG DRIVER (VOLUNTEER)</b>	\$0
<b>TRUCK DRIVER (VOLUNTEER)</b>	\$0

*There is a small processing fee per paid participant.*

The tour cost covers overnight camping Saturday to Thursday, limited SAG service, baggage transport, mapped routes, t-shirt, and lunch at the end of the tour. All participants, including volunteers and non-riders, must register.

### **Meal plans and bus rides are optional add-ons.**

Bicycle repair service will be at each site and fees will vary.

If there is an outside vendor offering tent service, this must be reserved and paid for through the vendor.

## MINORS AND SPONSORS

Participants of all ages are welcome, and families are encouraged! Everyone traveling with the tour, riding or not, must register and sign a waiver.

**A parent/guardian must sign a waiver for each rider under the age of 18** and this must be presented at check-in or the minor will not be allowed to participate.

Riders under the age of 18 must have an adult sponsor **on the tour** who is responsible for them, if a parent/guardian is not on the tour. Adults sponsoring minors must sign their waiver accepting responsibility. One adult may sponsor no more than eight minors.

### **No children under 16 may ride unaccompanied.**

A parent/guardian or sponsor must ride close behind all minors, and have them in their sight at all times.

If a minor is picked up by a SAG vehicle, a parent/guardian or sponsor must ride with the minor.

## ADD-ONS (SEE WEBSITE FOR PRICING)

Optional meal plans and bus transportation are provided for your convenience for an additional fee.

<b>MEAL PLAN</b>	\$__
<b>BUS TRANSPORTATION</b>	\$__
<b>EXTRA T-SHIRTS</b>	\$__

## MEAL PLANS

Food is not included in the price of the tour. However, we make arrangements to have a quality breakfast and dinner available at each site. We try to have a vegetarian option available whenever possible.

Riders are responsible for obtaining their own lunches. There are usually places to buy lunch or snacks on the route.

Meals provided in the meal plan are breakfast Sunday-Friday and dinner Sunday-Thursday. Dinner Saturday is on your own, and PALM provides a complimentary lunch on Friday.

## BUS TRANSPORTATION

We provide optional charter bus transportation from the end site to the start site on Saturday so you can park at the end, or bus transportation from the end site to the start site on Friday so you can park at the start.

Bus transportation must be reserved at registration (or added before May 10) or we cannot guarantee seats will be available. Bus transportation refunds will be made if PALM must cancel a bus due to lack of participants reserving transportation.

We try for the safest spot we can get for long-term parking, but we cannot assure security. You are responsible for parking fees, if any.

Your bikes are trucked to the start site at no additional cost. We cannot be responsible for scratches or other damage to bikes. We recommend wrapping your frame if this is a concern.

## CHANGES/CANCELLATIONS

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Registration is limited to the first 700 participants and may close before this deadline, so don't delay!

<b>REGISTRATION</b>	by May 10
<b>CHANGES TO REGISTRATION</b>	by May 10
<b>CANCELLING AN ADD-ON</b>	by May 10
<b>CANCELLING YOUR TOUR</b>	by May 10

Refunds are subject to an administration fee.

**No refunds for any reason after May 10.**

Instructions for changing or cancelling add-ons or your tour registration are in the Registration FAQ on our website at [palmbiketour.org](http://palmbiketour.org).

## TRUCKS AND LUGGAGE

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Baggage will be trucked between campsites. Cyclists must carry everything they need during the day (bathing suits, jackets, snacks, first aid, spare tires, money). The trucks will carry everything else (tents, sleeping bags, clothing). Do not bring valuables or things that could be easily damaged by contact with damp bags.

Bags must not weigh more than **40 lbs.** and be able to be carried, loaded, and unloaded by one individual. Use more bags if necessary. Do not tie bags together. The luggage for all participants must fit into three trucks.

## SUPPORT AND GEAR (SAG)

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SAG stops provide fresh water to refill your water bottles at regular intervals along the route.

SAG vehicles drive the route to help riders who are injured, ill or have disabled bikes. SAG service ends at 5 p.m. every day.

If a rider is unable to finish the route on two separate days and requires a SAG ride to the next site, the rider will be asked to arrange for transportation back to their car or to their home.

If a minor is picked up by a SAG vehicle, a parent or authorized guardian must ride with the minor.

## PRIVATE SAG VEHICLES/CAMPERS

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All vehicle drivers parking on site must register as a participant and display a **PALM Parking Pass** at all times. If you intend to have your vehicle or camper

accompany you from site to site, indicate this in the registration ADD-ONS. Private vehicles and campers must park in the designated areas at each site.

Private SAGs must stay off ride route. Do not arrive at the next site before noon, and do not set up camp without first checking with Site Coordinator.

