

Club Ride Policy

Reviewed January 2020

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

Equipment

- All riders must ensure that their bike is in good working order before each ride
- All riders must wear a crash helmet
- 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
- TT bikes are not permitted on group rides
- The use of TT bars is not permitted on group rides
- A road bike is recommended over other types of bike (e.g. mountain bike)
- 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

Safety and Risk Management

All riders take part in the group rides at their own risk. Those risks can never be totally 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 to help clarify the content of this policy. They will politely point out any deviations to the rider(s) concerned and seek compliance. If they believe that a rider's conduct is putting others at risk they have the authority to exclude the offender from the group run 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

These calls and signals are universal to all experienced cyclists. Please use them at the appropriate times

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

- “Single out” - 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 forward 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 in the inside file.
- “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” - 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” “Easy” “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
- “Puncture” - Let the others know and they will wait while you repair it. (You will probably be given help).
- “Horse(s)” - 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.
- If you have a puncture (or mechanical problem) shout PUNCTURE and slowly pull over to the roadside
- If you see another rider that is having problems (mechanical or other) alert others in the group to this 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, the leader needs to know

General Ride Etiquette

- Ride steadily. Keep a steady line and constant speed while in a group. Any sudden change is magnified as it reaches riders at the back and so can have dramatic consequences
- Do not overtake the rider(s) at the head of the group. If you have to, then do not push your way back into your original position but re-join at the back of the group as soon as possible
- 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 immediately behind the rider in front. Do not overlap either forwards or sideways
- Overlapping forwards gives you no chance to avoid the rider in front if he swerves or falls, and overlapping sideways results in the group presenting a three abreast profile
- When approaching a hill, anticipate the gradient and 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
- Ride safely at all times. Follow the requirements of the Highway Code as they apply to cyclists and guidance from your leaders
- Treat members of the group and other road users with courtesy. Acknowledge courteous behaviour by other road users 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 following 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 any form of accident.
- Do not react to bad driving incidents with gestures or provoke retaliation. Remember a road rage motorist has a one ton weapon!
- Ride with the group which best suits your ability. It is usually better (and less embarrassing) to start low and build up. If in doubt senior 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
- The slower rider determines the speed of the front pair of the group. Faster riders should avoid 'half wheeling' the slower rider
- The close proximity of other riders in the group makes sudden change on speed or direction undesirable. Do not make any sudden movements when riding in a group
- When changing position in the group, do so relatively slowly. If overtaking, do this at about 1/2 to 1 mph faster than the other riders. This allows them to take your wheel and benefit from the aerodynamic drag that you produce
- When pulling off the front of the group ensure the road is wide enough to allow the whole group through
- Do not ride with your front wheel overlapping the rear of the person in front. If the person in-front makes a sudden move, your front wheel could be knocked from under you
- Avoid overtaking and riding ahead of the group unless you are willing to take responsibility for your own navigation. Club members or leaders are not obliged to chase after people who miss a turning in this way
- Riders will climb hills at different speeds. Faster riders may wish to slow down & wait for the group to reform at the top of a climb