



# **Droitwich Cycling Club Group Ride Safety Guidance**

## **1.0 General Information**

Droitwich Cycling Club promotes safe cycling.

All club members and prospective members that ride on a DCC club ride are advised to follow this guidance for their safety, and the safety of others.

All riders must comply with the Highway Code, the Road Traffic Act 1988, Highways Act 1835 and other regulations that apply. The applicable laws take precedence over any other guidance or advice. Every club member and prospective club member is expected to comply with the law.

Cycling carries a degree of risk that cannot be eliminated. All riders are fully responsible for their own safety and the safety of others. Riders must understand their own abilities and not exceed them. When riding in a group you must accept that you have the greatest influence on your own safety.

## **2.0 Club Ride Organisation**

Droitwich Cycling Club rides are unsupported rides organised and undertaken by likeminded individuals on open public roads. They are not formal or organised Droitwich Cycling Club events.

Club rides can be arranged by any individual at any start time and location to suit the prospective group. Full details about regular rides can be found on the Droitwich Cycling Club Facebook Page.

The published route can be amended on the day taking into account wind direction, weather conditions and the requirements of the group if necessary.

When groups decide to join up (e.g. B and A ) faster riders on the front should move further back into the group and adopt the groups natural speed so that all riders can enjoy the ride at an acceptable pace.

## **3.0 Riding Conditions**

In extreme weather the individual riders must decide whether or not to ride, this decision may take place at very short notice. Individual riders must consider whether it is safe to ride at all in icy conditions. If individual riders make the decision to ride on icy public roads, it is advisable to follow roads treated by the highways authority with salt.

Cycles must be in a road-worthy condition and comply with legal requirements, particularly relating to front and rear lights.



The use of all tri-bar or clip-on's is strictly banned from all club group rides.

It is your own responsibility to be able to navigate back home if you get lost or abandon the ride. Other riders may assist, but do not rely on this.

Although not legally required, it is very strongly recommended that you are a member of British Cycling or have equivalent third party liability insurance.

By joining Droitwich Cycling Club group rides you must determine your own current physical condition, ability and health is adequate for the ride and group you are joining. These are unsupported rides, with no specific medical cover provided on the open public road. In the case of injury, accident or illness assistance is to be summoned by dialling 999.

You are strongly advised to warm up sufficiently or ride at a warm up pace in the first few miles. Ensure you have the correct position on your bike and suitable clothing. It is extremely important that you stay properly hydrated and carry sufficient water and nutrition for the duration and effort of the ride. Drink regularly during the ride, especially if you start to feel thirsty. Plan and make food & drink stops as required.

In the event of an accident. Stop, and ensure no other vehicle can become involved. Warn other road users of obstructions in the road and that they must slow down or stop. Do not move an injured person unless they are in imminent danger or it is absolutely certain that injuries will not be made worse. Do not offer any drinks or medication. If first aider present let that person take charge of the injured party. Keep talking and reassuring the injured person, if necessary dial 999. Send a free cyclist or member of the public to confirm the location if the incident.

All accidents, illness, injuries and incidents that occur on Droitwich Cycling Club runs must be reported to the Club Secretary as soon as possible.

#### **4.0 Etiquette and Safe Riding on Group Rides**

Obviously, the Highway Code provides much useful information about cycling on the road. But when riding as a member of a group there are other things to be aware of. Some are safety-related and some encourage good relationships with other road-users.

- Each rider should have adequate tools and equipment to fix common mechanical problems. You should not rely on others to have tools.
- Toolkit should comprise the minimum of: A pump or means of inflating tyres. At least one inner tube. Minimum of two tyre levers (three is ideal in case of breakage). Allen keys appropriate for your bike
- Carry a mobile phone or money to enable you to get home in case of mechanical failure or emergency. Add ICE number (In Case of Emergency) within the phone so others can access if necessary.
- Riders should wear or carry clothing that makes them easily visible to other road users and be prepared for changes in the weather
- Riders should wear an EN standard cycle helmet for all club events, rides and activities
- Bring food and drink appropriate for the planned ride.



