

Shasta Wheelmen Ride Leader Guide

Overview

The members of the Shasta Wheelmen cycling club thank you for taking on the role of ride leader. As a ride leader you do not need to be the best or fastest rider in the group. Most riders that join a group ride are looking for a safe ride, some leadership and friendship. As a ride leader you will be making decisions that influence the group ride experience.

All of the ride leader's responsibilities are things you can do! Have confidence in your ability. We do!

Focus on Safety

Ride leaders are primarily responsible, to the best of their ability, for the safety of the ride. You are encouraged to actively counsel riders who are negatively affecting the safety of the ride or are behaving in a manner outside the Wheelmen Ride Guidelines. You can't force change. Just bring the problem to their attention and suggest alternative behaviors that make the group ride experience safer and less stressful for the group and for the individual.

Should an accident occur, take appropriate action. Contact emergency services if needed, take notes and photos, note the time, talk to those involved, call the rider's emergency contact if needed.

Ride leaders should not lead a ride if weather or road conditions are dangerous. They can either make changes to the route to improve safety or cancel the ride.

Ride Leader Equipment

The following is a list of items a ride leader must carry on a Wheelmen Group Ride

- Cell phone
- Emergency contact list – Printed or saved to phone
- Ride route - Printed or saved to phone

Saved to phone means you are able to access the information without a cellular data signal.

The following is a list of items a ride leader is encouraged to carry on a Wheelmen Group Ride. This is not meant to be a complete list of all you may need as a ride leader. Just a good starting point to self-support yourself and other riders.

- At least one spare tube
- Emergency Tire Boot (Park Tool TB-2)
- Mini tool
- Tire levers
- Pump or CO2 inflator and a couple cylinders
- Extra calories for other riders (snacks, gels, cookies, burritos, etc.)



Preparation – Night Before Ride (or earlier)

Download the route map and cue sheet to your cellphone or print it.

If you want or think it's necessary, send out a Wheelmen Google Group email about the next day's ride conditions. Encourage people to join your ride. Add a link to the Ride with GPS route if you want.

Determine the coffee stop, bathroom and/or after ride snack locations.

Print copies of the release waiver for use by any non-Club riders.

Preparation – Morning of Ride

Get to the ride start early! - Minimum 30 minutes prior to the published start time.

Select your sweep rider(s) and explain what you expect from them. Discuss possibly changing sweep riders somewhere during the ride if one rider does not want to ride at the back for the whole day. A sweep rider should be comfortable handling flat repairs, dropped chains and other minor mechanical repairs independently. A sweep rider should be carrying a cell phone and have the route map and cue sheet downloaded to their phone or cycle computer. Bring an extra printed copy of the route map and cue sheet if so inclined.

Meet with the leader of the Geezer group (shorter ride group) to get their plan for the day.

Pre-ride Script

1. Get everyone's attention. Speak loudly. Some of us don't hear too well.
2. Introduce yourself and your ride sweep. Explain what your roles will be.
3. Review the route (and possible Geezer deviation).
4. Initiate a round of introductions that includes all riders.
5. Get a signed release waiver from any non-club member.
6. Communicate regroup point(s). Good regroup locations include:
 - a. Coffee stops.
 - b. Bathroom stops.
 - c. Points of interest
 - d. Known safe locations away from road traffic.
7. Remind all riders that they are responsible for their own safety.
8. Remind everyone to keep it lite and fun.



During the Ride

You can lead from any position in the group. Front, back or middle.

Watch for riders who are struggling, overheating, shivering, or having any other problems (physical, emotional or mechanical).

You can't do everything, just do the best you can.

Smile and bring positivity!

Final Thoughts

Most people aren't aware of it, but no matter who happens to be out front leading a group ride, or how fast they go, the group ride's pace is controlled by the slower riders at the back of the pack. One of the more difficult aspects of leading a ride is ensuring the people at the back are having as much fun as those at the front. New riders won't return if it isn't fun. Give the slower riders time at the regroup to drink, talk, snack and whatever else they need to do.

Thanks for taking on one of the most important tasks in the club. You are the face of the club to new riders!

