

Spalding Cycling Club Club Group Rides – Rules and Etiquette

Spalding Cycling Club 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 the text below.

If you are unsure about anything then please email the club in advance of the rides, or ask the ride leader before the ride sets off.

Be sure you are confident before setting off that you can complete the ride, the ride leader will be able to advise of the estimated average speed and mileage.

Safety:

Safety for riders is the most important consideration for our club rides, however the safety of others also needs to be considered.

Helmets are required on all SCC rides. Please make sure yours is in good condition. If you have had a fall or it has been somehow hit or damaged, replace it immediately.

It is essential that your bike is in a safe and roadworthy condition with, for example, working brakes and charged batteries for lights, e-shifting or e-bikes.

Lighting and high-visibility clothing should also be used as appropriate.

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.

Ride leaders (or more likely their sweepers) will always try to help with mechanical issues, but are not trained mechanics. All riders should be able to fix basic problems such as punctures and be familiar with the workings of their own bike. Always carry some spare inner tubes that are the correct size for your tyres.

On every ride, it is the responsibility of each rider to have their own plan to get home in the event of a major mechanical failure or similar. We recommend that riders carry a spare layer of clothing to stay warm in case of an incident, or needing to pause to fix a mechanical.

Safety tips:

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

To be safe it is important to ride smoothly, 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 or inattentive riders who brake suddenly or touch a wheel may crash or cause a crash.

Focus on the rider(s) ahead. Beware of pot holes in the road. Don't brake unless absolutely necessary. Don't accelerate suddenly, although there may be circumstances when riding on the front of a group where you need to accelerate "through" a situation, to avoid the group behind crashing.

Youth:

Spalding Cycling Club encourages the progress of youth riders as they develop. All riders under the age of 18 need to complete a consent form unless they are riding with a parent or a guardian. A copy of this consent form can be provided by the Membership Secretary.

Respect:

We ask everyone, when riding on a Spalding club ride to have respect for their fellow riders and other road-users:

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.

Once you've joined a ride, please stay in the group. If you're having one of those days when you're struggling to keep up, let the ride leader know. If you see someone struggling, drop back and see if you can help. If you're on the front, hold a pace at which the group can stay together.

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:

Please get to the rides on time.

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, obstacles, 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.

Shouts:

Warnings you're likely to hear when riding with SCC include:

Car Back: there's a car approaching from the rear of the group ride

Car Up: 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

Out: the group needs to move out to avoid an obstacle

Gravel 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; or one approaching us in the opposite direction

Clear: this is called at a junction when there is nothing coming and you know you can pedal through. If, however, it is unsafe to proceed into the junction, then announce the danger (e.g. "Car Right") or the action ("Stopping") loudly and as soon as possible.

Slowing: potential hazard ahead, control speed (but don't brake sharply to a standstill)

Stopping: 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.

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.

If in doubt, ask a fellow rider.

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