



Group Riding Etiquette

This is critical for several reasons - safety, efficiency, enjoyment, and public perception.





Group Riding Etiquette

Introduction

Naomh Barróg Cycling Club (NBCC) was founded in 2015 and has grown in membership ever since, including many new to cycling. Members take part in club spins, sportives, audaxes and races but our overriding ethos is to have fun while cycling safely. This Guide aims to promote safe riding and to summarise the basic rules and etiquette of group riding that everyone should be aware of and adhere to when cycling in a group, regardless of your level of ability. Please read this alongside our Safety Statement and Code of Conduct.

General Guidelines

- Always obey the rules of the road, without exception.
- Wear a helmet.
- Ensure your bike is safe and well-maintained.
- Aero bars are not permitted.
- Arrive at least 5 minutes before the start time.
- Use front and rear lights in low light conditions, set to constant mode.
- Fit suitable mudguards during the winter season.
- Be self-sufficient with spare tubes, tools, water, food, and suitable clothing.
- Know the route and consider if it suits your fitness level.
- Respect the Captain's decisions.
- Ride predictably, your actions impact others.
- Make others aware of obstacles by the appropriate hand-signal/call. See section on communication below.
- Avoid spitting and clearing nostrils but, if you absolutely have to, ensure you are at the back of the group and not anyway close to other riders.
- Maintain a safe distance from the rider in front: up to 50cm between wheels.
- Avoid half-wheeling, (when you edge ahead of the rider beside you and speed up if he/she draws level), respect the pace of the rider across from you and ride handlebar-to-handlebar.

(Cont.)

General Guidelines

- Do not overlap wheels



- Look forward at all times. Pay attention. Avoid looking at the rider across from you if chatting to them.
- Minimise braking and sudden stopping, and always signal / call out to the group when doing so.
- When cycling on segregated bike paths, tailor your speed to reflect the path is shared with leisure cyclists and be alert to other hazards like dogs on long leads etc.
- Do not “swarm” around vehicles to get to the front of a line of stationary traffic. Keep the group together and stay on the left-hand side of the road. Never ride on the footpath in such circumstances.
- Approach all junctions where the group does not have right of way by easing up and be ready to stop.
- Avoid continuing through an orange light if it means the group will have to split.
- Never break a red light.
- On an incline, be prepared that the pace of the rider in front may slow, particularly if they suddenly raise themselves out of the saddle.
- Help less experienced riders to learn group riding techniques and calls.

Lead Riders at Front of Group

- Ride at a constant speed. Only ever slow down if it is clearly signalled to the group behind first. Keep all actions smooth and predictable.
- Make safe judgements for the whole group on whether to stop at junctions, roundabouts and traffic lights. Bear in mind that stopping abruptly could cause an accident or near-miss further back in the group.
- When approaching a set of traffic lights, the lead riders have sole responsibility in making the call. It will either be “LIGHTS...STOPPING” or “KEEP GOING”. Do not ride through red lights. If you aren’t comfortable, call ‘STOPPING’. Riders behind the rider who has made the call to stop, do not overrule this call.
- After stopping the lead riders should start cycling again at an easy pace for the first 200m/300m to help keep the group in a tight formation.
- Make the group aware of the need to change lanes well in advance of any obstacle such as a parked car or lane ending.
- Maintain the appropriate pace for the group. Slow the pace if requested from behind to keep the group together.

Last Pair of Cyclists in a Group

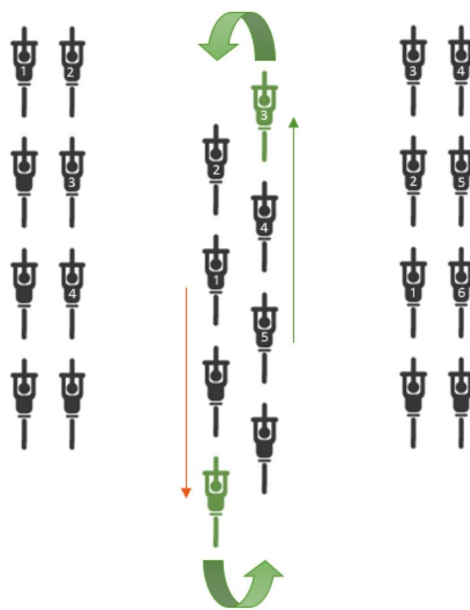
- If the entire group is splitting the last pair of cyclists should alert the group that the pace needs to be eased. Once the group is back together the one of the last pair of cyclists should call “ALL ON” to let the front riders know the group is united.
- When approaching a right-hand junction or right turn at a roundabout where you need to cross lanes, the cyclist at the back of the group on the outside should give clear instructions to the rest of the group when it is safe to move across lanes.
- They should be the cyclists to alert of cars behind by calling “CAR UP” (see section “Vehicle Behind”).

