



## **Ride Participant Guide 2024**

Cycling is more fun when you ride with others! There is no better source of motivation, networking, being social, sharing knowledge, and camaraderie than your fellow riders. The Cornwall Cycle Club holds rides all through the week for most levels and abilities.

All rides are open to club members and approved guests only.

Cornwall Cycle Club rides are intended to be safe and enjoyable for all participants. Riding a bike in a larger group requires special skills, care and caution. Since riding in a group tends to attract more attention than a single rider, each of us should, as always, be role models for all other roadway users. The respect we earn from motorists depends on our actions as responsible cyclists.

### **Safety is the Top Priority**

No matter which ride you're on, safety is more important than anything else. Please don't endanger yourself or others by committing unsafe acts. CCC Ride Leaders will ask unsafe riders to immediately leave the ride. Repeat offenders will be asked to leave the club.

CCC rides strictly follow the Ontario Highway Traffic Act. For example, we must all stop at every stop sign; even those on the quietest roads. Every rider must stop and proceed only when it is safe to do so. The Club will be unable to hold rides if participants fail to abide by this and all aspects of the HTA.

A helmet meeting the requirements of Sections 3 and 4 of Ontario Regulation 610, enacted under the Highway Traffic Act, must be worn while cycling during all Club rides and Club-sanctioned events. In addition to a cycling helmet, other protective equipment is strongly encouraged (e.g., gloves, eye wear) at each rider's individual discretion.

### **Pick the Right Group Ride**

Since the purpose of the various group rides is different, finding out the group's pace, distance and goals will help you join a ride that's right for you. Find out whether the ride is social or a "hammer-fest". How far will the group go? What route will the ride follow? Will the ride re-group at certain spots to let stragglers get back on? Are there any rest stops or fluid stops? Getting answers to these questions before the ride starts will help you make the right ride selection. If you are not sure what type of group ride you are getting yourself into, just ask the Ride Leader.

Don't expect or try to change the pace of a ride. If a ride you choose is slower paced than you would like, don't try to "improve" the ride by riding off the front of the group or surging at the front. Choose another ride that is more suited to your abilities.



## **Communicate**

Communication is key to safe group rides. Roads are full of traffic, loose gravel, signs, potholes, parked cars, animals, pedestrians, etc. and visibility is limited for cyclists riding in a pack. It is important to communicate to the other riders in the group by calling out and pointing out hazards with simple hand gestures.

Signal all turns to the group and to motorists. Hold up your hand high in the air if you have a problem like a flat tire so riders behind know to be careful and can help.

Be attentive to the Ride Leader when he/she is describing the route and possible hazards. Even if you are an experienced rider, there may be important announcements about route changes or new hazards, such as road construction. Also, if you are talking during the ride briefing, it may interfere with others hearing the information.

Try to make new riders feel welcome. The two most obvious things that can make a new rider feel unwelcome are being ignored and being dropped. Experienced Club members should talk to new riders and if necessary, assist the Ride Leader in keeping track of newcomers and making sure they get back if they have trouble keeping up.

## **Ride Smart & Be Safe**

All participants in CCC rides and events must understand that the ultimate responsibility for safety rests with the individuals themselves. Follow the Rules of the Road as defined in the Highway Traffic Act - a bike is a vehicle.

Group ride dynamics are interesting and ever-changing. You must be alert at all times. To be safe it is important to ride smoothly by not overreacting and by avoiding hard braking or surging acceleration. Be alert as to what is going on up the road in the front of the pack and anticipate what traffic will do. Inexperienced riders that panic and touch a wheel may crash or cause a crash. You can avoid most problems by practicing these simple rules:

- Listen to and adhere to the directions of the Ride Leaders.
- Make sure your bike is in good working order. A bike shop can help with this – a spring tune-up is a great idea.
- Be relaxed.
- Be predictable in all your actions. Move around slowly, flowing like water.
- Ride mostly two-up and stay tight and to the right, two to three feet apart, front and back. However, single out if unnecessarily obstructing traffic.
- Stay alert at all times.
- Communicate hazards by calling and pointing them out.
- Hold your line in corners.
- Don't overlap wheels. A slight direction change or gust of wind could easily cause you to touch wheels and fall.
- When preparing to stand up on the pedals, get out of the saddle slowly over two pedal strokes to avoid shooting your rear wheel into the rider behind you.
- Be aware of the rider(s) around you.