- Fit mudguards when the weather is wet or the road conditions likely to be muddy. They will protect you, other riders, and café seats from getting too wet and dirty. You will be asked to ride at the back of the group if you are not using mudguards.
- Bring lights when the weather conditions or time of day require it. Avoid using a rear light on flashing mode unless you are at the rear of the group.
- Support and respect the ride leader. Please volunteer if you would like to act as a ride leader on other occasions.
- Inform the ride leader if you wish to stop or to leave the ride.
- Ride no more than two abreast unless overtaking. When riding two abreast stay level with the person next to you and do not constantly increase the pace when a rider draws level with you ("half wheeling")
- Ride smoothly, consistently and predictably.
- Do not brake sharply without warning unless necessary and avoid sudden unexpected swerves - one rider's actions impact everyone in the group.
- Use steady, predictable braking when reducing speed and leave sufficient stopping distance.
- Ride defensively, assuming that a driver may not have seen you and may not give way to you or the group. Consider riding in single file to assist slow moving following vehicles to pass, especially on narrow roads.
- Hold a steady line when cornering or at junction, do not cut towards the apex of a bend across the path of other riders in the group. "Hold your line".
- Do not let your front wheel overlap the rear wheel of the rider in front. Learn to stay at a comfortable but safe distance away from their rear wheel, look up and relax. If you are nervous then ride to one side of the person in front, but do not overlap wheels. Changes of speed should be as gradual as possible.
- Before standing up on your pedals check the proximity of other riders behind you because you will lose speed with this action, and lose even more speed if you hesitate e.g. looking behind whilst standing up. This can cause real problems for following riders who will have to lose speed – and then have to catch up!
- Do not actively encourage vehicles to pass. Drivers must make their own decisions, and we should be careful not to do anything that could place us in any blame scenario.
- After crossing major roads, and before continuing the ride, the group should double-check that all riders are present, and that nobody has been unable to make the crossing.
- Learn the standard hand signals and calls used (see below). Pass the information through the group.
- If you are comfortable with the pace, take your turn on the front of the group. Stay alert to riders behind you and ease off if gaps start to appear.
- When the group size is large, break into two or more groups when cars behind are waiting to overtake. Don't hold up vehicles for a prolonged period of time; instead pull over to allow them to pass safely.
- If you feel the need to clear your nose, wait until you are at the back of the group or well clear of other riders.
- Greet other cyclists you meet on the road.
- Thank motorists who wait for the group. Avoid responding to motorists who display agitation or aggressive behaviour.
- It's everybody's responsibility to make sure we don't leave anyone behind; let the leader know if a rider is 'off the back', i.e. is 10 or 20 yards behind the main group



## **5.0 Hand signals**

Apart from the normal Highway Code signals, cyclists have additional signals for fellow riders and all riders are required to learn the below hand signals.

All riders in a group should communicate with others in the group. When possible, warnings should be given from the front of the group and passed down in relation to any hazards such as parked vehicles, potholes or other obstructions.

- Hand straight up in air. Group is stopping for a junction, puncture or because there is an obstruction in the road.



- Pointing down and left (and sometimes shaking the hand) means a pothole or hazard on the road surface on the left. Similarly right.



- Left arm bent behind the back and pointing right indicates a hazard such as a parked car or pedestrians on the road on the left and the need to move out to the right.





- A horizontal straight arm pointing right (or left) indicates a cyclist is turning right (or left). Make sure the arm is horizontal and can't be mistaken for pointing out a pothole. Keep the hand flat and vertical for best visibility.



- A straight right arm moving up and down indicates that the cyclist in front is slowing down.



## 6.0 Calls

Learn the call and use them

- **Car back** Car approaching from behind
- **Car front** Car approaching from the front
- **Hole** Pothole (often accompanied by the hand signal)
- **Gravel** Loose stones in the road or a bend
- **Clear** Tells riders behind that it is safe to pull out at a junction (but always look yourself)
- **Easy** Reduce the pace to allow other riders to catch up
- **Middle** Something to be avoided by passing left or right of it.
- **Underneath** Unavoidable holes, trenches, dead animal or animal dung.
- **On the left** Parked cars, walkers, slow cyclist etc., the need to move out and pass.
- **Stopping** Stopping for a junction, a puncture, put jackets on, etc.
- **Slowing** Slowing before junction or hazard but may proceed without stopping.
- **Going left** Turning left, similarly 'Going right' and 'Straight on'.
- **Glass** Broken glass in the road
- **Leave a gap** Split a large group into two to allow cars to overtake
- **Puncture** A rider has punctured and will be stopping. Group must find a safe place to stop.
- **Car/Car left/Car right** indicates the approach of cars at a junction and it is not safe to pull out.
- **Easy or steady** Slow down the pace a bit to allow others to keep up or catch up.



- **Horses**

We always slow down and warn horses and riders of our approach, then pass wide and slow and listen to any instructions from the horse rider. When approaching a ridden horse, slow down and be prepared to stop. The lead rider should warn the horse and rider that cyclists are present behind with a shout of "cyclists" from a significant distance and then repeat as you draw closer. Pass by wide and slowly, advising the horse rider approximately how many cyclists are following. Heed any advice given by the horse rider. Horses can be spooked by bikes (especially ones that arrive silently from behind) so it is essential that the horse hears the human voice before it sees the bikes.

- **Single**

Change from two abreast to single file. This is done by the person on the right dropping into a gap behind the person on the left. The front riders may need to accelerate and the rear riders slow down to stretch the group and create gaps between riders to allow the right hand riders to drop in.

- **Double**

Move back into a two abreast formation, this is the default riding formation used 80% of the time. When there is a large group it can be safer to remain two abreast to prevent vehicles overtaking.

- **Roll through**

When riding 2 abreast. Instruction for the front right rider to move ahead into front left position and all the right hand line of riders all to move up one position. The rearmost left rider moves into rearmost right position. This is repeated about every 2 or 3 miles so everybody takes a turn on the front and also gets to talk to everybody else.

- In the case of loose animals on the carriageway, the front riders should shout a warning, reduce speed and point in the direction of the animals. The warning should be passed back by the following riders.

## **7.0 Further information can be found via below links**

[The Highway Code](#)

[The Highway Code: Rules for cyclists](#)

[Riding in a group – Top 10 Tips \(British Cycling\)](#)

[Essential kit to carry on the bike \(British Cycling\)](#)

[How to cycle in a group \(Cycling UK\)](#)

[Cycling Side by Side \(Chris Boardman / Cycling Weekly\)](#)