

Southampton CTC

Guidance for Riders

Introduction

Welcome to Southampton CTC! We want all our riders, old and new, to keep safe and enjoy their time out with us. Cycling in a group is a very sociable activity but it does require a little bit of practice and discipline to do it properly. It is very important that other riders, especially the designated leader, can trust you to do the right thing in a variety of situations. These guidelines have been produced to help you understand how our rides are organised and what is expected of you. Please remember that they are only guidelines and that they cannot cover every possible situation that can arise on the road. Ultimately, it is, and will always be, up to each individual rider to take full responsibility for their actions and to use their own judgement as to what is best for their own and the group's safety in any specific situation.

Preparing for the ride

- New and inexperienced riders should contact the leader in advance to help ensure that the planned ride is within their capabilities.
- Make sure your bike is in good roadworthy condition, fits you, and is appropriate for the planned ride.
- Please acquire a good working knowledge of the Highway Code and keep your knowledge up to date. Study it: do not rely on distant memory, folklore, or guesswork.
- We strongly recommend carrying an emergency contact number of next-of-kin in an easily accessible place.
- Take spare inner tubes, an efficient pump and tools to effect minor repairs.
- Take water, emergency food rations and spare clothing to cope with possible changes of weather.
- If there is any likelihood of being out after dark, carry front and rear lights.

The role of the leader

- Our leaders are all volunteers who have given their time and experience freely to the group.
- Respect the leader's role and help him/her to ensure a safe and enjoyable ride for all.
- **Do not overtake the leader.**
- Do not leave the group without informing either the leader or the sweeper.
- If someone is missing, or you need to stop, tell the leader or the sweeper at the earliest opportunity.
- At a junction, ensure the person behind has seen you turn. If in doubt, stop and wait.
- Follow the leader's decision whether to use cycle tracks or not.

Riding in a group

- Ride two-abreast in most situations. This is safe and legal. It helps you be seen and presents a more compact obstacle for cars to overtake. Singling up is often taken by motorists as an invitation to overtake even when it is unsafe.
- If the leader asks the group to "single up", the inside rider should move up, allowing the outside rider to tuck in behind.
- Never ride more than two-abreast.
- Ride in a compact group, but do not overlap your wheel with the rear wheel of the rider in front. This is dangerous. They may have to move out suddenly to avoid a hazard!
- Don't "half wheel" the person riding alongside you.

- Do not ride no-handed in a group. No tri-bars, please.
- Do not stop suddenly: shout “stopping” in good time and give a slowing down signal if possible.
- Warn riders behind of potholes or other hazards by pointing, whenever it is safe to do so.
- Shouting “on the left” or “on the right” are standard ways of drawing attention to possible hazards.
- We use “car up” to mean that a vehicle is approaching from behind and “car down” to draw attention to vehicles coming from ahead.
- Pass on “car up” and “car down” messages.
- Do not overtake the cyclist ahead on the inside.
- Only use flashing lights in a group if you are sure your riding companions are not upset by them.

Roadcraft

As a cyclist, you are a vulnerable road user. For your own safety and that of your riding companions, you should seek to develop skills of defensive cycling and to exercise a high degree of courtesy to other roads users.

- Never cut corners when turning right. This is **always** highly dangerous, and especially so when riding in a group.
- Never wave cars on.
- At junctions, do not block the line of sight of other road users.
- When you stop, pull off the road as much as possible.
- Always wave to thank drivers who slow or stop to let us by.
- Do not shout or gesticulate at drivers who behave badly.
- Keep calm when drivers use their car horns inappropriately.

References

[Cyclecraft](#) by John Franklin

The Highway Code

<https://www.gov.uk/highway-code/contents>

If you have any comments or questions about these guidelines, please email them to secretary@southamptonctc.org.uk.

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