

GROUP RIDE SAFETY & ETIQUETTE

Welcome to Horsham Cycling. The following document is prepared to provide guidelines for members to promote safe and enjoyable Club riding for all members.

If you are new to group riding, these notes on etiquette and safe practice when riding in a bunch may be helpful. As you may not be familiar with the warnings used in groups, we have also listed the most commonly used terms, signals and warnings that riders give each other. Above all, use common sense.

Helmets are strongly recommended. Front and rear lights are recommended in darker / overcast conditions.

Select a group within your capability. Ensure your bike is roadworthy and carry tools and spares to mend a puncture. Bikes fitted with tri-bars or aero bars are not permitted for group rides.

Ride safely and encourage others to do the same. Always abide by the Highway Code. Remember that you are responsible for your own and other riders' safety.

Follow the guidance and instructions of the Ride Leader.

Groups are encouraged to ride two-abreast when it is safe to do so as this is generally the safest and most efficient way to ride in a group. You should ride single-file when the road is busy or narrow without a clear view ahead, or when directed to do so by the Ride Leader. Never ride more than two abreast.

Maintain a space (approx. 50-100cm) between your front wheel and the rear wheel of the rider in front of you. Avoid overlapping your front wheel with the rear wheel of the rider in front of you as this can be dangerous.

When riding two-abreast, ride about an arm's length away from the rider beside you with your front wheels in line. Never half-wheel. Half-wheeling is when one rider edges ahead of the rider beside them increasing the speed of the group.

Take great care when overtaking riders in front. Do so in single file, whether those you are passing are in single file or two-abreast. Be aware of oncoming vehicles and ensure you can easily move into the left without causing other riders to take evasive action. When going through to the front of the group, the overtaking riders should continue to maintain a steady pace and not accelerate ahead of the group as this will lead to the group splitting up.

Ride smoothly and at a consistent speed, without sudden changes in direction or swerving, taking into consideration other riders around you. Never slow suddenly or attempt a quick stop without a prior voice signal to those riding behind you.

The riders at the front of the group should point out hazards on the road ahead by using clear hand signals and/or calling out in order to warn riders behind (see examples below).

All signals or warnings should be passed up or down the group so that all riders within the group are made aware.

Always keep looking ahead and stay alert to things around you at all times.

Riders should be aware of the traffic conditions, be considerate to other road users, whether they be pedestrians, other cyclists, motor vehicles, horses/riders and even cattle. This includes pulling over or stopping if necessary. Note: avoid startling horses with loud noises/bells (especially when approaching from behind) – a warning call from a safe distance is recommended.

Make space for vehicles to overtake by riding in single file where appropriate or when directed by the Ride Leader. When riding in a large group, and where practicable without causing the group to split up, it may be appropriate to leave gaps to enable overtaking drivers to avoid traffic coming the other way. If necessary, stop to let traffic overtake.

As you become more familiar with the group in which you are riding, you may find yourself at the front, setting the pace. Should this be the case always be mindful of the speed the group should be riding at and ensure nobody is left trailing off the back.

Don't get too far ahead of the Ride Leader - you may go the wrong way and delay the ride or disappear off it altogether. In these circumstances, it will be assumed that you have left the ride. If you decide to leave the ride before the end, please let the Ride Leader know. Always allow the group to reform at the top of hills. All riders should be aware of where the last rider is and be considerate to them.

Never argue with motorists, even if you think they are in the wrong - you could worsen an already dangerous situation. You and your fellow riders are identifiable as members of Horsham Cycling; you should never act in a way which may bring the club into disrepute.

So, in essence: when in a group, ride smoothly without sudden movements, be aware of the other riders about you and follow the Ride Leader's instructions.

A detailed risk assessment has been prepared and is available on the club web site. In addition, British Cycling have produced a useful video on group riding: <https://youtu.be/-GeRonLni70>

Cold Weather Policy

The full cold weather policy is available on the Club website. A brief summary of the key points is as follows:

In the event that the weather is forecast to be at or below zero at any time over night and due to remain below +2°C at 08:00 then club rides for that day will be cancelled. In addition, all ride leaders have the authority to cancel their ride if they deem conditions unsafe.

We shall be using the Meteorological Office forecast for the Horsham area (available at: <https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/weather/forecast/gcpf2xeu5>) for the purpose of this policy.

Club ride cancellations will be communicated by a member of the committee through e-news and the Club Facebook group. WhatsApp notifications can also be sent to groups if widely used as a communication mechanism within the group.

VERBAL WARNINGS

Here are a few of the shouted warnings used when riding in a group:

Car Front	Car/vehicle approaching from ahead
Car Back	Car/vehicle approaching from rear (note this does not necessarily mean the group needs to ride in single file)
Single out / single file	Get into single file safely and promptly
Stopping	Brake – but not violently!
Wait	Usually at junctions to indicate traffic coming
Clear	To indicate that a junction is traffic free (although you should also check yourself, and not rely on others)
Gravel / Ice (etc)	To warn other riders of specific hazards on the road
Ease Up	Slow down, eg to allow the rest of the group to catch up

COMMON HAND SIGNALS



(graphic courtesy of British Cycling)

1 - STOP

Hand straight up in air. Group is stopping for a junction, puncture or because there is an obstruction in the road. Usually accompanied by call 'Stopping!'.

2 - SLOW

Move one hand as if gently patting an invisible dog. Group is slowing down or just easing things back a bit.

3 - OBSTRUCTION

Waving/pointing behind back indicates that there is an obstruction such as a parked car or pedestrian and that the whole group needs to move in the direction indicated to avoid it.

4 - TURN

Left or right hand extended out to side. Direction of turn/change in direction coming up.

5 - BELOW

Pointing down (sometimes with a circling motion) to a hazard on the road such as a pothole, drain cover or obstruction that needs to be avoided or noted. Be sensible with this one and only point out major obstacles. This signal is often accompanied with a verbal call as listed above.