- Don't brake hard unless absolutely necessary.
- Pass and change lines slowly and carefully and look where you're going, like you would in your car.
- On trails, respect the environment and be courteous to other trail users. Remember that all our area parks are multi-use.
- Install front and rear lights if the ride may be within a half hour of dawn or dusk.
- Remove aerobars for all group rides.
- Look out for each other's wellbeing.
- Review and adhere to the aspects of the CCC Risk Management Plan found on the web site.

### **Be Prepared**

Always bring a spare tube, a CO<sub>2</sub> cartridge or a pump, and the tools to change a flat. It's also a good idea to bring some money on the longer rides because often group rides stop to fuel up. Bring a cell phone. Bring along identification and emergency information. Keep in mind that not all group rides stop when someone flats, so be prepared to ride alone if you flat. Have the right clothing for the weather.

### **Weather-Related Cancellations**

Rides may be cancelled due to extreme weather. Active thunderstorm warnings will result in cancelled rides. Extreme heat alerts may result in cancellations or modifications. The air quality index may also impact a ride. Please check with the Ride Leaders and the CCC CycleClubApp.

### **Guidelines for Competitive Rides**

The CCC holds some rides that are competitive in nature. These rides require a higher level of group riding skills, in addition to what's listed above. The CCC requires that riders participating in competitive rides have a sufficient level of ability and experience. The following is a general list of some guidelines for competitive rides:

- Maintain a steady straight line and avoid braking or changing direction suddenly, especially if contesting a sprint. Remember that there are riders closely following you from behind. To slow down, gradually move out into the wind and slot back into a position in the bunch.
- Stay to the right when in front to allow room for others to pass safely on your left. Pass other riders on the left-hand side whenever possible.
- Do not cross the yellow line or center of the road at any time.
- Be smooth with your turns at the front of the group. Avoid surges, a group will travel quicker when turns are completed smoothly.
- Avoid leaving gaps when following wheels. Each time you leave a gap you are forcing yourself to ride alone to bridge it. Also, riders behind you will become annoyed and must ride around you.
- When climbing hills, avoid following a wheel too closely. Many riders lose momentum when rising out of the saddle on a hill and a sudden deceleration results. Such a

deceleration can often catch a rider who is following too closely unaware and results in a fall from wheels touching.

- After climbing a hill, it may seem that the summit is a good place to rest. However, consider other cyclists climbing up behind you and, if a rest is necessary, pull completely off the road so that others who do not wish to rest may proceed. Remember that sight lines for cyclists and motorists at the crest of a hill may be compromised.
- Do not panic if you brush shoulders, hands or bars with another rider. Try to stay relaxed in your upper body to absorb any bumps. This is a part of cycling in close bunches and is quite safe provided riders do not panic, brake or change direction.
- If riding at the front, try to maintain a steady pace, not to slow down on rises and not to accelerate too much when descending; this avoids the “concertina” effect to riders near the back.
- Pedal downhill when you are at the front of the bunch. Cyclists dislike having to ride under brakes. Do not simply freewheel downhill if you will cause a deceleration in the group’s descent.
- Ride with honour. Examples:
  - a. Pick a group reflective of your ability.
  - b. Don’t hide from the wind all ride then win the sprint (there are exceptions, like having teammates driving the pace).
  - c. Don’t sit in and never attack, but then chase all those that do (unless you’re working for a teammate); it’s just boring and negative.
  - d. Try an attack; it’s fun. Most won’t succeed... but some do.
- And finally, competitive cycling is a team sport. Working with others is much more fun than working alone. Get some buddies and team up ... and don’t keep it a secret – the more teams there are the better!

Keep safe, have fun, and thanks for riding with the Cornwall Cycle Club!