

Bunch Riding

Code of conduct

Purpose: Improve the safety & public image of cyclists



Bunch Riding Etiquette

- Correct formation
- Holding the wheel
- Position on the road
- The lead riders
- The tail riders
- Rolling over
- Pace Line
- Hand signals & calls
- Avoiding holes, rubbish & obstacles.
- Other things (the little things)



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CORRECT FORMATION

Riders should pair off 2 by 2. Try to maintain about a 30cm – 60cm distance from the rear wheel of the rider in front.

HOLDING THE WHEEL

Do not focus on the wheel in front, actually watch the riders' body. This will allow you to observe a lot more bunch dynamics.

As you ride next to the person opposite you in the bunch, try to hold your wheel level with theirs. Half wheeling is always keeping your wheel in front of the rider next to you, this is considered rude. AVOID IT!



POSTION ON THE ROAD

We have rights on the roads. However there is a love/hate relationship between many motorists and cyclists. Motorists in most cases do not give us much space, toot, abuse, swerve at us, some cases throw stuff at us, & even worse. Cyclists also lose their manners, giving the finger, swearing, ignoring road rules, not stopping at red lights, riding three or four abreast. *The road is not a race course for our exclusive use.*

We can legally ride two abreast, however at times there needs to be common sense used, single file may be more appropriate. Do not hug the gutter when riding, give yourself a little bit of space. This forces cars to drive around you, not to squeeze by. Further by allowing a little space from the gutter you have room to move left or right to avoid the obstacles.

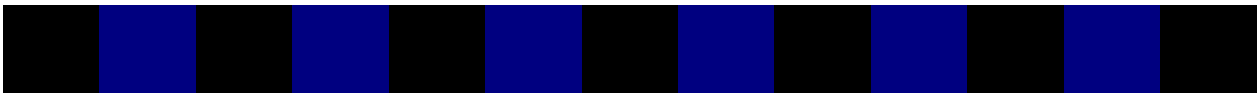
THE LEAD RIDERS

Lead riders set the pace, call all obstacles, and warn the bunch of any traffic hazards. When approaching traffic lights there are set calls to be used.

They are **“lights....rolling”** or **“lights....stopping”**

When coming to intersections/ roundabouts the calls to be used are **“clear”** or **“car right/left”**.

*Please note that all calls are to be passed down the bunch.
All riders should be aware of the calls.*



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THE TAIL END RIDERS

The riders at the back also have a responsibility for the bunch. They make the calls when it is safe to cross lanes or overtaking cars (particularly narrow roads) and trucks.

The calls are either “**wait**” or “**over**”. The bunch must move as one, not in fragmented groups. The rider on the outside rear must hold their hand signal until the bunch has crossed as a whole safely.

The call for a vehicle overtaking the bunch on narrow roads is “**car back**”.

ROLLING OVER (see diagram page 6)

Everybody should have a chance of sitting on the front. 15mins is plenty of time to sit on the front. If you are not fit enough or strong enough, when you get to the front advise the other riders and immediately roll off.

Do not pull out before getting to the front. This only leaves gaps. At speed gaps only cause further bunch problems.

The roll over procedure is easy. Simply the two lead riders move to the side of the bunch, leaving a gap for the following riders to move through to take the lead. The previous lead riders soft pedal whilst waving the bunch through, and slot in to the rear of the bunch, thus becoming tail end riders.

PACE LINE (see diagram page 6)

Once the bunch starts to speed up, a pace line forms. The formation is similar to a chain, where the rolling off by the lead rider moves to one side.

In racing the rolling off occurs to the side the wind is coming from. However in social bunches & training groups the lead rider should roll off to the left (gutter side); it is generally safer.



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The rider rolling off immediately soft pedals. The change in pace is very small. The riding coming through *does not increase pace*. Surging through increases the bunch speed, strings the group out and drops riders off the back.

If you cannot do a turn, stay out off the pace line. Appreciating that you do not want to get dropped there is a good place to sit in the bunch rather than 4th or 5th wheel; remaining here causes the bunch to lose its dynamics & is annoying to those riders involved in the pace line. The best position to stay out of the pace line is slightly at the back of the line coming off the front.

HAND SIGNALS & CALLS

Simple calls and hand signals are as follows.

Please note it is the responsibility of all riders in the group to pass this down the line.

- Turning corners or crossing lanes = hold turning side hand out straight at shoulder height
- Stopping = right arm bent at right angles held directly out from shoulder & call **“STOPPING”**
- Pothole = point to the ground with straight arm & call **“pothole”**
- Glass = point to the ground with straight arm & call **“glass”**
- Overtaking parked car = 3 large waving left arm movements from level of shoulder to behind hip & call **“car”**.
- Overtaking slower cyclist or walker = as above but call **“rider left”** or **“walker left”**
- Passing oncoming rider or walker = 3 large waving right arm movements from level of shoulder to behind hip & call **“rider right”** or **“walker right”**
- Dogs = often the bunch will pass dogs off their leads. The bunch needs to slow, as no one can predict what an animal will do. The call is **“dog right”** or **“dog left”**

There are many other calls around the country but these are generally universally recognized.



