

SOUTHEND WHEELERS

Ride Leader coaching

Thank you for volunteering as a Ride Leader, you can now organise a group of club members and visitors into a group with an experience almost every cyclist started their career - on a good club run!

Ride leaders should be familiar with the [Ride Safety advice](#) on the Club website. This(below) is British Cycling's Top 10 group riding tips, which is a good check list of your pre ride chat! This is the advice given to new riders.....

- 1. Relax**
If you're not use to riding in a group, it can be a bit nerve wracking but try to stay relaxed, follow these tips and avoid tensing up.
- 2. Ask - Let the other riders know if you are new to group riding and that you'd appreciate their advice and tips. Make sure if there's something you don't understand that you ask for clarity and remember, everyone was new to group riding once.**
- 3. Communicate**
Successful group riding is all about good communication. Along with verbal calls, there are a few hand signals that you should be aware of. Again, if you are unsure what a signal means, ask. Always pass signals on through the group. Communication is especially important if you're on the front of the group when you'll need to point out obstructions, hazards and any upcoming turns.
- 4. Look through the group.**
Don't just stare at the wheel or backside in front. Look through the group at the road ahead and try to anticipate how the riders ahead will react.
- 5. Don't overlap!**
It's okay to leave a bit of a gap to the wheel ahead and even to ride slightly to one side of it. However, always avoid overlapping your front wheel with the rear wheel of the rider in front as, if they have to swerve to avoid a hazard or just have a lapse in concentration, they'll take out your wheel.
- 6. Easy on the brakes**
Avoid grabbing handfuls of brakes. Freewheel, sit more upright or use light braking to adjust your speed gradually. This is one of the reasons why looking through the group and anticipating the actions of the riders in front is so important.
- 7. Don't half wheel!** If you're on the front, avoid pushing the pace and constantly moving ahead of the riding next to you. Known as half-wheeling, it'll push up the speed of the group and is considered bad form.
- 8. Avoid kicking back your rear wheel.** On rises, be aware of your rear wheel kicking back when you stand out of the saddle as it can catch the rider behind you unaware if they are close on your wheel. With good technique, a smooth rise and correct gear selection it can be avoided.
- 9. Don't surge or slow.** When you come to the front, try to keep the pace/intensity of the group consistent. Don't surge if you're feeling strong and conversely, if you're struggling, don't try and slow the group. If you're on a good day, just do a long turn and, if not, just put in a few pedal strokes before pulling off and settling back in the wheels.

SOUTHEND WHEELERS

- 10. Mudguards on, tri-bars off.** In the winter especially, your ride mates will appreciate you having mudguards and some clubs insist on them. Also, if you have clip-on tri-bars, take them off for group rides.

Green and Blue Ride Leaders

You will probably be responsible for leading the least experienced group of riders. Communication is probably one of the most important elements. Green and Blue are no drop rides. If you are a ride leader, you should keep the group within the speed stated for that group.

If you have new riders on your ride, then please take an emergency contact number just in case!!!

Ask them how long and fast they will want to ride for. You should have a route in mind and if leading from the front or rear must shout the turn instructions loud and clearly, if you can appoint an experienced rider to ride at the back then that could make the group easier to manage. Please make sure the weaker riders are taken care of and with a Blue group ride the distance should be no more than 45 miles, to return to Canewdon or your start point by a reasonable time i.e. 12.30pm the latest,

Complete a quick [British Cycling's M check on the bike](#). Check quick release, brakes and gears are working, bar end plugs are in place, check the chain spins freely, saddle is secure and rear quick release is secure.

And most important check helmets are well fitted and done up correctly.

If they have turned up to a welcome day, ask for their contact details and a next of kin telephone number just in case.

It's worth reminding newer members to carry spare inner tubes and pump and taking some pocket food with them to avoid running out of energy, we've all done it.

Orange and Red Ride Leaders

Drop or No Drop rides, please agree at the beginning of the ride and let everyone know the plans. Ensure that if it is a drop ride that they know the way back if you are going further afield. The through and off format can be the formula that delivers the best club run experience. It's also the safest method, with no more than two abreast.

It introduces riders to the skills of through and off, and as leader, you can have some control over the length of time a rider has on the front. You can pre-set their stint by giving them a "revs" target, say 20 revs on the front and swing over. The stronger riders in the group can do longer efforts on the front. It also brings in the direction of wind factor. If the wind is coming from the right, then the inside line is going forward, and the outside line backwards. Echelon riding (related to racing rather than club runs) is covered in this video but the principle is the same!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kWEoBFkwsc0&list=PLUdAMIZtaV10DXaKA900aksfQfhjQIEGO&index=15>

SOUTHEND WHEELERS

If as a ride leader you have a bell (to be rung to warn other road users), this can also be used as the signal to change on the front. If you are in charge of a through and off group, and there's a hill to climb, a weaker rider within the group could stay on the front of the group so it's climbed at a pace they can control.

You can work out wind direction in advance of the ride, and check weather conditions via <https://mywindsock.com>. You log on using your Strava account and the weather appears on your Strava feed for the ride. You can also see the weather for a given Strava route or TT course.

This is a paceline video - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HDxXRq5fo8A>

Hand signals are covered in this BC video -

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gDUTeIeqSNQ&list=PLUdAMIZtaV10DXaKA900aksfQfhjQIEGO&index=9>, but doesn't include the "Asda slap" that is visual and audible to the rider behind, and specific to left or right! The rider(s) at the front of the group need to give an elevated hand signal that the rest of the group can see when changing direction.

Other road users

Encourage your group to acknowledge other road users – cyclists coming in the other direction, horse riders, walkers, hikers, even oncoming cars with a roof bike rack. This gives a positive vibe, especially as some of the group will have Wheelers kit on.

Road signage and furniture

There's lots of help from traffic engineers to help read the road ahead. Double white lines in the centre of the road prevents overtaking, so maybe seeing this would require single file.

These are the Highway code rules.

127 A broken white line. This marks the centre of the road. When this line lengthens and the gaps shorten, it means that there is a hazard ahead. Do not cross it unless you can see the road is clear and wish to overtake or turn off.

128 Double white lines where the line nearest to you is broken. This means you may cross the lines to overtake if it is safe, provided you can complete the manoeuvre before reaching a solid white line on your side. White direction arrows on the road indicate that you need to get back onto your side of the road.

129 Double white lines where the line nearest you is solid. This means you **MUST NOT** cross or straddle it unless it is safe, and you need to enter adjoining premises or a side road. You may cross the line if necessary, provided the road is clear, to pass a stationary vehicle, or overtake a pedal cycle, horse or road maintenance vehicle, if they are travelling at 10 mph (16 km/h) or less.