

## CHAINGANG – SAFE GROUP RIDING PROTOCOLS

Group riding can be great fun and rides short or long. However, it can be dangerous if key protocols are not observed. This guidance is provided for your own and the group's safety, along with safety of other road users. Please observe these and respond to instructions from your ride leader.

**NB this guidance adopts generally accepted protocols for group riding, along with those suitable for a recreational club such as Barnt Green Chain Gang and have been endorsed by Cycling UK.**

**You are responsible for your own safety**, and even though you may hear calls such as 'road clear' at junctions, it must be your own judgement as to whether you proceed or not.

**Ride a well-maintained, roadworthy bike**, and have equipment for roadside repairs (innertube, tire levers, bike tool, and pump). Even if you can't make your own repairs, other cyclists may assist.

**Ensure you can be seen**, wear high visibility clothing and have suitable gear for forecasted weather. Always wear a helmet and have front /rear lights, as these help to be seen in poor / dusk conditions.

**Follow the highway code**. Acknowledge cars that are patient and be courteous to other road users. See sections 59 to 82 of the highway code for cycling specific elements.

**Concentration/communication** is key. You can come off in an instant if not concentrating and possibly take others down with you. Be aware of what is happening around you and communicate regularly with your fellow riders (both up and down the group).

**Do not undertake** (overtaking on the inside) as you may force a rider towards the centre of the road. Always overtake on the outside of other riders and let them know you are moving out or past.

**Never ride no hands** – i.e., for stretching or taking off a garment etc this is dangerous for you and others in the group. It is not cool – especially if you come off.

**Never ride more than two abreast**. Your Ride Leader will advise if riding one or two abreast, depending on the road conditions. This may mean moving from double to single file and vice-versa, if so don't panic, communicate with fellow riders re moving into or out of single file.

**Do not ride wide or in the middle of the road**. You will be risking your own and the group's safety, especially on winding lanes. You may also be at the mercy of oncoming cars. Your default cycling should be about two to three feet from the curb.

**Do not overtake the ride leader**, as they are managing the pace of the ride so as all can complete the ride safely, get a good workout and return together. Let the RL know if leaving the ride early.

**Club rides are not races**, so ride for the benefit of the person behind you by holding a good line that they can follow. Let riders in front, know if the person behind is dropping back.

**Look out for others in the group**. Whatever the level of fitness, all can experience a 'bad day in the saddle'. So, look out for your fellow cyclists. It may be you one day that needs help getting home.

**Carry drink and energy supplements on rides**, to ensure you can hydrate and fuel regularly. If you leave it till you are thirsty or hungry, you will probably have left it too late.

**Use your gears to manage your effort** and help maintain a steady speed, especially over undulating terrain. This helps avoid concertinaing of group. If you use too harder gears, you will waste energy.

**Head or Earphones must not be used** as can be a distraction, hamper communication and be dangerous for you and the group – as you can often hear of dangers before seeing them.

**Mobile phones should not be used when cycling** (calls, texts or taking pictures). Rule 68 of the Highway Code says you must not ride in a dangerous, careless, or inconsiderate manner – failure to do so carries maximum £1000 fine. Selfie pictures on SM provide evidence of your actions.

**HAND SIGNALS AND CALLS** (repeat the calls made by riders in front of you)

**Indicate when stopping or slowing.** For slowing, shout slowing and or wave your arm in an up and down motion. For stopping, shout stopping or hold up your arm/hand. Don't suddenly slow or stop.

**Point out or call any hazards** such as potholes, stones, branches etc. Don't just swerve to avoid a hazard and leave the person behind you riding into it.

**Moving out for parked cars** indicate by waving your arm behind you so that the person behind you knows they need to move out, or move in, for oncoming vehicles. (A common accident when tired)

**Turning left or right** - indicate with your arm and call which direction you are turning. Give plenty of notice and at junctions give the rider in front of you plenty of space for clipping in or out of pedals.

**Cars coming up behind or down towards the group** - Riders may shout 'car up' when a vehicle is coming up behind, or 'car down' when a vehicle is coming down the road towards you.

**ELECTRIC BIKES** (All of the above applies for electric bikes – but with special considerations below)

Know the **range** of your bike for the distance and terrain of ride. Be very aware of **stopping or slowing distances**, as electric bikes can be heavier and have greater impact if colliding with another cyclist. Don't unnecessarily use your bike's **electric assistance to pass members** of your group.

**INDIVIDUAL THIRD-PARTY CYCLING INSURANCE COVER**

is required when you become a member. You are unlikely to be supported by the club if pursued by a third party if you don't have this cover. We have Club affiliation with Cycling UK and are happy to refer newcomers to them for third party cover. Other appropriate providers include British Cycling and British triathlon.

By signing this document, you have signed to indicate you have read and understood these Safe Group Riding Protocols and will ensure you have appropriate third-party cover.

Name ..... Date .....

Signature .....

Emergency contact name & number .....