



## RIDE ETIQUETTE & SAFETY



### The benefits of riding in a group:

- A Group ride enhances social bonding, safety, and fitness. If you are a newcomer to cycling or the area, you are welcome to join one of our rides. By riding in a group you'll also learn advanced road and bike handling skills and be able to chat to more experienced riders. It is the best place to learn important cycling etiquette and skills. We ride at your level; nobody gets left behind. CTC Wessex Cycling has several group rides. Choose the group with the pace and distance you feel comfortable with. Information is on the website. <http://www.wessexctc.org/> or <https://www.cyclinguk.org/local-groups/ctc-wessex-cycling>
- When participating on Group rides, please make yourself fully aware of what is going on, how to ride in a group, who is leading the ride from the start to finish (i.e. Leader and Backmarker).
- The benefits of riding in a group are more than just social. You will cover more ground with less effort in a group, saving around 20% of your energy when cycling in the group.

### Your Ride Leader:

- You will have an experienced Ride Leader who will have a great route planned so relax and enjoy it
- If you are new to group riding, let them know – they will keep an eye on you, or assign someone to do so. Please provide the Ride Leader with an emergency contact number and advise them of any health issues. You may be asked to complete a Guest Registration form or Signing On Sheet.
- Keep in mind they are a volunteer and listen carefully to any instructions. Let them lead!
- They will explain any jargon and hand signals they may use to keep control of the group, however you are responsible for your own safety.
- The ride leader will use their discretion to split large riding groups into smaller groups to ensure safety and convenience of all road users. It is important that large gaps between the smaller groups are maintained at all times. Respect and be aware of traffic trying to pass.
- Do not overtake the leader (except on long uphill sections where at the top, stop (where safe) and regroup). If you miss an important turn or road junction, the group will not look for you. You will be deemed by the ride leader and the group to have left the ride without notification.
- Pass leader's messages down the line so that everyone follows suit.

- Members wishing to leave the group should notify the leader (to avoid their being treated as "missing persons").

### Be Prepared:

- An appropriate bike in good working & roadworthy order. If in doubt, have it checked over by a local bike shop or qualified mechanic.
- Carry working front and rear lights when riding in the dark or during poor visibility. Failure to comply - leader may refuse to allow you to join the group.
- Wear light or bright coloured clothing, with reflective clothing or belts at night. An approved helmet of the correct size and correctly fitted can reduce head contact injuries.
- As a minimum, you should carry: - spare tube(s) and puncture repair kit, pump, tyre levers - wet weather wear and warm clothing. Mobile phones - please carry for emergency use only.
- Please carry your ID and essential medical information and In Case of Emergency details.
- Carry sufficient money for refreshments and a bank card in case of an emergency. A map is useful and reassuring if you are on routes that are not known to you.

### The Highway Code and your safety on a ride:

- Abide by the Highway and Countryside Codes
- Overtaking must be carried out with great care.
- Because of possible liability it is not advisable to signal to vehicle drivers to overtake the group.
- Never ride more than two abreast. (If riding alone within a group, ride behind the inner rider of a pair.) Ride in single file on narrow or busy roads and when riding round bends.
- Keep your distance from the cyclist in front, especially when riding two abreast; you or your partner may need to cut in suddenly.
- Riders are expected to be courteous to other road users and be a good ambassador to cycling.
- Consider the safety of your companions and other road users at all times.
- Take care not to overlap the wheel in front - keep level or 6 inches behind. Don't 'switch' suddenly without signalling. Hold your line and keep a steady speed: this allows for the rider who may be riding behind and needs to be close and confident that you won't move suddenly or wobble. The riders in front will not stop suddenly without warning so you won't have to make any sudden moves.
- Essential hand signals to be passed on by the group: Arm vertically in the air - Signifies that the rider signalling is stopping (e.g. puncture/ chain off) or there is a hazard in the road that the whole group may have to stop for. Arm pointing down to the road - Points out potholes, drain covers, glass or anything else which may cause harm to a cyclist. It informs the rider behind - before they hit it, causing possible serious injury.
- Don't block junctions and the sight lines of motorised traffic at any time. Always look over your right shoulder before leaving the near kerbside.

## On The Ride:

- If you fall behind, don't worry – your group should wait for you at the next junction or at the top of a climb.
- Drop into single file on narrow or busy roads, unless it would be unsafe to do so.
- Show courtesy to other road and trail users and be a good ambassador for cycling.
- Be alert to what other riders around you are doing and do not get too close to them.
- Point out any road defects or other hazards to others.
  
- Essential verbal instructions to be passed on by the group:
  - Shout 'Slowing!' or 'Stopping!' if necessary – smooth, gentle manoeuvres work best. Stop close to the kerb or verge.
  - 'Coming through' - Means that a rider coming from behind 'warns you' that they are overtaking on your right.
  - 'Easy' or 'Grid' - This is shouted when a badly sighted road junction or potential hazard is ahead. Pay attention, it's often very easy to just rely on the ride leader to warn you of pending problems in the road. This is especially important if you are in a large group and it will take a while to pass the hazard. 'On your left' - Means that there is an obstacle on the left-hand side, and the group will move to the right to avoid it e.g. a parked car, walkers, forest ponies etc.
  
- Change to single file riding when the call 'car up/down' is heard - the riders on the outside slot into gaps left by riders on the inside. If there is traffic behind which is unable to overtake, split into smaller groups of about five to enable it to pass.
  
- If the leader divides the group into smaller groups, because of heavy traffic or large numbers, remain in that group and do not "gap-jump".
  
- Stay close. If the group splits, the ride leader will stop at the next suitable pull-in, junction or turn, and pass on route information. The leader will ask a rider in the first group to mark the turn, allowing split riders to regroup. Should the ride split into smaller groups for whatever reason, the last rider in each group must mark the turn.
  
- Tell someone if you have a problem. Tell riders around you if you have a puncture, a mechanical problem, or are suffering physically. Don't drift off the back of the group without telling anyone.
  
- At junctions, the backmarker should check that all riders are with the group and wait at the junction or notify the leader if any rider has fallen behind.
  
- If you wish to leave the ride, let the Ride Leader know first.

### Other information:

Horses - On approaching a horse rider or horse riders from behind, slow down and, rather than ringing your bell, shout 'Bicycle(s) behind you'. Horses are accustomed to a commanding human voice and are very rarely startled. A horse rider will 'thank you' verbally and 'wave' their appreciation. Nevertheless, play safe, and always give the horse(s) a wide berth.

### In Summary:

- We ride at your level
- Be prepared
- Don't ride off the front unless the ride leader is happy for you to do so
- Ride two abreast when appropriate and safe to do so
- Riders should obey the rules of the road as defined in the Highway Code, including being fit to ride
- Stay close
- Don't 'switch' suddenly without signalling
- Relax
- Use hand signals
- Tell someone if you have a problem