



Cambridge Cycling Club (CCC) Guide to Club Riding

Cambridge CC welcomes new riders. This document is intended to provide guidance to those not used to riding in a group. It is hoped you will find it useful and would encourage you to contact us if you have any queries or concerns. This guide draws on many years experience of club riding by members. The aim is to ensure safe and enjoyable cycling for everyone.

Below is a summary of the rides that leave Addenbrookes on Sundays at 9am. If you are new to cycling and have never cycled in a group, we suggest you start with the Touring ride to gain experience and then move onto the faster groups.

For the safety of everyone it is important that we all obey the Highway Code. Speeds and distances in the table below may reduce in winter and increase in summer.

Group	Average mph	Effort	Distance (miles)
Touring	14	Gentle	40/50
GT	15	Steady	60
ST	16	Constant	60+
Inter17	17	Mod. strenuous	60+
Sporting	18	Strenuous	70+
Sporting+	19+	Very strenuous	70+

- **Prepare.** Make sure your bike is in good working order before each ride. This is the costly bit as you will need a reasonable bike. A mountain bike (with relatively smooth tyres) will be hard work (but okay for that first ride providing it is well maintained). An entry level hybrid bike or road bike is better. It's probably a good idea to check out your local bike shop if you haven't bought a bike before. (Most offer a discount to CCC members). In order to help prevent tyre failures, before each ride scrutinise your tyres for damage to the side-walls and foreign objects embedded in the tread. Punctures often result in these foreign objects gradually working their way through over time.
- **Prepare!** On each ride take at least a puncture repair kit, pump, tyre levers, a spare tube, basic tools, fuel! (water and bananas) and some money for the café stop. That said we tend to travel light enough to fill seat packs but not enough to fill panniers or rucksacks. It's also handy to have a map and to be aware of the destination. You may wish to carry a mobile phone and a pocket size cable lock to deter thieves at the coffee stop.
- **Dress Sensibly.** It is best to wear sports type clothing; cycling specific clothing is not necessary although cycling shorts, gloves and shoes help those pressure points. In the winter it is generally preferable to be too warm than too cold. A wind-proof top can make a significant difference. Most riders tend to layer up with a number of thin layers rather than a single thick



jacket. A wind/waterproof in your rear pocket can be very useful! The Club recommends riders wear a helmet.

- **Think.** Do not make sudden changes of speed or direction when riding in a group. Consider the proximity of other riders and how your actions might affect them. For example, getting out of the saddle to stand on the pedals can have the same effect as braking, should you throw your weight forward and not maintain pressure on the pedals. Do not stop suddenly to answer that mobile phone.
- **Group Riding.** Ride no more than two-abreast and maintain two imaginary lanes on the road. The leading riders will ride closely to one another and this should be copied to aid aerodynamic efficiency. When moving to single file the outside rider should drop back. Here is an article written for triathletes by Tim Williams which gives a technical description of group riding: - <http://www.perfectcondition.ltd.uk/Articles/Drafting2.htm>
- **Riding style.** The upper body should be relaxed, back straight and elbows bent with the focus ahead, especially when taking a drink i.e. do not look down when reaching for, or replacing, your bottle. Riders tend to find that group riding is suited to a smaller/easier gear than they would use when solo riding.
- **Good Manners.** When changing position in the group, do so relatively slowly and deliberately. Particularly if overtaking, do this at about 1/2 to 1 mph faster than the other riders; this allows them to take your wheel and benefit from your aerodynamic drag. Then, and only then, revert to the group speed.
- **Road Manners.** Keep to the left of the left side of the road, but not in the gutter. This helps other cyclists and and motorists with overtaking.
- **Wheel positioning.** Do not overlap your front wheel with the rear wheel of the rider in front. If that rider makes a sudden move, your front wheel could be knocked from under you whereupon **you will crash.**
- **Communicate!** If you are dropping back or see another rider that is having problems or dropping back, alert others in the group. Those on the front are only aware of riders immediately behind them.
- **Hand Signals**
 - Apart from the obvious left and right turns, leading riders should point out pot-holes and other road hazards so that the group is not caught unawares. It is not essential for every rider to signal. It is safer to keep both hands on the bars than risk losing balance by signalling.
 - Riders pointing behind their backs will be moving in the direction indicated to avoid a parked vehicle or other obstruction.
- **Verbal Warnings**
 - Hole - large pot-holes may be accompanied by a shout as well as pointing.
 - Car Back - a vehicle is approaching from behind.
 - Car Up/Down - on a narrow lane a vehicle is approaching from the front.
 - Easy - the group is slowing, perhaps for an approaching junction.
 - Single - the group moves to riding single file, perhaps in order to allow a vehicle to pass or when passing through a village with parked cars.
 - Clear/Stop/Car left/Car right - verbal communication at junctions.



- Puncture/Mechanical – a rider should warn those in close proximity of their need to stop. Sudden braking should be avoided if at all possible.
- **Do not speed off.** In particular don't ride well ahead of the Club-run Leader unless you are willing to take responsibility for your own navigation. The Leader is not obliged to chase after people who miss a turning in this way.
- **Do not** get into slanging matches with motorists. Be mindful of the risk of bringing the Club into disrepute.
- **Do not** indicate to motorists that it is clear for them to overtake. Let them make the decision. To indicate runs the risk of being implicated should an accident subsequently occur.
- **Do not** “half-wheel”. When on the front of the Ride, this is the phrase given to riding half a wheel ahead of the rider alongside in an attempt to increase the speed of the Ride. If the ride isn't going fast enough join a faster ride!
- **Riders at the front of the group should pedal downhill.** Otherwise other riders will be braking.
- **ICE. In Case of Emergency.** Consider attaching a sticker to the inside your helmet with your contact details or a card in your pocket/wallet.

Sunday Ride Summary

It will sometimes be the case that there aren't sufficient leaders to have a ride in each category – check the website calendar.

Start with a group well within your fitness and then move up. All groups tend to be faster in the summer than in the winter. The stated speeds serve as an indication of the intended speed of the ride, and this can vary either way by up to 1.5mph.

Sunday rides leave Addenbrookes car park, adjacent to the bus stop, promptly at 9am. Most rides will achieve three to four hours of riding. Go to the club website calendar for details – some rides start earlier on a Sunday, or on a Saturday if the forecast is poor for Sunday.

NOTE THAT THE CLUB RUN LEADER IS NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR YOUR SAFETY OR YOUR ACTIONS. They are there only to indicate the route. To ensure the safety of other road users and to maintain the reputation of the club, club members are expected to follow British Cycling Best Practice Guidelines.

All members are liable for their own actions during a club ride. Cambridge Cycling Club does not provide any insurance for individual members whilst participating in club rides. We strongly recommend that members obtain their own public liability insurance - for example through British Cycling Ride Membership (half price for club members in the first year) or Cycling UK, the National cycling charity.

If you are involved in an incident where someone is injured or damage is caused, the club expects you to offer your contact details as you would with any road traffic accident. You must do this even if you do not believe you are at fault.

If there is an incident please send a report to The General Secretary.

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