

Southampton CTC

Guidelines for Rides Leaders (and Sweepers)

Introduction

These guidelines are intended to help leaders plan and lead rides, so making our rides safer and more enjoyable for everyone taking part. Please remember that they are only guidelines and cannot cover every possible situation that can arise on the road. As designated leader, you are responsible for planning the route, setting the pace of the ride, liaising with refreshment providers etc. However, it is always 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.

Planning the ride

- Make sure that you have a good working knowledge of the Highway Code. (Not many people do.)
- If you are unsure of a good route for your ride, ask the advice of experienced leaders. (We are currently compiling a database of .gpx tracks to regular refreshment stops.)
- Allow for delays (punctures, mechanical problems, head winds, slow riders) and avoid being too ambitious. It is better to have time in hand than to be pressured into trying to go too fast for the group.
- Leaders should check that the refreshment venues are open and can accommodate likely numbers.
- Busy roads should be used as little as possible, unless there is a suitable cycle track.
- When crossing busy roads, bear in mind that turning right, then left is safer than turning left, then right.
- If ice is a possibility, consider starting later or cancelling the ride. Inform the membership in advance by Google group and, as far as possible, by going to the start at the appropriate time to announce any changes.

At the start of the ride

- The leader must know how many people there are in the group. You will need to take a list of names.
- Welcome any new riders and inform them of the basics of group etiquette. Hand them a copy of the Guidance for Riders.
- In the case of an unaccompanied rider aged 13-17, ensure you have a parental consent form.
- Remind all riders that it is their responsibility to carry emergency contact information.
- Immediately before starting, gather everyone together to give essential information about the route.
- Unless the group is very small, always appoint a sweeper, preferably one who knows the route.
- If there are more than 12-14 riders, split into two groups. If at all possible, appoint an additional leader and sweeper for the second group.
- Announce clearly when you are setting off.

During the ride

- As leader, your fundamental job is to control the progress of your group. As such, you may need to remind riders of the basic CTC rules of courtesy and safety.
- Encourage riders to ride two-abreast as standard. This is more sociable, easier for you to manage, and presents a far more compact unit for following cars to overtake.

- Only ask the group to single up when you judge that it is safe to be overtaken. Be aware that many drivers will take singling up as a signal to overtake, irrespective of conditions. Never wave cars on.
- Be prepared to adjust your pace to match slower riders. However, do not compromise the ride for the whole group by trying to accommodate obviously incapable riders.
- You cannot set an appropriate pace, warn of hazards or give route directions safely unless you are in front of the group. Discourage riders from overtaking you needlessly.
- Try to keep your sweeper in sight as much as possible. He/she may have to stop if there is a problem, or ride up to you to tell you of the problem.
- If there is an unexpected hazard on the route, stop to discuss alternatives with the whole group.
- Keep an eye on how the group is progressing, slowing or stopping as appropriate to regroup and/or to discuss any problems with the sweeper.
- Signal clearly (both visual and vocally) at junctions. Be aware that there are other riders following you, so allow an extra margin when judging when it is safe to proceed.
- Always regroup after traffic lights and junctions, until the sweeper informs you that everyone is present; if necessary ride back to help the sweeper with any problem.
- Stop in a safe place away from junctions, preferably off the road.
- Always make sure that everyone is ready to go before restarting after a stop; restart slowly and gradually build up speed to allow tail-enders to attach smoothly to the group.

After the ride

- Pass on the list of names to the person responsible for collating rides records, preferably by emailing it to participants@southamptonctc.org.uk .
- If you have a .gpx track of your ride, pass it on (together with a brief description of start, stops, etc.) to the person responsible for maintaining our route library, preferably by emailing it to rides@southamptonctc.org.uk .

Additional Notes for Sweepers

- Like the leader, the sweeper should also know how many people are on the ride.
- Check any uncertainties about the route with the leader before setting off.
- Stay behind with the rearmost rider.
- At junctions, signal to the leader that everyone is present.
- It is better to ride up to join the leader to discuss problems (e.g., a puncture) rather than stopping with an affected rider and risk the rest of the group riding on unaware of the issue.

References

CTC Cycling Guidelines for Group Leaders

http://www.ctc.org.uk/resources/Go_Biking_with_CTC/Rideleaderguide.pdf

[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.

25 May 2015