



Delaware

Ride Leader Manual 2016

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Thank you to the New York Cycle Club, for information obtained from their website

Introduction:

The quality of Sussex Cyclists rides depends on the active participation of both riders and leaders.

By listing a ride, a leader has advertised the general characteristics of a ride, on which riders should be able to rely. But, leading a ride is more than just setting a particular pace or following a cue sheet. It's about selflessly taking responsibility for a group of cyclists and doing your utmost to achieve a safe and pleasant ride experience. Toward that end, we've prepared this Manual, emphasizing the basic concepts of leading a ride with the Sussex Cyclists Club.

I. Why Lead a Ride?

We want to start with some words of inspiration, some explanation of why you would want to lead a ride. So, here goes:

- It's fun.
- You get to choose the route, the pace, and the food stops. This means that you get to share *your* favorite destinations and routes, ride at *your* preferred pace, and bring people to *your* favorite eateries.
- You get to decide when and where to take a pit stop.
- You get to meet new people. This expands your pool of potential riding partners (and friends) who like to ride the way you do.
- You can share your *other* interests, knowledge, or talents with people by leading theme rides or rides combined with other activities. For instance, people have led bike and row rides, bike and tennis rides, bike and swim rides, rides to historical sites, cultural rides to museums, singles rides, shopping rides etc.
- You can inspire people, motivate them, and get them excited about bicycling.
- Ride leaders have countless tales of novices who could barely shift gears on their first ride and later blossomed into avid cyclists.
- You can exercise your creativity in creating a new route or using a new theme.
- You contribute something to the cycling community.
- Leading a ride makes you go riding yourself.
- Other people have to call you "Leader."

2. Before the Ride

1) Deciding on the pace and distance you want to lead

a. Before you can “decide on the pace and distance you want to lead,” you need to understand what these speed designations *mean*.

Sussex Cyclists			
Ride Speed Classifications as of 1/29/2015			
Category #	Title	Average Rolling Speed	Description of pace, planned stops, max speeds
F	Casual ride	8 to 10 mph ARS	ARS may vary depending on terrain, wind, traffic, and ability of riders. Frequent rest stops, typically every 5 miles. Less than 20 miles in length. No Drops
E	Cruising	10 to 12 mph ARS	Cruising speeds may reach 14 mph for short periods. Rest stops every 5 to 10 miles. 30 miles or less in length. No Drops
D	Easy Touring	12 to 14 mph ARS	Cruising speeds may reach 16 mph for short periods. Rest stops every 10 to 15 miles. Length varies, typically more than 30 miles. No Drops
C	Touring	14 to 16 mph ARS	Cruising speeds may reach 18 mph for short periods. Rest stops every 10 to 15 miles. Length varies, typically more than 35 miles. No Drops
B	Training	16 to 18 mph ARS	Cruising speed may reach 20-22 mph. For rides over 35 miles there is typically a rest stop every 15 to 20 miles. Length varies. No Drops
A	Fast Training	18+ mph ARS	Pace lines approach 22 mph but may top 24 mph for short intervals. For rides over 40 miles there is typically a rest stop every 20 to 25 miles. Length varies. No Drops

b. What pace should I lead?

Lead at a pace you're comfortable with or a slower pace than you normally ride. (Leading at a slower pace is better so that you will be stronger than the group and able to pull the entire way if needed.) This applies equally to "A" leaders who may utilize a rotating paceline. As with pace, choose a distance you can comfortably ride.

c. Should I have a co-leader?

Sussex Cyclists recommends, but does not require, that you have a co-leader for your ride. See Section 6 "What If" Situations below.

We highly encourage you to enlist the aid of a co-leader who can sweep. You might want someone who also has some mechanical skills in case the need arises. You also will probably want someone with some prior ride leader experience if you are new to ride leading. Having a co-leader will also allow one leader to go to the hospital with an injured rider as a patient advocate in case there is an accident.

2) Selecting a route.

Safety should be a deciding factor for all route-related decisions. If you can't find a safe way to get somewhere, don't go there. Keep in mind that riding with a group is *much* different from riding by yourself and rarely is it easier.

The best choice for a route is often one that you've ridden and enjoyed! Ride leaders rarely mind if someone else uses their routes or cue sheets, so you needn't worry about plagiarism (it's nice to ask, however, if the cue sheet isn't "public," i.e., isn't in the Ride Library). Feel free to add your own variations; just because you're borrowing someone else's route doesn't mean that you can't give it your own personal touch. If you know a ride leader who has led rides in the area where you want go, contact him/her and ask for a cue sheet or for suggestions on roads to use or avoid, good places for a mid-ride snack, and other relevant details.