Formation & Rotation

- NBCC rides two abreast unless it is unsafe to do so. It's safer to be more compact on the road. The Captain will dictate when the group breaks into single file (invariably only on busier roads or minor roads with bends). Always be aware of the conditions and be courteous to the vehicles with whom we share the road.

Ride Rotation – two abreast and then roll to the left

- The whole group rotates in an anti-clockwise direction:



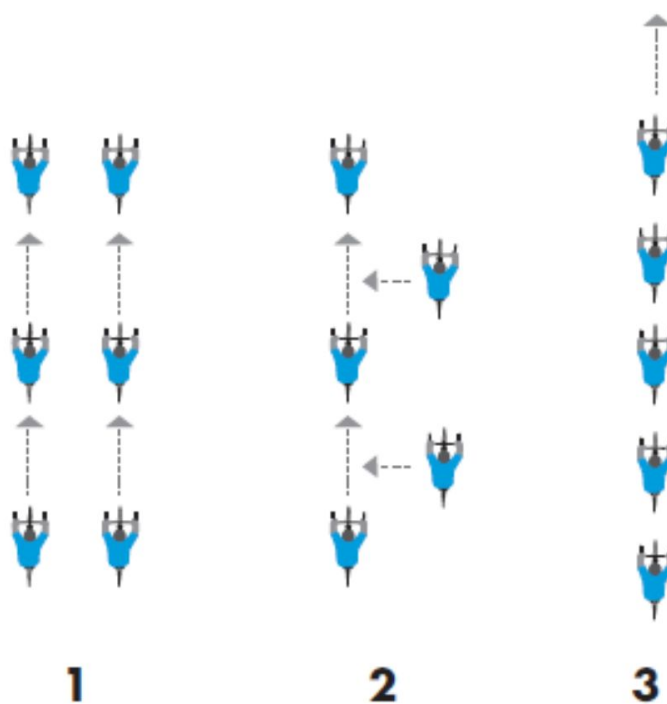
- The need to roll should be called by the Ride Captain using the call “ROLL OVER”. The front-left rider will ease very slightly allowing the front-right rider to smoothly move 1.5 bike lengths clear and then move over to the left and take over front-left position. The front right rider should never move diagonally to their new position on the left or accelerate excessively. The rider that was second in line on the right follows the wheel to take over front-right position and does this without increasing the pace.
- The Ride Captain will determine the duration of turns at the front and generally the workload should be shared equally within the group. There may be instances where longer or shorter turns are required e.g. later in a ride where fatigue plays a part or where there are head or cross winds.
- Stay level with the rider beside you.

Set the Pace

- When riding on the front, keep the pace consistent and try not to surge or increase the speed unexpectedly. Be aware of any riders in the group who may be struggling if the pace increases and reduce the speed as necessary.
- When riding two abreast, the rider inside sets the pace. Remember that this rider has already completed half a turn whilst the rider coming through is rested.
- Call to “SLOW UP” if you notice the group splitting or you are struggling to maintain the pace.

Moving from double to single and back

- When required by the Captain to single out, the lead rider nearest to the kerb should speed up slightly with the lead rider on the outside slotting in behind. Other riders should follow suit.



- On the call to “Double Up”, to move back into pairs the leading riders position side by side with everyone slotting back into their original positions. It is vital that the lead riders proceed slowly as those at the back will have many bike lengths to make up.

Vehicle Behind

- When a vehicle approaches from the rear of the group and looks to overtake, the cyclists at the back of the group will call 'CAR UP' to warn the group that a vehicle will pass shortly.
- This is a warning to cycle cautiously and hold tight formation allowing room for the vehicle to pass.
- The Captain should consider the size of the group and the terrain and whether it is appropriate to move into a single file. If it considered safe and appropriate to do so they will call 'SINGLE OUT'.

Mechanical Problem

- In the event of a mechanical problem or puncture, the cyclist should raise their hand and call 'MECHANICAL'. The cyclist and group will pull over to the side of the road as soon as it is safe.

