



2016 Safety Riding Guidelines

The below is a listing of the safe riding guidelines Sussex Cyclists operates under.

These guidelines are expected to be followed on all rides and are to be properly enforced by Ride Leaders.

While ultimately it is the role of the Ride Leader to monitor and address ride safety issues, it is the role of all riders to ride and behave in a safe, courteous manner, and to assist each other to improve and eliminate risky behaviors.

The below list of guidelines is intended to clearly layout the behavior expected on Club rides. It is not an exhaustive detailing of all possible safe riding rules.

It can be summarized in a short clear statement...

“Pay attention, Be predictable, Ride straight, Point out hazards”

Overview of Standard Safe riding guidelines and good practices:

You have an obligation to bring good personal biking skills to the group you're joining. Riding is about minimal risk and maximum enjoyment.

Riders should be prepared (physically and equipment-wise) to ride at the speed level and distance that the ride has been published at.

All riders should come prepared with Emergency contact information. This can be in the form of a "road ID" or other emergency contact information sheet. This information should be readily available in the case of accident (i.e. strapped to your arm or leg, inside your helmet, in your bike tool case.

You have a responsibility to not do anything that would compromise the safety of other riders or yourself.

Ride at an even speed. Be predictable with all your actions.

Make all your speed changes and moves smoothly so that you are easy to follow.

Never pass another rider on the right side. Passing on the right is only permissible when the lead rider (rider at the front) is moving toward the back and has moved to the left and waved you up to pass them.

Communication is key on group rides by; hand signals (see Signalling section below) are preferable but vocal at least. Hand Signals need to be held for four to six seconds so the riders behind you have a chance to react and signal the riders behind them.

Hand signals and vocal signals must be echoed from the front to the back and from rider to rider. So pass that hand and voice signal down the line - Please

When at or near the front you are the eyes of the group. Your responsibilities are to point out anything that could be a safety problem to the riders. Even if you are not at the front, you should pass these signals down the line to aide those toward the rear of the group.

At intersections warn of oncoming cars, even those at a distance.

Don't ride too close to the edge of the road, Leave a foot to eighteen inches to the right side when possible.

When passing parked cars, leave a 5 feet safety zone between you and the parked car.

When riding on wide shoulders stay within 3 feet to the right of the white line. The further you go to the right, the possibility of debris causing a fall or a flat increases.

When stopping for any reason get totally off the road. Not doing so is dangerous and disrespectful to motorists.

Never block the right turn lane at stops. Stay to the left of the turn lane unless turning right.

No rider will drop from the group, or return to the start alone unless they specifically inform the Ride Leader prior to doing so.

No rider will be left behind by the group without their specifically requesting the group proceed without them.

Lead rider (rider at the front) has the responsibility to maintain the predetermined pace of the ride (i.e. Category C ride 14-16 mph)

Lead rider will ensure that the group stays as a group, and will reduce speed sufficiently enough to enable riders to rejoin or 'close the gap'. This is especially important at turns, intersections, stop signs, stop lights etc.

Lead rider will not hog the front. It is appropriate and courteous to move to the rear and allow other riders to lead. Unless safety reasons or a complex routing requires one rider to stay at the front, it is recommended that the rider in the front not remain in that position longer than one mile or 5 minutes. They should be sure to signal the rider behind them to move up, and move to the rear only when it is safe to do so.

Be on time! The published start time is the time the ride leaves. Showing up late is asking your fellow bikers to delay their departure to accommodate you.

Ensure that all of your equipment is in good repair and ready prior to the ride.

Be prepared with at least minimal repair tools and supplies. (i.e. a spare tube and tools and ability to change a flat).

It is the responsibility of every rider to adhere to these rules, and to educate or caution other riders when they witness risky practices.

Club Specific Riding Safety Guidelines:

Technology will be used sparingly and appropriately:

Handheld device use (any device that is held in the hand) while you are moving is not allowed under any circumstances.

Computers, Cyclometers, Cell phones (in appropriate bike mountings) being used as tracking or measuring devices, GPS devices, etc...

- **SILI** – Set It and Leave It.
- Do not adjust, set or otherwise fiddle with technology while moving. If it is not working correctly when you begin riding leave it alone until the next rest stop.
- Switching between screens to see additional information is permissible as long as it is done efficiently and does not cause any riding distraction.

Ear phones and ear buds. While Delaware state law allows one ear bud or phone to be used when cycling, use of any is discouraged as a potential distraction.

Use of Mirrors when riding:

While encouraged to enhance safety, specifically on busy traffic areas, the use of mirrors should be kept to the minimum required to see the immediate area behind you.

Excessive staring at or adjustment of mirrors while riding is strongly discouraged.

Riders should not pass those in front of them who have slowed or stopped

All riders will stop or slow when those in front of them have stopped or slowed.

There will be no passing of other riders unless the rider wishing to pass specifically informs the rider(s) ahead of them that they wish to pass (i.e. "passing on your left") and they receive acknowledgement that passing is ok from the rider(s) ahead of them

There will be No passing of other riders when approaching and traveling thru an intersection.

Passing is acceptable when the front rider specifically motions or verbally states for the rider(s) behind them to pass, (i.e. when a front rider is moving to the back of the group).

Do not bunch up at intersections. Remain in place in line. Doubling up to compress the group is OK, but do not block other lanes when doing so.

Do not overlap with cars at intersections. Remain behind the car in front of you. Do not edge up alongside them.

