

Owen Sound Cycling Club

Ride/Event Participant Guidelines

The Owen Sound Cycling Club and its event leaders will try to make every event safe and enjoyable. Participants must do their part by making sure they are familiar with and follow the current Club Risk Management Plan (posted on the OSCC website) and following these guidelines.

Before a ride or event

1. Carefully inspect your bike to make sure it is ready to ride. Pay particular attention to brakes and tires. Please make sure you have tubes, tire levers and other basic tools to repair flats or other breakdowns, and that you know how to perform these repairs.
2. Bring water and food sufficient to get through the ride/event.
3. Wear a helmet.
4. Dress appropriately for the weather and make allowances for changing weather conditions.
5. Leave enough time to arrive at the event location and get ready before it starts.

During the ride/event

1. Follow the event leaders direction.
2. Honestly assess your skills and abilities and ride to them.
3. Inform the ride leader if you are having trouble keeping up or are dropping out. If you are having a mechanical problem, let the leader know when and if you are going to rejoin the event.
4. Make sure you know the planned route and what to do if you become separated from the group.
5. When instructions and information is passed verbally or through signals, acknowledge that you understand the message and pass it to the next person. Make sure they understand the message. On road rides, use standard hand signals.

Communication:

Communication is absolutely critical to the success of all group rides. It starts right from the beginning even before the group leaves. The rider needs to communicate with their group or Ride Leader to determine which group and pace of ride they want. On the road, riders need to communicate the ride formation, rotation and pace. Riders at the front need to call out road hazards and traffic situations. Riders at the back need to call out cars approaching from the back. The bottom line is that the quality and safety of the ride is dependent on frequent and clear communications between all the riders. Never assume everyone in the group knows a car is approaching or that the group is turning. Everything that can affect the group needs to be called out.

One final but important point regarding communication. We have Ride Leaders who are there to try to maintain the quality of the ride but the best way to keep us all at our best is when we all communicate best ride practices. So if you see someone riding inappropriately ie overlapping wheels, surging off the front we all should say something. Be polite but make it known that that was not proper. We all own these rides and if someone does something dangerous it's in everyone's best interest to correct it. So don't let bad habits go unaddressed. Say something before it's too late. We all have a responsibility to the riders around us. When we are at the front we are responsible to the riders behind to provide a smooth and steady pull and to point out hazards. When we are at the back we are responsible to call out cars coming from the back and to maintain the integrity of the group by not allowing gaps. So don't wait for the Ride Leader to say something, we all own the ride equally.

Keep your head up and your eyes looking ahead

In a close formation, you must be looking up and ahead at all times. Look to the front of the group or at least a few riders ahead of you. This way, you will see any problems or changes in direction or speed, well in advance. The riders close to you (left, right or directly in front) will be sensed using your peripheral vision, which is more adept at judging movement than your straight-ahead vision.

For some things we rely on other group members (when it is hard to see the road ahead) and for other things we must rely on ourselves (traffic safety). At intersections, you **MUST** look for yourself to see if it safe to cross. Do not yell about cars coming in either direction (on-coming or passing) on the road in the normal way. They have every right to be there and that is exactly where we should expect to find cars. Since we will be riding in an orderly fashion close to the right hand side of the travel lane, at all times, we should have nothing to worry about. It is up to the driver of the vehicle to assess how best to proceed past an orderly group of cyclists, just as she or he would proceed past any other slow-moving road user. An experienced group member may order "Single file" if the traffic warrants. So, we will save our yelling for warnings of an urgent or unusual nature.

Please signal all turns and stops with regular arm signals, well in advance. Also, point out potholes and hazardous objects in the road so that following riders can avoid them.

Changes of Speed and Direction:

All changes should be smooth and gradual. Remember, everyone behind is depending on you to lead them safely up the road, around potholes, dead animals and corners, and up and down hills. There must be no sudden movements to left or right (switching).

Switching is very dangerous in a group and can instantly lead to serious injury for fellow riders, as a result of a crash. Common sense is a virtue. Do not remove things from pockets, eat, drink, take off clothing, startle another rider, suddenly break ranks or do

anything else that may result in an erratic movement when riding in a group. If the speed is fast you must be especially vigilant. Your hands must be on the bars at all times. To eat, etc. you must wait until it is your turn to be at the back of the group, when no one is following. Drinking and the 'shoulder check' should be practiced ahead of time to ensure that they can be performed without swerving.