## EQUIPMENT

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Any bicycle in good working condition can be used on PALM. No roller-blades, skateboards, mopeds or scooters are allowed on PALM. Please review guidelines on our website for electric bicycles.

## HELMETS

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Your CPSC-certified and properly-fitted helmet **MUST** be worn any time you are on your bike, even in the parking lot. Children in trailers also must wear helmets. Failure to wear a helmet could result in your removal from the tour.

## STATE LAW

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Absolutely no alcohol, firearms, smoking, or fires of any kind on school grounds.

Obey all traffic laws. Violators will be removed from the tour and may be eligible for traffic tickets.

## STAFF VOLUNTEERS

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PALM is only possible due to the efforts of many dedicated staff volunteers. The committee meets monthly beginning in September to review the previous tour and begin planning for the next year. Every year many of our staff volunteers return, but we also need new people as positions become available. Please consider donating a bit of your time to supporting PALM in the future!

We need **SAG drivers** every tour to help participants in need. We also need **truck drivers** every tour to drive baggage trucks from site to site.

Volunteer staff SAG and truck drivers do not pay the tour fee but must register, sign the participant waiver, have a standard driver's license, and must be at least 21 years old. Two daily meals are provided.

## QUESTIONS?

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Our website is updated monthly, so that's a great place to check first! [palmbiketour.org](http://palmbiketour.org)

# POST-REGISTRATION

We're so glad you're joining us!

## SATURDAY CHECK-IN

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**Check-in hours are 3 p.m. to 6 p.m.** on Saturday at the first site on the tour. Your packet includes your fanny flag, maps, rules, t-shirt, and other items. **Participants must pick up their own packets** as a staff volunteer will attach your wristband.

**Be sure to bring printed, signed waivers for all participants.** Minors without a waiver signed by a parent/guardian AND a sponsor (if parent/guardian is not on the tour) will not be able to participate.

Dinner on Saturday is on-your-own. There will be late arrival check-in for a limited time after the Saturday evening meeting. **Do not skip this 7 p.m. orientation meeting!**

The baggage trucks close at 9 a.m. Sunday so please pack up your site before breakfast, or eat early so you can pack up after.

## TOUR WRISTBANDS

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**Your ride wristband must be worn at all times.**

Ensure you received the correct color wristband if you opted for the **meal plan**. Due to limited seating, only those with the wristbands for paid meals will be allowed in the cafeterias. Meal times are usually 6:30-8:30 a.m. for breakfast and 5-7 p.m. for dinner but may change by location, so always attend the evening meetings and check the information table.

## TOUR FANNY FLAGS

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**Your PALM fanny flag must be visible every day!**

Pin on bike bag, facing the road, or on lower back of shirt. Be sure it is visible from the road so PALM SAG drivers can see it. Many people print their name and their hometown on the flag. Your emergency contact info is on the back of your flag.

**To signal a SAG driver:** *TAP-TAP-TAP*  
*the top of your helmet.*

## T-SHIRTS

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Save your commemorative PALM t-shirt for Friday to wear in the parade at the end of the route!

You can swap your clean, unwashed shirt for a different size (if available) on Tuesday after the meeting. You may buy additional t-shirts (if available) on Wednesday after the meeting.

## INFORMATION TABLE

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Local site information including nearby restaurants and attractions, lost and found, and other messages are located at the information table. **Please check it every day after your ride.** Add your thoughts to the comment book!

## TRUCKS AND LUGGAGE

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**Each bag must be 40 lbs. or less!**

Do not tie your bags or other items together. Please use duffel bags — they pack well on the trucks. Be sure to put your sleeping bag in a waterproof bag. Pack clothing inside resealable plastic bags.

Trucks open at 7 a.m. and close at 9 a.m. each morning. **You must load your own bags every morning.** Staff cannot load your bags for you. Do not leave your bags on the ground near the truck.

Trucks will be unloaded in the afternoon when there are enough riders at the site willing to help unload ALL of the trucks.

## SAFETY AND EDUCATION

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We highly recommend participants complete the online 'Traffic Skills 101' course found at <http://bikeed.org>

We have a certified safety instructor offering classes every evening on topics such as bicycle maintenance, efficient cycling, and self-contained touring. We recommend all new participants attend the first-timer class after Saturday's orientation meeting.

## HELMETS

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Your CPSC-certified helmet **MUST** be worn any time you are on your bike, even in the parking lot. Children in trailers also must wear helmets.

Your helmet should sit straight on your head — not tipped toward the back of head. The chinstrap should be slightly snug — only two fingers should fit between it and your chin.

