

*Last updated January 2023*

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

We formed in 2013 to empower, educate, and encourage women/trans/femme identifying bicycle-riding persons in the DC, Virginia, and Maryland metropolitan areas.

The Women & Bicycles program is centered on a peer-to-peer experience that inspires people to bike, participate, teach, advocate, and lead in the bike movement.

### **Grounding definitions:**

[WABA's diversity, equity and inclusion statement](#)

Women/trans/femme - Gender is a wide field of possibility. You are welcome in this group if you identify in the general spectrum of women, genderqueer, femme, nonbinary. We generally trust you to know yourself and if this group is for you. One exception: you are not welcome if you are cis-male trying to join as a transphobic joke. Feeling a little lost in the language that was just used? One place to learn more [here](#).

[Racism](#)

[White Supremacy](#)

Privilege [here](#) and [here](#)

[Intersectionality](#)

[Audism](#)

[Microaggressions](#)

## **II. JOINING THE WOMEN & BICYCLES FACEBOOK GROUP**

### **Group Screening Questions:**

What is your physical location? (We're DC-metro-based, and we are the bicycle group, not the motorcycle group). Requires an answer.

Women & Bicycles is a safe space and open to all who identify as a woman/trans/femme - do you? Requires an answer. (Feel free to share your pronouns.)

### **How to approve:**

Have they answered all of the questions?

NO (even if they answered some of the questions)

- If they haven't answered the questions - ignore!

- If they have sat there a while and the FB account looks legitimate, you can send them a message (or something to this effect):

“Thanks for your interest in the WABA Women and Bicycles Facebook group. We do have required questions, both to ensure that the group is full of people and not spam-bots, and follows the community boundaries we have established for our group (a group for women/trans/femme people who are interested in bicycles in the DC region)”

## YES

- Check for realness:
  - Have they had a FB account for a while?
  - Do they have interests/friends/connections?
  - Do they have photos/posts?
  - This can be tricky because folks, especially if they have one or more marginalized identities, may have very restricted access to their profiles and have a vague public presence in posts/photos.
- Good spam bot checks
  - Is there a member with the same name/profile? (ie copied account)
- Have they answered the questions?
  - Legitimate reason to join a DC area group of women/trans/femme group

## When to DECLINE a request

1. DECLINE right away and block:
  - a. If it is an obvious scam. Here are some examples of scam markers:
    - i. A glamor shot with great lighting and sexualized focus on breasts or other body parts prominently on display.
    - ii. No other information in profile
    - iii. A new profile
    - iv. Not a member of any other groups
    - v. Does not live locally
2. DECLINE without blocking:
  - a. Men. If a person is clearly a cis-man, you can decline.
  - b. You can always message the man to explain that we are a women/trans/femme only group, but we appreciate their solidarity. Invite them to join WABA!
    - i. Suggested Language: Dear (MAN's NAME), Thanks for your interest in the Women & Bicycles: Washington DC Region group. We want to let you know that W&B is a women/trans/femme group. While we really appreciate the support and solidarity of the men in our area, this group is just an area where we need to maintain a women/trans/femme-only space. We hope you are already a member of WABA (or that you'll join it!), since there are many events, classes, and rides for all genders. Thanks again for your interest, (YOUR NAME)
3. MESSAGE and DO NOT DECLINE or ACCEPT until there's a reply:
  - a. if you aren't sure if their profile is real or that they made the request.

- b. Please couch your message in language that indicates we want to be sure the profile is real and that the person themselves made the request to join.
- c. A person, especially important if they are gender fluid, does NOT need to explain their gender identity to us - it is our job to explain our group's purpose.
- d. SUGGESTED LANGUAGE: Dear (NAME), Thanks for your interest in the Women & Bicycles: Washington DC Region group! I wanted to write to check in on your request. We deal with a number of spam requests, or cases where a well-meaning friend added you without your knowledge, and we want to be sure that you are real, and that you wanted to make this request yourself. (Sometimes, a person sets their privacy settings quite high, and it makes their profile look like a spam one when it is not. This is why we check with you!). W&B is a bicycle-riding community for women/trans/femme folks in the DC region. We talk about issues on bikes, organize rides and social events, and engage in critical conversation about transportation justice. If this is you, we would love to have you among our members. Please reply to this message to confirm you are real and making this request! I look forward to hearing from you! Thanks, (YOUR NAME)

### III. INCLUSIVITY

#### Community Culture

As an inclusive space with a wide variety of folks, we have historically not done a great job ensuring that the most marginalized members feel safe and not judged. A safe intersectional space takes work and a lot of knowledge building by many folks. If you have lots of privilege, it is going to take work to know how folks can be hurt.

