

Best Practices for Safe Cycling

02/20/2023

- I. Personal Safety
 - A. Helmet
 - a. In order for your helmet to be effective it must fit and be positioned correctly.
 - b. The front of your helmet should be level and two-finger with above your eyebrows.
 - c. The side strap should come to a point just below your ears and the chin strap about half an inch below your chin when your mouth is closed.
 - d. Wearing a helmet with loose straps or one that is not positioned correctly is the same as not wearing one at all.
 - e. Consider replacing your helmet every 3 – 5 years and always after a crash.
 - B. Be prepared
 - a. Assess your level of fitness so you can complete and enjoy the ride.
 - b. Consideration should be given to distance, elevation gain and anticipated speed of the ride.
 - c. Carry identification and emergency contact information.
 - d. A phone with the number of someone on the ride is helpful especially if you need assistance during the ride.
 - e. Ensure adequate nutrition and hydration.
 - f. Dehydration, inadequate nutrition, exhaustion, overheating and/or low blood sugar can diminish your ability to focus and control your bike.
 - g. Carry some cash in the event you need to purchase food or water during the ride.
 - h. If you are unfamiliar with the route let someone you are riding with know that.
 - i. Most rides have route sheets and/or downloadable GPS routes.
 - C. Clothing
 - a. Jerseys and shorts with a close fit keeps fabric from rubbing your skin and causing irritation.
 - b. Avoid riding with clothing that may interfere with your wheels, crank, chain or pedals. Clothing getting caught on/in any of these parts may cause you to crash.
 - c. During the summer months consider clothing or accessories that provide some protection against UV rays.
 - d. On cold weather rides layering is the best way to control body temperature.
 - e. Gloves, ear warmers, gaiters, hats and shoe covers are particularly effective.
 - f. Wear bright clothing –Hi-Vis yellow and green are colors that increase your visibility.
 - g. Clothing or accessories that are reflective, especially for night riding are also beneficial.
 - D. It's your decision
 - a. Conditions such as rain, wet roadways, fog, wind, air quality and temperature are factors that will impact your riding decision.
 - b. Each rider is ultimately responsible for their own safety.

- c. Be courteous: treat everyone with dignity and respect.
- d. Your actions/behavior impact every other rider.
- e. Your conduct reflects on you, the Club and all cyclists.

II. Bike Safety

A. Before you ride:

- a. Check and/or charge the batteries for your computer, lights, shifters and e-bike.
- b. Check the lights for operation.
- c. Examine your tires for wear, cuts, and bulges.
- d. Check your tire pressure.
- e. Grasp the wheels and try to move them side to side. The wheels should spin freely without wobble or unusual noises.
- f. With your bike on the ground squeeze the front brake and try to push the bike back and forth. Do the same with the rear brake. The wheels should not roll. Listen for unusual noises while doing this.
- g. The quick release levers should be in the closed position.
- h. The thru axels should be tight.

B. Weekly checks to do:

- a. Hold the front tire between your legs and try to rotate the handlebars both side to side and up and down. Handlebars should remain stationary.
- b. Spin the chain backwards while wiping with a rag. Look for kinked links while doing this. Re-lube as needed.

C. After an accident: Have your bike professionally checked.

III. Group Safety

A. Riding in a group is very different from riding alone and requires both skill and awareness of your surroundings and others using the road.

- a. Communicate with cyclists and drivers. Never do anything suddenly or without warning.
- b. Ride in a straight line at a consistent and predictable pace.
- c. Make sure you are clear of other riders before you stop and pull to the right.
- d. Ride far enough behind the rider in front of you to allow appropriate reaction time.
- e. Ride off center of the rider in front of you to provide an escape route and sight line.
- f. Call out "On Your Left" or ring your bell when passing other riders and/or pedestrians.
- g. Move out of the group to spit or blow your nose.
- h. Don't struggle to hold your place in the group – that will cause you to ride erratically.
- i. If the group needs to slow down, signal and shout out a warning, "LIGHT UP", "CAR UP", etc. in time for riders behind you to respond and pass the signal on.
- j. Use verbal or hand signals for turning, stopping and hazards. An illustration of hand signals in common use follows in IV. Road Safety.

- B. Personal Awareness
 - a. Keep your head up, watch the rider in front of you and scan down the road constantly.
 - b. Look over the shoulder, under the arm or thru the legs of the riders in front of you. Ride pro-actively instead of reactively.
 - c. If you talk – skip the eye contact- keep looking ahead.
 - d. Back off from the rider ahead of you when approaching a climb, climbing or descending.
 - e. Do not let your front wheel overlap the rear wheel of the rider in front of you.
 - f. Give erratic riders more space – protect yourself now – talk with them later.
- C. Leading - when in the front of the group you are responsible for the safety and cohesion of the riders behind you.
 - a. Do not talk with others while in front.
 - b. Point out road hazards in time for those behind to avoid them and pass the signal on.
 - c. Hold or change the pace to maintain group cohesion.
- D. Drafting – During group rides, there are times when some participants decide to draft each other – ride 6” to 36” behind the rear wheel of the rider ahead.
Participate in drafting only if:
 - a. You understand and are willing to assume the added risk.
 - b. All riders involved know and agree to what is occurring.
 - c. You never let your wheels overlap.
 - d. You will stop drafting if you feel the situation is unsafe.
- E. Regrouping – During rides the group may periodically stop and wait for everyone to arrive. Consider the following:
 - a. Regroup at places with room to gather completely off the road.
 - b. Regroup after conditions that might cause group separation such as at the top or bottom of a climb or after a series of intersections.
 - c. Proceed once everyone has arrived and allowed time to recover.
 - d. When appropriate, send a rider back to find those missing or communicate via phone.
- F. Riding Sweep
 - a. A rider providing sweep should know the route.
 - b. A rider providing sweep should always keep the slow riders in sight.
 - c. A ride leader could lead from behind and be the sweep.

IV. Road Safety

- A. On the road
 - a. Use of headphones, phones or distracting devices is discouraged during club rides.
 - b. If you need to participate in a phone conversation, you should be stationary and off the road.
 - c. Give warning before passing pedestrians or other cyclists.

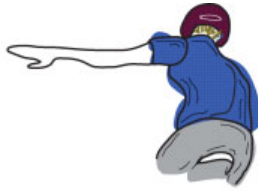
- d. Be alert for hazards: potholes, uneven pavement, train tracks, debris, animals and walkers/joggers.
 - e. When riding near parked cars be aware of door openings and cars pulling out of parking spaces. Allow adequate space between you and the car.
 - f. Listen for any unusual noises or changes in the feel of your bike.
 - g. If you stop for repair, rest or any other reason get well off the road.
- B. Common Bicycle Hand Signals



Stopping



Turning Right



Turning Left



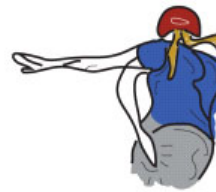
Move up - forward



Loose Debris / Gravel



Hazard on right side



Hazard on left side



Pay Attention / Warning



I am moving there



Potholes / Glass on right



Potholes / Glass on left