In addition, the Sussex Cyclists Ride Library (coming soon) contains many possible routes to choose from.

- Choose a starting point that people can find easily. If possible, the starting point should also have nearby restrooms.
- When planning a lunch stop, consider stopping after the midpoint rather than before. The riders who are feeling a bit tired can take solace in the knowledge that you're more than half way.
- Try *not* to pick a route that everyone always uses (e.g., Walmart to Milton coffee shop)

Try to find an interesting alternative to get to your destination. (But, if you are leading your first ride and you are nervous about the route, by all means use a

tried and true route. People will be happy to have a well-led ride even if it is not creative. THEN, on your next ride, think about using an interesting alternative.) See also Section 8 for mapping a New Route.

3) Scouting the route

Regardless of the pace and distance of a particular ride, a scouting ride is strongly advised so that you know everything necessary about road conditions, mileage, and water, lunch, and restroom stops.

Scouting a ride beforehand allows you to focus more on leading the group safely on ride day rather than on trying to read a cue sheet while moving. This is especially true when you have to lead a large group through busy intersections or into left-hand turns.

Try to scout with your co-leader(s) so that you can discuss who will pull at what times, where to pit etc. If that's not possible and if you're not entirely comfortable scouting on your own, enlist the aid of a couple of friends (not a large group) and take an existing cue sheet and learn the route.

- If you've been on the route, but not recently, you may want to go over it again to ensure that nothing has changed significantly—no long detours over gravel or milled roads, for example.
- If you're using a route that you've never ridden, or that you're designing on your own, it's even more important that you travel it before the ride, preferably on a bicycle rather than by car or using a GPS program. It can be a nasty surprise to find difficult hills where it appeared to be flat.

4) Distributing the cue sheets

You may want to email the cue sheet in advance to the ride participants and have them bring printed copies with them. This will give your riders a chance to familiarize themselves with the route.

Even if you send cue sheets in advance, you must bring a few hard copies with you on the day of the ride to distribute to riders / co-leaders / sweep.

3. Day of the ride

1. Leave yourself time to formulate your pre-ride discussion or prepare one the night before.
2. Arrive early to coordinate pre-ride activities.
3. Be available to answer questions about the ride, mileage, lunch stops, food etc.
4. **Bring a club Liability waiver and pen for non-club members to sign prior to the ride. Any rider joining a club ride that is not a Current club member must sign a waiver for that ride. Past but not current club members are included in needing to sign waivers. Non-club member must sign waivers for every Club ride they join.**
5. Bring extra cue sheets to distribute
6. Take the opportunity to assess all the participants – are they and their bikes suitable for that particular ride? Check that all have Helmets.
7. If they have not participated in a club ride before, you might casually ask questions regarding their current riding status: i.e., how far they've ridden, what pace etc., and determine if they might have a problem keeping up with the group.
8. Although it might seem unfair to turn back a rider at the start or at some point before you get too far along on the ride, it could be a significant burden to hold the group up every few miles waiting for that person to catch up. If they are physically unprepared, lack adequate water, snacks, spare tube, pump, or their bikes are poorly maintained, it would be equally unfair to all to have them break or quit along the way.

Pre-Ride talk/discussion

After everyone has arrived, introduce yourself, welcoming everyone on behalf of Sussex Cyclists.

- If you weren't able to talk to all of the new riders previously, ask for a show of hands of those who have not participated in a club ride before. It's always nice to give those people a particular welcome.
- Introduce yourself and your co-leader(s) and anyone else who may be helping out that day.
- If there's time and the group is not too large, it is nice to have the riders introduce themselves as well.

The following should be made clear to all riders (hit the main topics so as not to make the pre-ride discussion longer than the ride itself):

Group riding skills

- Impress upon the group that cycling with a group, as opposed to cycling alone, requires special cycling skills.
- Safety is the major concern of group riding.

- There is also a certain cycling etiquette, or rules of the road, which need to be followed.

Emphasize predictable, single-line riding that is attentive to local traffic laws and follows common sense. Failure to do so may anger motorists, other cyclists who may want to pass, and pedestrians, and could contribute to an accident.

