



Club rides are intended to be training rides to help you toward your goals. They are not races. Your goals are just as important as those of other riders. To maximize any ride, all riders need to be supportive and safe.

The key to a safe and enjoyable group ride is to choose wisely. If new to riding with groups, we suggest starting with the Friendly Friday ride. Please also consider attending one of the club's "Drills for Skills" classes. Even if you have extensive group riding experience but are new to the LaGrange rides, arrive early, introduce yourself as a new rider, and please ride off the back until familiar with the entire route and the dynamic character of the ride.

Best Practices and Ride Etiquette – Club Rides:

- Stay alert at all times. Never assume that it's always safe. Keep reading the dynamics of the group and road, they can change very quickly.
- Be communicative about potential road hazards. Communicate clearly to cyclists behind when stopping, slowing or turning.
- Hold your line. This means no unnecessary swerving. If you need to move left or right, do so gradually after checking for other riders and pointing out your move to make fellow riders aware of your intentions. If you notice that someone is swerving, they may be tired or inexperienced. Politely remind the rider that their riding may cause an accident and ask them to go to the rear of the group to recover
- Don't overlap wheels. Overlapping is putting your front wheel next to the rear wheel of the rider in front of you. This is an accident waiting to happen. An evasive move by the rider in front will immediately take you down. Always remain behind the bike(s) in front unless passing.
- Don't look back! Looking back causes even skilled riders to swerve, which can cause a crash. If you must look back, ask the person next to you if you can put your hand on their shoulder. That will keep you riding straight so that when you look back, you won't swerve. Also position your hands closer to the stem when looking back. This will reduce the tendency to swerve.
- Relax! Use a relaxed grip with your thumbs under the bar for full control when riding over minor road hazards. Keep your shoulders down (not up against your neck) and bring your elbows down and in so that they're slightly bent. These steps will help you stay relaxed, which allows quicker reaction time and prevents tension in the neck and shoulders that can lead to fatigue and sloppy riding.
- Always cover your the brake levers. In an emergency, you won't have enough time to move your hands to the brakes and stop in time.

- Focus on the rider(s) ahead. Don't make the common mistake of focusing on the back wheel in front of you. Look up at the shoulders of the riders ahead and occasionally look at the road ahead and the riders up front so you can see what's going on and be prepared for sudden changes.
- Don't brake unless absolutely necessary. If you must brake, do so lightly to scrub off a little speed. You can also slow down by sitting upright and catching more wind in your chest.
- Warn of hazards. Keep on the lookout for things that could cause problems (rocks, potholes, damp pedestrian crossing lines, etc...) and shout out a warning or point out the hazard.
- Pass carefully. Sometimes you'll see the riders ahead starting to accelerate and you'll want to jump up to them. Be careful! Make sure you're not going to get cut off or cut someone else off. Usually, a moment's hesitation is all it takes to make the move safely.
- If you get tired, move to the rear. Fatigue leads to poor reaction time which can cause an accident. It's safer to go to the back of the group than to remain in the middle of the action. And do this slowly. Tell those around you that you're dropping back so it's a safe move.
- Do your business at the rear of the group. If you need to take your vest or arm warmers off, wipe your sunglasses off, eat a gel, etc., please do this at the back of the group. Any activity that involves removing your hands from the bars and taking away your attention from the group should be done at the back of the group. The last thing you want to do is cause a group crash due to poor decision making.
- If you have a mishap (flat, mechanical, etc.), remain calm. Raise your hand to indicate to those around you that you're experiencing a problem and need to pull over. Slowly slide out of the pace line and move to the side of the road.
- If you are leading a group ride, it is imperative to begin pedaling slowly when starting up from a stop sign or traffic signal. Riders behind you need a few seconds to clip in. Keeping the pack together helps to maintain safety
- While in a rotating paceline, if you find that you are unable to take a pull, remain in the left line of riders and if possible, indicate to riders around you that you need some recovery time.
- Maintain a riding style to that of the group. Do not go to the front of the pack and purposely slow the pace. If the pace is too fast for you, then remain at the back.
- Always carry Emergency ID (Road ID, Dogtags) with you at all times that has several contact names and telephone #'s in case of an accident.

Cyclist/Motorist Coexistence:

The coexistence between cyclists and the motoring public is a delicate balancing act. We as cyclists can make a big difference when it comes to reducing conflict with drivers by remembering the following items:

- Our group rides are never more than two wide – ALWAYS. Nothing will aggravate drivers more than cyclists riding well out into the traffic lane.
- For the Tuesday Marina ride, we maintain a counterclockwise rotating paceline. If you're not familiar with what this is, please remain at the back of the group and learn how it works. We do this to maintain as high a pace as possible as a group and to retain a margin of safety.
- A tight pack is a safer pack especially when entering intersections. Do everything you can to remain close to the rider in front of you. When we ride as a group, we maintain a greater presence out on the road.
- Communicating with drivers is critical. I'm sure most of you when driving have experienced the weaving solo cyclist with the iPod and earbuds and absolutely no clue that you're behind them. When there is a vehicle attempting to pass the group, help the driver out. Drivers are typically very apprehensive about passing cyclists. By waving the driver to pass, we have let the driver know that we are aware of their presence and that it's safe to pass.
- When coming to a stoplight, always remain behind any car in the lane instead of rolling up along the gutter. The rule of thumb is; if the entire pack can't follow you, then it's best to remain behind traffic.
- When approaching an intersection, look for any clues that the light may soon be changing to red. More and more intersections now have timers that count down to zero to give you an idea of how much time you have to safely cross the intersection. If you're approaching an intersection and you see the timer closing in on zero, don't hesitate to call out "slowing" even if the light is still green. This will allow the pack to slow safely.

California bicycle laws

Please refer to this link maintained by the Los Angeles County Bicycle Coalition:

<http://www.la-bike.org/resources/california-bicycle-laws>