

Guide to the Etiquette of Group Riding

Group rides are great fun but with larger groups of riders comes higher risk and in order to ensure these rides remain safe as well as good fun it is important that everyone follows a set of rules.

Club rides are unsupervised and The Club is not responsible for our safety; **everyone on the ride must take responsibility to look out for others safety as well as their own.** Always bear in mind that everyone in the group may not be as confident or have as good bike handling skills as you.

The Club's Rule 10 is as follows :All cycling members must affiliate to a National Cycling Organisation which provides 3rd party insurance as part of the affiliation.....

[Do's](#)

[Don'ts](#)

[Calls](#)

[Hand Signals](#)

Please apply these rules when you are next on a group ride and where others don't please politely inform them of the proper cycling etiquette.

Do

Follow the Highway Code at all times – it applies to ALL road-users.

Wear a cycle helmet. (Club Rule 13 applies)

Ensure your bike is road worthy, brakes are fully operational and that your tyres are pumped up to the recommended PSI (as written on the tyre).

Cycle a maximum of two abreast in 2 close parallel lines where appropriate, focus on keeping it neat and tidy.

Ride with 1ft approx. between your front wheel and the back wheel of the rider in front. There should also be 1ft between your shoulders and the rider beside you.

Be prepared on small or busy roads to ride in single file.

Riders at the back of the pack to shout "Car back, single file" if there are vehicles behind.

Listen and act on their calls, DON'T look back and check for yourself, as you will move off your line and may cause an accident.

Lead cyclists to navigate and point out hazards in the road by either shouting or using hand signals. Listen to them and act on the calls, and most importantly, **repeat them for the cyclist behind you.**

Ride directly behind the wheel of the rider in front. If you cycle in the middle of the two wheels in front of you, you WILL push the cyclist on your outside into the path of passing vehicles.

Brake as gently and smoothly as you safely can when riding in a pack

Cover your brakes at all times.

When on the front keep pedalling, this is particularly important going downhill. If you freewheel everyone behind will have to brake.

Talk to each other. Point out either with hand signals or shouts, all potholes, manhole covers and other dangers in the road that could cause punctures or accidents. Follow the hand signals and calls of the riders in front as they will have seen the danger before you and then you can all communicate down the pack.

If you are the back of the group and either see someone dropping or are being dropped it is your responsibility to call to the cyclists in front that the pace is too high. The pack must communicate this up to the front. The lead cyclists will not be aware if you start to drop. Ask them to slow down, it is your ride too.

When asked to “ease up” or “slow a little” do not brake suddenly. Gentle ease your pace by pedalling less hard or freewheeling for a moment. Look at your speed – if someone is being dropped you probably only need to reduce your speed by half a mile an hour to allow them to stay on.

Ride at a steady pace, keeping the pack as a compact unit.

Check over your shoulder for other riders or traffic before moving out to the right.

Slow right down when passing horses, and pass them as wide as it is safe to do so. Always call to the horse riders well ahead of catching them – a cheery “Good morning” or “Hello” will. Keep calling until the riders indicate they know you are there. They may want to turn the horse so it can see you.

If you are on the front, remember that people are following your calls. If you make a decision to pull out on a roundabout or junction, you need to call “Clear” or “Wait” to warn the pack of hazards.

If you are feeling tired let people know. Accidents happen when people are tired and lose concentration. Everyone gets tired, let people know so they can slow the pace down and tuck you in the pack to carry you home ;)

Cycle with confidence. If you’re nervous you will tense up and then are less likely to be able to respond to things quickly.

When cycling at dusk or night wear appropriate reflective bright clothing and ensure you have working lights on the front and rear of your bike.

Dress in appropriate clothing for the weather

Bring everything you might need. Prepare for every eventuality. For example, puncture kit, tyre levers, inner tubes, pump, multi tool (including chain tool), helmet, waterproof jacket, food, water, money, credit card, mobile, contact details in emergency.

Don’t

Overlap wheels, or nudge in between the wheels of the riders in front. You will come off if they move off their line.

Ride on tri / aero bars in packs as you will not be able to brake or steer quickly.

Make any sudden movements/changes in direction off your line when in the pack. You are responsible for the cyclist behind you, they are following YOUR wheel they need to trust you.

Ride off the front. This is a group ride, not a race. If you want to go faster then let the others know what you are going to do and if no one wants to join you then go off and enjoy your ride alone.

Stop pedaling if you are on the front, even on downhills. The cyclists behind you will read this as you slowing and could be forced to brake and bunch up.

“Zone out” on the wheel in front. Keep aware of everything that is going on around you, look ahead and that way you can avoid most hazards.

Whip round the outside of the pack to get to the front unless in an emergency. Shout up the pack any communication. If you do need to get to the front then make sure you check in front and behind for cars, remember three abreast will push you out into on coming traffic.

Pull out at junctions without looking, having heard the “Clear” call from a fellow cyclist. Check whether there is a vehicle coming yourself.

Calls

These are some calls you might hear. It is essential that you repeat them down the pack so everyone can hear:

“Car Up/Front/Back” : Keep tight to the cyclist next to you, and be prepared to cycle in single file

“Hole” : Upcoming pothole to avoid. This can also be followed by a direction i.e “HOLE LEFT”.

“Slowing” : Usually accompanied by a hand signal. The cyclist in front needs to slow down for some reason.

“Stopping” : Brake!

“Wait” : Usually at junctions to indicate there is a car coming

“Clear” : To indicate that a junction is traffic free. You must check yourself and not rely on others.

“Heads Up” : Hazard ahead, pay attention.

“Single out/ single file” : Get into single file safely and promptly

Hand Signals

These are some hand signals (other than the obvious left and right turns!) It is essential that you repeat them so everyone can see and pass it on:

Single hand in the air (up or down) : Rider is signalling that he/she needs to stop or slow down. Usually followed by the call ‘Slowing’, ‘Stopping’.

Pointing down at the road : This is to point out hazards such as pot holes, manhole covers etc. PLEASE copy this signal, it stops accidents and punctures

Arm out left or right : Everyone in the pack needs to indicate when turning left or right

Left arm signalling behind back : Signal the cyclist is about to move out into the road, e.g. to pass a parked car, to go round debris in the road.