For instance:

- Do not bunch up at lights or while riding – “maintain the line.”
- Don’t allow cyclists to “move up” at a stop. They may do so only while riding - alerting other riders by saying “passing on your left.”
- Remember to share the road respectfully with other cyclists, drivers, and pedestrians. This includes stopping before (not in) crosswalks.
- don’t pass on the right, unless asked by the front rider to move up after they have moved to the left to allow you to do so.
- Ride as far to the right as is reasonable and safe.
- When climbing a hill, stay to the right except to pass.

Notify the group that everyone must indicate his/her intentions

- Use hand and/or voice signals, such as “stopping,” “slowing,” “left turn” etc.
- Discourage the calling out of “Clear” when approaching intersections. Each individual should monitor traffic and proceed only when they have checked
- Call out or point to conditions such as holes, glass, doors etc. and expect everyone on the ride to do the same. By not doing so, a rider might impede riders behind him/her from reacting to a dangerous obstacle and might cause injury or damage to those riders and/or their bicycles.
- On the other hand, make riders aware of their need to focus on their own safety in situations such as going through intersections or turns by not always following the group blindly.

Describe your ride as advertised in your ride description, including distance and pace (cruising speed).

- Riders rely on the pace (cruising speed) and ride description as advertised; therefore, the leader is expected to adhere to his/her description. To deviate from this would certainly be unfair to any participants who planned on doing the advertised ride. Monitor your speed often during the ride, as it is easy to be pressured by riders “pushing the pace.” “Make allowances for hills.” Keep the speed up hills proportionate to the pace AND USE AN EVEN EFFORT.

Announce that Sussex Cyclists has a NO-DROP policy.

- No rider will be left behind alone for any reason.
- Should a rider breakdown, be unable to continue, or wish to return to the start without finishing the ride:
 - If logical the group will stop while the breakdown is repaired
 - If not repairable or if that rider needs to end their ride for any reason, at least a few other riders will break from the group and remain with that

rider till they are picked up, or escort them on a return to the ride start location. All of this is to be discussed and agreed on with the Ride Leader.

- A rider has can end their ride, return to the start, or for any other reason be left alone only at their request and after discussing with the ride leader.

Announce that you plan to adhere to the pace

- Strictly discourage riders from “pace busting.” As a ride leader you must also resist this temptation yourself! That breaks the ride tempo and compromises group safety.
- If riders go off the front, other riders may follow and the ride leader will no longer maintain control of the ride.
- If riders insist on going past the leader or going faster than the advertised pace, other than where indicated (such as on hills), they should be asked to leave the ride or told to ride on their own and meet the group for lunch.

Dealing with large groups

Anticipate when you may have one:

- Forecast for good weather
- Popular destination
- Few alternative ride listings for the day

When the group is larger than appropriate for the riding conditions ride leaders should break the group up into smaller, safer and more manageable groups. Rule of thumb is for urban, heavier trafficked roads more than 6-8 riders, rural and lightly traffic roads more than 8-10 riders. The exact number of when to split is at the discretion of the ride leader. In some more popular, heavily attended rides this could mean splitting into 3 or more groups.

When splitting into multiple groups, the ride leader should:

1. If known in advance of the ride, Recruit one or more additional co-leaders and/or some fellow cyclists “in your league” to come out for the ride—you’ll be sure to have some moral support if not a formal co-leader
2. Ask for, or nominate (with the nominees’ consent), sub-group leaders (to effect the previous point)—ask if there is anyone present who has ride leading experience
3. Be sure cell phone numbers have been shared among sub-group leaders and their phones are available
4. Be sure to agree on regrouping locations throughout the ride to ensure an overall sense of cohesion for the day

5. Be sure cue sheets get distributed evenly among smaller group
6. Have Groups maintain a clear spacing – 500 yards or so is appropriate.
7. Be sure riders are not switch groups when riding, and should let their group leader know if they are switching groups after a rest stop

The importance of a pre-ride discussion cannot be overemphasized. It lets riders know what you expect from them and what they can expect from you. Try to keep it brief, covering the topics above and anything else that will ensure a safe and pleasant ride.

4. Leading the Ride

*****Always remember - the objective of a cooperative group ride is to *ride together as a group*.*****

Every ride is different, so it's impossible to anticipate everything you might encounter on a ride. But, here are a few items to consider.

