

GROUP RIDING RULES AND ETIQUETTE

Although cycling has its benefits and is relaxing and fun, it's always more pleasurable to ride with someone than to ride alone. However, riding with someone or riding in a group requires adherence to certain rules.

The EBTC Bylaws set in place expectations that all riders will adhere to. It also outlines the actions that the EBTC will undertake, including revoking memberships, should a rider or riders refuse to change their pattern of behavior. The Bylaws are available on our website. So, here are Group Riding Rules and Etiquette. Learn these and you can totally avoid the ire of your fellow members.

1. **Always ask a rider or riders if it is okay to join or form a group.** Not everyone is comfortable riding in the close quarters of a peloton, pace-line, or echelon. Groups who ride together regularly have developed a trust that has to be earned, to join. Don't make a nuisance of yourself by forcibly trying to form a group or insert yourself into one.
2. **Don't be a "wheel suck."** Take your pull at the front. You will become very unpopular if you just sit on someone else's wheel.
3. **Be predictable.** Groups should maintain integrity when approaching intersections. That means destination positioning in the lane, stopping together, and starting together as traffic allows. Every member in the group has the responsibility of predictability
4. **Don't Overlap Wheels.** This habit will get you in real trouble. Some people do it from lack of concentration, others may just not know any better, but sooner or later they'll crash. There is no recovery from a front wheel deflection. All it takes is for the person in front to move sideways a few inches...if someone is overlapping his/her wheel, that someone will go down along with practically everyone who is behind him/her. Many times, the person in front can recover, but not the people behind.
5. **Hold a steady speed and line.** When everyone is working for the group, maintain a steady speed as you go to the front. Ever notice how easy it is to ride behind some folks? If you take note of their riding style, you'll probably notice they don't yo-yo around in the pack. They are rock steady. When they take the lead, they don't accelerate. If they are strong enough to accelerate the group, they do it after the previous pull has rejoined the rear of the group and then only gradually to not string out the pack. When they are leading, they ride a straight line, and their speed will be constant with the conditions. When they are following, they don't make sudden moves, or they know how to control their spacing by using their body position instead of using the brakes. Sudden braking will set off general alarms from everyone in the rear and make you very unpopular. If you do use the brakes, feather the front brake only and keep pedaling against the resistance. This allows you to moderate your speed very gradually without disturbing trailing riders
6. **Announce Hazards.** When you are in the lead, you are responsible for the safety of everyone behind you. You need to be very vocal when approaching intersections, slowing, stopping, or turning and all actions should be smooth and deliberate. Sudden, unannounced actions will throw terror into any peloton. Riders in the pack should relay these warnings to the rear. When you are following, announce oncoming traffic from the rear with a CAR BACK in this case - others should relay this info toward the front.

7. **Signal.** Signaling lets everyone (vehicles and riders) know your intentions. This makes you predictable.
8. **Don't Fixate.** If you are staring at something (i.e., the wheel in front of you), eventually you'll hit it! Learn to be comfortable looking around or through the riders ahead of you. This will allow you to see things that are developing in front of the group. With a little practice you will develop your peripheral vision and sense how far you are off the wheel in front of you.
9. **No Aero Bars.** They are much too unstable to be used in a group ride. Plus, you don't need to be on aero bars if you are in a pack as you will receive more aerodynamic effect from the other riders anyway.
10. **Don't Leave Stragglers.** If you get separated at intersections, as a matter of courtesy, the lead group should soft pedal until the rest have rejoined. Also, as a courtesy to those who may not be able to stay with the group, the pack should wait at certain points along the route to regroup. If an individual or individuals are having trouble with the pace allow them to sit-in on the back until they have recovered (see point 9)
11. **Know Your Limitations.** If you're not strong enough or too tired to take a turn at the front, stay near the back and let the stronger cyclists pull in front of you instead of making them go to the back of the line. Another point here, don't pull at the front faster and longer than you have energy to get back in at the rear (Remember, your "pull" isn't over until you do).
12. **Change Positions Correctly.** A common beginner faux pas is to stop pedaling just before pulling off the front. This creates an accordion effect toward the rear. Keep a steady pressure on the pedals until you have cleared the front. After pulling off, soft pedal and let the group pull through. As the last couple riders are passing through, begin to apply more pressure to smoothly take your position at the rear. If you don't time it correctly, you'll create a gap and must sprint to get back on.
13. **Climbing.** Don't drop-kick the rider(s) behind you. If you need to stand, shift up a gear to compensate for the slower cadence and stand up smoothly keeping a steady pressure on the pedals. This will keep you from moving backward relative to the rider behind you. Apply the opposite technique when changing to a sitting position. Downshift and keep a steady pressure on the pedals to avoid abrupt changes in speed.
14. **Descending.** The leader must overcome a much greater wind resistance as the speed increases. If you are leading, keep pedaling. If you don't, everyone behind you will eat your lunch. Riders to the rear will accelerate faster downhill as drafting becomes more effective at the higher speeds.
15. **Relax.** This one is important. It will allow you to be smooth and responsive. You can bet that if you see someone who is riding a straight line and is very steady, he/she is relaxed on the bike. It not only saves energy, but it makes bike handling much more effective. Anytime you are riding in the proximity of other riders there's always the chance that you may come into contact. If you have tense arms and get bumped from the side, the shock will go directly to the front wheel and you will swerve, possibly lose control, and possibly cause a massive pile up.