

NDV Group Riding Principles

North Devon Velo operates on a set of group riding principles that are adhered to across all club organised group ride. We request all riders follow these good practices to ensure oneself and other NDV riders' safety when out on the road.



Fundamentals

The safety of North Devon Velo members during NDV sanctioned rides is of paramount importance to the club and riding in a group is radically different to riding alone.

- Arrive prompt to the ride start time.
- A helmet is **essential** to participation.
- Maintain your bike in good order as to not pose a danger to yourself or other riders when travelling at speed.
- Carry enough food, water and spares to complete the ride route.
- Wear the correct clothing for the weather conditions and plan ahead with the forecast.
- Abide by the Highway Code at all times.
- Learn to call and signal all hazards – these are detailed in *Groups Calls and Signals*.
- Stay alert to potential hazards, and chat only when it's safe.
- Pass the group signals up and down the group to alert all riders of hazards/sudden changes in speed.
- No drop policy across all club rides unless specified prior to ride start.
- Youth riders need to be accompanied by more than one adult member at all times. Please see the *NDV Welfare Statement* for more information on Youth rider safety both on and off the bike.

Riding Etiquette

- **GROUP FORMATION** - Either ride alongside another rider or behind them – the Highway Code states riding two abreast is both safer for group visibility and for other road users' safety as overtaking cars spend less time in the oncoming traffic lane. However, it may be safer in certain scenarios to filter down to one single line especially on narrow roads.
- **OVERLAPPING WHEELS** - Don't allow your front wheel to overlap the back wheel of the bike in front – if they pull out quickly to avoid a hazard, you can both crash.
- **OVER/UNDERTAKING** - Don't overtake (undertake) a rider on the inside. You should only overtake another rider on their right and only if it is safe to do so without crossing the white line into the oncoming lane. We advise to additionally communicate to the rider you are overtaking that you are about to do so.
- **DISTANCE TO WHEEL IN FRONT** - Keep a distance of at least a few bike lengths minimum distance away from the wheel in front when sharply descending behind other riders, for your safety and theirs. Keep hands on the handlebars during descents and shout out potential hazards.

- **HORSES AND OTHER SLOW MOVING ROAD USERS** - Slow down for horses and other animals on the road and give horse riders a wide berth, warning them if you are approaching them from behind.
- **RIDER WELFARE** - The ride leader(s) should be regularly checking on the status of the other group riders, but if you see a member in trouble (mechanical difficulty, 'bonking') and the ride leader(s) is unaware, please communicate it to them so that they can assist swiftly.
- **STOPPING** - When waiting for other riders to catch up or when dealing with a mechanical, the ride leader(s) will designate a safe place to stop to avoid blocking the road or junctions, as this makes it difficult for other traffic to pass or impairs their visibility. This decision will be governed by the ride leader(s).
- **ACCELERATING** - Don't accelerate suddenly from a standing start/traffic light. This should be conducted in a dignified manner so that other group riders are not dropped.
- **BRAKING AND CORNERING** - Alert other group riders to sudden braking as non-communication can lead to an accident. Additionally, when cornering, please try to hold the line you have entered the corner in unless there is

a clear hazard. We strongly recommend leaving a bike length or two from the wheel in front when descending on sharp gradients in order to give yourself time to react to any sudden hazards or changes in speeds.

- **ACCIDENT** – in the event of an accident, no rider shall be left isolated. At least two club members will remain with the afflicted individual until he/she receives the appropriate medical and logistical assistance.
- **WINTER** – NDV strongly advises and expects members to have mudguards fitted on club rides during the winter months.
- **CHAINGANG** – A chain gang (also known as through and off) is a group in a close-knit formation usually of two parallel lines. The formation comes from the fact that it is harder to cycle at the front of a group than in the shelter of another rider. The rider behind enjoys the slipstream of the rider in front. If one rider were to stay at the front all the time, he would tire and the whole group would slow down. If the lead is rotated, the effort is distributed across the group and the speed can be higher or the individual effort less.

- The rider in the front of the group will take their share of the lead without surging in pace, then swing to the side and let the rest of the line come through, led by a new leader. The first rider then eases up and drops in behind the last rider in the line, staying in their slipstream until once again their turn comes to ride at the front. If you are unsure of the change direction or roles within the chain gang, please ask the designated ride leader. A chain gang will be announced by the ride leader well in advance and are usually reserved for specific ride (namely Tuesdays and Thursdays).
- **Have fun and enjoy the ride!**

Group Signals and Calls

When out on the road, NDV riders will be calling out and signalling a range of phrases and gestures. This may prove confusing to newer riders, so below is a glossary of the most frequently used terms and their implications to you; the rider.

1. **“Slowing/Stopping”** – put your arm to the side and point your open palm towards the rider behind.
2. **“Lights”** – shout clearly to advise other riders to the presence of traffic lights in the route course ahead.
3. **“Clear”** – call when junction/roundabout is safe to enter; also to advise rider on your left that it is safe to roll over in front of you (used when pace line rolling)
4. **“Last wheel/rider”** – informs the last rider on the left that it is their turn to move across to the right-hand line when the group is rolling in chain gang riding formation.
5. **“Ease up/steady”** – slow down to allow the group to reform or assist slower riders.
6. **“Regroup”** – slow down significantly or stop to bring everyone together (sometimes after a steep climb)
7. **“Car back/riders back”** – alerts riders in front of passing traffic (stay left to make room)
8. **“Wait”** – called repeatedly by back of group while it is unsafe to change lanes.
9. Avoid hazard on the left – signal by placing bent left arm behind your back and call the hazard, eg “car left”, “debris left”
10. **“Single file”** – one finger pointed up from an extended arm.
11. **“Pair up”** – two fingers pointed up from an extended arm.
12. **“Mechanical/ Puncture”** – to inform other riders to your misfortune and to stay alert to the group stopping in a safe place to assist.

Summary Remarks

- North Devon Velo and its members rely on you to READ, UNDERSTAND and COMPLY with the on-ride code of conduct detailed in this document, for your safety, and the safety of other members.
- NDV is a British Cycling affiliated club and further information on group riding skills and practices can be found on the British Cycling website through their Ridesmart initiative.
- We also advise you to read the NDV Welfare Statement for information regarding wellbeing practices operated by the club.
- If you are unsure on any of the group riding principles, please ask the rider leader(s) who will be happy to advise and assist where necessary!

NDV's Group Riding Principles was updated on 28th March 2023. We may update this group riding principles document from time to time where we deem appropriate and necessary to ensure the safeguarding of the club and its membership.