- **Set a good example.** Ride safely, be respectful to pedestrians, drivers, and other cyclists and remember that you represent the Sussex Cyclists Club. For instance, do not ride between two lanes of moving cars stopped at a red light – if necessary, pass on the far right.
- **Be courteous.** Anticipate situations where your group may inconvenience others. For example, when you stop to regroup, be sure your riders aren't blocking the road, a sidewalk, or a driveway. When you re-enter the roadway, wait until there's a break in the traffic, so drivers aren't forced to slow down for your group.
- **Passing other riders:** If your group needs to pass other cyclists on the road, please announce yourselves ("passing on the left"), and do not move back to the right until the entire group has passed the cyclists. Do not box in riders you are passing.
- **Unforeseen problems:** If you run into unforeseen problems (new construction, bad weather, unusually heavy traffic, a closed bakery shop), be creative. Change the route, take shelter, choose a different rest stop. You might consider asking for suggestions from your riders. They may know the area better than you do. However, you're in charge, so you want to make sure you don't lose control of the group and don't let yourself be railroaded into something that you think is unwise. Consider safety above all else.
- **Mid-ride announcements:** Periodically, regroup and re-emphasize safety, especially related to upcoming conditions. For example, if you need to move into the left lane to make a turn, remind riders to look before they change lanes. Remind them not to yell "clear" at intersections. What might be clear for them might not be clear for riders further back. (Yelling "clear" implicitly absolves other riders of their responsibility to look out for their own safety; the preferred term, "going through," simply announces *one's own* intentions and forces each individual to decide for himself or herself.) However, do remind riders to alert the group if a car is approaching them at an intersection by yelling "car right" or "car left." Pull the group over if you see unsafe riding practices to explain what the proper/safe practice is. Try not to point out a particular rider's mistakes to the entire group - if needed, talk to that rider later when you are able to discuss the issue in private.

- **Food and restroom stops:** When it's time to start riding again, announce your departure enough in advance that everyone has time to pay their bill, get their helmets and gloves on, and refill their water bottles. In addition, be alert for riders who have wandered off or are in the restroom. You might consider having everyone stand by their bikes so that you can be sure not to leave someone behind.

Making Turns

Turning Left:

- From Single Lane. Before the intersection, move toward the center of the lane and signal your left turn. If a car ahead of you is signaling a left turn, stay in line behind that car. If stopped at a light where you will turn left, stay toward the center of the lane so that cars cannot pull up beside you.
- If you are too far left, a left-turning car might pull up next to you on your right, which makes it difficult for you to get to the right after the turn. Also being on the far left of a turning lane puts you potentially in the path of cars making turns onto the road you are on if they swing wide around the corner.
- From Left Turn Lane. Before an intersection move to right side of the left turn lane.

Turn wide so that you stay on the right side of the lane so that cars turning left will stay to your left. If you approach the intersection with a car ahead of you in the left turn lane, stay in line behind that car and take the lane so that other cars turning left will stay behind you. As you turn, stay on the right side of the lane.

Turning Right:

- From Single Lane: Don't go wide on right turns; tuck in the radius as much as possible.
- From Right Turn Lane. If you're going straight at an intersection where there is a right turn lane, move to the left side of that right-hand lane so that cars turning right can pass you on the right as you go straight.

In General, Where Should I Be?

- Two-Way Traffic: Stay to the right, especially outside urban areas and on busy roads with fast-moving traffic.
- Heavy Traffic: Especially with slow-moving heavy traffic, establish your position in the middle of a lane. Don't skirt the edges, as car drivers are too likely to take chances on getting around you and you might get side-swiped.

5. Safety

Err on the side of safety

If you have any doubts, always err on the side of safety.

- Don't try sprinting through lights to beat the Red.
- Don't try to beat a car to a turn.
- Don't take a shortcut down a one-way street.

Helmets are required

It's club policy. You can't lead a ride or allow any participant to join a club ride without one.

Don't bunch up at stop lights

- Keep in line at traffic lights.
- Don't creep up on the right side of cars.

Turn as a group

• Keep the line tight so that the group turns as one unit. This discourages impatient drivers from trying to cut in.

Know and obey the traffic laws

- i.e. riding only with the flow of traffic, never running a red light, never ride the wrong way on a one-way street, etc..
- Stop signs are to be obeyed in any heavily trafficked or urban area (i.e. Rehoboth, Bethany, Lewes), doing a "slow-roll" thru a stop sign maybe acceptable only with extreme caution and in rural areas with no traffic present. Riders must make their own decisions and accept their own liability in doing so.