Avoid sudden braking at all costs. Be aware that the front brake has a very abrupt stopping action whereas the back brake is less abrupt. Know which is which. To reduce speed slightly, use the back brake lightly and pedal against it at the same time. To increase speed, first pedal faster in the gear you are in, then change up to your next gear. Your cadence should be between 80 and 120 rpm for regular flat riding, on hills this may be reduced down to 60 rpm or lower. The higher the cadence, the smoother rider you will be, better able to adapt to changes of speed and other maneuvers.

Ride Formation and How We Rotate:

Single File Paceline:

We make every effort to ride on the quietest roads, however depending on the ride schedule, we are often riding at or near "peak traffic" (e.g. after work). As a result, **we will most often ride single file**. We also will ride long descents single file, more on that later. Furthermore, when we have inexperienced riders or we travel on an excessively busy road we will also ride single file.

Rotating – Single File Paceline:

When riding in a single paceline, the rider at the front will do the brunt of the work into the wind. The following riders make about 30% less effort, yet ride at the same speed. It benefits the group as a whole to rotate the leader off the front once in awhile. The amount of time a rider will spend on the front depends on how fast the pace is, how strong the wind is and how strong that particular rider is. It could be 30 seconds or up to 15 minutes. In any case, the leader will go to the back of the pace line when they have had enough. When the front rider decides to be relieved, first look forward and behind to see that there is no traffic coming. Then make a hand signal and shout your intentions to show the other riders you are about to break formation. Move to the left then pedal a little softer so your speed drops slightly relative to the rest of the group. The second rider in the group now moves to the front, without changing pace. The rider that has rotated off the front will eventually arrive at the back of the pace line. A shoulder-check will ensure that you are now at the back. Now speed up slightly and pull into position at the back of the pace line.

Note: Information on riding in a **double paceline formation** is provided below for the information of our club members. We may introduce this skill to new or inexperienced members in a "learn to group ride" clinic. It is advisable that only members who are skilled at this group riding technique or accompanied by members who are teaching this skill and are riding on quiet roads should practice this.

The Basic Double Paceline Ride Formation: “Tight and to the Right”

Our goal as a disciplined and well organized club is to share the enjoyment of the road with our club members as well as the general public. We are well aware that we have to share the road with motorized vehicles. To reduce the potential conflict between these two groups we frequent only the least travelled roads possible at all times. In order to further protect ourselves we may travel two abreast or in a double paceline. This is an internationally recognized cycling formation used by professionals and amateurs around the world. The main objective of the double paceline is to reduce the length of the line of cyclists in order to allow vehicles to pass with greater ease and increased safety. It encourages drivers to make full lane changes when passing which provides a safer gap between the passing vehicle and the cyclists. Aggressive drivers will attempt the dangerous pass between the center line and the group, “known as threading the needle”.. The idea is to take a traditional two abreast formation and position it as far right as is safely possible. *Our goal is to accommodate the approaching driver with a clear view forward so that they make a clean and safe pass as soon as possible.*

In order for us to accomplish this, we as a club, are required to ride in a formation that is ‘tight’ and well disciplined. By ‘tight’ we mean that the cyclists are to be 2-3ft apart laterally at the shoulders, and 2-3ft apart front to back (wheel to wheel). The group’s primary goal is to maintain the cohesion of this formation. It is the individual discipline of each rider to hold their position in a smooth predictable manner and not create gaps or overlaps which jeopardize the ride quality.

Rotating – Double Paceline:

We use two methods to rotate cyclists within a basic “tight and to the right” formation. One we refer to as a Social Paceline and the other as a Rotating Paceline. The Ride Leader will call out the appropriate formation for the needs of the group but any cyclists within the group can call out a suggestion. All riders must understand and be familiar with the double paceline technique or the Ride Leader will insist on a Single File Paceline.

Social Paceline:

This is our standard rotation used while warming up or just cruising along. In the Social Paceline we start from the premise of the two abreast formation where everybody is 2-3ft apart laterally and fore/aft. The two leading cyclists are breaking the wind and setting the pace. The lead cyclist on the right, after a reasonable period of time (ie 1- 2 minutes, it's flexible) asks the cyclist on their left to "Cover Me". That means the leading left cyclist will gently ride forward and fade right to shelter the right side of the group. In turn the left side of the group will gently advance forward to the front of the group beside the right line. Those two riders will now lead the group for whatever time they feel comfortable with, again it's negotiable. All passes are to be done smoothly and gently and make sure that your rear wheel is clear before you fade right.

A very important point to rotating a group : While you are in front of the group, the group is at your mercy. Anything you do, good or bad, will effect the entire group. If your pass is smooth and steady, then the group will remain smooth and steady. If you accelerate aggressively it will start to shatter the group and create gaps and confusion. If you half wheel the lead rider beside you it will offset the whole group or create gaps. We all have a responsibility to the riders behind us to move in a smooth and predictable way and watch the road surface ahead.

