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Cycling UK's Ride Leader Standards Handbook

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A guide to leading social and leisure rides for cycling groups

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Introduction

This handbook aims to:

- inform you about Cycling UK's ride leader standards
- support group ride leaders to organise and run safe, enjoyable rides
- increase your confidence and proficiency in leading rides and groups

It complements the eLearning course that has been designed to be suitable for member group ride leaders with a range of different experiences and levels of knowledge.

If you are an experienced ride leader, you may already be familiar with some of the course content, but a refresh of the basics can still be useful.

Rides led by Cycling UK groups can take many different forms. This course's content applies to most group rides but places an emphasis on leisurely group rides on roads, as these are the most common rides led by Cycling UK member groups.

It does not cover advanced group riding skills like riding in a tight peloton or paceline.



Section 1
An Introduction
to
Ride Planning

Planning a Ride

In this section you will learn about:

- What to consider when planning a ride
- How to widen inclusion
- How to plan a great route
- The size of the group and how many volunteers you'll need

Planning a route is not just about using a map and how far you can travel in the time allowed.

When planning a route, you need to consider your audience and their needs. For example, you should consider:

1. Participant motivation

Take a moment to think about why members of your group may be taking part in rides. Will your choice of route align with what motivates your riders? For example, if a rider is interested in the social elements of cycling, would a fast-paced ride on busy roads be appropriate?

2. Participant skill level

Think about how difficult or easy your route is. Is it pitched at the right level for participants? Are there lots of busy roads to cross or follow that may make riders uncomfortable?

3. Participant fitness

Think about the length, terrain and gradient changes in your ride. Will your participants be able to complete and enjoy the route? Would a ride of 50km be suitable for a beginner's ride?

Top tip

To encourage less confident riders is to talk about your ride in terms of time taken, rather than distance.

Widening inclusion

Cycling UK is committed to increasing participation in cycling amongst a wide range of people from all backgrounds. All ride leaders are required to provide a safe and welcoming environment on group rides.

Making sure a ride is accessible starts at the planning stage. Consider if the route, start/ stopping points, and toilet facilities are accessible to all.

Where possible, inform riders of stopping points in advance so they can plan ahead and ensure their accessibility needs are met. Ensure the ride leader is available to contact prior to the activity to discuss any extra requirements.

If you need any advice or guidance on making your ride accessible, speak to your group's [diversity and inclusion officer](#).

Using appropriate wording/guidance based on rider experience, you'll need to inform riders of:

- **the route**
- **how far and fast you expect the cycle**
- **the intended stopping points**
- **any major hazards**
- **whether equipment, water or food is required**
- **whether this a 'drop' ride (ie will riders be left behind?)**

Make sure this information is easy to find, not buried away in a hidden document.



What else to consider

- Weather and daylight conditions should also be factored in when considering the choice of route.
- Always inform someone not on the ride of your route, intended stopping points and expected timings.
- Ride leaders should be aware of the Highway and Countryside Codes and ensure that groups comply with them.



Creating a route

Once you have determined the reasons for a ride, you can start planning a route.

There are multiple tools that can be employed to help plan a ride including:

- **Ordnance Survey maps**
- **Local cycling maps**
- **[Online route planning tools](#) like Google maps, CycleStreets, Komoot, and Strava**

Whichever method you use, you should be comfortable using it and understand the way it shows different types of terrain so you can plan your route accordingly.

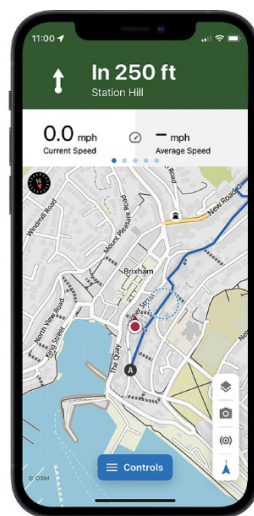
Consider using an existing route

When planning a group ride, why not consider using an existing route? Many groups and their members have a library of routes they use regularly.

Using pre-planned routes can keep things simple, and you know both it and any cafe stops are likely to have been approved by fellow cyclists.

Cycling UK also [has plenty of routes and ideas for rides](#) ready for you to use.

Before using someone else's directions, be sure to familiarise yourself with the route, identify any major hazards and double-check it's suitable for the group and your riders.



Group size and roles

When planning your ride, you'll need to consider how many people will be on it and what roles they may undertake.