Use your contacts

- Identify the experienced riders in the group.
- Ask them to assist in keeping the group together.
- Ask them to work with the less experienced riders.

There is a more thorough list of Club Safety Policies on the club website

There are also several other document on the club website on Safe riding practices and riding techniques

6. “What if” situations

6.1 Accidents/medical emergencies

As a leader, some of the initial steps for you to take if there is an accident are: to remain calm, attend to and assess the condition of the victim, and assign leaders to:

- A. Direct traffic around the site
- B. Get all cyclists off the road and do not overwhelm the victim
- C. Get details of the accident from other riders
- D. If necessary, call 911 and be prepared to:
 - 1. Describe the emergency
 - 2. Give the proper location (use your cue sheet)
 - 3. Give 911 your cell phone #
 - 4. Listen to any instructions by the dispatcher

Initially, tell the victim not to move or get up and do not try to move him/her. In order to get a quick assessment of the victim’s condition, you can calmly ask if he/she has any serious pain, specifically in the head and neck areas. You can then ask questions such as “do you know where you are” or “do you know what month it is”? You can then decide whether to call 911, always erring on the side of caution when making this decision.

Do not always rely on the victim to determine if help is to be called. If emergency help is summoned, the victim is not to be moved at all and should be encouraged to stay still until help arrives. Under no circumstances should the victim’s helmet be removed or should he/she be given food or drink or painkillers.

If it is determined that the victim is to be taken to the hospital, give the person who is accompanying the victim the victim’s emergency contact information and have that person get in touch with the emergency contact person once the location of the hospital is known. Also, have that person give you any details that he/she obtains at the hospital so that you can inform the group of the situation.

IMPORTANT: If someone on your ride needs to take an ambulance to a hospital, one of the leaders should either go with him/her or ensure that another responsible rider goes with him/her in the ambulance unless it can be determined that the injured person’s family will meet him/her at the hospital. (In the case of a serious injury, someone should accompany the victim to the hospital even if one of the family members says that he/she will come to the hospital.) The person going to the hospital with the injured person will be the injured person’s “patient advocate.” The patient advocate should stay at the hospital until the logistics are taken care of. It is also the leader’s responsibility to ensure that the injured person’s bicycle is taken to a safe location. Many times the police will be able to take the bicycle to the police station where it can be picked up later, or the leader can ask a neighbor to hold onto it. (Of course, the bike of the patient advocate must also be taken care of. And, the leader and patient advocate

must figure out a way to get the patient advocate and his/her bike home.) Given all these responsibilities, it is clear why having a co-leader is highly recommended.

Being reasonably prepared for an accident won't turn you into an obnoxious worry wart.

6.2 Resolving Conflicts

Your time and commitment to the Sussex Cyclists are a privilege to your fellow riders. Their rights are to have a well-planned, safe, and enjoyable event. You have the same rights and deserve the respect of your fellow riders.

Conflict on your ride can arise for a number of reasons; it can be between two or more riders or be directed at you, the leader:

- One rider's action may cause perceived or real danger to another rider and that rider may react aggressively (verbally, emotionally, or worse).
- Criticism about a rider's style from you or another rider may be perceived as unjust or threatening (to his/her sense of self-esteem).

As a Ride Leader, your responsibility is to the overall enjoyment and safety of the ride and riders. Any of the actions above can pose a danger to you, other riders, or even the uncooperative rider him/herself.

You may be able to resolve conflicts by following some of the following basic steps:

- **Listen and Assess:** find out what the issue is—get your rider(s) to talk to you. Sort through emotion and lay out the facts. By doing so, you are closer to removing the emotion from an issue and coming to a logical resolution and one that hopefully the rider(s) will understand and support

- **Restate the tenets of the Sussex Cyclists Ride Leader Guidelines**

(advertised pace, route, and rest stops, any behavior prescribed by laws of traffic or common sense/safety, explain to the rider that the Guidelines are there to protect him/her, you, and all the riders

- **Take action** to defuse the issue:
 - You can send an uncooperative/unskilled rider to the back of the group, or, alternatively, place him/her directly in back of the leader
 - You can tell a rider to leave your ride

Avoid escalating conflict by not taking conflict personally.

