

El Paso Bicycle Club

Guidelines for Ride Leaders

As a ride leader you have a responsibility to make sure the ride runs smoothly and all riders return safely. To do so you should follow a few simple guidelines, list below.

Before the ride

Sign in form. You need to print out and bring the ride sign in form and a pen to the ride. Have all riders complete the form prior to departure. Take the form with you as you may need the emergency contact information or riders cell phone number while on the ride. The ride sign in form can be found on the club website at: <http://www.elpasobicycleclub.com/liabilityrelease.pdf>.

Greet new riders. It is very common for new riders to show up to a club ride. If you see someone you do not recognize greet them and welcome them to the ride. You should spend a minute getting to know them and learn about their riding experience. It's helpful to go around the group and say who they are, both for the benefit of the new rider and some of others as well. It is also a good idea to have a few membership applications with you to give to new riders. These can be found on the club website at <http://www.elpasobicycleclub.com/membership/memberapp.html>. Occasionally a rider will show up unprepared for the type of ride you are leading. If this happens see Difficult Situations below.

Helmets. All riders must have an ANSI/Snell certified helmet – no exceptions! Most riders know this and it's not a problem. But occasionally a new rider will show up without a helmet or someone will forget theirs. Many ride leaders bring an extra helmet just in case someone does show up without one. If you have an extra helmet please bring it. Bottom line, if a rider does not have a helmet they cannot participate in the ride.

Aerobars. If someone shows up with aerobars inform them it is okay to have them on their bike but it is NOT okay to use them during the ride.

Pre-Ride Talk. Before you leave gather the group and give a brief description of the route, pace, destination and regrouping points. This is also a good time to introduce new riders to the group.

Arrive early. You should be at the starting location at least 20 minutes in advance of the designated ride time to do the things listed above.

Start the ride on time. The listed ride time is the time the ride should leave the parking lot. Everyone should be on their bike and ready to ride at this time. It is okay to leave someone that is not ready to leave on time.

During the Ride

Maintain the pace. It is very common to have a group of riders with varying degrees of skill and ability. Stronger riders tend to want to go faster than the stated pace. Often you will have a rider or group of riders get in the lead and take pace above that listed for the ride. You need to tell them to bring it back in the ride range. It may be necessary to break the ride up and let the stronger riders go ahead. You need to stay with the group going the ride pace, the fast guys are on their own. They will likely meet you at the next designated regrouping point. The opposite can be true as well. Sometimes you will have a rider or group of riders that cannot maintain the ride pace. If this happens see Difficult Situations below.

Regroup at designated stops. You should have predetermined stops along the route to regroup riders and make sure you haven't lost anyone along the way. You should wait at each stop until everyone has arrived and has had a chance to rest. Some faster riders may want to start out before everyone has arrived. This is fine but you need to wait for all riders.

Flat Tires/Minor Mechanical Problems. As the ride leader you should be prepared to help out with a flat tire or minor mechanical problem. All riders should come equipped to replace or repair a flat but sometimes they don't so it is a good idea to have an extra inner tube and/or patch kit with you. You should either stay with the rider or leave another qualified rider with them. Wait for them at the next regrouping station.

Get riders off the road when stopped. Whenever the group stops whether to regroup, for an emergency or for a repair, get all the riders a safe distance off the road. This is as much of a safety issue for the riders as it is common courtesy to drivers on the road.

Difficult Situations

Every situation encountered on a ride will be unique. Therefore it is impossible to anticipate and prepare for everything that could possibly go wrong on a ride. If the issue is an emergency keep calm and get professional help immediately. In all cases never leave a rider stranded or wandering around lost on their own. Do not leave a rider behind unless there is a recovery plan in place and the rider is completely comfortable on their own. Below are general guidelines on how to handle some of the more common problems out on the road. Again, no two situations are ever exactly the same, just use common sense when dealing with it and know you may have to improvise.

Unprepared Rider. Occasionally a new rider will show up for a moderate or fast pace ride that has a different expectation of what the ride will be. You can usually identify these riders by the type of equipment they have (hybrid bike, mountain bike, etc) or talking with them ahead of the ride. You should politely inform them of the nature of the ride and the pace they will be expected to maintain. This is also a great opportunity to recruit new riders to the BIG program. We want everyone to ride and we don't want to discourage anyone from riding in the future because they were dropped or struggled to maintain the pace.

Mechanical Failure. Occasionally, but fortunately not very often, a rider will have a mechanical failure severe enough they cannot continue to ride with the group. When this occurs the rider may have an idea of how they want to handle it, which is usually to call friends or family to come get them. If they do not know what to do you have a couple of options.

- 1) Call a club member or someone else you know to pick them up and take them back to their car.
- 2) Have a rider go back to get a car to retrieve them. If the ride is already on the return leg and you are close to the finish this may be the best solution.

Once you have a recovery vehicle on the way it is okay to leave the rider on their own, if they are comfortable doing so. Some people will not feel secure standing by the side of the road by themselves. If that is the case do not leave them alone. Either you stay with them and have someone else take over the ride or ask for a volunteer to remain with them. In any event make sure to exchange phone numbers with the person with the recovery vehicle and the stranded rider.

Rider Can't Maintain Pace. When it is clear that a rider cannot maintain the advertised pace let him/her know that we have an obligation to the other riders to go at the agreed pace. If the rider is competent and in good shape physically, and is content with turning around at whatever point, make sure he/she knows the way back. Let them know you will call them to make sure they get back OK. Also let them know that since this is a group ride, we feel obliged to make sure they are OK.

Another option, depending on the ride, is to arrange for a regrouping point. For example, if you're riding to Mesilla and back, let them know you can meet up with them in La Mesa. If they are not there when you get back there, call to make sure everything is OK.

If another member of the group is agreeable, he or she may volunteer to ride back with that rider. If you feel the rider needs a fellow rider and no one else wants to turn around, deputize a replacement leader and ride with the slow rider.

Lost Rider. Whenever a rider has separated from the group without letting you know they are going off on their own, call them to make sure they're OK. If they don't answer or don't have cell phone, and you have any doubts about their situation, have someone go back and look for them and figure out how and when to regroup. Obviously the rider(s) going back need to have a cell phone.

Medical Emergency. This could be the result of the individual's health or collision. Assess the severity of the injury. Ask if someone in the group has medical training so they can assist. Most injuries are road rash, heat prostration or bonking. In any event remain calm and get off the road. In warm weather find shade. Have the rider drink fluids or eat if appropriate. If the injury is severe call 911 and stay with them until the EMS team arrives.