

British Cycling Group Riding

Guidelines

When riding with a group it is important to remember that you are riding as a member of a group and not as an individual. You are also probably representing a Cycling Club!

It should be noted that all riders join those rides at their own risk. Leaders of such rides (see “Make sure there is a Leader” later in these guidelines) are offering their local knowledge to decide a route and are no more responsible for the group safety than any other member of the ride. Each member is responsible for riding in a manner which helps ensure the safety of themselves as well as other members of the ride.

All members should act with consideration towards their fellow cyclists as well as other road users to help ensure the safety and enjoyment of the rides.

To that end, there are a few do's and don'ts that should be included, aimed at promoting a safe and enjoyable riding culture.

- Keep your bike maintained and carry spare tubes and tools
 - Keep your bike well maintained, especially tyres, brakes, gears and wheels.
 - Always carry spare inner tubes, tyre levers and pump. A multi- tool or allen keys and a chain tool are also recommended.
 - In wet weather your bike must be fitted with effective mudguards and a rear mudflap that extends sufficiently far below the rear axle height so as to avoid spraying your fellow riders with a mixture of road slime and slurry.
 - Your bike must be fitted with front and rear brakes.
 - Tri-bars should not be used on group rides.
 - Carry a phone and some money for café stops and/or emergencies!
 - Carry some identification and an emergency contact phone number.
- Wear suitable clothing and a helmet
 - It is strongly recommended that you always wear a helmet.
 - Wear appropriate clothing for the time of year.
 - Carry a waterproof or windproof top in case the weather is wetter or cooler than anticipated.
- Ride safely when in a group!
- Follow the highway code and be courteous
 - Ride in pairs. Never ride more than two abreast. Single out on narrow lanes, busy roads or when holding up following traffic.
 - Ride on the left hand side of the road. When riding in pairs the riders on the right must avoid drifting towards the centre of the road.
 - Respect traffic lights and pedestrian crossings, don't ride on pavements unless they are cycle paths.
 - Slow down and pass horses with care. Warn the horse rider when approaching from behind and pass slow and wide, in single file if necessary.
 - Be courteous and don't shout abuse or make offensive gestures to other road users. You are probably representing a club and poor behaviour damages the club's reputation.
 - It is recommended that the maximum group size is 16 riders and certainly no more than 20. If there are more people than that, the group should split.
- Ride as a member of a group not as an individual!
 - Look where you are going, be aware of the other riders around you and think about how your actions might affect them.
 - Ride in a smooth and predictable manner and avoid making sudden movements like braking or swerving suddenly.
 - Ride close to the rider in front of you, but only as close as you are comfortable with. Leave a larger gap in wet or windy weather conditions or if you are less experienced.
 - Do not ride with your front wheel overlapping the rear wheel of the rider in front. It is dangerous.
 - Ride in line with the pair of riders in front of you. Avoid riding outside the line of the group.
 - And, no “half-wheeling”! When on the front, do not edge ahead of the rider next to you. Be aware of the speed they are riding and adjust your speed accordingly.
 - Equally, within the group, each pair of riders should ride ‘shoulder to shoulder’. Do not edge ahead or fall back from the rider next to you.
 - When singling out, each rider in the outside line should drop in behind the rider on their left
 - When pulling out from a junction or turning into a road, be aware of the riders behind you: slow down a little so that they can catch up.
- Be careful at road junctions
 - Stop at junctions. Don't jump across when vehicles are approaching as other riders may follow you.
 - When pulling up at a junction, stay in two lines: do not scatter across the road. Don't pass or crowd around vehicles at the junction.
 - Riders on the front should warn of traffic to the right or left and call out when it is clear to cross.
- Don't ride dangerously – all three of the following have caused accidents!

- It should be noted that group rides are not a race and should not be treated as such. Sprinting for village/road signs is inherently more dangerous than steady riding and must only be done with a great deal of care and consideration for the safety of your group and other road users.
- Do not ride 'hands off' in the group. Similarly, don't take off or put on a rain jacket when in the group. Both are very dangerous. If you need to do either, ask the group to stop where it is safe to do so, or move to the back of the group.
- Do carry a phone for emergency use, but do not make or answer calls when riding in a group. Do not stop suddenly if it rings.
- Take turns on the front
- All riders in the group should take turns on the front. Don't hog the front. But equally, don't avoid it! Change over at the front roughly every 5 to 10 minutes so that everyone gets a turn. It is recommended that the following procedure be used to change at the front:
 - The rider on the outside at the front pulls forward and over in front of the rider on his left.
 - Then, the outside line of riders moves forward two positions.
 - And the last rider on the inside line moves over to the rear of the outside line.
 - And, when you do get to the front, maintain a steady pace for the group. Don't speed up to show everyone how strong you are, as you will break up the group!

Make sure there is a leader of the group

On a group ride, it's important that someone knows where the ride is going! So make sure one person in the group is nominated as the leader for the ride. The leader should give clear directions ahead of turns. If the leader happens to be near the back of the group, then make sure that any ride directions are passed forward through the group to the front, so that everyone knows where to turn.

And finally, talk to each other!

Riders on the front should shout and point out hazards such as potholes, debris, parked cars etc. Warnings should be passed back through the group so that all riders are aware of the danger. Please don't ignore shouts made by other riders. Listen to calls that are made and react accordingly!

Some shouts and signals are standard:

"Car up"

To warn of a vehicle coming towards the FRONT of the group.

"Car down"

To warn of a vehicle coming towards the BACK of the group.

"On the left"

To warn of a vehicle coming towards the BACK of the group.

This shout, often accompanied by putting the left arm behind the back warns following riders of an obstruction on the nearside of the road such as a parked car or a pedestrian.

"Hole (left/right/ middle)"

This shout accompanied by pointing to the road with the appropriate hand is a warning that there is some hazard in the road such as a pothole, branch etc.

"Easy"

A request to slow down and be careful because there is a hazard ahead: a dog, pedestrians etc.

This shout is also used when approaching a junction.

Or because the group is breaking up because the speed is too high.

"Stopping"

Hopefully self explanatory. Stop slowly and avoid spreading out across the road.

"Puncture"

If you have a puncture or other mechanical problem, then use this shout. It is important that you hold your line as you slow down, don't swerve or brake suddenly. You and the rest of the group should slow down in an orderly fashion and pull in to the side of the road at a safe spot. Don't just stop and spread out over the road.

"Horse"

We often encounter horses and riders on country roads. They are unpredictable animals. The rider on the front of the group should shout "horse" and should shout a warning to the horse rider of "cyclists behind" Pass horses wide and slowly and in single file if necessary.