- Find facts
- Invoke the Ride Leader Guidelines
- Let riders know you are looking out for the well being of the group

6.3 Getting lost

- Don't panic.
- Assess the situation:
 - Did you miss a turn and realize it immediately? If so, do not stop short; slow down gradually and turn at the first safe opportunity. Try humor – “practicing Uturns.”
 - Have you been going for miles without noticing?
 - Can you easily back-track and get back on the cue sheet?
 - Is the cue sheet wrong?
- Explain to the group that you are lost/missed a turn/what is happening.
- Check your Cue sheet, Map, Garmin or GPS, or find a participant with a Garmin or GPS.
- If you are close to a deli/gas station, have a pit stop and ask directions.
- Ask fellow riders if they know the way.
- Take out your map and plot the course back to the cue-sheet or catch up on the cue sheet at a point ahead in the ride.
- You might have to change the destination of the ride if seriously off course.
- But, whatever you do, don't panic - it happens to everybody sooner or later (but it happens a lot less if you've scouted the ride in advance!).

7. Ride Leader Tools

Here are some basic tools to ensure that you and your riders are in the best place to complete your ride safely, enjoyably, and in reasonable time.

Cue Sheets — Consider cue sheets that identify Turns, Street Names, Landmarks, and Incremental and Cumulative Mileage. Check out the Sussex Cyclists website for examples. Bring extra cue sheets for yourself and for riders who lose them along the way. Consider emailing the cue sheet to the registered participants in advance of the ride, and ask them to print it out and bring it to the ride.

Maps—even more basic than cue sheets; better maps always include side or secondary streets and a few streets before or after the intended route (so that if riders stray from a route or miss a turn, they can more easily reorient themselves relative to the planned route). Outline your route in a contrasting color (for example, with a Highlighter marker). Some leaders find that a smart phone may be sufficient instead of a map.

GPS - many people ride with some sort of GPS device: a Garmin, a blackberry, iphone etc. Learn how to use yours effectively to track your ride and salvage wrong turns.

Cell Phones—exchange cell phone numbers with your sweep and make sure your riders have the leaders' cell phone numbers.

Extra Tube—ride participants are responsible for their own provisions; however, here is one “extra” you can carry for your ride group in the inevitable event that someone experiences a flat and does not have an extra tube. It takes less time than booting or stranding a rider or going off course in search of a bicycle shop. You might consider carrying a tube that you've patched as an extra tube.

Basic Allen Set and Patch Kit—having 3, 4, 5, and 6mm Allen keys and a patch kit addresses most common adjustment/repair needs.

Frame Pump—capable of inflating to tire pressure suitable for the type of ride you are leading; all riders should have a pump, far fewer come prepared with one. A CO₂ Cartridge system is good to have as a back-up but nothing is more reliable than a good frame pump. Mini-pumps are not recommended if you don't have the arm strength to use one adequately.

First Aid Supplies—bandaids, antibiotic ointment, latex gloves, aspirin, antacid tablets (they contain fast-acting electrolytes, sometimes effective with cramping).

8. Mapping a New Route

1) Using the Club Ride Library

Most, if not all, of the standard routes can be found in our Sussex Cyclists Ride Library under the Club Rides tab of the website.

<https://sussexcyclists.wildapricot.org/>.

2) Putting Together Your Own Route

- Grab either a detailed map or use any of the computer or GPS programs available or use a combination of routes from the Sussex Cyclists Ride Library. The club has settled on the RideWithGPS web and app tool for the creation of standardized cue sheets and maps.
- As can be expected, having previously cycled in the area helps tremendously as it will provide a foundation of country roads that you will eventually tie together into a route. Once you find the best way there, you may want to find a "bike friendly" lunch stop, which invariably means a deli or sandwich or diner stop with a good selection of food, drinks, and rest room(s).
- Our best ride leaders do most of their scouting this way: finding a destination and joining the roads to get there. It helps to have a good cycling companion, as scouting is an imperfect science requiring many revisions and having a friend along makes it a lot more fun.
- Additionally, what sometimes looks good on paper is seldom as desirable in reality. Mapping companies sometimes erroneously assume that you are riding a jeep instead of a bike, so don't be surprised to find a road that has more rocks than pavement or requires serious skills to climb.
- Although many routes require two to three scouting trips for perfection, it's always worth the effort. You will soon realize that scouting is the best part of leading a ride since it allows you the opportunity to create the experience that countless future riders will eventually enjoy.