Overlapping is strongly discouraged

Do not overlap wheels! If the rider you are following moves and hits your wheel, you will crash. This puts the entire group in danger.

If you contact wheels, turn your wheel towards the wheel of the rider in front. If you turn away you will go down quickly.

Any rider who is not comfortable with another rider overlapping them should immediately say so and the overlapping rider has a responsibility to drop back and not overlap again.

Leave sufficient space between your front wheel and the rear wheel of the person in front of you to avoid incident. As with driving a car it is the responsibility of the rider in the rear to leave enough space to react to unforeseen issues ahead of them.

Keeping the group together

It is the responsibility of riders that start falling behind to bring attention to this to those in front of them. They should clearly say something like "Gap" to alert the riders in front of them to the issue.

It is easier for these riders to see the growing gap and announce it rather than waiting for the riders in front of them to notice that they are having difficulty.

However, all riders are responsible for being aware of those around them, including behind them. If the rider behind you seems to be lagging it is your responsibility to pass the message up the line to the leaders to prevent significant gaps from forming

Once a gap is announced the group in front should immediately lower their speed until the gap has closed. The rejoined group should be sure that the pace set is appropriate to keep the group together.

Calling attention to possible risky and unsafe behavior:

- It is every rider's responsibility to clearly and courteously help other riders avoid risky or unsafe riding behaviors.
- It is the Ride Leaders responsibility to be aware of unsafe riding and ensure that the rider ceases doing so.

- Should a rider continue to exhibit unsafe riding practices the Ride Leader can either ask them to ride in a place they will not impact other riders, or can ask them to leave the ride
- Should the Ride Leader witness continued or particularly egregious riding practices they should raise this to the Club Leadership.
- Riders who exhibit risky and unsafe riding behaviors can be banned from all Club Riding at the discretion of Club Leadership.

Additional documents on Ride Safety and Riding Techniques can be found on the Club Website.

Signaling:

Introduction to Signaling

The ability to quickly and efficiently communicate with fellow cyclists is a necessary habit to learn. Hand signals and vocal calls are the two best methods for communicating with other cyclists. The responsible cyclist will use hand signals as the primary means of communication along with vocal calls as a secondary means when appropriate. Please note that when riding with a new group you should pay attention to the hand and vocal signals they use and adapt accordingly.

Hand Signals

A Google search will quickly show that there are numerous alternatives for use of hand signals in cycling. The following reflects the common practices for Sussex Cyclists.

Learning and using hand signals can greatly enhance safety when riding in a group. Using hand signals allows you to effectively point out objects in the group's path of travel as well as to inform other cyclists of your intentions. Below are a few of the basic hand signals that you should become familiar with if you intend to ride in a group.

<h3>Slowing or Stopping</h3>	<p>This signal is a clear indication to the cyclists behind you that you've stopped pedaling and that you are slowing or intend to bring your bicycle to a complete stop very soon.</p>	
	<p>Never make an immediate stop, even after signaling, unless an emergency situation warrants it.</p>	
	<p>This hand signal is often combined with a loud vocal call of "Slowing" or "Stopping."</p>	



Left or Right Turn

An extended straight arm is used to indicate to fellow cyclists and vehicular traffic of your intention to make a left or right turn.

We suggest you do not use the signal of extending your left arm and bending the forearm upwards at 90 degrees.

There seems to be growing consensus that the bent left arm (see next signal) can be misinterpreted



Road Hazard

This signal is used to identify a hazard on that the group is riding on. Potholes, drainage grates, and manhole covers are great examples of items you should identify using this signal.

Make sure that you point at the hazard, as it appears ahead, allowing sufficient time for it to be avoided.



Loose Road Surface

This signal is used to alert cyclists of a scattered hazard on the road that could cause traction problems.

Examples of a scatter hazard include loose gravel, sand and broken glass. Instead of simply pointing at the hazard, like you do for the “road hazard” signal, you make a waving action with the open palm of your hand facing the ground.



Moving Over

This signal is used if your group is coming up on a parked car in the way, passing an oncoming runner, approach a narrow bridge, road sign or other obstacle, or overtaking a slower rider.

Typically this means taking your right hand and waving it behind your back. The motion goes from right to left, signaling everyone to move left.



Vocal Calls

Vocal calls are an important addition to hand signals to communicate in a group of cyclists. Ambient noise from traffic or other sources may present problems with vocal calls along your route, so stay aware of your conditions and use necessary precautions to ensure the safety of all riders. Below are a few of the basic vocal calls that you should become familiar with for riding with Sussex Cyclists.

Slowing or Stopping:

Yell “Stopping” if you are going to be stopping your bicycle quickly. It is best to give the riders behind you an ample amount of warning before you stop. Announce that you are “Slowing” as you roll up to a traffic light or stop sign. This gives the other riders plenty of time to prepare for your next call of “Stopping”.

Car Back:

Those at the back of the group shout this when there is a vehicle behind the group and it is attempting to pass. NEVER call out “Car” as this can be confused with “Clear”.

Car Up:

“Car Up” is shouted by those at the head of the group when there is an oncoming car (e.g., entering the intersection in the opposite direction of travel). NEVER call out “Car” as this can be confused with “Clear.”

Rider up, or Walker Up:

Rider Up or Walker Up is called when there is bike rider or walker coming toward the group in the opposite direction, or when the group will be overtaking a Rider or Walker in the direction the group is headed.

Bump, Gravel, Hole, etc...

These calls can be used in conjunction with the appropriate hand signal to aide those behind in being aware of the upcoming hazard.