Along with the ride leader, you may need to identify an assistant ride leader. A minimum of two volunteers are required for beginner group rides (i.e. one ride leader and an additional experienced/competent cyclist).

The use of additional assistant ride leaders is encouraged, depending on group experience, size, route plan, and risk assessment.

Group rides should adhere to the following **minimum** ride leader (plus assistants) to participant ratios:

Beginner rides 1:6

Advanced rides 1:8

Groups of more than 15 should be split into two smaller groups



Where you can ride

When leading a group, it's important that you only ride where legally permitted.

UK-wide

You can cycle on all public carriageways in the UK, except where cycling is expressly forbidden such as motorways, some tunnels and so on.

England and Wales

In England and Wales, you can cycle on:

- Bridleways and permissive bridleways
- Restricted byways or Byways Open to All Traffic (BOATs)
- Cycle tracks - technically not normally discussed as a 'public right of way' as they are not featured on the 'definitive map' held by local authorities, but a type of highway over which the public have a right of way on pedal cycles, with or without a right of way on foot
- Unsealed unclassified roads (shown on OS maps as 'Other Route of Public Access') These are technically not a 'public right of way', but rights of access on these routes are generally the same as on Byways Open to All Traffic
- Promoted mountain biking trails at trail centres

There are also a variety of other off-road access opportunities, such as disused railway tracks (often highlighted as part of the National Cycle Network), country parks and canal towpaths. Many (but not all) of these routes are now shown on Ordnance Survey maps

Please note, access legislation is currently being reviewed in Wales - See [Cycling UK experts called on to assist with Welsh access](#).



Where you can ride

Scotland

Everyone, whatever their age or ability, has access rights established by the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003. You only have access rights if you exercise them responsibly, however.

You can exercise these rights, provided you do so responsibly, over most land in Scotland, including mountains, moorland, woods and forests, grassland, margins of fields in which crops are growing, paths and tracks, the coast and most parks and open spaces.

Northern Ireland

Access laws in Northern Ireland are more restrictive than in Scotland, England or Wales.

Recent reforms allow the right of access to publicly owned forests, but the public has no general rights to wander – or cycle – over open land, including moorland and mountains.

Access depends on public rights of way, local government and individual landowners with some informal access in upland and coastal areas.



Paperwork and equipment

There are a few essentials you will need to prepare for your rides. We try to keep these to a minimum to make this process as easy as possible.

In this section you will learn about:

- **What to prepare**
- **What equipment to bring on a ride**
- **What to include in your paperwork**

A ride leader should consider the following paperwork before taking a group on a ride.

Route plan and risk assessment

When planning a route, we need to identify any potential hazards. This allows us to put control measures in place to mitigate any risks and try to prevent incidents from occurring.

There are **three types** of risk assessments:

- **Formal written risk assessments**, like the example below, for a specific ride or event
- **Generic risk assessment** that can be reused for regular rides
- **Dynamic, informal, unwritten risk assessments** performed as you go (i.e., you spot a large pothole or parked car and signal the group to move out and around it)

You do not need to create a formal written risk assessment or pre-ride the route for regular member group rides.

Each group should, however, produce and save a generic risk assessment that can be used for regular group rides, in combination with a dynamic risk assessment.

Key hazards (such as fast roads and busy junctions) should be identified using local knowledge and/or maps during route planning.

Note that events open to the public and/or non-members, and rides aimed at beginners require a dated formal written risk assessment and a full pre-ride of the course.

We'll look at risk assessments, hazards, and control measures in more detail in the next section.

Signing in sheet and consent forms

Signing in sheet or ride register

Ride leaders must have a list of all participants taking part in the ride. This could be in the form of a signing in sheet or an electronic list. You must destroy the list once the ride has finished, unless an incident has occurred.

It's also a good idea to collect or have access to the emergency contact details of riders taking part in the ride.

Consent forms and young people's participation

Parents/guardians of riders under the age of 18 must consent in writing to their participation. The only exemption is when a young person, having reached the age of 16, can prove they no longer live with their parents or guardians but are living as an independent adult.

Young people under the age of 13 must be accompanied by a parent or guardian.

Cycling UK's template parental consent form also includes our full policy on young people's participation.

You will also need a photo consent forms from everyone on the ride who is identifiable if you plan to take photos to be used in public communications such as websites, social media and newsletters.



GDPR and Essential Equipment

A note on GDPR: the general data protection regulation governs how we collect, store and use people's data. For the purposes of leading rides, there are three things to remember:

Any data you collect should be stored securely and you should be able to control who can view it. You should only use the data in ways that the owner of the data has consented to, this includes if they change their mind or withdraw consent.