**Failure to wear a helmet could result in your removal from the tour.**

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## CAMPING

**Camp only in areas marked by PALM staff.** Do not ask school staff for permission to camp or park in other areas — not all school staff may know what arrangements have been agreed upon in our building use contracts. Our volunteer Site Coordinators have worked closely with school administration on designated accommodations.

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## WEATHER

We camp outside unless **severe** weather is near the area. Be prepared to sleep in the rain! PALM staff will announce if severe weather dictates we must take shelter inside the school.

We will not unload trucks if **severe** weather is in the area. We will attempt to unload bags into the school if it is raining.

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## SUN SAFETY

Drink lots of water! There are water bottle refill sites along the route.

Don't skimp on sunscreen! Keep a small container with you and reapply during the day.

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## BIKE REPAIR

Each cyclist is expected to carry the basic minimum tools; at least enough to repair a flat tire. Bike shops accompanying the tour can make repairs in the evening. They charge for their parts and services. If you ride a non-standard bike, come prepared with parts the bike shops may not have in stock.

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## BIKE LOCKS

Use your own discretion when locking your bike. There are not always suitable places to use a lock at the school buildings or on the route.

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## ELECTRICITY

Electricity will be available in designated areas for **C-PAP machines ONLY**. No fans, lights, etc. C-PAP users must bring outdoor rated extension cord.

Check with the information table for the location of the device charging station.

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## CHARGING STATION

The station is in high demand, so please remove your devices as soon as they are charged.

**Please silence calls and alarms while your device is charging.**

Be sure to remove devices from the charging station before breakfast so it can be loaded onto the truck for use at the next site.

PALM is not responsible for devices left at the charging station after 9 a.m.

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## HEADPHONES/EARBUDS

For safety, no headphones or earbuds allowed while on your bicycle.

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## QUIET TIME

As a courtesy to all riders, quiet time is from **10 p.m. to 6:30 a.m.** Early risers, please be considerate of those still sleeping! Trucks do not open for loading until 7 a.m. so there is no need to take down tents before 6:30 a.m.

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## STATE LAW

Absolutely no alcohol, firearms, smoking, or fires of any kind on school grounds.

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## CANCELLATIONS

Refunds are subject to a fee (see website for current costs and fees). **No refunds after May 10.**

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## QUESTIONS?

If you can't find the information you're looking for at [palmbiketour.org](http://palmbiketour.org) please email [palmbiketour@yahoo.com](mailto:palmbiketour@yahoo.com) and we will forward your message to the volunteer staff member best suited to address your issue. Please be patient.

# PREPARING FOR PALM

## IS YOUR BODY READY FOR A SIX-DAY TOUR?

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For those of you who have never participated in a multi-day ride, you may be asking yourself: how do I get physically ready?

PALM is geared toward families and beginners and the daily mileages reflect that. However, how easy the ride will be for you, and especially how much you enjoy yourself, is directly proportional to how well you prepare.

Start riding in the spring as soon as weather permits. Try to ride at least 3 times a week. In the beginning, try for at least 5-10 miles. After 2 weeks, add an additional 5-10 miles to each ride. After a few more weeks, add another 5-10 miles per ride. Continue this gradual building up until you get to at least one 50-mile ride each week right up to PALM.

**March:** ride 3 times per week, up to 20 miles

**April:** ride 3 times per week, up to 30 miles

**May:** ride 3 times per week, up to 40 miles

The secret is to not only build up your muscles and aerobic capacity, but to become comfortable in the riding position and especially the saddle. Everyone, even pro riders, get a sore posterior. Take a "butt break" every 10-15 minutes while riding by coasting, standing up on the pedals, and stretch; first one leg, then the other.

Get off the bike for at least few minutes every 10-20 miles. You have all day to get to the next site and there's plenty to see and do along the way.

**Remember, PALM is not a race. Enjoy the scenery!**

## IS YOUR BIKE READY FOR A SIX-DAY TOUR?

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For a bike ridden only on pavement, if it has been more than 5 years or 2000 miles, you may need an overhaul. All the bearings will need to be cleaned and repacked with grease. That includes the front and rear hubs, bottom bracket, headset, and pedals. You may also need a new chain, cables or brake pads.

If you are not comfortable servicing your own bike, take it to your local bicycle shop to have it tuned up and checked out. Make sure to tell your mechanic that you are going on a tour. A good mechanic will find anything that is likely to go wrong during the tour.

While you're there, ask them to see if the bike is properly set up for you. Have them look at the seat's height, tilt, and fore-aft position, as well as the handlebar position, to be sure everything is set up properly for you. Remember that these are starting positions — as you ride, you may want to make adjustments. Ask the shop how to make these adjustments so that you can do them yourself.

