

Club Ride Policy

Reviewed May 2023

Salt and Sham Cycle Club wants riders to gain maximum enjoyment from their group rides. All riders ride at their own risk, but experience shows that adherence to this policy will create the safest possible environment in which to ride. The policy incorporates long-standing practices that will be familiar to experienced riders. General advice has also been included that may help new, or inexperienced cyclists. All club members should read this policy and must adhere to it.

Equipment

- All riders must ensure that their bike is in good working order before each ride (check brakes, frame, steering, pedals, cleats, wheels & tyres etc).
- All riders must wear a crash helmet. Eye protection is also recommended.
- All riders must bring the following equipment on each ride as a minimum. A spare tube, tyre levers, pump, puncture repair kit and basic tools.
- A mobile phone is recommended in case you are unable to continue the ride at any point.
- TT bikes or TT bars are not permitted on group rides.
- A road bike is recommended over other types of bike (e.g. mountain bike). Mudguards are recommended in winter.
- Wear appropriate clothing for riding and for the weather conditions.
- Bring appropriate food (energy bars, bananas etc) and drink (energy drink and water) for the ride, especially if the ride is longer and no cafe stop is planned.
- Have an ICE number on your bike, helmet, accessible on your mobile phone (without unlocking) or in an easily accessible in case a serious emergency leaves you incapacitated.
- Familiarise yourself with the route beforehand (download to your phone/bike computer where possible). Check the ride is suitable for your level of fitness. Do not ride if unwell.
- If a café stop is planned you may want to carry a simple lock, also park bikes where they can be seen during the stop.

Safety and Risk Management

All riders take part in the group rides at their own risk. Risks can never be eliminated but can be minimised by adhering to this policy in the spirit as well as the letter. Experienced club members will be happy to offer general advice and should politely point out any issues to the rider(s) concerned. If they believe that a rider's conduct is putting others at risk they have the authority to exclude the offender from the group and will subsequently report the circumstances to the club committee who may wish to take further action.

Consider your own insurance needs. In particular ensure that you have Third Party (Public Liability) insurance that covers you whilst cycling. Although this is not a legal requirement, the current "sue everyone for everything" attitude makes insurance essential. The Club has such a policy to cover claims against the Club and its officers, but it does not cover individual riders. You should consider joining British Cycling as membership includes both Third Party insurance and free legal assistance should you need to claim against someone else.

Communication and Warning Calls

Please use the appropriate calls to communicate within the group:

- "Car back" - a vehicle coming up behind the group.
- "Car up" - a vehicle approaching towards the front of the group.

- “Single out” - Typically a call from riders at the back of the group when a vehicle is unable to pass the 2 abreast column safely. This call must be relayed by everyone to ensure that the move to single file is executed quickly and safely. The standard procedure is for the outside rider to drop back behind the inside rider. The call “single out” alerts everyone to the need to slow up and create spaces.
- “Clear” and “Car” on “Left/Right” - This call, let’s following riders know at junctions, when the group is joining or crossing another road, whether or not the road is still clear. If the group cannot stay together the first ones across ride slowly until the others catch up.
- “Pothole/Holes” - Any pothole that could cause a rider to fall. If possible, indicate where it is so that following riders can steer away from it and not into it. Do this by either pointing or adding to the call “on the left (or right).”
- “On the Left/Right” - A general warning of some kind of hazard - usually parked cars or pedestrians. For hazards on the left, an alternative warning is to put your left hand behind your back, pointing to the right, away from the hazard. Give way to pedestrians - they can feel intimidated by cyclists just as we sometimes feel intimidated by motorists.
- “Stopping” “Slowing” “Right Hand moving in an up and down action” - If you brake without letting those behind know your intention they can easily run into you
- “Ease up” - Message to riders in front that gaps are forming, or the group is splitting and they should soft pedal to allow the gaps to close
- “Puncture” - Let the others know and they will wait while you repair it. (You will probably be given help). Slowly pull over to the roadside.
- “Horse(s)” – If the group is about to pass horses and special care is needed. Pass as widely as possible. Make sure that both the horse and rider are aware of your presence and if you are approaching from behind call out. Keep pedalling slowly as you pass to keep noise from your freewheel and gears to a minimum. Pay attention to any request by the horse rider - they know the temperament of the horse and its likely reaction to a group of brightly clad cyclists.
- “Walker/Runner/Pedestrian” – If the group is about to pass someone in the road (or shared path). Make sure they are aware of the groups presence. Dog or pet walkers may need extra time to control or distract their animal.