You should destroy data when it's no longer being used, or if the owner of the data asks you to.

See our [GDPR guidance for groups](#) for more information.

Essential equipment

As a ride leader, you need to come prepared with certain equipment. It is your responsibility to make sure the correct equipment is on hand to deal with unexpected situations.

This equipment doesn't have to be carried by one individual, sharing the load is a good idea, but the responsibility of organising and knowing where each item sits with the ride leader.

Essential equipment a ride leader must carry with them includes:

- **Multi-tool with Allen keys and a couple of larger spare Allen keys are a good idea too**
- **Mobile phone - fully charged - for emergencies and route planning**
- **Inner tubes with correct valve size for a range of tyre sizes**
- **Tyre levers and repair patch kit**
- **Pump compatible with both Schrader and Presta valves**



Optional equipment

Optional equipment

This is the optional extra equipment a ride leader may carry with them.

Most Cycling UK groups have plenty of knowledgeable members happy to share their mechanical know-how. If someone has a mechanical, try to show or guide them through the repair, rather than doing it for them. Offering maintenance demonstrations and classes can be a great way to increase the confidence of members.

- **Master link or quick-release link to allow you to connect or disconnect a chain without a chain tool - make sure they are the right speed for the bike**
- **Master link pliers**
- **Chain tool**
- **Nitrile gloves for keeping your hands clean**



Top equipment tips

- **Take extra clothes, food and water**

Sometimes it does get cold and wet, we do live in the UK after all! It's worth taking spare gloves and waterproof clothing if the weather isn't looking great.

As a ride leader, it's always handy to have extra food and water to keep riders (and yourself) motivated throughout the ride.

- **Keep your bike in good working order**

As a ride leader you are relying on your bike, so give it a little love. Regularly servicing your bike and keeping it clean and lubricated will help ensure it won't let you down.

Servicing your bike is a great chance to learn more about bike maintenance and become familiar with the tools needed.

- **Bring cash and charge your phone**

Although you might not use it, bring some cash for emergencies.

Make sure your phone is fully working before you leave for your ride.

- Snack-size Ziploc bags are a great way of weatherproofing your phone.

- **First aid kit**

Ride leaders aren't required to have a first-aid qualification, but it is something that's good to have. It's a good idea to find out if anyone on the ride has a first-aid qualification, as they may have had training through work or other interests.

We recommend that only properly trained individuals render first-aid, and our insurance will only cover suitably qualified individuals.



Helmet policy

It is [Cycling UK policy](#) that the wearing of a helmet is a personal choice.

Keeping the group safe

Ride leaders need to be aware of risks when leading rides to make sure everyone stays safe.

Risk management

In this section you will learn:

- How to keep your group safe
- How to identify risks and take steps to mitigate them
- Your duties as a ride leader

Hazards, risks and control measures

Before and during the ride, ride leaders must identify hazards and take action to reduce the likelihood of an incident occurring. These can be defined as:

- **Hazard**
Something that has the potential to cause harm e.g. a large pothole or icy surface
- **Risk**
A combination of the likelihood that a hazard will cause harm and how severe the harm will be
- **Control measures**
The action you take to eliminate the hazard or reduce the risk

Dealing with risks

Once you have identified a hazard and assessed the level of risk it poses, you need to take some form of action to control the risk. There are two options:

Eliminate: Can we remove the risk entirely? For example, change the route to avoid a particularly dangerous descent.

Mitigate: If we can't eliminate the hazard, we can take action to reduce the likelihood or severity of the risk. For example, warning riders behind you of an upcoming pothole.

Generic hazards

Some hazards are present during all group rides and events.

Below are some common hazards and control measures to consider. All groups should develop their own risk assessment of local generic hazards and update it following any incidents. We'll look at creating risk assessments in the next section.

Common hazards

Riders' equipment and fitness

Fully inform riders as to the likely demands of the activity and the equipment required for it ahead of the event.

Terrain and road type

Ensure the terrain and surface type is suitable for the experience and equipment of the expected participants. Identify key junctions, fast roads and other terrain features during route planning and inform the group.

Adverse weather

Monitor the weather forecast ahead of the ride and update riders if necessary. Check participants have suitable clothing during the pre-ride briefing. If extreme weather is expected, you may need to consider cancelling the ride.

Other road and trail users

Plan routes away from busy roads/trails where possible. Explain local group riding etiquette or specific difficult sections in advance. Remind riders they are responsible for their own safety at all times.



