

# NTR Ride Rules & Etiquette

## Ride Etiquette – SAFETY – RESPECT – FUN

Cycling on the public roads has some inherent danger attached, but as a club we want to support and encourage people to ride safely and enjoyably, respecting their fellow riders and other road users.

By following a few basic “rules of etiquette”, we can achieve this, so please read, and if you are unsure about anything then please email [chris@northtynesideriders.co.uk](mailto:chris@northtynesideriders.co.uk) in advance of the rides, or ask your ride leader before the ride sets off.

These rules are based on best practice issued to us by British Cycling, and on the collective decades of cycling experience that the ride leaders have.

**SAFETY** This is the single most important consideration for our club rides, and we ask you to take this very seriously:

It is essential that your bike is in a safe and roadworthy condition, with for example, working brakes. If you are unsure many local bike shops will offer a bike-check, or post a query on the NTR Facebook Group if you want to ask an open question. The appropriate lighting and high-visibility clothing should also be worn. It is British Cycling best practice and a condition of attending NTR club rides that helmets always be worn when riding. Should there be an incident, please support the ride leader and offer any help you can, whether it be making a phone call to seek help, warning other road users (often the most critical thing to do), or assisting with any injured riders.

All riders under 16 MUST be accompanied by their parent or a guardian. We advise they have attained Level 2 Cycle Training Standards or equivalent, but leave it to the parents’ discretion. We encourage parents to ride within the capabilities of their children and ensure their safety is the paramount factor.

**RESPECT** We ask everyone, when riding on an NTR ride to have respect for their fellow riders and other road-users:

Ride leaders will help with mechanical issues, but we would ask all riders to be able to fix basic problems such as punctures. Always carry some spare inner tubes that are the correct size for your wheels, as the ride leaders will be unlikely to have a full set of spares

Please follow the highway-code at all times, including stopping at red-lights and riding no more than two-abreast. Please respect ALL other road users including drivers, pedestrians, runners, dog-walkers and horse-riders. Where appropriate and safe to do so, allow drivers to get past you on narrow roads.

Please get to the rides on time. We will have a short announcement before each ride and then look to get going.

**FUN** Let's not forget that we do this because we love cycling, so let's do it with a smile on our faces A cheery "hello" to a passing group helps spread the fun to everyone else

### **GENERAL GROUP RIDING ETIQUETTE FOR BEGINNERS**

Pick the right Group – Club Rides would be broken into an A, B and C group (with A the fastest). The Event on NTR CC Facebook group page will give an indication of how fast this will be, or how long it will take to ride a certain route, as the hilly routes we tend to ride on around the area don't always translate to a straight miles-per-hour figure. We will refine these estimates of times for each route as we develop – please bear with us as we get this right, and feedback (politely) when we need to change something.

As a general rule it will be worth starting with a slower group than a faster one. But if you are not used to riding in a group then you might be surprised how much benefit you get from it (approx 20%). By this I mean you will go 20% faster with the same effort.

Each NTR Club ride will have a leader.

The leader will not necessarily have to ride at the front, but will be familiar with the route and have some cycling experience. Please respect the leader's decision, if for example they decide to shorten a route due to weather/light/safety concerns.

Ride two-abreast when it is safe to do so – this way the group is a compact unit which can ride efficiently but easily move to single-file when needed to (for example to get past an oncoming car when the road is narrow). On the roads, NEVER go three or more abreast, irrespective of how good the conversation is!

Communication is key to a safe group ride. Roads are full of traffic, rocks, signs, pot holes, parked cars, animals, pedestrians, etc. and visibility is limited for the cyclist in a pack. It is important to communicate to the riders in the group of potential hazards by shouting and pointing out hazards.

Hand-Signals: It is not imperative that all the cyclists in the group point out the same hazards or signals. As long as a few are then this is normally sufficient (and the leading two always should). If you are a beginner or unsteady then it is far safer for the group to keep both hands on the handle-bars then it is to point things out.

The purpose of these signals is that the riders can continue to ride at a steady pace and can ride round the smaller obstacles without constantly having to brake (and sudden braking causes most incidents).

The thing you are most likely to see is where riders point down in the direction of an oncoming rock/hole. If the two riders both point to the ground between them, this signifies there is small obstacle (such as a pothole) that they are going to ride one either side of.

If the rider on the left points to their left, it means there is something to their left that they might have to ride slightly to the right of to pass – and if you are behind them then you will have to take the same

line if you also want to avoid it! Similarly the rider on the right might indicate a similar obstacle to their right.

These signals allow the group to ride at a constant pace.

You will also see a rider pointing or waving behind their lower back. If they are pointing right (the most common) then it indicates that the whole group will have to move to the right to overtake a large obstacle such as a parked car.

Shouts – Warnings you're likely to hear include:

Car Back: there's a car approaching from the rear of the group ride Car Up or Car Front: there's a car approaching from the front of the group ride Car right or left: car is approaching on the left or right of the group ride Rock or Hole: there is a hazard in the road

Walker/runner up: there's a pedestrian on the road ahead Bike up: there is a slower cyclist ahead that we are likely to overtake Clear: perhaps at a junction this is called when there is nothing coming and you know you can pedal through Slow – potential hazard ahead, control speed (but don't brake sharply to a standstill) Stop – we are going to have to stop – there is a hazard we can't ride round Line-out or single-file – asking that we move (whilst still keeping same speed) to single-file to for example let a vehicle past.

To be safe it is important to ride smooth, don't over react, avoid 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 who panic and touch a wheel may crash or cause a crash. You can avoid problems by practicing these simple rules:

Stay alert at all times. Hold your line. Don't overlap wheels. Don't look back! Relax!

Focus on the rider(s) ahead. Beware of pot holes in the road. Don't brake unless absolutely necessary

All of this may sound complicated at first but you will soon get into it. It actually gives a whole new dimension to cycling as it makes it a team event – you have to communicate, support and trust each other, and everyone's safety is in each other's hands. But you will find it one of the most enjoyable elements to riding in a club.

Enjoy !