



Ride Participant Guidelines

Cycling is more fun when you ride with others! There's no better source of motivation, networking, being social, sharing knowledge, and camaraderie than your fellow riders. The Peterborough Cycling Club holds rides all through the week for most levels and abilities.

The rides are open to club members only.

Peterborough Cycling Club rides should be safe and enjoyable for all participants. Riding a bike in a larger group requires special skills, care and caution. Since riding in a group tends to attract more attention than a single rider, each of us should be role models for all other roadway users. The respect we earn from motorists depends on our actions as responsible cyclists.

Safety is the Top Priority

No matter which ride you're on, safety is more important than anything else. Please don't endanger yourself or others by committing unsafe acts. PCC Ride Leaders will ask unsafe riders to immediately leave the ride. More on safety later.

Pick the Right Group Ride

Since the purpose of the various group rides is different, finding out the group's pace, distance, and goals will help you join a ride that's right for you. Find out whether the ride is social or a hammer fest. How far will the group go? What route will the ride follow? Will the ride re-group at certain spots to let stragglers get back on? Are there any rest stops or fluid stops? Getting answers to these questions before the ride starts will help you make the right ride selection. If you are not sure what type of group ride you are getting yourself into, just ask the Ride Leader.

Don't try to change the pace of a ride. If a ride you choose is slower paced than you would like, don't try to "improve" the ride by riding off the front of the group. Choose another ride that is more suited to your abilities.

Be On Time

Many riders have busy schedules and want to get as much riding in as they can. Each group ride typically starts within minutes of its posted start time. If you're late, you'll miss the ride. No one wants to make a poor first impression by being the one who holds up the start of a ride. It is a good idea to arrive at least ten to fifteen minutes before the start of the ride.

Communicate

Communication is key to safe group rides. Roads are full of traffic, loose gravel, signs, pot holes, parked cars, animals, pedestrians, etc. and visibility is limited for cyclists riding in a pack. It is

important to communicate to the other riders in the group by calling out and pointing out hazards with simple hand gestures.

Signal all turns to the group and to motorists. Hold up your hand high in the air if you have a problem like a flat so riders behind know to be careful.

Be attentive to the ride leader when he/she is describing the route and possible hazards. Even if you are an experienced rider, there may be important announcements about route changes or new hazards such as road construction. Also, if you are talking during the ride briefing, it may interfere with others hearing the information.

Make an effort to make new riders feel welcome. The two most obvious things that can make a new rider feel unwelcome are, being ignored and being dropped. Experienced club members should talk to new riders and, if necessary, assist the ride leader in keeping track of new-comers and making sure they get back if they have trouble keeping up.

The Signpost Rule

The Signpost Rule is a way to ensure no one gets unintentionally dropped on a group ride. Each rider is responsible for making sure that the rider behind them doesn't get lost or dropped. They do this by waiting for the next rider each time there is a turn, traffic light or any type of road condition that could cause a rider to get dropped.

Additionally, it is especially important when riding in town that the group does not proceed through stop signs until it is safe for the all riders in the group to do so.

Ride Smart & Be Safe

Follow the Rules of the Road as defined in the *Highway Traffic Act*—a bike is a vehicle. Failure to follow these rules will result in a three week suspension from the club's group rides. This includes offences such as crossing the yellow line and failure to stop at a stop sign. Ride Leaders and their designees will enforce this rule.

Group ride dynamics are interesting and ever changing. You have to be alert at all times.

To be safe it is important to ride smoothly by not over reacting and by avoiding hard braking. Be alert as to what is going on up the road in the front of the pack, and anticipate what traffic will do. Inexperienced riders that panic and touch a wheel may crash or cause a crash. You can avoid problems by practicing these simple rules:

- Make sure your bike is in good working order. A bike shop can help with this – a spring tune-up is a great idea.
- Be relaxed.
- Be predictable in all your actions. Move around slowly, flowing like water.
- Stay alert at all times.
- Communicate hazards by calling and pointing them out.
- Hold your line. Especially in corners.
- Do not pass in corners.
- Don't overlap wheels. A slight direction change or gust of wind could easily cause you to touch wheels and fall.
- Leave enough space between yourself and the rider in front of you to suit your abilities (generally three feet or so for a beginner).
- When preparing to stand up on the pedals, get out of the saddle slowly over two pedal strokes to avoid shooting your rear wheel into the rider behind you.

- Be aware of the rider(s) around you.
- Don't brake hard unless absolutely necessary.
- Pass and change lanes slowly and carefully, like you would in your car.
- Remove aero-bars for all group rides.

Be Prepared

Always bring a tube, CO₂ or a pump, and the tools to change a flat. It also a good idea to bring some money on the longer rides because often group rides stop to fuel up. Bringing a cell phone is also good to have in case something happens and you need to call for help. Bring along identification and emergency information. Keep in mind that not all group rides stop when someone flats, so be prepared to ride alone if you flat. And have the right clothing for changes in the weather. Put your PCC membership sticker on your bike and your OCA membership card in your saddle bag.

Guidelines for Competitive Rides

The PCC holds some rides that are competitive in nature. These rides require a higher level of group riding skills in addition to what's listed above. The PCC requires that riders participating in competitive rides have a sufficient level of ability and experience. The following is a non-inclusive list of guidelines for competitive rides.

1. Maintain a steady straight line and avoid braking or changing direction suddenly, especially if contesting a sprint. Remember that there are riders closely following you from behind. To slow down, gradually move out into the wind and slot back into a position in the bunch.
2. Stay to the right when in front to allow room for others to pass safely on your left. Pass other riders on the left hand side whenever possible.
3. Do not cross the yellow line or center of the road at any time. This will result in your removal from the ride.
4. Be smooth with your turns at the front of the group. Avoid surges, a group will travel quicker when turns are completed smoothly.
5. Avoid leaving gaps when following wheels. Each time you leave a gap you are forcing yourself to ride alone to bridge it. Also, riders behind you will become annoyed and ride around you.
6. When climbing hills, avoid following a wheel too closely. Many riders lose momentum when rising out of the saddle on a hill and a sudden deceleration results. Such a deceleration can often catch a rider who is following too closely unaware and results in a fall from wheels touching.
7. After climbing a hill, it may seem that the summit is a good place to rest. However, consider other cyclists climbing up behind you and, if a rest is necessary, pull completely off the road so that others who do not wish to rest may proceed. Remember that sight lines for cyclists and motorists at the crest of a hill may be compromised.
8. Do not panic if you brush shoulders, hands or bars with another rider. Try to stay relaxed in your upper body to absorb any bumps. This is a part of cycle racing in close bunches and is quite safe provided riders do not panic, brake or change direction.
9. If riding at the front, try to maintain a steady pace, not to slow down on rises and not to accelerate too much when descending; this avoids the "concertina" affect to riders near the back.

10. Pedal down hill when you are at the front of the bunch. Cyclists dislike having to ride under brakes. Do not simply freewheel down hill if you will cause a deceleration in the group's descent.
11. Ride with honour. Examples: a) Pick a group reflective of your ability. b) Don't hide from the wind all ride then win the sprint (there are exceptions, like having teammates driving the pace). c) Don't sit in and never attack, but chase all those that do (unless you're working for a teammate), it's just boring and negative. d) Try an attack; it's fun. Most won't succeed... but some do.
12. And finally, competitive cycling is a TEAM sport. Working together with others is much more fun than working alone. Get some buddies and team up. And don't keep it a secret – the more teams there are the better.

Keep safe, have fun, and thanks for riding with the Peterborough Cycling Club