Completing a formal risk assessment

As we touched on in the previous section, you'll need to complete a formal risk assessment if you are planning a ride or event aimed at beginners, members of the public (i.e. non-members of your group), or inexperienced cyclists.

It is also a good idea to risk assess any routes you use regularly.

It's essential to include what the risk is, who may be involved, the control measure/s and whether the level of risk is acceptable. Here are a couple of examples that you might include in a risk assessment document. Fill in your own example in the blank spaces.

example of a formal risk assessment

Hazard	Who may be involved?	Control measure	Is the level of risk acceptable?
Mechanical failure of bike on ride	Ride leader, participants	<p>Explain to participants the necessary condition of their bike in advance.</p> <p>Check all bikes prior to the start of the ride. Basic adjustments made to bikes by a suitably experienced volunteer.</p> <p>Any bicycles deemed unsafe, are excluded from the ride.</p>	Yes
Dangerous multi-lane roundabout on gyratory system	Ride leader, participants	Find alternative route	No

Section 2
Preparing
to
Lead a Ride

Your duties as a ride leader

Although it should be stressed that riders must take responsibility for their own health and safety, as a ride leader, you do have a duty of care towards them. Therefore it is your responsibility to:

- **Plan a suitable route**
- **Create a welcoming and friendly atmosphere**
- **Lead the group in a safe and enjoyable manner**

It is **not** your responsibility to:

- Make a decision on when to cross a road or junction on someone else's behalf
- Decide if someone is well enough to join a ride (this is down to the individual and their doctor) unless they pose a danger to either themselves or others. If you feel a rider's behaviour is endangering the group, it is within your authority to ask them to leave the ride on the grounds of safety. This should be a last resort and ample words of encouragement and coaching should be offered, followed by a warning. You can ask the group's safeguarding or welfare officer or the committee to intervene if you do not feel comfortable raising the issue with the rider directly.



Preparing to lead a ride

Before any ride, you should go over a pre-ride checklist to ensure that your ride is safe.

In this section you will learn about:

- **What to think about the night before and day of your ride**
- **Bike checks that should be done before any ride**
- **What makes a bike safe**
- **What adjustments can be made to bikes to ensure safety**
- **Pre-ride briefings**

Before you set off

Here's a checklist of things to do:

- Take a look at the relevant risk assessments for the ride to refresh your memory
- Double check the weather and account for any adverse conditions and hours of daylight
- Arrive early at the ride location and discuss the route and any issues with other ride leaders and/or assistants.
- Introduce yourself to any new riders. This is a great opportunity to get to know them, assess their ability and equipment and make them feel welcome. Some groups buddy new riders up with more experienced riders to help them settle in.
- Carry out pre-ride bike checks (more on this later)
- Carry out pre-ride briefing (also more on this later)
- Check you have a list of all riders who have turned up
- Conduct a final head count of participants before setting off

Pre-ride briefing

The pre-ride briefing is often the first encounter newcomers will have with the group. It's a great chance to make people feel welcome and included. It's easy to take knowledge such as group riding etiquette and communication for granted, but even seasoned riders can often do with a reminder.

Pre-ride briefing

Ride leaders must include the following in their pre-ride briefing:

- **Summary of the route - distance, duration, difficulty etc**
- **Major hazards on the route**
- **Stopping points/refreshments**
- **Group riding etiquette reminder**
- **Groups communication reminder - the specific communication you use will vary group to group**
- **Introduction to ride leaders and other volunteers**
- **Inform participants if photography/filming is to take place and give them the opportunity to opt-out**
- **What to do if the group gets separated**
- **What to do if a rider would like to leave the ride early**
- **Agreeing as a group/recapping on a way of communicating and hand signals based on local practices**
- **Ask if there are any medical issues or concerns (offer for people to speak to you separately about issues if they'd prefer)**
- **Allow time for questions**



Pre-ride checks

Pre-ride checks are essential to make sure bikes are roadworthy.

Firstly, a reminder:

Before setting off for your ride, remind riders that they are responsible for the roadworthiness of their cycle. Along with a roadworthy cycle (defined as a minimum of pumped-up tyres and two working brakes), participants should have weather-appropriate clothing.

E-cycles are welcome on Cycling UK rides, provided they are in good working order and conform to all relevant legislation and restrictions. We have [more information](#) about electric bikes and the law.