Passing Other Groups

- When approaching a slower cyclist/group, the cyclists at the front should call out 'ON YOUR RIGHT' to warn the other party of their presence and give the 'Move Right' signal to the riders behind.
- Only pass where it is safe to do so, never on a bend or where there is poor visibility.
- Give plenty of space to cyclists when passing, particularly if you are in a large group moving at speed. Make sure you are well past the cyclist(s) before moving back over to the left.
- When passing another group of cyclists who are riding two abreast, the call should be given to "Single Out" and the group should pass in single file.
- When passing other cyclist riding in single file, the group may pass 2 abreast if it safe to do so.

Horses

- If you are on the front of the group and you see horse(s) ahead, signal to the group to slow down, alert the horse rider of your intention to pass and approach with caution.
- Pass slowly but only once you are certain that it is safe to do so.
- Leave plenty of room between the group and the horse.

Communication Non-Verbal

- Generally speaking, hand-signals and the pointing out of hazards are more preferable to calls.
- Excessive calling out can be a hazard in its own right and riders should be conscious of this. However, there will always be instances where calls are necessary e.g. relating to cars, singling out etc.
- Riders should always be alert for hand signals and should relay them through the group.



SLOWING: HAND SIGNAL: Raise your arm, move up and down.

STOPPING: HAND SIGNAL: Raise your arm, open palm



MOVE OUT: HAND SIGNAL: Bring hand behind the back (left or right depending on which side the obstruction is on) and wave or point behind back indicating that there is an obstruction such as a parked car or pedestrian, etc. Riders should move in the direction indicated to avoid the obstruction.

POTHOLE OR HAZARD: HAND SIGNAL: Extend arm (left or right depending on which side the hazard is on) pointing down at the road, to point out hazards such as pot holes, manhole covers etc. In the event of a pothole rider should shout "Hole" while pointing toward the hazard.



Group Riding Etiquette

COME THROUGH: ARM SIGNAL: Hands on the handlebars, flick your left or right elbow away from your body. Flick the elbow on the side that the following riders will come through on.



PUNCTURE: HAND SIGNAL: Raise your hand, stop pedalling and hold in a straight line until everyone has passed. When all the riders are ahead it is safe to pull over.

GLASS OR LOOSE GRAVEL OR UNEVEN GROUND: HAND SIGNAL: Extend arm (left or right depending on which side the hazard is on) with hand open and palm facing the ground. Move hand left and right to indicate gravel or uneven ground, etc.



Communication Verbal

- As mentioned there will always be instances where calls are necessary e.g. relating to cars, singling out etc. Clear and concise verbal cues can help prevent accidents, alert others to hazards, and improve the overall safety and enjoyment of a ride.

CALL "Slowing" usually accompanied by a hand signal to indicate that the rider or riders are slowing down for some reason. For example, approaching a signal controlled junction.

"Slowing"

CALL "Stopping" usually accompanied by a hand signal to indicate that the rider or riders are stopping for some reason. For example, approaching a signal controlled junction.

"Stopping"

WAIT: CALL "Wait" typically at a junction to indicate there is a car coming or that it is unsafe to proceed.

"Wait"

CLEAR: CALL "Clear" to indicate that a junction is traffic free or that it is safe to proceed. Rider must check themselves and not rely solely on others.

"Clear"

Group Riding Etiquette

SINGLE OUT: CALL “Single Out or Single File” to instruct riders to get into single file.

“Single Out”
or
“Single File”

CAR UP: CALL “Car Up” to warn riders that a car is approaching from the rear of the group. Riders should be prepared to single out if riding two a breast to accommodate the car(s) moving through.

“Car Up”

CAR DOWN: CALL “Car Down” to warn riders that a car is approaching from the front of the group. Riders should be prepared to single out if riding two a breast to accommodate the car(s) coming down, particularly on narrow rural roads.

“Car Down”

RIDER(S) UP: CALL “Rider Up” to warn rider(s) that the rider(s) behind intend to pass. Riders should be prepared to move over or single out to accommodate the rider(s) coming through

“Rider Up”

IN SUMMARY

- Have fun on your ride, but stay alert, pay attention to what is happening around you.
- If someone is behaving inappropriately, call it out, their actions can impact us all.
- Follow these guidelines to ensure everyone's safety and enjoyment.

SAFE CYCLING!