

Whistler Cycling Club Ride Leaders' Manual

This manual is a reference for Ride Leaders with respect to overseeing and managing Whistler Cycling Club rides. Ride leaders should feel comfortable quoting or referring to these 'Rules Of The Ride' when requesting actions or certain behaviours from participants at club rides. The following points are to ensure everyone is reading from the same script; please internalize them, as they should help make leading rides a little easier.

Ride Leaders

A ride leader sets the tone for the ride and helps convey the club's values, in particular safety and inclusivity. Ride leaders have been "certified" by the club's ride committee as capable of leading a group of cyclists and upholding the club's values.

Club rides aim for one certified ride leader for each ability level of riders participating in the ride. Should there be fewer ride leaders attending than ability levels attending, all riders are combined into one group, with the ride leader in control of the ride pacing and managing of splits and regrouping should that occur.

In the absence of a certified ride leader present at the start of a ride, the ride is declared cancelled and the club's insurance coverage will not be in effect (as if the ride had never been scheduled).

IMPORTANT: Please plan ahead for rides that you can lead or assist, using the [Ride Leader SignUp Sheet](#). Bookmark this page so you can quickly check the need for ride leaders at upcoming rides. The aim is to have leaders scheduled two weeks in advance of any given ride.

NOTE: The Whistler Cycling Club calendar will have the latest details about for any particular ride plan. Check the corresponding entry for last minute updates or unique notes about the ride you are about to participate in.

Whistler Cycling Club Ride Guidelines

“Almost anyone can be somewhat fast on a bike, but few learn to be elegant, graceful cyclists.”

- Peter Wilborn

The Whistler Cycling Club was created to facilitate and promote recreational road riding in Whistler and surrounding areas. The club's core values are safety and inclusivity. We do our best to welcome new cyclists and see that everyone enjoys a safe, fun and perhaps even educational ride.

Ride leaders, and participating riders, should keep in mind the following:

It's a 'Group' ride: Participating in a group ride implies an informal contract. You are part of a group. Each member is responsible (to some degree) for the group functioning as a whole. It is the group's ride, not the leader's ride or anyone else's ride.

Be Predictable: Group riding requires extraordinary attention. The group should move as a co-ordinated, predictable, flowing mass. Each participant is expected to ride in a straight line, at a constant speed, and to clearly signal changes. Pedal continuously at a cadence and speed that are consistent with those around you.

Communicate: Communication is a requirement of safe cycling. Participants make a positive contribution to a ride when they provide respectful feedback, reminders and instructive dialogue regarding cycling etiquette and safety. It is incumbent on all of us to offer courteous input regarding mistakes and dangerous riding habits. Communication also goes beyond the cycling group, to others on the road. It includes exemplifying and politely advocating for safe and courteous behaviour on the road.

Don't ever forget that when you ride with the club and when you wear our club jersey you become an **Ambassador** for both the club and cyclists in general. If you ride in a way that is courteous and respectful to all others on the road you may or may not be noticed. But if you behave in a way that antagonizes others it will reflect poorly on all cyclists.

Highlights: Taillights are strongly recommended. Use of earbuds, headphones or cell phones while riding is not permitted. Riders with time trial bars are not permitted to ride within a paceline. When giving corrective guidance to participants, do so discretely, and never in front of the whole group.

“But a group ride is neither a race nor cycling Darwinism. As riders get better, they seek to distinguish themselves by riding faster on more trendy bikes; but as riders get better they need to realize two things: 1) there is always someone faster, and 2) they have obligations as leaders. Cycling is not a never-ending ladder, each step aspiring upwards, casting aspersions down. It is a club, and we should want to expand and improve our membership.”

– Peter Wilborn

Ride Leader To Do's – All Rides

Before a ride starts the ride leader must talk to the group about the ride, including guidelines and expectations. Part of the ride leader's duty is to offer guidance and support to help participants complete the route safely.