Now let's look at some pre-ride checks that can be used before your ride:

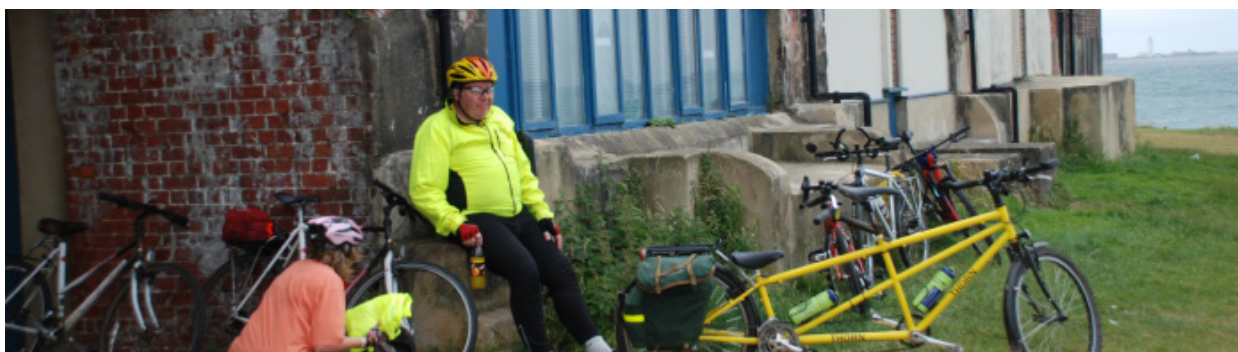
What is a 'safe' bike?

The aim of any led ride is to encourage cycling participation. Any overbearing technical expectations from participants could discourage people from taking part on rides in the future.

To be deemed safe to take part on a led ride every bike must:

- **Have two functioning brakes**
- **Have correctly inflated tyres that are not overly worn**
- **Have a freely turning chain**
- **Have two pedals**
- **Be the correct size for the user**
- **The 'M' Check**

This simple check is used as a way of ensuring that a bike is safe to ride. [Perform an 'M' check](#) or lead the group through checks, depending on the experience of riders. In particular, talk to newcomers to identify knowledge of bike maintenance and explain if needed.



The ABCD Check



A is for Air

- Squeeze each tyre in turn - they should be like firm apples
- Check the tyre pressure is correct - it's written on the sidewalls

B is for Brakes

- Squeeze each brake in turn - the rear wheel should lift off the ground when the front brake is pulled and the front wheel when the back brake is pulled
- If this doesn't happen, they may need adjusting

C is for Chain

- Chain should not be rusty or worn
- When pedals are turned backwards, the chain should move freely

D is for Drop

- Pick up the front of the bike and drop it from 10cm above the ground - listen for any rattling or looseness

If there is a bike maintenance issue identified by the ride leader which compromises the safety of the rider or the group, it is the ride leader's responsibility to actively request the participant to leave the activity.

Section 3

Leading the Ride

Leadership techniques

In this section you will learn:

- **How to lead a group ride**
- **How to deal with unexpected situations**
- **How to position your group when cycling**
- **Where to position yourself in relation to the group**



Leading the ride

Best practice includes:

- **Stick to the starting time for the ride**
- **Stick to the planned route if possible**
- **But be flexible and adapt the ride to account for any issues, changes or the needs of the riders**
- **Try to end the ride on time and keep riders updated if you are behind schedule and expect to be back later than planned**
- **Take headcounts regularly throughout the ride, especially after stops**
- **Check in with riders regularly, especially if they mention they are struggling or seem like they are falling behind. Remember, riders may not always say if they are not enjoying the ride or pace**
- **Go out and have fun!**

Leadership techniques

You'll want to adapt your leadership techniques depending on your ride. For example, consider:

- **Allowing participants to ride freely on quiet roads but take more control of the group on busier roads**
- **Adapting your leadership style to suit the type of riders. Take into consideration their experience, plus any disabilities or other needs**

Adjustments and participant registration

Adjustments

The typical adjustments that can be made before a ride are:

- **Lubricate and/or repair a chain**
- **Pump up the tyres to the correct pressure**
- **Tighten nuts and bolts (especially handlebar/stem bolts)**
- **Adjust saddle height and position**
- **Adjust the brakes (using the adjusters)**
- **Adjust the gears**
- **Replace (or repair) an inner tube**

Participant registration

Ride leaders must have a list of all participants taking part in the ride. We can provide a sample signing on sheet - see Appendix 2.

Participants under 18 require a signed consent form from a parent or guardian. See our separate young people's participation policy for more information.



