



Guidance for Ride Leaders

Introduction

This guidance is for Malvern Cycle Sport Ride Leaders who run non-competitive group club rides for its Members and guests.

Organised rides, and the people that lead them are the lifeblood of our club, it is very rewarding for leaders and participants alike. Whilst they are guidelines to follow, much of the below is common sense.

Ride leaders are covered by British Cycling's insurance providing they are acting on behalf of the club.

Ride Leader Development

Whilst not required, the club wants to actively support our ride leaders by part funding their British Cycling ride leader qualifications to enable their development as leaders. Please contact Matt Nixon or Justin Dawkins.

Duty of Care

Ride Leaders accept responsibility for leading the group and owe the other riders a duty of care to reduce the chance of them being exposed to unacceptable risk of injury, as far as is reasonably practicable.

Rides are open to club members, members of affiliate clubs and guests (a guest being defined as someone 'trailing' club activities prior to membership for a limit of two attendances).

Each Ride Leader will have in mind the type of ride they wish to plan and lead and the abilities and experience of the Club members it might attract. Whatever the type of ride, the Ride Leader should look to work to the practices set out in this document, to ensure the safety and enjoyment of participants.

It is essential therefore that a Ride Leader carries out the control measures in the Club's Generic Risk Assessment. Many of the measures are in fact the responsibility of individual riders so this will need to be communicated to riders from time to time. Attention should be paid to new members or guest riders turning up for the first time to make sure they are reasonably competent and have a suitable bike.

Ride Leaders must undertake to lead to the best of their ability and avoid creating foreseeable risk of injury. They must take reasonable steps to deal with any potential risk of injury, which they know exists or arises during a ride.

Ride Leaders are volunteers, not professional guides. MCS guidance makes this clear and states that it is for individual riders to take full responsibility for their actions and to also use their own judgment as to what is best for their own and the group's safety in any particular situation, but:

As a Ride Leader you must override unsafe decisions about group actions made by others, if they occur.

A Ride Leader will have knowledge of the route they are leading, be aware and reasonably follow this guidance and be an experienced rider.

A Ride Leader will aim to make a group ride enjoyable by:

Planning a ride - Road

Using roads with low traffic volume

Considering Scenic routes or destinations of interest

Choosing 'Hilly' or 'flat' routes

Matching the time and length of ride to daylight hours (or specify lights)

Avoid or manage hazardous junctions

Consider avoiding large urban areas unless specifically a planned feature of a ride.

Planning a ride – Off Road

Carefully choosing a route which matches the skill level of the least skilled member of the group.

Ensuring that the ride is carried out in daylight, or that all members have suitable lights if this is not possible.

Avoid areas of the Malvern Hills that have restricted usage as set-out by the Malvern Hills conservators.

Avoid busy parts of the hills at peak times to ensure safety of people on foot

Giving a Pre-Ride Briefing

Group rides tend to fall into two categories: The standard weekly club social rides and the one-off special events or outings.

A special event will need a briefing communicated in advance so that club members may decide whether the ride is for them. The Ride Leader may need to check entrants' abilities are suited to the ride in advance and may wish to limit numbers.

For standard weekly club rides a briefing on the day is usually sufficient though Ride Leaders may wish also to provide advance information, particularly in special circumstances due to say a longer route or changeable weather conditions.

In either case the briefing should:

Outline route, the distance, hills, surfaces and road types to be encountered, known hazards, average speed, comfort stops, café stops, train routes and times to provide alternative ways home. Off road rides will usually require more detailed description of the terrain and the type of bikes suitable.

On the Ride

After the briefing and before setting off, the Ride Leader should:

Take a headcount check and names if necessary, to comply with insurance requirements (it may be possible to prepare a list in advance) and when needed, appoint an assistant/back marker.

Making introductions for any new riders to the group.

When riding, the Ride Leader will implement the Club's Group Riding Rules, paying particular attention to:

Keeping the group together and providing support.

Not leaving anyone behind unless agreed during the ride and then only where safe to do so.

Delivering the ride that has been briefed, facilitating regrouping (e.g. at junctions; after hills) and keeping to the planned speed, subject to:

Making adjustments to the planned ride for comfort and safety.

Always choosing a safe place to stop as a group, and in particular avoiding road junctions, bends and other physical road hazards.

Warning riders before stopping and keeping the carriageway clear.

Assess the problem and decide whether to hold up the ride or leave the affected rider with helpers and details of the route to the next stop(s).

If unsure of the route, stop well before junction to consult map.

Check for presence of back marker at junctions. If necessary, wait for slower riders beyond the junction

Equipment failures on the ride:

In the event of punctures, breakdowns etc the priority is to keep the group safe. Clear the carriageway/trail if possible or instruct the group to continue to a safe waiting place.

Ride Leaders are not expected to be bike mechanics and often others in the group may be able to help with mechanicals. No one should carry out any repairs or adjustments that they are not reasonably confident they can carry out successfully.

Ride Leader Position in the Group

It's not necessary for the Ride Leader to be on the front for the entire ride. It will be the best position when there are sections of more complex route finding or junction, or areas like narrow lanes where route knowledge might help in decisions for singling out. The Leader also does not have to be the back marker though there may be times, particularly on long climbs where this is appropriate. Often the best position is in the middle. And if on front best to be the right-hand side as this gives better visibility of the group behind.

Wearing of protective equipment

The club requires that helmets are worn at all times during rides of any type.

First Aid

It is not a Club requirement for a Ride Leader to carry or administer first aid.

Dealing with an accident

If someone has an accident, first ensure you're not endangering yourself or others by approaching them. Find out if anyone has a first aid qualification and follow their instructions or, if you hold a qualification, follow the procedures you learned. There is some excellent advice provided by British

Cycling: <https://www.britishcycling.org.uk/knowledge/training/health-recovery/article/izn20150202-All-Cycling-Dealing-with-a-cycling-accident-0>

Club Rider Development

The Ride Leader should encourage the development of individual club members' abilities and potential for leading rides. Sharing information about bike and riding safety in an informal, supportive and polite way is part of this.