We are patient and understanding with one another, especially to new members of this group who may not be familiar with our group's norms and values. But making folks feel excluded is not okay.

Moderators read posts with an eye towards how others might experience the post. People can be excluded or hurt through not just the obvious insults - (micro)aggressions are real.

Things that are not okay:

- Any slurs (examples below)
  - Ableism:
    - "Tone-deaf"
    - "Blind to \_\_\_\_" (to insinuate oblivious)
    - "I must be OCD" to imply a minor attention to detail
    - More context [here](#).
  - Racist
    - Either literal racist slurs or racist in their context or origin
  - Also homophobic, transphobic, classist, ageist, audist, sexist, etc slurs
  - Swearing is fine as long as the words are not derogatively derived (ex: bitch is not okay)
- Racism

- Including making assumptions about ability or interest based on profiling and stereotypes.
- Homophobic, transphobic, sexist etc statements
- If someone uses ableist, racist or other language, it is okay to post saying “WABA Women and Bicycles strives to be an inclusive and safe space which includes thinking about the way that language can cause harm. \_\_\_\_\_ causes harm because \_\_\_\_\_. Can you please edit your comment/post with a different word choice?”

Your experience isn't the same as everyone else! Make sure that you are not making others feel like they are Other or not part of the community. If you find yourself using the word “they” in the plural sense, you might be heading in that direction! Also, stay away from broad generalizations that can make people feel tokenized.

### **Pronouns**

You cannot assume a person's pronouns based on what they look like and not everyone in 'Women & Bicycles' pronouns are “she/her.” Cis-men are not allowed in Women & Bicycles but gender is complex and not binary woman/man. “He/him” pronouns does not necessarily mean a person is not within the group bubble and spending too much time worrying about the precise line can easily turn transphobic. “Y'all” and “folks” are great options for calling out the group members as a whole, “ladies” “gals” are not inclusive.

### **Lived Experience, Stepping Up and Stepping Back, and Allyship**

Your lived experience, stories you've heard from friends, does not invalidate the lived experience of others or the existence of structural oppression.

It is okay to write a post and want to hear only from others who share a particular attribute with you. Ex: If you only want to hear from folks with lived experience of where to find band-aids that match brown skin, it's okay to include that in your post! If that is not you, do not comment on that post.

Related noted especially for folks with lots of privilege (white, cis, straight, able-bodied, etc) If someone posts about a racist insult they heard or the fears of being a trans woman in today's world, etc and that's not part of your personal experience, be thoughtful if you choose to respond and it might be a time when it makes sense to simply step back and not say something at all. It's easy to write in a way that makes the harm or fear that folks have feel minimized.

### **General tone**

It is hard when you're engaged in a group more often than the average participant but assume good intent when people are posting - many members do not have the housing rules (see below) memorized and it is likely an innocent mistake.

Do not over moderate aggressively - it can be better to communicate more or let things slide than over moderate.

Explain why - if you're going to remove a post, use the message function to let them know why.

Everyone is an adult who can make their own decisions about what they do (provided they are not actively endangering others).

Unsolicited advice and diagnosing are not okay - good intent doesn't guarantee good impact. Unsolicited advice (which often feels condescending) or encouragement can make someone feel targeted and stereotyped rather than supported.

Be mindful of [tone policing](#). When engaging in conversation, it's not okay to go after the way someone is presenting/delivering their message based off of your perceived notions. This tactic discredits and dismisses what is being said rather than engaging with the substance of what is being said.

Disagreements are fine but personal attacks are not. Make sure the conversation sticks to the topic at hand and does not deviate to discrediting or attacking people not ideas.

Don't speak for others, generalize or minimize what others feel. Minimising often looks like "I'm sure they didn't intend to \_\_\_\_" Everyone gets to decide how much of themselves they wish to share, don't ask others to explain their personal history or trauma to justify or validate what they are saying. (Credit to [Link Strategies](#) for inspiration).

#### **IV. TYPES OF POSTS**

So what's allowed in WABA Women & Bicycles?

In addition to the specific categories mentioned below, posts must generally connect with the intersection of women/trans/femme experience of bicycling. We also allow posts about topics that may be uncomfortable to discuss in an all genders group (ex: IUDs, ob/gyns, female medical issues).