Plans and emergency procedures

Plans and emergency procedures

Leaders should have a plan for when things go wrong during a ride. The plan should outline what action to take if an unforeseen situation occurs.

You'll account for these using a dynamic risk assessment, referred to earlier. Examples of these may include fallen trees, debris on the route, inaccessible paths or roads, road closures, damaged equipment or bikes, injured/tired participants, missing participants and loss of daylight or a sudden change in weather conditions.

Some situations can be predicted, and you can plan around, but completely unexpected situations can occur. If things are going wrong, keep calm, stay flexible, and keep the group updated. It's likely you'll have other experienced riders in the group, so seek advice to help you make a decision if need be.

It's important for a leader to also create and follow an emergency operating procedure (EOP) too. This would be used if you have to involve outside resources or personnel (e.g. the emergency services). See the next page for more.

Mechanical issues

Unfortunately, sometimes bikes do break! You'll want to have a plan in place to deal with mechanical issues such as punctures, broken chains, slipping gears and any brake problems.

Riders are responsible for the condition of their cycle, but you can help prevent issues by asking riders to check the condition of their bike before the ride, as mentioned earlier.



Emergency Operating Procedures

- 1. Remain calm and think of yourself first - make sure you are safe. Count to 10 before acting.**
- 2. Get other people off the road or trail and away from danger.**
- 3. Make the area safe. Ask for two (or more) people to stop any traffic or other riders if necessary.**
- 4. Assess the casualty if qualified to do so or ask if anybody has a first aid qualification. Only move the casualty if absolutely necessary.**
- 5. Call the emergency services if required by dialling 999 or 112. They will need to know your location and the details of the injured parties. Identify your location by either a grid reference or using apps such as [what3words.com](https://www.what3words.com) or OS Locate.**
- 6. Send people to guide the emergency services if required.**
- 7. Reassure the casualty and, if they are conscious, ask whom they would like to be contacted. If they are unconscious, try and locate their emergency contact details (ICE) on their phone or on the signing-in/out sheet.**
- 8. Keep an eye on the rest of the group - look out for anybody suffering from shock, which can be dangerous.**
- 9. When help arrives, ask where the casualty is being taken so you can inform their emergency contact. Try and get the job number as well in case the ambulance is redirected en route. Do not go with the casualty.**
- 10. Make a note of any witnesses and other parties. Record briefly what happened and take photos of the scene. Complete [an online Accident/Incident report form](#) as soon as practicable and contact our [Incident Line](#) if you think there may be a claim to be pursued (available to full Cycling UK members only).**
- 11. Decide what to do with the casualty's bike and possessions - perhaps a local resident could look after it for the time being, or you could lock it up somewhere and retrieve it at a later date?**
- 12. Decide whether to continue with the ride. People may appreciate the chance to sit down quietly and discuss what has happened over a hot drink. They may also feel able to carry on with the ride as planned.**