Rotating Paceline:

This rotation is different from the Social Paceline in one fundamental way: The act of rotating is constant. There are no static moments. When the left lead rider moves smoothly and gradually forward and clears the right line of riders, he/she then gently fades to the right. The transitioning lead rider must be careful not to touch wheels with the passed rider's by checking under their arm for the rider's wheel. The right rider can assist by calling out 'clear' when the passing cyclist is safely ahead. As soon as that first rotation is complete the next one begins as if all the cyclists in the group are part of the same chain. In the Rotating Paceline all the cyclists should be moving through the rotation at the same speed.

Here are some important points to remember when executing the Rotating Paceline properly:

1. Do not attack or surge off the front when it is your turn to pull. You are supposed to go slightly faster than the receding line. Surging or attacking will cause gaps and jerk the speed of the line around. Pull smoothly and gently to the front and be there to shelter the riders behind you, not gap them.
2. Do not leave gaps within the line when you are in the back of the rotation. All riders need to focus on maintaining the same gaps all the way around the rotation.
3. Riders wishing to miss a rotation can do so by sitting a bike's length back of the group and allowing the group to rotate through. It's best to call out to the rider ahead that you are not pulling through to avoid their hesitation.
4. It's also helpful for the last rider on the advancing side to call out to the last rider to remind the last receding rider that they need to transition next. Gaps often happen when the last rider misses the transition.
5. The rotation can go from left to right or vice versa. Experienced cyclists will tailor the rotation so that the advancing line is sheltered from a crosswind. We generally opt for the left to the right rotation because the HTA specifies passing on the left.

Echelons:

This is a formation where the cyclists are spread diagonally across the road to gain shelter from a crosswind. This formation is unacceptable for group riding in our community. It completely blocks the lane and is counter to our "Tight and to the Right" strategy where the driver is to be given a view up the left side of the lane.

"Hot Spots":

Every group ride has to have a degree of compromise. One person's hammerfest is another person's recovery ride. We try to accommodate everyone's wishes by offering as many different groups as possible. We may also offer different opportunities along the route for some hard efforts. Almost all our routes involve sections where the option exists for the riders to break from the group and go as fast as they wish. We call these the Hot Spots. All long climbs are automatically Hot Spots and as such the groups are permitted to break formation and regroup at the pre-designated spots at the top. We do ask you to stay to the

right and not scatter across the hill when the group breaks apart. Slower riders stay right and make room for the faster riders to get by without forcing them too far out. We still want to stay 'Tight and to the Right'.

We may also offer Hot Spots on flatter terrain Your Ride Leader should inform you of the Hot Spot locations before and during each ride. There are three common denominators to a Hot Spot:

1. A very quiet section of road
2. No traffic lights or stop signs
3. A safe regrouping location at the end of the section

Some rules about Hot Spots:

1. Going hard is optional, not compulsory. Those that choose to cruise can rest assure that the group will wait for them at the regrouping point which is often a coffee stop.
2. All riders must wait at the regrouping spot. Under no circumstances can anybody soft pedal down the road. This causes confusion for the late arrivers. They think the group is leaving them behind. If you feel the need to keep moving come back toward the late arrivers and then ride back with them.
3. Never regroup in a manner that would obstruct traffic in any way. All of our regrouping spots offer plenty of space to pull over safely. No excuses for blocking traffic.

Descending:

In Owen Sound we have several descents that are longer than is typical for Ontario and they can generate speeds in excess of 80 kph. On those descents we recommend the group take the following actions:

1. The group should move into a single file formation.
2. Riders should move 1 to 2 m from the right edge of the road. It is not safe to ride close to the edge of the road at high speeds due to wind gusts.
3. Riders should open up gaps of at least 2 m plus between each rider front to back.
4. Send the heaviest (e.g. tandem bicycles) and presumably the fastest riders down first to avoid bottlenecks. The goal is to reduce the amount of passing on the descent.
5. All passing must happen on the left. Never pass on the right.

Emergency Stops

When being approached by an emergency vehicle (fire truck, ambulance, or police) with its lights and siren activated, we are required under the HTA to pull over our group and stop. It doesn't matter if the emergency vehicle is approaching from the front or behind.

Act fast, but act safely and in control: when a siren is heard or lights are seen, immediately shout out to your group to pull over and stop. A siren or lights means stop now but not a panic stop, a controlled and safe stop.

How to stop a group: let's presume your group is riding 2 abreast.