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AVOIDING HOLES, RUBBISH, OBSTACLES ETC

If you are following the wheel correctly; and the lead riders have spotted the hazard early and made a call with appropriate hand signal; and that call has been passed down the bunch, trouble should be avoided.

However riding in a bunch is dynamic. Accidents do happen. There are many skills that come with time in the saddle.

- RELAX do not choke the handle bars and brake hoods.
- If you are talking to your partner face the front, watch what you are doing and what the bunch is doing.
- Make the calls all the way down the line.
- Do not make sudden movements.
- Do not overreact and exaggerate avoidance, this causes a domino effect through the bunch.
- Further be aware of the roll back. The roll back is when the rider in front gets out of the saddle to ride up an incline, when they do this, the back wheel momentarily comes back. If the rider following is a little too close they may touch wheels. Possibly causing a fall & bringing down the bunch. BE AWARE & hold a safe distance.

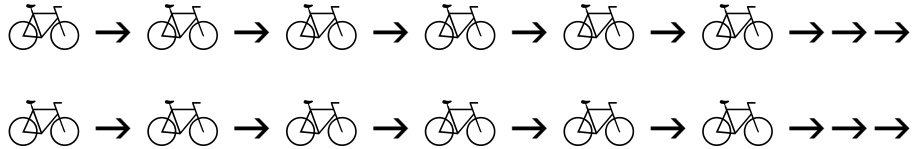
OTHER THINGS (the little things)

- NEVER use a mobile phone while riding, let alone in a bunch.
- LIGHTS, LIGHTS, LIGHTS—white light for the front of the bike and a red flashing light for the back of the bike. When it is dark they are on. If you are riding in the afternoon, they should be on the bike, incase you get held up and end up riding in twilight or the dark. ***It is illegal to ride without lights.***
- Bring your own spares, do not expect others to lend you a tube.
- RED traffic lights mean STOP. There is no ifs or buts. If the bunch does not roll easy to wait POLITELY point out etiquette. We will all get caught at traffic lights eventually. ***It is illegal to ride through red lights.***
- COFFEE SHOP—don't leave gloves on table; don't drip sweat (cool down); be polite to staff & have manners.



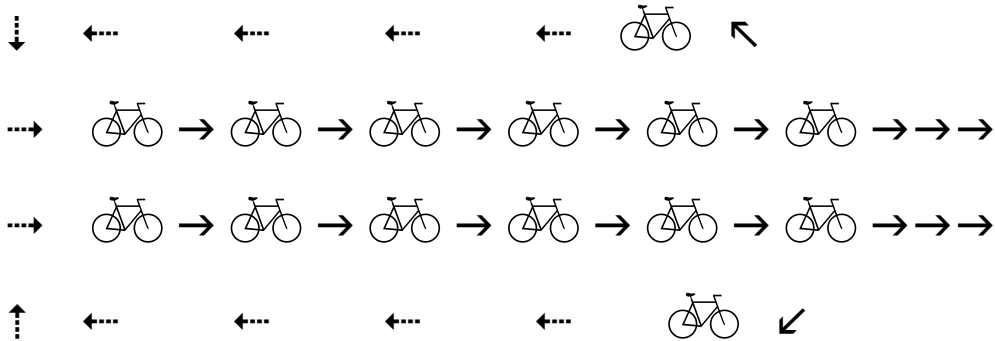
BUNCH FORMATION

The gap between your front wheel and the wheel in front should be approx. 30—60cm.



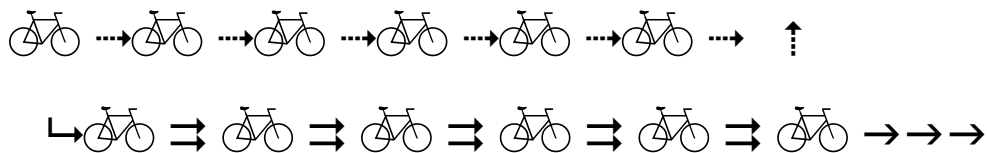
ROLLING OVER

The lead riders move to side allowing next riders through. The riders soft pedal until they reach the back of bunch & join in again, to become tail enders.



PACE LINE

SLOWER LINE (as the rider moves over they soft pedal, small change in speed)



FASTER LINE (do not increase speed as you get to the front, hold the pace, move over when your rear wheel passes the left riders front wheel)



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IN SUMMARY

- know & respect road rules.
- Don't obstruct or impede traffic.
- Be responsible & predictable.
(hold your line, give clear signals & call obstacles when bunch riding)
- Be patient, courteous, & forgiving. (things happen)
- Avoid confrontation.
(don't use inappropriate gestures or language & don't react to abusive behaviour from other road users)
- Acknowledge courteous drivers.
- Encourage other riders to do the right thing.
- Lead by example.
- Remember—what you do effects others.

ENJOY YOURSELF— SAFE RIDING—HAVE FUN



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