Positioning

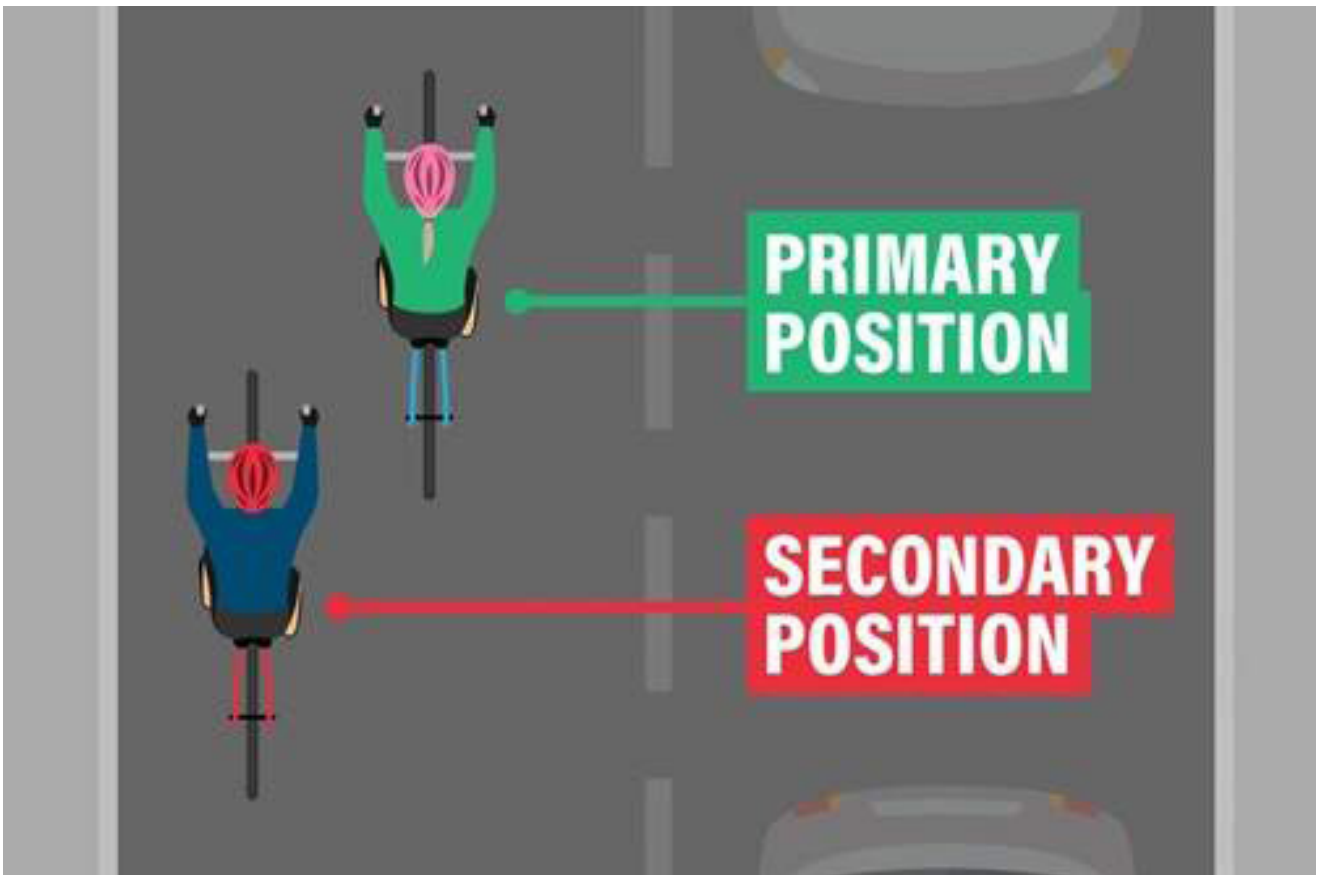
Before leading a group, a ride leader should have a good understanding of the road positions to take whilst riding.

A lot of people think the safest place to cycle on a road is riding in the gutter. It's not. Why?

Because if you ride close to the pavement, you are less likely to be seen by other road users and you've got to navigate potholes, road debris, and bad surfaces.

Typically, the distance from the kerb is the same distance that drivers will give you when overtaking. Your position when cycling will help influence how much room passing cars give you or your group when you're out riding.

So what are the best options? The National Standard in cycle training recognises two road positions:



Positioning

It's up to you to decide the best place for you to be in relation to the group. There are lots of factors in play, so there are no set answers for a given situation.

Here are some of the factors to consider when deciding where to position yourself:

- **Spotting hazards - does your position allow you to spot upcoming hazards and warn the group of them?**
- **The ability of the group - can you keep an eye on the group and communicate with riders if need be?**
- **Navigation - does the group know the route or will you need to call out turnings?**

It is important that each participant understands that they are responsible for their own safety. Encourage riders to keep away from the gutter and car doors and to watch out for any potential hazards, which they should point out to other members of the group. They must also be careful not to ride too closely to each other or the ride leader.

Communication and hand signals should be agreed upon in advance during the pre-ride briefing based on local practices. Call out turnings in good time, don't just turn off suddenly, or you may find yourself without a group to lead!

Leading from the front

Pros

- Allows you to easily identify upcoming hazards
- Riders can follow your navigation
- Allows you to set the pace of the ride

Cons

- Hard to keep an eye on the group
- Can't support slower/struggling riders

Leading from the back

Pros

- Can't keep an eye on the group
- Can encourage and support slower riders
- Allows faster and stronger riders to go ahead - but make sure they know where to stop so you don't lose them!

Cons

- May make spotting hazards more difficult
- Make sure riders in front know when to stop at junctions and turning

Positioning

Here are some other suggestions for where you may position yourself - but use your own judgement to decide what would be best for you and your group.

Downhill

Position yourself at the front of the group to control the speed and allow more cautious riders to catch up.