1. The Ride Leader calls out to the group
 - "EMERGENCY STOP, GROUP STOPPING NOW"
 - "RIGHT LINE STOP FIRST"
 - "LEFT LINE PASS AND STOP"
2. The right line applies their brakes to reduce the speed in a controlled manner, eventually pulling over to a complete stop. Once stopped, cyclists must keep as close as possible to the right edge of the road, clear of any intersections.
3. The left line completely passes the right line and once safely clear, slows in a controlled manner. Once stopped, cyclists must keep as close as possible to the right edge of the road, clear of any intersections.

This can all happen within seconds. There is no need for panic. What is essential is that the decision to perform an "emergency stop" be made quickly, loudly and clearly so that the group has time to perform the stop safely.

General Rules for Time Trials:

1. Obey the starter's instructions.
2. Respect the wishes of all marshals and timekeepers.
3. Warm up using a piece of road away from the start/finish area.
4. Once the event has started, do not cross the start or finish line unless you are starting or finishing your time trial.

5. While you are waiting to start, keep over to the side, well off the travel lane of the road.
6. Have respect for nearby residents. Do not urinate on their bushes or buildings, or otherwise be disrespectful. If you do, we will lose the opportunity to use the location.
7. You may use aero bars in a TT.
8. As with all OSCC events, helmets must be worn. Brightly coloured clothing is recommended for greater visibility.
9. For individual TTs you cannot draft on any part of the course. That is to say, do not follow in anyone's slipstream and leave a lateral distance of 1 metre when you are passing someone. If you do draft, you will be disqualified. If you are passed you must drop back 7 metres (about 4-4.5 bike lengths).
10. Be aware of the dangers of intersections along the course, even if you do have 'Right of Way,' and act accordingly. Remember, you are ultimately responsible for your own safety.
11. As you pass the timekeeper, you must call out your number. Failure to do so may mean that you will not get a result.
12. Do not disturb the timekeeper while he or she is trying to get results.
13. When you finish, move quickly away from the start/finish area to begin your cool-down. Do not re-cross the finish line – if you do you risk losing your time for the event.
14. When you stop, remain aware of traffic, move off the road and, once again, respect local residents.

After the ride:

1. Let the event leader know about any problems you had.
2. Suggest ways to improve future events.
3. Eat and drink as required to promote recovery.
4. Thank the leader and anyone else who helped put on the event.

Ride Leader Guidelines

1. Plan your route carefully, including alternate routes in the event of obstructions, bad weather or tired riders. If available and if required, distribute maps. Brief riders on planned route, location of rest stops and action to be taken if separated from group.
2. Instruct riders to check their bikes for mechanical and safety problems.
4. Make sure you have an OSCC First Aid Kit, spare tube, pump and water. Check what spares and emergency items other riders have brought. Each rider **MUST** wear a helmet.
5. Check the weather forecast. NOTE: Ride must be postponed/cancelled in the event of lightning or other weather extremes. Have a bad weather plan prepared.
6. Determine if any riders have current First Aid/CPR training.
7. Ensure all riders are OSCC members, OCA members or members of an affiliated club.

8. If you feel the group is too large (25 riders or more), split the riders into two or more groups of 6-12 riders. Try to keep riders of similar abilities together.

During the ride

1. At each rest/re-grouping stop check that no one has been dropped. Have a plan to accommodate slower riders. If required, appoint a “sweep” rider to ensure that riders are not dropped.
2. Record any accidents or injuries using the form in the OSCC First Aid Kit. Ensure injured/exhausted riders have a safe means to return home.

Appendix I

Share the Road Guidelines

Ways Cyclists Can Improve Safety

Bicycles are considered vehicles under the Ontario Highway Traffic Act, and have the same rights and responsibilities on public roadways as motorists. Bicyclists fare best

when they act and are treated as drivers of vehicles. When you as a bicyclist fail to obey the rules of the road, you lose the support of motorists. Do your part by being a good ambassador for bicycling!

Follow Rules of the Road

- Obey all traffic laws, signs and signals.

Ride on the Right

- Always ride in the same direction as traffic, far enough from the road edge to keep a straight line.
- Ride single file when being passed.
- You may occupy any part of a lane when your safety warrants it, e.g. to avoid obstacles, or if the lane isn't wide enough to safely pass.

Be Predictable

- Ride in a straight line – don't weave around obstacles.
- Stay about one metre from the edge/curb or parked cars to avoid hazards.
- Use hand signals to communicate turns and stops to other road users.

Be Visible

- Wear brightly coloured clothing, including reflectors.
- Use lights in low light conditions (red rear, white front).
- Stay out of motorists' blind spots – especially truck drivers.
- Make eye contact with motorists – it's the best way to know they see you.

