

Ride Leader Guidelines

These guidelines are produced so that ride leaders are clear of the expectations that the Committee has when planning and leading rides. The primary reason for this to ensure that rides are **safe** and **enjoyable** - good leadership can make all the difference to both. Not all rides will fall exactly under these guidelines, and rides will run according to conditions and riders on the day.

Guiding Principles for ride / rider suitability – will be communicated to all club members

Riders should look at the ride description and route and decide if they are capable and happy to ride the route at an average riding pace of 22-24 km/h (14-15 mph).

Ride leaders should ensure that riders are not left behind by:

- Ensuring that there is a strong sweep for the ride who remains at the rear of the group on undulating stretches
- Regrouping at the top of hills
- Regular regrouping on undulating roads if the group splits
- Setting expectations about regrouping after any spirited riding sections
- Waiting for all riders at obvious junctions

Before the Ride

The ride leader is expected to plan the ride according to the following guidelines:

- Plan the ride in conjunction with the Secretary if you are unsure of the suitability or rating.
- Plan the ride taking the following into account
 - Prevailing expected weather conditions – don't be afraid to change or even cancel the ride if conditions dictate
 - Time of year – rides will be slower and shorter in the Winter, and you will need to advise riders to bring lights if you may still be riding 30 minutes before sunset
 - Are the roads chosen appropriate for Club rides?
 - What contingency plans do you have to cut a ride short if necessary (weather, incidents)
 - Except designated night rides, all rides must complete prior to sunset
 - Recent rides – have they been to the same place? Maintain ride variety.
 - Refreshments – will you have to book in advance and will the planned stop be open?
 - Ride Description guidelines – are you fully within the updated guidelines or skewed towards one end – if so declare that on the website and discuss with Ride Secretary
 - Route – plan it out online (use www.RideWithGPS.com please)

- For away rides, what are the logistics for travel, start points etc. Do you need to ask riders to confirm that they are planning to join the ride?
- Place ride details (route, map, distance, speed, grade etc.) on the website at least 10 days before the ride (weekend rides).
- Brief riders prior to the start of the ride, ensuring that everyone is clear about what the ride entails, including how hard it is likely to be.
- Consider splitting the ride into two groups if it unmanageably large. Each group should have a registered leader.
- Appoint a sweep for the ride where appropriate. Sweeps should also be registered ride leaders and not just a volunteer who likes to ride at the back.
- Introduce and buddy up new riders with experienced riders to give them a good grounding on group riding skills.
- Collect rider details and register new riders, encouraging them to join Corallian.

During the ride

When the ride has set off, the ride leader is expected above all to ensure that the ride remains safe and enjoyable for all riders, and the group as a whole.

- Ensure that the ride is led appropriately to the conditions and riders on the day, with an emphasis on rider safety, taking into account the wider group needs as well as individual needs. Explicitly, where there is a strong group, the group can (if all riders explicitly consent) exceed the standard average speed that we see on rides, at times even considerably, depending upon the riders. The club is not seeking to facilitate upward drifts of riding speeds, but also does not seek to artificially restrict riding pace when conditions allow. It is a tough balance to get right, so please try to be considerate to all riders!
- Ensure that you know if anybody leaves the ride.
- Ensure that riders regroup at strategic points such as hilltops and junctions, regularly on undulating sections where the group becomes split, and that the sweep has arrived with nobody left behind.
- Be aware of riding at extended pace for extended stretches well in excess of the norm on flat or headwind sections – this can stretch smaller riders as much as hills can stretch larger riders.
- If riders have gone off the front, your duty of care towards them has ended – unless they re-join the group. Riding off the front of the group on flat sections is not forbidden though, so do balance the control of the ride and group with an individual's desire to stretch themselves on a section of road, and do identify suitable upcoming opportunities and let the group know where it will re-group.
- Be aware that riding two abreast may be safer in many circumstances than riding single-file, and that single lines may need to split to allow traffic to pass some of the group.
- Only stop the group in safe places and away from junctions where possible.
- You may have to remind riders of expected riding behaviours during the ride - do this quickly, firmly and with tact.
- Check regularly that the group are all managing to keep up and adjust the pace accordingly. Be especially aware of whether the pace is causing any riders to struggle. If there is a rider clearly not up to the advertised pace, and this becomes detrimental to the enjoyment of the remaining riders, consider (last resort!) asking them to leave the ride either accompanied or alone.

The Sweeper has a specific job to do during the ride:

- Ensure that nobody gets left behind and that the leader is aware of any issues behind him or her in the group. Normally this means riding at the rear of the group.
- Inform the leader of any riders that leave the ride.
- The sweeper should be a strong enough rider to ride up to the front of the ride to communicate with the ride leader.
- Struggling riders should be paced back into the main group and encouraged to remain there.
- Signal to the leader at junctions ("**ALL UP**") that everyone is present.

After the ride

There is a small amount of post ride administration:

- Update the website post-ride with a ride report, the ride participants and report any issues to the Secretary, including poor riding standards. There is guidance available on the website for how to do this.
- Let the Secretary know the name and email address of non-members who rode.

Hand Signals and Shouts

We use hand signals and shouts to ensure that the group remains informed about hazards during the ride. They should be passed up and down the line quickly.

Hand Signals

- **SLOWING / STOPPING** - Vertical arm at the front of the group indicates slowing or stopping for an obstacle or hazard ahead
- **HOLE / COVER** - A finger pointing at the road indicates a pothole, cover or fixed hazard on the road surface. Used with or without a shout of '**HOLE**' or '**COVER**'
- **LOOSE** - A flat hand with fingers spread that is waved over the road surface - with or without a shout of '**LOOSE**' - indicates a loose surface
- **MOVE OUT / IN** - A rider pointing or waving behind their back is indicating that riders behind should move in or out

Shouts

- **CAR UP** - Car to rear of group (up your rear)
- **CAR DOWN** - Car approaching from front - use on narrow lanes (down your throat)
- **GRAVEL / LOOSE** - Loose road surface – take care
- **HOLE (LEFT / RIGHT)** - Hole ahead – look for support hand signal for location
- **STOPPING** - Warning that the front of the group is stopping
- **STEADY / EASY** - Warning to slow down
- **SINGLE OUT** - Ride in single file
- **PUNCTURE / MECHANICAL** - A group member has a bike problem
- **ALL UP** - Call from sweeper at a junction to let the group know there are no stragglers

- **CLEAR** - Used at a junction to tell following riders that the road is clear for them at the time of the call
- **ON YOUR RIGHT** - Tell a rider you're passing them on the right

What we expect from riders

The riders out on the ride can make the ride leader's job easier or harder. We have some guidelines for riders that you'll need to be familiar with. They are rooted in common sense and common courtesy:

- Arrive at least 10 minutes before the advertised start time for bike preparation and registration.
- Attend a ride that's suitable for their abilities and aspirations according to the latest Ride Ratings document on the website (if you're unsure, please ring the ride leader as identified on the Club website).
- Have a serviceable bike, with means to repair their own punctures.
- Be dressed appropriately for the prevailing weather conditions.
- Ride safely and within the Highway Code, being ever-mindful of the safety of their fellow riders.
- Respect the decisions and guidance of the ride leader.
- Inform the ride leader if they plan to leave the ride before the end.
- Join Corallian Cycling Club to continue riding with the Club after a trial ride.