The Pre-ride Talk

- Introduce yourself and, if the group is not too large, have riders introduce themselves. Welcome new members and guests.
- Confirm that everyone has a Full Ride Membership or has purchased a Single Ride Membership for this specific ride. Staff from Whistler Village Sports will help with Single Ride Memberships (waiver + \$2 fee) at Tuesday night rides. It is possible, though a long process, for riders to purchase a Single Ride Membership via the club web site using a smartphone. Visitors who have not done this in advance may need to be denied access to the ride.
- Confirm participants have a helmet, ID, and medical and emergency contact information. If a participant doesn't have the information needed, have them write it down. Encourage the use of taillights.
- Go over the objective(s) for the ride as well as the route, pace, regroupings and stops/intersections. Determine who will lead the group at various points of the ride, if applicable. Discuss the general plan for the ride — drop/no-drop, what happens in the event of a mechanical issue — and any special conditions or hazards that might be encountered along the route.
- Remind riders to let you know if they leave the ride before the end point.
- Count the number of participants. Suggest that everyone help by "looking out" for each other.

The Sweep

Most club rides are no-drop rides, i.e. no one is left behind. It is a ride leader's responsibility to designate someone in the group as sweeper. Choose an experienced rider to tail the group and assist rider(s) who fall behind, possibly due to a flat tire, mechanical issue or fatigue. Choose a rider who is equipped and able to fix flat tires, and ideally is carrying a charged cell phone.

When There's More than One Group Riding

If there is more than one group riding the same route the ride leaders must convene briefly to choose who among them will act as the "Lead" ride leader for the day.

The “Lead” has the ultimate call on whether the ride will proceed or be cancelled (should weather conditions threaten). The “Lead” will also choose who is to brief the group on the outline for the ride, or day, etc.

In addition, the ride leaders must designate who will do the sweep for all the riders, and, if applicable, where the sweep zone ends. For example, for rides that return to Whistler from the south, the sweep is to end no further south than Creekside. For rides returning from the north, no further north than Alpine Meadows. This assures that riders will have at least reached to where they can get assistance if they are on their own.

Cancelling a (Probably Wet) Ride

Cancelling a ride is the “Lead” ride leader’s call, judging when conditions are too wet or unsafe for riding. The club’s default wet weather policy is that a ride will be declared cancelled if it is raining significantly at the start location 60 minutes before the ride is scheduled to start. Note that an alternate policy may be specified for any given ride as stated in the ride’s calendar entry. In the event of cancellation, be sure to inform Whistler Village Sports (604) 932-3327.

During the Ride

- Monitor the ability of participants to stay with the group. Adapt the pace or define an upcoming regroup point that everyone is capable of reaching.
- Do a head count at regroups (or more often)
- Check for riders needing support or encouragement. Ensure that any rider who may lag behind has a capable rider assigned to accompany them.
- Monitor the weather and changing conditions that can affect safety and discuss adaptations to plan as necessary.

After the Ride

- If a rider is expected to finish late, contact the sweeper to confirm the rider’s wellbeing.
- Record the number of riders and any comments on the club’s Ride Leader spreadsheet. [Here’s the link.](#)

A ride leader must carry:

- **a basic first aid kit** (which includes a waiver form, an accident report form and a pencil). The club's first aid kits are kept at the Whistler Village Sports cashier desk.
- **a functioning** (i.e. charged) **cell phone**

In the event of an accident

For any incident requiring immediate medical attention call the emergency contact number (911). Post two people to direct traffic going in both directions. If there is no cell reception, send two people on to where there is reception. Apply first aid as appropriate. At least two people should stay with the injured rider until help arrives. Make arrangements for the injured rider's bike to be picked up and stored safely.

Note the time and circumstances of the incident, and at the end of the ride submit an accident report to the club.

Specifics for Different Club Rides

Tuesday Night Rides

The Whistler Cycling Club's regular Tuesday night rides are intended to be social affairs but usually involve riding in a paceline. There are three groups and the average speed and competitiveness varies from A (fastest/longest distance) to B, and C (slowest/shortest distance). Most rides are 40-60 km and typically last about two hours.

Ride leaders should co-ordinate their routes and order of departure so that a faster group doesn't catch (and try to pass) a slower group when on Highway 99.

- **A Group** – The A Group rides on Tuesday nights are the exception to all other club rides in that they are drop rides. In other words, if you have a mechanical or can't keep the pace you will be left on your own. A Group rides are for experienced cyclists comfortable riding in a fast paceline. The average speed of A Group rides is approximately 30 km/h, with the emphasis on training and fitness.
- **B Group** – Is for experienced riders used to riding in a group at average speeds of 25-30 km/h.
- **C Group** – Riders have some experience riding on the road and in a group of cyclists. The average speed of C Group rides is 20-25 km/h.

