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**BG&E Riders guide**

**April 2015**

Group cycling has many benefits, but you need to be aware of certain rules and guidelines in order to ride efficiently, safely and to minimise potential inconvenience to other road users. Look after yourself but also be aware of your fellow cyclists. The following tips are a basic guide to cycling, you also need to follow the rules of the Highway Code – Rules for Cyclists (<https://www.gov.uk/rules-for-cyclists-59-to-82/overview-59-to-71>) , use your common sense and respect the decisions of your Ride Leader.

**Before the ride**

* Make sure you are **fit enough** to maintain the advertised speed for the distance of the ride.
* It is recommended that you have a **road bike**, rather than a mountain bike or hybrid, as a road bike is faster and more efficient.
* You should **check your bike** over before the ride to make sure it is in good working order.
* It is recommended that you carry with you a **spare inner tube**, tyre levers, pump, puncture repair kit and **basic tools**.
* Make sure you are **dressed for the weather** you are riding in.
* Carry food supplies such as **energy bars** or a banana and plenty of fluids for the distance of the ride. Usually there is a coffee stop, but not always.
* Make sure you have **some money** and a **means of communication** in case you get lost.
* Ensure that you have an **“in case of emergency”** (ICE) card in your saddle bag with your personal details, emergency phone number, next of kin and any medical records.
* All riders **under 16 yrs. old** MUST be accompanied by their parent or guardian, who must ride with them for the whole ride.

**During the ride**

* Arrive about **5/10 minutes early**.
* **Listen to the Ride Leader** and pay attention to any directions.
* Look slightly ahead when riding to assess the road for potholes or other objects, do not simply rely on the rider in front. Always **be aware** and **concentrate**, a moment’s loss of concentration can cause an accident.
* You should be able to **“hold your line”.** So, you should be able to ride in a straight line parallel with the kerb, in a confident manner.
* Equally, **don’t ride too far out** in the carriageway, unless it is necessary.
* Follow the **rules of the road** and be courteous to other road users. Car drivers can sometimes get **‘road rage’** or annoyed by cyclists, do not get involved and maintain your cycling or stop until you are safe.
* Riding no more than **two abreast** is acceptable and in neat lines, moving to **single file** on narrower roads and to let vehicles pass.
* **Don’t ride in the gutter**, you need to ride about 1m out from the kerb. There are several reasons for this, there are often obstacles in the gutter that may give you a puncture and cars are more likely to squeeze you in the gutter.
* Groups ride in close proximity, so **do not make any** **sudden movements** as this can cause an incident or crash.
* **Avoid overlapping** your front wheel with the rear wheel of the bike in front, as a sudden movement could mean the wheels clashing.
* When riding in a small group, take your turn at the front. Facing the elements is tiring, so each rider should take their turn, also **‘drafting’** or riding in the slipstream of the rider in front can save about 20% of your energy, so taking turns can ensure the whole group can take this advantage.
* Riders will climb hills at different speeds, so **faster riders should wait for the group at the top** of the hill.
* When **riding downhill**, do so at a safe speed, within your competence. You can reach speeds of up 50 miles an hour and stopping at this speed is difficult unless it is controlled.
* Do not **“Half wheel”**, or constantly up the pace whenever a rider draws level with you.
* The ride leader will tell you what the route is, **do not deviate** from the planned route, unless you have told the ride leader. If you ride ahead, it is your responsibility to navigate the route.
* If there is a large group starting out, **split into smaller groups**, so you don’t dominate the road to let cars pass.
* If you are planning on **leaving the route** early, make sure you **tell the ride leader** or someone that can pass the message on.
* If possible, make sure you have a mobile phone number that can be contacted in **an emergency.**
* **DO NOT use a mobile phone whilst cycling**, you must stop before making or taking a call
* If you have a **puncture** or mechanical problem, shout out “puncture” for example, before slowing down.
* If you see someone else with a puncture or **mechanical problem**, again shout out and stop, to see if the rider needs assistance.
* **Be courteous** to other road users and acknowledge them with a wave or nod when they slow down or stop.

**Legal requirements**

**The Highway Code – Rules for cyclists (59 – 82) (**<https://www.gov.uk/rules-for-cyclists-59-to-82/overview-59-to-71>**)**

**60 At night your cycle MUST have white front and red rear lights lit. It MUST also be fitted with a red rear reflector (and amber pedal reflectors, if manufactured after 1/10/85). White front reflectors and spoke reflectors will also help you to be seen. Flashing lights are permitted but it is recommended that cyclists who are riding in areas without street lighting use a steady front lamp.**

**64** You **MUST NOT** cycle on a pavement.

**69 You MUST obey all traffic signs and traffic light signals**

**71** You **MUST NOT** cross the stop line when the traffic lights are red. Some junctions have an advanced stop line to enable you to wait and position yourself ahead of other traffic (see [Rule 178](https://www.gov.uk/using-the-road-159-to-203/road-junctions-170-to-183)).

**Communication**

This is a very important part of group cycling and you will need to know the various verbal warnings and hand signals that are used.

*Shout-outs*

When you hear a shout-out pass the message on.

**“Car up”** There is a car coming towards the group. Move into single file, where necessary.

**“Car back”** There is a car coming up behind the group. Move into single file, where necessary.

**“Single out”** Form a single file.

***"Clear"*** It is **NOT** advisable to shout the word “clear” when at a junction or crossing a carriageway, each rider should be responsible for their own clear passage.

‘Car’ can be changed to be specific, e.g. “bike up” where there is a bike.

*Hand signals*

**Slow down** - Hand stretched out and moving slowly up and down, as if patting a dog. This means slow down.

**Move** - Hand behind back, pointing left or right. This means there is an object to be aware of in that direction, such as a car or pedestrian and the whole group needs to move in that direction to avoid it.

**Obstacle** - Either arm stretched out and pointing down. This means there is an object to avoid in that direction, such as a drain cover or pothole.

**BEWARE:** when making hand signals, ensure that you are stable enough to do so, otherwise accidents can occur.

British Cycling have made a video of how to ride in a group: <http://youtu.be/seWlSY03OCY>

**Insurance**

It is **strongly recommended** that you take out insurance for third party liability. What this means is that if you have an accident and another person makes a claim against you for personal injury or damage to property, you insurance should pay out for you. If you are not covered by insurance you can be personally liable.

*You can get insurance from providers such as:*

**British Cycling**

( <https://www.britishcycling.org.uk/membership> )

As a member of British Cycle you get liability insurance included. (ranges between £21 -£77 pa)

**Cyclists Touring Club – the National Cyclist Charity (CTC)**

( <http://www.ctc.org.uk/membership/affiliate-membership-for-cycling-clubs-and-groups-of-all-types-and-sizes> )

The BG&Es Cycling Club is a Group Member of the CTC and as such individual members can get a discount on insurance through the CTC (Approx. £18 pa)

**No Liability**

All riders ride at their own risk and the BG&E Cycling Club does not accept any responsibility and is not liable for the rider’s safety.

**Contact:**

If you have any queries please send an email to: contact@bgecyclingclub.co.uk