

# RIDE SAFELY - Group Riding

## Be predictable

- In a group, your actions affect those around you, not just yourself
- Riders expect you to continue straight and at a constant speed
- Signal your intention to turn or slow down before you do so

## Use signals

- Use hand signals to indicate turns and point out hazards to others
- Left or right arm straight out to indicate left or right turn
- Left arm out and down with palm to the rear to indicate stopping

## Give warnings

- Ride leaders should call out right turns, left turns and stops in addition to signaling
- Announce turns before the intersections to give riders a chance to re-position.
- Try to avoid sudden stops or turns except for emergencies

## Change positions correctly

- Slower moving traffic stays to the right; faster traffic to the left
- Pass slower moving vehicles on the left; announce your intention to do so
- Announce passes on the right clearly as this is not a usual maneuver

## Announce hazards

- Most cyclists do not have a full view of the road while riding in a group
- Announce potholes and other hazards so others can avoid them
- Call out the hazard and point down to it, either left or right

## Watch for traffic from the rear

- The last rider should frequently check for overtaking cars
- Announce "car back" clearly and loudly
- It is also helpful to announce "car up" on narrow roads or when riding two abreast

## Watch out at intersections

- Leader should announce slowing or stopping at intersections if necessary
- Cyclists should not follow others through intersections without scanning
- Each cyclist is responsible for checking cross traffic; if you must stop, signal

## Leave room for cars

- On narrow road or during climbs, leave space between every three or four riders
- Motorists will utilize the shorter passing intervals to pass the group
- Good relations with motorists is the responsibility of every cyclist

## Stop off road

- When stopping for mechanicals or regrouping, always move clear off the road
- Only if conditions permit should you move back onto the road as a group
- Always yield to traffic in the roadway

## Ride single file

- It is illegal in some areas to ride more than two abreast
- Ride single file between intersections; double up when the group stops
- When taking the lane, double up and take the whole lane

## Lights at Night: Visibility

- By law, you must have a front white light and red rear reflector in most states
- Motorists are familiar with white meaning front and red meaning rear
- Front lights can illuminate your path or simply make you visible at night

## Wattage

- Inexpensive lights seldom light your path; at about 3 watts, they make you visible
- Lighting systems are available that put out 45 watts with a halogen bulb
- Most full-time commuters use at least a 10 watt system with a rechargeable battery

## Power sources

- From AA batteries to nickel-metal-hydride rechargeables, the options are endless
- Self-contained, rechargeable batteries have the best life and brightest light
- Simple AA powered lights have lower initial cost but frequent battery replacement

## Helmet vs. bar mount

- Helmet lights allow you to get the attention of motorists by looking at them
- Bar mounted lights make you look more like a vehicle but only point forward
- The ideal situation is one helmet light and one bar-mounted light for safety

## Rear lights

- A red rear blinking light is much more conspicuous than a passive reflector
- Make sure that your light is visible to motorists and not pointing up or down
- Clear obstructions from the back of the bike that would block the light

## Nutrition: Basics

- Your body needs fluids, vitamins, minerals and carbohydrates to work
- While riding, your body needs more of these than it can store
- Replacement of energy that you have used is necessary

## **Preparation**

- A balanced diet will do wonders for your body
- Start drinking more water than normal two days before a big ride
- Do not do any hard riding a few days before the event

## **Before the ride**

- Eat a low-fat, regular portion breakfast such as cereal or pancakes
- Drink at least one water bottle of water or sports drink that morning
- Stretch for at least five minutes just before the event

## **During the ride**

- Maintain your body's water level by drinking often; one water bottle per hour
- Consume low-fat snacks such as fruit or energy bars
- Avoid eating a big meal during the ride

## **After the ride**

- Continue to hydrate; your body will be working overtime for up to 24 hours
- Replace lost energy stores by eating proteins, carbohydrates and sugars
- Relax and enjoy your accomplishment; give your body time to repair itself

## **On-Bike Stretching and Exercises: Reasons to stretch**

- Reduce tightness and strain in your neck, back, shoulders, arms and face
- Ride longer with less fatigue; recover faster with post-ride stretches
- Always warm-up muscles before stretching; cold stretching can cause injury

## **Be careful**

- Never attempt these stretches while riding in a group or pace line situation
- Check for traffic, slow down and maintain control of your bicycle
- Attempt only on smooth, flat, dry pavement

## **Lower and middle back**

- With one hand on the bar, reach back and place your forearm across lower back
- Twist your upper body toward the hand that is behind you; hold for 5 seconds
- Look over shoulder and move that shoulder back while moving the other forward

## **Shoulder and neck**

- Reach across chest to opposite shoulder as far as comfortable; hold for 5 seconds
- Lift shoulders towards your ears until you feel tension
- Hold for 5 seconds, then slowly roll back to original position

## **Fingers and forearms**

- Place hand on hip, palm down, fingers up; straighten elbow to stretch for 10 Secs.
- Place fingers on handlebar and push down to stretch forearms; hold for 5 seconds
- Bend hand back as far as possible; rotate wrist back and forth; hold for 5 seconds

## **Face and jaw**

- Open mouth in an "O" then move your lips right to left to stretch cheek muscles
- Open your mouth wide to stretch jaw muscles
- Never clench your teeth while riding

## **Back**

- Arch your back while lowering your head slightly
- Then straighten your back and lift your head up to straighten your spine
- Hold each for 5 seconds; perform both stretches consecutively

## **Legs**

- While coasting, straighten one leg in the 6 o'clock position and drop your heel
- In the 3 and 9 o'clock position, stand and drop both heels; switch feet and repeat
- Hold each stretch for 10 seconds and repeat

## **Pace lines and Drafting: Drafting**

- Following closely behind another rider cuts down on wind resistance
- Only draft off of someone whose riding style or experience you trust
- Always inform the rider in front that you are on their wheel; between 6" & 18" back

## **Pace line**

- A group of riders drafting off of each other is a pace line; the leader dictates pace
- Front rider must communicate obstacles to riders behind; last rider watches traffic
- Pay close attention to those ahead and behind; be able to react safely and quickly

## **Rotation**

- Riders in a pace line take turns 'pulling' the group along through the wind
- To move from the front, check traffic, pull out to the left and move to the back
- The second rider is now the leader and provides draft for allotted time or distance

## **Signals**

- Lead rider must signal debris and hazards in roadway as well as stops and turns
- Point in direction of hazard and announce 'grate' or 'gravel' for other riders
- Rear rider is responsible for signaling intentions to following traffic

## **Dangers**

- Do not draft on high traffic roads or roads with frequent intersections
- There is very little room for error when riding very close to others
- Crashing in a pace line has a domino effect & may knock down riders behind you

***Hendersonville Greenways Committee***

**Make bicycling a safe and enjoyable activity for all ages.**

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