General Ride Etiquette

- Ride steadily. Keep a steady line and speed while in a group. Any sudden change is magnified as it reaches riders at the back and can have dramatic consequences.
- Be prepared to do your turn on the front - but do not surge off the front. The group is not obliged to chase after people who miss a turning in this way.
- If you do end up out of position, re-join at the back of the group.
- Never ride more than two-abreast and stay in neat and tidy lines, this will help the aerodynamic efficiency of the group. Change to single file as necessary to help cars overtake or as the road determines.
- Ride directly behind the rider in front
 - If you are not behind the rider in front you lose the aerodynamic benefit, but this also means the group can look three or four abreast to following motorists resulting in complaints/bad press about “cyclists riding like they are on the Tour de France”.
- Ride level with the rider alongside you (shoulder to shoulder), do not “half wheel” (overlap wheels with the rider in front)
 - Half wheeling/overlapping means the rider in front will hit your front wheel/handlebars if they swerve or fall which will result in you losing control and crashing. Riding level with the rider alongside means you will touch shoulders first and are more likely to maintain control of your bike.
- Ride with a group which suits your ability. It is better (and less embarrassing) to start low and build up. If in doubt experienced club members will be happy to advise. It is sometimes nice to try an easier group, especially if you are a bit off colour. It is considered bad manners to hold back a strong group when an easier group is available.

- Keep an eye on the riders immediately behind you - if a gap starts to develop - soft pedal to allow the gap to close. If everyone does this the same the whole group should stay together at the speed of the slowest rider.
- Do not make any sudden movements when riding in a group. When changing position in the group, do so slowly. If overtaking, do this at about 1/2 to 1 mph faster than the other riders.
- When pulling off the front of the group ensure the road is wide enough to allow the whole group through.
- When approaching a hill, change gear in good time. Missing a gear change on the steep bit can bring you to a sudden halt, which is not a good thing for the riders behind you.
- On steeper hills riders may climb/descend at different speeds and it may not be possible to keep the group together. Faster riders should slow down/stop & wait for the group to reform when the road levels out.
- On fast descents the group should single out and increase the space between riders.
- If you see another rider having problems, alert others in the group and ask the group to slow down.
- Finally, let others know if you are unable to keep up, have a problem or have decided to leave the group. Always pass the instructions along. If a rider cannot keep up, those at the front of the group need to know.

Highway Code/Road Safety

- Follow the requirements of the Highway Code. Treat all road users with courtesy.
- Acknowledge courteous behaviour with a wave. Many oncoming motorists will slow down or stop when they meet a large group of cyclists, whilst others allow the whole group to join or cross a major road.
- Do not wave through a vehicle that is waiting to overtake. Let the driver make this decision. This will avoid the risk of being held responsible if the overtaking results in an accident.
- Do not react to incidents with gestures or provoke retaliation. Remember a road rage motorist has a one ton weapon!

Useful Videos

British Cycling - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-GeRonLnj70>

GCN - [Group riding - YouTube](#)

N.B. Groups may not use the “through and off”/clockwise method of rotation and may rotate the other way (passing on the outside and pulling in). If the group is rotating/chain-ganging make sure all members know which direction you are rotating in. Often changes at the front will occur naturally at junctions etc.