Approaching stopping points that aren't obvious/you haven't used before

Position yourself at the front of the group as you approach the stopping point, allowing you to make sure the stop is suitable and there is space for everyone to stop safely. Clearly indicate/call out before you stop, so riders are aware you're slowing down. As the group comes to stop, you can ask them to stop in front of you, so you can count everyone in and check they are well.

Uphill

Consider putting yourself at the back of the group on climbs. This stops the group from splitting up and allows you to support and motivate riders who may struggle - no one likes to be left behind!

Busy or narrow roads and trails

Think about leading from the back of the group and in the primary position, if need be. This allows you to make sure the group is keeping together and you can spot traffic approaching from behind using frequent shoulder checks. This will help you decide if/when to single out, or not.

Wide, quiet roads and trails

If the road or trail is wide, open, and free of significant hazards, why not ride in the middle of the group? This allows others to take a turn at the front or back and gives you a chance to have a chat!



Riding two abreast

There are some key rules to follow if you want your group to ride two abreast on road:

What does the Highway Code say?

Highway Code Rule 66 says: **Be considerate of the needs of other road users when riding in groups. You can ride two abreast and it can be safer to do so, particularly in larger groups or when accompanying children or less experienced riders. Be aware of drivers behind you and allow them to overtake (for example, by moving into single file or stopping) when you feel it is safe to let them do so.**

With this in mind, let's look at when to and when not to ride two abreast:

- **When you consider it safe to do so**
- **When there is good visibility ahead i.e., the ride leader can see it is safe**
- **When there is space or time to allow other road users to overtake (this may sometimes include moving into single file or stopping to allow overtaking)**
- **When the less experienced cyclist is riding closest to the kerb in the pair, maintaining a safe distance away from any obstacles or roadside debris (roughly 1 metre). This can be a great way to build their confidence.**

What are the advantages of riding two abreast?

- **Communication** - it's easier to communicate
- **Compactness** - the group can stay tighter together
- **Visuals** - Other road users will consider the group as a single unit and will be less likely to attempt a dangerous overtake where there is not room to do so
- **Supervision** - ride leaders can supervise the group more easily and be closer to all riders
- **Protection** - more vulnerable riders feel protected from motor traffic by riding on the inside



Riding two abreast

When not to ride two abreast?

- When there is poor visibility ahead
- The road has particularly fast-moving traffic
- If the group is impeding other traffic unnecessarily. Remember, for a vehicle to overtake safely there needs to be at least 1.5m space between your riders and the passing vehicle.
- You may wish to consider splitting larger groups into two distinct groups but allow plenty of room between the groups for other road users to overtake and pull in appropriately.
- If you have nervous or unsure riders who feel uncomfortable riding close to others

Never signal other road users to overtake you or wave them through. All road users should make their own decisions on when it's safe to make a manoeuvre and your signals could be misunderstood.

Letting traffic pass

The Highway Code requires cyclists to allow traffic to overtake when it is suitable and safe to do so. If you are riding on narrow busy roads, this may mean you need to pull in and stop to allow traffic to overtake. Only pull in when it is safe to do so and ensure the whole group can move safely out of the way.



Section 4
Post-ride essentials

Post-ride essentials

Once the ride has finished, there are a few key steps to take:

Reporting incidents

If an incident or even a near miss has taken place, the ride leader needs to make sure an [Accident/Incident report form](#) is sent to Cycling UK as soon as possible.

We also ask groups to report 'near misses' so we can keep an eye out for trends or common hazards.

Headcount and sign out

A final headcount should be conducted to ensure all riders are accounted for. You may wish to have riders sign out of a ride, or mark them off your list as they leave. Head counts should also be performed regularly throughout the ride, particularly before leaving a stopping point or breaks.

Feedback

Allow time for participant feedback on the ride, such as route length, terrain and, quality. Note down this feedback if needs be and include it in the planning of future rides.



Other ride leader essentials

As well as leading safe and enjoyable rides, there are a couple of other things you need to be aware of:

Safeguarding

All ride leaders **must** be aware of and follow [Cycling UK's Safeguarding Policies](#). If you have any safeguarding concerns, report it to your group safeguarding officer or Cycling UK's Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Most Cycling UK member group rides are not aimed at children or adults at risk, so most ride leaders don't need a DBS or PVG check.

But, if you do plan to work closely with such groups, consult [Cycling UK Safeguarding Policies](#) to find out more about criminal record checks and be aware of our Safeguarding Code of Conduct.

Data Protection

Ride leaders should be familiar with the key concepts of GDPR and treat personal data with the utmost care. See [Cycling UK's GDPR guidance](#) for more information.





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