## WHAT'S IN YOUR ON-BIKE TOOL KIT?

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The most likely mechanical problem you might have is a flat tire. At a minimum, you should carry a spare tube, tire levers, a patch kit and a pump or CO2 kit.

Someone in your group should also have a chain tool and a spoke wrench. You don't want a broken chain or a warped wheel to cause you to miss a day's ride.

Also, carry all the tools necessary to tighten all the nuts, bolts, and screws on your bike. Some tool kits are pretty complete and include the seat bag. Multi-tools can replace many individual tools. Make sure you know how to use the tools you carry.

**Remove your bicycle from the roadway completely before starting to work on your bike.**



# PACKING FOR PALM

## WHAT TO BRING:

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### *YOUR BICYCLE AND RELATED ITEMS —*

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- helmet — required (CPSC-certified)
- rear-view mirror — recommended
- small bike-mounted air pump
- extra tube and tire levers
- bike multitool or the correct sized tools for your bike
- chain lube
- handlebar bag and/or a back rack and straps
- water bottle(s) for the bike
- lock and cable for securing bike
- charger and extra battery for e-bikes

### *YOUR CAMPING NECESSITIES —*

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- sleeping bag, some sort of sleeping pad, small pillow
- tent, rain fly, ground cloth, stakes and small mallet
- flashlight and batteries
- earplugs, if a light sleeper
- toiletries and medicines, sun block, lip balm, mosquito repellent
- quick-dry camping towel and washcloth
- clothes line and clothespins

### *YOUR RIDING GEAR AND OTHER CLOTHING —*

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- jerseys or shirts (one for each day, or plan to wash out at night)
- cycling shorts (at least two pair so that you can wash one at night)
- cycling tights (if prediction is for cool weather)
- cycling gloves (with padding)
- rain gear — at least a rain jacket for cycling
- regular clothing for warm evenings, cool nights
- socks and underwear
- swimwear and shower shoes

## WHAT NOT TO BRING:

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- valuables
- breakables
- large folding chairs
- large coolers

## HOW TO PACK:

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- **Please use duffel bags** — they pack well on the trucks. Hard-sided luggage does not.
- Be sure to put your sleeping bag, bedding and pillow in a waterproof bag.
- Pack clothing inside resealable plastic bags.
- **No more than 40 pounds per bag.**
- Do not tie bags or other items together.
- Trucks open at 7 a.m. and close at 9 a.m.
- **You must load your own bags on the truck.** Staff volunteers cannot load them for you.
- **Do not leave your bags on the ground near the truck.** Your bags will stay on the ground when the truck leaves at 9 a.m.!
- Trucks will be unloaded in the afternoon when there are enough riders at the site willing to help unload ALL of the trucks.

## STAND OUT!

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With 500-700 participants, your bag might not be as easy to spot as you might think! Attaching a durable luggage tag — or a colorful patterned duct tape or fabric "flag" on your handle — can make the task of locating your bags at the next site much easier.

Also note which of the three trucks you are loading them onto!

# PEDAL SAFELY

*The PALM Pledge: Be Responsible. Be Polite. Be Predictable. Be Careful. Be Helpful.*

## BE RESPONSIBLE.

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- Obey ALL traffic laws. In particular, **STOP** at stop signs — don't just yield.
- Keep to the right of your lane when safe to do so.
- Don't ride in low light conditions without lights.
- Keep your head up and scan your surroundings. Regularly check your mirror.

## BE POLITE.

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- Ride no more than two abreast.
- Drop to single file when traffic approaches.
- Get bikes completely off the roadway when stopped.
- Use paved shoulders where available, debris free, and of sufficient width.
- Call out, "Car back", "Car up", "Slowing", or "Stopping" to alert other riders as to what you see and what you are doing.

## BE PREDICTABLE.

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- Use hand signals for all turns.
- Stay in your lane — ride straight; don't swerve.
- Say and signal "stopping" or "slowing."
- Warn other cyclists before passing. Ring bell or call out "On your left!"
- Don't swerve around potholes or debris without first checking that it is clear behind.

## BE CAREFUL.

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- Watch out for vulnerable cyclists.
- Watch for gravel, sand, potholes and other hazards.
- Warn other cyclists if you spot a hazard.
- Pass parked cars a door width out, in case one opens.
- Always cross railroad tracks at a right angle.
- If chased by a dog, squirt with water bottle, yell "GO HOME" at the dog, or try to out run it.

## BE HELPFUL.

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- Be grateful for SAG drivers — they're volunteers too!
- Get involved — you'll be glad you did.
- Above all, be safe and have fun!

*Remember this tour is run entirely by volunteers who are on vacation too — help out if you see an opportunity. Things will run smoother and you'll have as much fun as we do!*

There is a FREE bicycle education class after each evening's PALM meeting!

