



# Safety Guide for Group Riding

The club expects all cyclists to follow these best practices on our group rides.

## What We Do

- **Ride single file** whenever there is traffic on the road.
- **Stay as far to the right as is safe and reasonable**—and not so far that you have to swerve left into traffic to avoid hazards.
- **Hold your line** ride directly behind the rider in front of you.
- **Maintain constant pedaling.** Maintaining a steady pace helps the rider behind you predict your speed.
- **Signal well in advance before turns.** Also, audibly communicate your intentions.
- **Look carefully over your shoulder** before signaling and pulling out into the lane. The use of a rearview mirror will make it easier to see behind you. Don't move if cars are in the lane or overtaking rapidly—they have the right of way.
- **Before you pass another rider, make sure the lane to your left is clear** and announce that you are passing with “on your left”.
- **When you move out to pass, have a plan** for how you are going to re-enter the line of riders.
- **Come to a full stop at red lights—ALWAYS stop behind last car.** Do not pass waiting cars. You can take lane, double file if appropriate.
- **Come to a stop at stop signs.** Take turns with cars at four-way stops.
- **Regroup if the group gets separated** at an intersection. No one should be penalized for stopping.
- **Move well off the road** if the group stops.
- **Must use front and rear lights when riding in the dark** that comply with NJ Bicycle Regulation 39:4-10 (must be visible from at least 500 feet away).

## We Communicate

- **“On your left”** whenever we are passing. If our fellow rider doesn't know we are there, they might move to the left unexpectedly.
- **“Car back”** Those in the back of line say it first. Everyone else passes it up the line so all are aware **“Car back”** means **“Single file”**.
- **“Car up”** when there is a car in the oncoming lane on a narrow road, or a stopped car in our lane.

- **“Slowing”** so the person behind us will know to slow down too and not run into us. In addition, use hand signal, left hand down with palm facing to rear.
- **“Stopping”** loudly and clearly.
- **“Walker up”** so fellow riders know to move out and give a pedestrian or jog-ger some space. In addition use hand signal, left hand down, waving horizontally.
- **“Hole”, “Bump”, “Branch”, “Debris”** to warn riders behind us of a hazard. In addition use hand signal by pointing to hazard.

## What We DON'T Do

- **Don't pass on the right** because we cut off someone's safe lane, and they don't expect it. If it becomes absolutely necessary (for instance the rider is in the far left portion of the lane) it is imperative to say “On your right”.
- **Don't call “Clear!”** at an intersection because conditions can change rapidly – each rider needs to make their own decision about when it's safe to go. Instead, say: “I'm going” or “Going through” or “Rolling”.
- **Don't signal to drivers** that it's safe to pass the group because conditions change rapidly, and riders in front of us might suddenly move out into the lane. (This is also a legal issue; rider could be liable if there was a crash).
- **Don't wear headphones or earbuds** because we won't be able to hear when fellow riders communicate with us or hear vehicles.
- **Don't use your cell phone while riding.** If you must answer a call safely pull over.
- **Don't let your front wheel overlap (laterally) with the wheel in front of you** because if they move to the side, you'll go down.

## Recommendations

- **Do not pass on a downhill** because riders who are descending may move laterally without warning to avoid a hazard, and they won't be able to signal in advance. If it becomes necessary to pass, it is imperative that you say “Passing on your left”.
- **Wear bright colored clothing.** Do not wear all black. You need to make your-self highly visible.
- **Use a rearview mirror.** This will allow you to see behind you without taking your eyes off the road. In addition to looking in the mirror, do a double check looking over your shoulder when changing lanes.
- **Daytime lights will make you more visible** but refrain from using a flashing red rear light set to a high brightness level as it will have a negative effect on the vision of the rider behind you.

## BE SAFE OUT THERE! HAVE FUN!

We want to thank the Westchester Cycle Club for granting us permission to use this edited version of their “Guidelines for Group Rides”.