

GROUP RIDE ETIQUETTE

1. Use hand and verbal signals when necessary

Nothing is worse than being at the back of a group and barreling full speed into a giant pothole you didn't know about. Use hand signals to point out obstacles on the road; your fellow riders depend on this communication. Verbal signals are also good when you can't take your hands off the bars or there's a sudden change up ahead that needs to be communicated to the group.

2. Don't ride erratically

Frequently deviating from your line suddenly, or without notice, can make everyone riding around you very nervous. While there's no problem changing your line to navigate the road safely, do so predictably by letting your riding companions know, or try and do it pre-emptively so you aren't swerving erratically at the last minute. Squirrely riding won't get you a good reputation on group rides.

3. Obey the rules of the road

This one should be a given. There's absolutely no reason you should be recklessly running stop signs, or flaunting the rules of the road while out for a ride. It puts you and your fellow riders at risk and it's illegal.

4. Don't overlap wheels

Riding too close to the rider in front of you, or you can see your wheel overlapping theirs. This can be very dangerous because it drastically reduces the amount of time you have to brake or react to changes in their riding. An unexpected touch of wheels can result in a crash. If you are riding side by side with someone, ride handlebar to handlebar, and don't push to always be slightly ahead of the rider next to you. It's annoying to ride with someone who is always half-wheeling you.

5. Be mindful when you spit and snot rocket

There are few things grosser than riding through a misty cloud of your riding companion's snot. Instead of just indiscriminately aiming away from your own body, look back or move slightly out of the pace line to ensure you don't hit anyone you are riding with.

6. Arrive on time and prepared

It's important to be punctual for group rides. Come prepared with sufficient food, water, money, identification and a flat kit so you don't have to rely on others during the ride.

7. Don't surge or attack the group ride

A good way to get the wrong reputation on a non-drop ride is to up the pace to the point riders are struggling and dropping off. If you are feeling strong and want to prove it, don't lift the pace to the point it blows the group apart. Instead, sit on the front and take long, steady pulls. Everyone will be grateful and that way the whole group won't have to slow up and wait for riders who have been shelled out the back. As well, your power up the hill should be the same as your power down the hill. The group will naturally be slower going up the hill, and faster going down the hill ... power output remains the same.