9. Mechanicals

General

Always carry:

- multi-tool
- chain tool
- tire boot
- spoke wrench
- patch kit
- tire levers
- at least two tubes

If someone has a mechanical problem, you can:

- Fix it yourself if you have the parts and expertise to make the repair; or
- Check with your riders to see if anyone else has the parts and the expertise to make the repair; or
- Take the group on a detour to a nearby bike shop, car repair shop, or hardware store.
- Suggest the rider call home or call a car service.

The following are some problems that you might need to address (some problems are not as severe as they might at first seem):

Booting a Tire

If, when you attempt to inflate the tire, you see the inner tube bubble through a hole in the outer surface, you will need to place material on the inside casing of the tire to keep the tube in place.

- The best thing to use is a Park Tools pre-glued mylar boot, about \$1.00 a piece.
- Lacking one of these, use any tear resistant thin material such as an energy bar wrapper or a dollar bill.
- With a Park Tools patch, you can inflate the tire to full pressure; with other materials, inflate until you see the material itself start to bulge and then back off a bit.

Broken Spokes

Generally, if you don't have too far to travel, you can just ride with a broken spoke. If you can, remove the broken parts of the spoke. If removing spoke parts is not possible, tie or tape the broken parts to adjacent spokes. If breaking the spoke also affected the true of the wheel, you may also need to loosen the brakes. Emphasize that the rider should avoid potholes as much as possible.

Hesitant or Autoshifting Rear Derailleur

When the rear derailleur does not shift cleanly from one cog to another or seems to shift of its own accord it is usually the result of incorrect derailleur cable tension.

- Check the cable run under the bottom bracket to make sure it is unobstructed.
- While looking at the back of the bike, find the barrel adjuster located at the point the cable enters the derailleur.
- Turn the barrel adjuster one quarter turn in the direction in which the derailleur is not shifting correctly. If it hesitates shifting to the larger cogs turn it to the left. If it hesitates shifting to the smaller cogs turn it to the right.
- Shift through all the gears while turning the cranks and continue adjusting in quarter turn increments until shifting is smooth.
- Remember: If you want it to shift more smoothly to the large cogs, turn the adjuster towards the large cogs. If you want it to shift more smoothly to the small cogs, turn the adjuster towards the small cogs.

Jammed Chain

When the chain jams between the chainrings and the chainstay you probably won't be able to just tug it out.

- Insert a screwdriver or similar lever (wrapped in cloth so you don't scratch the frame) between the chainstay and the chainwheel and apply a little mechanical advantage. Most modern chainrings are surprisingly flexible.
- If this does not work, see the section on breaking a chain.
- Suggest that the person get a Third Eye chain watcher to prevent this in the future.

Broken Derailleur Cable

If the rear derailleur cable breaks, the derailleur will automatically shift to the smallest cog. You have three options:

- Leave it in the smallest cog and ride in the biggest gear. You don't want to ride too far in the small chainwheel and small cog combination or you can damage the cog.
- Move the chain to a larger cog by pushing inward on the derailleur and tightening the high-limit screw on the derailleur until it lines up with that cog. You may have to fiddle with the limit screws to get it to run quietly. This will give you at least two middle-range gears with a decent chain line by using the front derailleur.
- Push the derailleur inward while turning the cranks and when you reach the cog you want, place a stick between the derailleur cage plates to stabilize the spring tension.

Broken Brake Cable

There are various ways to attempt to repair broken brake cables but none of them is reliable for a road bike.

- If the front brake cable breaks; call a cab.
- If the rear brake cable breaks you should be able to make it home very carefully since you still have over 66% of your braking power. Do not attempt to ride in a paceline with only one brake.

Breaking a Chain

You will have to break and reset a chain if the rear derailleur jockey wheels jam, or the tension spring breaks, the chain becomes lodged between the chainwheel and chainstay, or the chain itself breaks.

- Campagnolo 10-speed chains require a special pemralink with two pins and a proprietary tool. Do not attempt to repair these chains with a normal chain tool.
- Shimano hyperglide chains require a new “subpin” or rivet each time the chain is broken. If the person is not carrying an extra subpin, do not attempt to break the chain and reconnect since the chain will be significantly weakened and could brake under pressure. These chains have HG embossed on the links.
- All other chains, barring those with gold master links, can be disconnected and re-assembled using the same rivet and normal chain tool.
- The chain tool has two sets of teeth for holding the chain. The set farthest from the chain tool handle is the set used for pushing and resetting the rivet. The set closest to the handle is used to make adjustments to stiff links.