Be Courteous

- When riding in groups, leave gaps to allow space for motorists or other cyclists to pass.
- Acknowledge motorists with a wave when they've passed you safely.
- Yield to pedestrians. Warn others with a ring of your bell or friendly greeting before passing.

Take Care of Your Gear and Yourself

- Anticipate the next move of drivers, pedestrians and bicyclists. Watch for debris, potholes and grates.
- Your bike is a machine and works best and safest when it is well-maintained. Tires need air, brakes must work, chains should run smoothly and quick release wheel levers must be closed.

- Carry identification, a cell phone, emergency cash and repair and emergency supplies.
- If you are a beginner or returning to bicycling, seek out clubs or bicycling advocacy organizations for tips on safe riding, instruction and group rides to improve knowledge and skill.
- Wear a helmet and make sure it fits correctly.

Appendix II

Cycling and The Law

A bicycle is a vehicle under the Ontario Highway Traffic Act (hta). This means that, as a bicyclist, you have the same rights and responsibilities to obey all traffic laws as other road users. Cyclists charged for disobeying traffic laws will be subject to a minimum set

fine and a Victim Surcharge fine of \$20.00 for most offences (please note set fines below are subject to change).

The following are key sections of the hta concerning cyclists.hta144/136 - Traffic signals and signs

stop for red lights and stop signs and comply with all other signs. **Set fine: \$85.00**

hta153 - One-ways streets

ride in the designated direction on one-way streets. **Set fine: \$85.00**

hta147 - Slow moving traffic travel on right side

any vehicle moving slower than the normal traffic speed should drive in the right-hand lane, or as close as practicable to the right edge of the road except when preparing to turn left or when passing another vehicle. **Set fine: \$85.00**

hta142 - Signalling a turn

before turning, look behind you and signal your turn. Cyclists can use their right arm to signal a right turn. **Set fine: \$85.00**

hta140(1) 144(29) - Crosswalks

yield or stop for pedestrians at crosswalks. **Set fine: \$85.00**

hta140(6)/144(29) - No riding in crosswalks

walk your bike when crossing at a crosswalk. **Set fine: \$85.00**

hta166 - Streetcars

stop two metres behind streetcar doors and wait until passengers have boarded or departed and reached the curb.**Set fine: \$85.00**

hta175 (12) - Stopped school buses

stop for stopped school buses when the upper alternating red lights are flashing. **Set fine: \$400.00**

hta62(17) - Lights

a bike must have a white front light and a red rear light or reflector if you ride between 1/2 hour before sunset and 1/2 hour after sunrise and white reflective tape on the front forks and red reflective tape on rear forks. **Set fine: \$20.00**

hta75 (5) - Bell

a bike must have a bell or horn in good working order. **Set fine: \$85.00**

hta64(3) - Brakes

a bike must have at least one brake system on the rear wheel. When you put on the brakes, you should be able to skid on dry, level pavement. **Set fine: \$85.00**

hta218 - Identification

Cyclists must stop and identify themselves when required to stop by police for breaking traffic laws. The police officer will ask you for your correct name and address. **Set fine: \$85.00**

htareg.630 - Expressways

Bicycles are prohibited on expressway / freeway highways such as the 400 series, the QEW, Ottawa Queensway and on roads where "No Bicycle" signs are posted. **Set fine: \$85.00**

hta178(2) - Passengers

Passengers are not allowed on a bicycle designed for one person. **Set fine: \$85.00**

hta178(1) - Attaching to a vehicle

You are not permitted to attach yourself to the outside of another vehicle or streetcar for the purpose of "hitching a ride." **Set fine: \$85.00**

hta104 - Helmets

Every cyclist under the age of eighteen must wear an approved bicycle helmet. Parents or guardians shall not knowingly permit cyclists under sixteen to ride without a helmet. **Set fine: \$60.00**

hta179 - Dismounted bicyclist

Cyclists are required to ride on the right-hand side of the road. If you are walking your bike on a highway where there are no sidewalks, you are considered a pedestrian and you should walk on the left-hand side of the road facing traffic. If it is not safe for you to cross the road to face traffic, you may walk your bike on the right-hand side of the road. **Set fine: \$35.00.**

The following are not considered bicycles and are subject to different rules for use:

- Limited-speed motorcycles
- Motor-assisted bicycles (mopeds)
- Low-speed vehicles
- Electric and motorized scooters (go-peds)
- Pocket bikes
- Segway Human/Personal Transporters

For more information on the rules of use for these types of vehicles, please visit www.mto.gov.on.ca.