



North Tyneside Riders Cycling Club 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 either captain@northtynesideriders.co.uk, the ride organiser in advance of the ride 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 Forum if you want to ask an open question. Appropriate lighting and high-visibility clothing are essential in poor lighting conditions or after dark. It is British Cycling best practice and club policy that helmets always be worn when riding for your own safety, and to set a good example for younger members.

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.

Junior riders aged 12 and over are welcome on senior club rides. **All riders under 18 MUST** have a consent form signed by their parent / guardian and they must be a competent cyclist (level 2 training standard - bikeability.org.uk). We advise that the parent / guardian responsible for the child ensures that a responsible adult attends each club ride the child undertakes. Where this is not possible the ride leader should be informed in advance of the ride and the ride leader will endeavour to arrange a responsible adult from within NTR for the ride; in this setting it is essential that the ride leader is given emergency contact details for the parent / guardian. Ultimately junior rider participation in the ride is at the discretion of the Ride Leader with a decision made upon the suitability of the ride on every occasion for each junior rider attending. We encourage parents to ride within the capabilities of their children and ensure their safety is the paramount factor.

Click here for the [NTR JUNIORS CONSENT FORM](#)

Respect

We ask everyone to have respect for their fellow riders and other road-users:

Ride leaders and fellow riders 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 may 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 wave to passing groups helps spread the fun to everyone else.

General group riding etiquette for beginners

Pick the right Group: Club Rides are broken into abilities and speeds. The ride description will generally give an indication of how fast this will be, or how long it will take to ride a certain route, as hilly routes don't always translate to a straight miles-per-hour figure. Any doubt over your ability or what the ride your attending involves ASK!

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% faster with the same effort).

Most Club rides will have a ride leader and may have a back marker, if this is not the case it will be explained in the pre-ride briefing.

The leader will not necessarily be at the front of the ride, 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.

The back marker will ride at the back of the group and make sure riders do not become detached from the main group.

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: It 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. Also be sure to pass any shouts back through the group, you may of seen or heard but the riders behind you may not have.

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 is far safer for the group to keep both hands on the handle-bars then it is to point things out but be sure to shout.

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 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. This is frequently also followed by a "OUT" shout verbally communicating the same information.

When approaching a rough area or multiple hazards that covers a long section of road the riders in front may either point or horizontally wave their hand backwards and forwards to highlight the hazardous area. This indicates to the group to be aware of multiple hazards for a short period rather than pointing every hazard out.

Traffic: As a mainly road-based cycling club we must share the roads with motor vehicles. Please be considerate to other road users when riding. Ride single file on busier roads so that traffic can pass. On approaching a junction or roundabout do not change lanes to late or to early as this can lead to accidents and traffic tailbacks.

Shouts and warnings you're likely to hear include:

Car back: there is a car approaching from the rear of the group ride.

Car up: there is a car approaching from the front of the group ride.

Coming through: there is a car passing the group.

Car right or left: there is a car is approaching on the left or right of the group ride.

Drain or Hole: there is a hazard in the road.

Walker/runner up: there is a pedestrian on the road ahead.

Bike up/out: there is a slower cyclist ahead that we are likely to overtake.

Clear: This can be shouted from the front of the group when approaching a junction to signal that there is nothing coming and you can pedal through (always check yourself just in case!). "Clear" may also be shouted from the rear of the group to signal that there is no traffic approaching from behind and it is safe to move across the road (usually to change lanes).

Slowing: to warn the riders behind you to slow down because of potential hazard ahead, control speed (but don't brake sharply to a standstill).

Stopping: we are going to have to stop – usually at a junction.

Single-file: asking that we move (whilst still keeping same speed) to single-file to for example let a vehicle past.

Ease up: to let the front riders know they are going to too fast and the group is breaking up or that people have been 'dropped' off the back of the group.

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 (Half wheeling). Don't look back! Relax!

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

Whilst this may sound complicated initially 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!