



## **Group Riding Etiquette and Road Safety**

Below is a list of tips I created some time ago as coaching points when it comes to group riding etiquette and road safety.

When you come to one of my clinics, rides or getaways, this is covered every single time no matter what level you're at.

One of my biggest missions as a Cycling Coach is to do my part to help bridge the gap between cyclists and motorists understanding each other with the goals of mitigating some of the aggression out there.

There is a right way to ride and aesthetics matter and they matter a lot. What it boils down to is that you must act respectful on the road, abide by the traffic laws and ride in a neat and orderly formation at all times. Period.

You are NOT entitled to do whatever you want on the road EVEN when no one is around or you're tired. There is always someone watching when you blow that stop sign or you're all over the road.

There is way more to group riding than this and there is no better way to learn than by taking the plunge, joining a group and doing it.

I could go on and on here however these are some tips and guidelines and they really are for your safety and the safety of others.

### **GROUP RIDING ETIQUETTE**

*Prior to a group ride, it is recommended you:*

- Be able to ride a straight line.
- Be comfortable riding directly behind the wheel you're following.
- Be comfortable doing shoulder checks - both right side and left side.
- Be comfortable eating, drinking and using hand signals on the bike.
- Open all packages of food for easy access while riding.

*During a group ride you must:*

- Be alert and aware of your surroundings at all times!
- Obey all traffic laws including stop signs and lights.
- At no time should riders cross the yellow line (middle of the road).
- Announce when you are going to stand and climb.
- When climbing, slower riders can do a shoulder check and pull over to the right to let faster climbers go by maintaining the group formation and regroup at the top.
- At no time should riders be riding 3 or 4 abreast UNLESS they are in a pace line formation.
- Be pedalling at all times.
- Be predictable. Riders cannot read your mind; you cannot read theirs.
- Look ahead. You are watching the rider in front of you HOWEVER you are also looking beyond to anticipate what is coming.
- Use your hand signals and speak what you see and do (i.e. left, right, straight, stopping, slowing, car up, car back).
- Point out objects and debris, use signals and speak what you see (i.e. road kill, gravel, potholes, random cars on side of road, railroad tracks, runners, walkers, etc.).
- Always have your hands close to your brakes so you can react quickly.
- No sudden braking or swerving.
- No quick accelerations.
- No cross-wheeling (never allow your front wheel to come past the back wheel of a rider you are following).
- Allow for extra space when riding up hills.
- Allow for space beside you and in front of you, from other riders (1 to 1.5 feet if you can safely).
- Allow for space from the edge of the pavement you are riding on (1 foot).

**ROAD SAFETY**

- Be alert and aware of your surroundings at all times!
- Obey all traffic laws including stop signs and lights.
- When you are approaching a stop light or stop sign, please do not ride up alongside the vehicles that have already passed you - pretend you are one.
- Be predictable. Drivers cannot read your mind; you cannot read theirs.
- Use your hand signals (i.e. left, right, straight, stopping and slowing).
- Use eye contact with drivers - even point at them to get their attention.
- Look ahead. You always want to be looking ahead to anticipate what is coming (i.e. traffic, other bikes, runners, walkers, etc.).
- Watch for car doors - scan the driver side of parked vehicles for heads.
- At no time should riders cross the yellow line (middle of the road).
- Ride in a straight line - no swerving.
- When riding in a congested area and there are parked vehicles and traffic - ride in a straight line - do not swerve in and out of the parked vehicles as moving traffic may not see you.

- You are responsible for making yourself visible with lights, reflective clothing and hand signals.
- Ensure you are well equipped with tools and spare parts to be able to perform standard roadside repairs including two tubes, tire levers, pump or two CO2 cartridges.
- Ensure your bicycle is well maintained, mechanically sound and in good working order.
- Wear helmets (mandatory) at all times on the bike - No Helmet - No Riding - No Exceptions.
- Attach front and rear lights to your bicycle especially if you're riding at dawn or dusk.