Mostly, you should be posting on behalf of yourself for personal use. Exception: asking a question or request on behalf of a WTF friend who would prefer to remain anonymous.

There are lots of previous posts! Commonly discussed topics (ex: bike fitting, bike shops, cargo bike types) can be found by the group search bar - please give that a look-see before posting a general question. Lots of time labor has been put into some topics before!

Members are asked to not delete posts.

##### **Selling Bicycles**

Help folks out by giving as much detail as you can (it is totally okay to not know everything though). All bike posts should include what size and the model of the bike. The general trend is - the more expensive and fancy the bike is, the more specific you should be about parts. Search for older bike sale posts to find some examples of details that would be good to include.

## **Stolen Bikes**

It is okay to post your own bike that's been stolen (and ugh, that stinks that it was stolen!). The more details you include, the better.

Be careful on stolen bike posts to not shame folks for why their bike was stolen. If they ask questions about locks or ways that thieves can steal bikes, it's okay to answer. But it's easy for what may feel like an innocent comment or question from you, to feel like a "I told you so" shame post on them. If you're reminded about something that you suspect needs a community reminder - make it a separate post! (don't do it right after a stolen bike post in a way that is still a direct "I told you so".)

Posts about "hey I think this person is riding a stolen bike" are 99% not okay. If it is your personal bike that was stolen and you see someone riding it - that's okay because it's based in fact. What is not okay is profiling and stereotyping - making assumptions about how someone is choosing to ride the bicycle, what color their skin is, what type of clothes they are wearing.

## **Helmets**

While we are on the topic of posts that are often judgemental and not okay, helmets! It is okay to discuss helmets and the merits and drawbacks of wearing them on Women and Bicycles. It is not okay to shame or judge others on personal decisions they make. See above re: unsolicited advice.

## **Housing**

Housing must be local, be for the person who is posting and a personal search. Posts should include within the post - photos of the unit in question including bike amenities and text description must include bike amenities (within the house and infrastructure/relevant things nearby). You can link to a Craigslist post or other listing but photos and text must be a W&B Facebook post.

## **Jobs**

Job postings are allowed provided they connect to the group topic and if the poster is connected to the job hiring process and have the salary range posted. Some great context for why salary ranges are required is [here](#).

## **Selling, Events, and Fundraisers**

So this is slightly complicated.

Totally always okay - posting events and stuff that you or a major cooperation/business that has lots of resources (labor, reach, money, etc.) do not benefit from because you think it's a cool event or you want people to join you at it!

WABA has projects connected to the organization but don't immediately read WABA

- Black Women Bike DC
- DC Families for Safe Streets
- Capital Trails Coalition
- DC Bike Ambassadors
- Trail Rangers

What do you mean “do not benefit from?”

- Reselling bicycles, jerseys, etc is okay as long as you’re doing it because you no longer want the item. It is not okay if you’re running a jersey resell business on Women and Bicycles.
- Events, etc get tricky if you or a boss you are posting on behalf of, is going to benefit from it. This could mean financial gain but it also could mean you benefit because your boss wants better attendance at an event which might contribute to a great annual review.
- Fundraisers that are associated with a large business/organization/cooperation are not allowed because the business typically has a lot more capital and resources than WABA and it feels inappropriate for that to be in this space. We also don't generally want people using the group for their personal fundraisers because it can get tricky with where the money is going and peer pressure vibes.

Basically we don’t want Women & Bicycles to be overloaded with business advertisements. Want to do business advertisements? Email [business@waba.org](mailto:business@waba.org) for options!

### **Surveys**

Women & Bicycles is not a market research group. If you post a survey, it must:

- 1) Be clear about who you are and what the survey is
- 2) Whether the survey results will be used for commercial purposes (and if so, which company)?
- 3) How to contact you if folks have questions about the study/survey

### **Correction time**

People have other things in their lives! Give everyone 24-48 hrs to correct a post.

### **Identifying moderators**

When you are posting as a moderator, identify yourself by including #mod or #modhaton. (It is also helpful if you’re worried about where the line is to use #modhatoff).

## **V. CAVEATS AND OTHER DETAILS**

This guide is mostly focused on moderating real humans - spam bots can just be deleted.

When in doubt, ask other moderators before you comment, delete the post, or otherwise act. You should feel comfortable to lean on your fellow moderators.