Tuesday Night Ride Protocol

- Meet at Whistler Village Sports at 5:15 p.m.
- Ride leaders should decide who among them will do the sweep.
- Ride leaders identify themselves and collect their group (A, B or C).
- Riders gather in the general area of their ride leader for a pre-ride briefing.
- Ride leaders go through the pre-ride checklist, including the route and protocol for getting through the village, who will lead the group through the village and on Highway 99 and where any rotation in the paceline will take place.
- Ensure the group is ready to ride by 5:30.

See also **Guidance for Frequent Routes** below.

Wednesday Night Rides

These are for emerging riders, those new to road cycling and/or unfamiliar with riding in a group. The emphasis is on learning to ride safely in a group and on the highway. Average speed will be determined by the group, with no one left behind.

- Meet at Whistler Village Sports at 5:15 p.m.

Saturday and Sunday Morning Rides

Aimed at B/C level riders, there may be a mix of ability levels in the weekend rides. If there are enough riders, and ride leaders, there may be two or more groups.

There are various start times and locations for weekend rides but the intention is to be finished the ride (and socializing over coffee) before Highway 99 gets too busy.

Guidance for Frequent Routes

Through Whistler Village

Many club rides start from Whistler Village Sports, in Whistler Village. There are several route options from WVS to Highway 99; each ride leader will decide the best route for his or her group. The critical point is that each group moves through the village as a group, at a controlled pace behind the designated leader. This ensures minimal disruption to car traffic and also conveys an organized, positive image of the club.

If the group follows a route through the village that includes intersections the ride leader should stop at each stop sign/red light until riders have regrouped and it is safe to go. When safe, the group should ride together through the intersection in a tight bunch, collectively occupying about as much space as a small bus.

To Whistler Olympic Park

Tuesday evening club rides often follow Highway 99 south to Callaghan Road, then proceed up to Whistler Olympic Park. On Highway 99 each group should ride in a single file paceline. There are two points between the village and Callaghan Road where the rider at the front of the paceline can change:

- 1) Lake Placid Road in Creekside
- 2) Function Junction

Prior to leaving the village the lead rider for the group should designate who will take over at the front of the group at Creekside and Function. At these points the previous ride leader moves to the back of the pack. Other riders maintain their positions until reaching Callaghan Road.

At Callaghan Road

If there is a reason to stop when the group gets to Callaghan Road (remove a layer of clothing, regroup for instructions for the ride up hill etc.) all riders must pause on the shoulder and avoid interfering with vehicle traffic.

The turnaround at Whistler Olympic Park

After a regroup at WOP the descent back to Highway 99 reaches high speeds in several places, on a road with lots of cracks and potholes. This means each rider must maintain laser-sharp attention — to the road and to the riders around him or her. Ride leaders should remind their group of these points before beginning the descent:

- Leave a bigger gap to the rider in front of you. At high speed there is less time to react and in some places the poor quality of the road may cause riders to swerve to avoid cracks and heaves.
- Pass only on the left.
- Do not pass another rider or group of riders when they are passing someone. Riding three abreast boxes in the middle rider(s), leaving them nowhere to move.

Crossing Highway 99 at the bottom of Callaghan Road

We can't emphasize enough how potentially dangerous this could be. The speed limit on this section of the highway is 100 km/h, though many vehicles travel much faster. There are two lanes of traffic in each direction. Some Tuesdays we may have 40-50 riders trying to cross all four lanes. The potential for disaster is high.

This is also an opportunity for cyclists to create a positive or negative impression.

When there is a clear break in traffic in both directions, cross the first two lanes in groups of 4-6 and ride north in the “merge” lane. Check over your right shoulder to ensure that there is still no north-bound traffic. When it is safe, cross the two north-bound traffic lanes and move on to the shoulder.

The return home

Many riders are fatigued on the return ride to Whistler and understandably may want to go at a slower pace. Try to find a group of riders who want to ride at a similar pace and stick with this group. Ride single-file — no riding two-abreast — and turn your taillight on.

Certifying Ride Leaders

Once you have studied this manual and discussed any concerns or questions with an experienced ride leader you are “ready to assist”. You should sign up for the “assist” role in at least two club rides and observe how the ride leader leads.

Following this you will be asked to lead two club rides with an experienced ride leader observing you. Following these rides the ride leader will discuss your performance. When you and the ride leader concur that you are ready to lead you are “certified”.