Truing a wheel

If a wheel has a *mild* wobble you can adjust by adjusting the spoke tension.

- Check the wheel for loose spokes and tie a blade of grass around each one to mark it.
- Turn the bike upside down so that the brake pads become truing calipers.
- Tighten all loose spokes
- Spin the wheel and look to see where it scrapes one of the brake pads.

Truing a wheel is not rocket science but is difficult to explain and hard to do on the side of the road.

10. Posting rides

Fluency in posting, and timeliness of posting of rides goes a long way in having a successful and well attended ride.

Our club website (<https://sussexcyclists.wildapricot.org/>) has an events calendar that is used throughout the riding season to list all Special / Sponsored events (i.e. Amish Country ride), as well as all club rides.

Riding Season posting process:

The club event calendar is maintained generally from early May thru end of September. All club rides can should be listed on this site during that time period.

One week or more in advance of the ride date:

Ride leaders should get the specifics of their rides to the Ride Committee lead for posting.

This should include:

- “Name” of the ride
- Date
- Start Time
- Start point
- Speed category
- Distance
- Ride leader contact information to receive responses of riders and questions
- Any additional specifics / instructions specific to the ride

If a recurring ride, the specific of the recurrences (i.e. weekly, monthly, on certain dates).

Within one week of the ride date:

- the ride leader should publish notice of the ride, with all of the above information, via the club email distribution list.
- any modifications or cancellations of their rides should also be published via the club email distribution list

Off-season ride posting process:

This period is generally from the beginning of October thru end of April the following year.

The posting process is the same as the “within one week” process above.

11. Ride Leader Guidelines and Responsibilities Summary

The quality of Sussex Cyclist rides depends on the active participation of both riders and leaders.

By listing a ride, a leader has advertised the general characteristics of a ride, on which riders should be able to rely.

1. Scout the route and stops before the actual ride. Designate rest stops appropriate to the level of the ride. Carry a map of the area (or use a smart phone or GPS).
2. Bring a copy of Liability Waiver and pen, and have Non-Members sign for each ride they join.
3. Bring at least a few copies of the rides Cue Sheet to distribute
4. Give some thought as to any emergency situation that may arise. Know the location of landmarks, shopping centers etc. on or near the route.
5. Deliver a pre-ride talk emphasizing some of these guidelines and encouraging safe and predictable riding must always be given.
6. Enlist the assistance of riders, (or have a planned co-leader in place) in looking out for others.
7. Turn back riders who are unqualified or show up with poorly maintained bikes or without helmets. As a leader you have the final say on the ride, including that of removing uncooperative participants as a last resort.
8. Ride at the advertised pace. Riders should be able to rely on the cruising speed advertised in the ride description. Make allowances for hills.
9. Emphasize predictable riding, attentive to local traffic laws and common sense. Do not bunch up at lights or while riding.
10. Maintain control of your ride. "Pace Busters" break the ride tempo and compromise group safety.
11. Be predictable, use signals, and alert other riders to dangerous obstacles and situations. Maintain a safe distance between riders commensurate with the level of the ride.
12. Post ride in a timely and appropriate manner, either thru the club email distribution list or club event calendar. If necessary, modify and cancel rides using the club email distribution list in a timely manner.

12. Becoming a Sussex Cyclists Ride Leader

Our club does not have a formal ride leader certification process. Most of our current ride leaders have many years of experience leading rides and do an excellent job of organizing and running our rides

To maintain our high level of ride success and safety, riders who would like to lead club rides should:

- Be current member of Sussex Cyclists
- Familiarized themselves thoroughly with the above Ride Leader manual
- Familiarize themselves thoroughly with our Safety Policies
- Have participated in mapping out at least three ride routes
- Understand and be able to utilize the ride posting process, the club website and the club email distribution list
- Have participated as a “sweep” or “co-leader” on a minimum of three Sussex Cyclists rides (with at least two different ride leaders), with agreement from the Ride leader that these are expressly to aide in training to becoming a ride leader
- Have the above ride leader do a post-ride review with them on each of the above “training” rides
- Have the above Ride leader contact the club leadership to discuss the wishes and capabilities of the potential ride leader
- Have an experienced ride leader “shadow” them on their first two rides in which they are leaders.