

GROUP RIDING GUIDELINES AND ETIQUETTE

1. Be predictable. Ride in a safe, straight and consistent manner. Avoid sudden acceleration or braking.
2. Communicate verbally and/or with hand signals.
 - Obstacles or hazards on the road may not be easily seen by the rider behind you. Call out and point to road hazards.
 - Always indicates turns with appropriate hand signals.
 - Give a verbal warning for automobiles coming from behind. For example "car back" is sufficient warning. If you hear a rider behind you call out "car back," you are obliged to single up (get in a single-file line) and move as far to the right of the lane as possible.
 - Give verbal warnings if you or cyclists ahead of you are slowing down (Slowing) or if coming to a stop. (Stopping).
 - When passing other cyclists pass on the left and offer a verbal warning of "On your Left".
 - Give verbal indication to cyclists behind when going through an intersections. If no vehicles shout "Clear" and if there are vehicles coming shout "Car Up". Motorists see cycling groups a single unit so try to cross or turn as a group when signaled to do so by a motorist.
 - Warn pedestrians if approaching from behind. Use a bell, horn or verbal indication far enough in advance so as to not startle them. Indicate verbally with a "Passing on the Left" or "On your left".
 - Warn of upcoming railroad crossings. This is usually communicated with a downward arm left to right waving or a verbal "Tracks ahead".
3. Ride single file unless riding on a wide shoulder or bike lane. **Cyclists in groups should ride, at most, double file.** As much as group rides can be a social event, riding 3, 4+ cyclists wide is dangerous and in most municipalities and states, illegal. Never ride wider than double file even on wide roads (4+ lane) that see little vehicular traffic. On 2 lane roads (i.e. Old San Antonio Road, etc.), it really is best to stick to single file riding.
4. Always wear a helmet.
5. **Always obey all traffic laws.** If approaching a red light, stop. Even if there is no vehicular traffic present. Stop and survey the situation. If there are no cross-walk buttons (i.e. on utility poles at the intersection) to push and the light has not changed within a "reasonable" amount of time and there is no vehicular traffic imminent, proceed at your own discretion.
6. Insure that your bike is in a road worthy state to insure yours and other riders' safety.
7. Carry identification.
8. If you run into mechanical difficulty, flat tire, chain off etc. call out to riders ahead so that communication can be passed to the ride leader so he/she can stop the group and wait or offer assistance.

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9. It is recommended that you carry a spare tube and a patch kit. You do not necessarily have to be prepared to fix your own flats as others with experience can assist you. It is a good skill to learn in case you are riding alone.
10. Communicate with the rest of the group to insure that no cyclist is left behind.
11. **Cyclists riding time trial or triathlon bikes** (i.e. those with aero bars) should **NEVER** ride in the aero position (arms and hands on the aero bars) while sitting in on a group ride. By “sitting in” it is meant while riding in a group ride in ANY position other than on the front of the group. If you wish to go to the front to take a pull/lead the group and wish to ride in an aero position or utilize your aero bars, at the front of the group is the **ONLY** position in which you should do so. Any time you are behind another rider you should remain in a position so that your hands are on your base bar and near your brake levers. No exceptions, no excuses.
12. Riding at nights requires front and rear lights as well as reflective clothing and/or reflective material on the bikes. The idea is to be visible to others.
13. **ABSOLUTELY NO MP3 PLAYERS, RADIOS OR TELEPHONES WITH HEADSETS OR EAR PHONES.** While this might seem draconian, for the safety and comfort of everyone on the ride, it really is better if your total attention is focused on bike control and group awareness. In a group with the wind coming from behind, a rider call from in front can be difficult to hear, you wouldn't want to be the reason for a group crash.
14. Last, but not least, be self-policing. You should not count on your group ride leader(s) to police the group. If you observe a member or members of the group not following these guidelines and/or standard riding etiquette, verbalize such/let that rider or riders know. It is in the best interest of the entire group that **all** riders follow and abide by these guidelines – the group leaders included. If a group leader is not following the rules, make him or her aware of such just as you would any “other” member of the group.

We have never had any major problems on the shop rides, your compliance with these simple and basic rules will help to keep it that way.

The guidelines listed are to promote the safety and well-being of cyclists as well as promote as seamless an interaction with motorists as possible. The better we, as cyclists, can do to follow the referenced guidelines, whether we're riding with a group of 30 or a group of 4, the better we will be with respect to our personal safety, the safety of others in the group, and promote as positive an image to and interaction with motorists as possible. Each and every last one of us is a representative of cycling every time we take to the roads, whether individually or in a group setting. Be mindful of such every time you ride.