



BUNCH RIDING RULES AND ETIQUETTE



Cycling is an inherently dangerous recreational activity and may result in obvious risk or a significant degree of risk of physical harm or death to a person. Participation in rides and activities is solely at one's own risk. All participants must abide by the Road Laws and commonly accepted bunch ride etiquette. The Highfields Rollers Cycling Group Inc accepts no responsibility and gives no warranties or assurances as to the appropriateness of the activities. It is the responsibility of the rider/guardian to have all necessary safety equipment and to ensure that their bicycle is in a safe operating condition and that they are fit to ride. Riders/guardians release and indemnify all persons/volunteers in the Highfields Rollers Cycling Group Inc from all actions, proceedings, demands and costs, expense and claims whatsoever, which may be otherwise, had or which may be made by any person arising out of their/their children/their family's participation in any activity. All participants in Highfields Rollers Cycling Group Inc activities are required to acknowledge that he/she is responsible for ensuring that he/she has appropriate and adequate Personal Accident and Liability Insurance. It is the rider's/guardian's responsibility to inform the ride or activity volunteer organiser if they object to having their photo or name included on the website or in the newsletter.

Welcome to the **Highfields Rollers Cycling Group Inc** (HRCG).

The HRCG was loosely formed as a group of like minded road cyclists in early 2007. The idea to encourage an interest in road cycling in the Highfields area was that of Wayne Wallace. It wasn't long before there were several experienced and non experienced riders getting together during the week and on Saturdays. Our early Saturday rides were mostly about 20 to 25 kms in length followed by coffee at the now defunct Chatterbox Café which was situated near Coles.

In June of 2010 it was determined that we should form an Incorporated Association. Some of our founding members set out to build a new club that would encompass the aspects of recreational cycling, racing, and socializing. In October 2010, we became incorporated and then affiliated with Cycling Queensland and Cycling Australia.

Being aware and understanding your responsibilities as a cyclist, when riding in a bunch or by yourself and generally when sharing the road, will help protect you and your fellow cyclists.

The ultimate aim of this book is to make your riding with us a safe and enjoyable experience.

Whatever your cycling interest is, safety is of paramount importance. This is the reason why this guide was developed and why it is made available for all current and prospective members.

We ask that you take the time to read, understand and practice the disciplines and etiquette described here. If in any doubt, ask a senior club or committee member who will be more than happy to help you.

Bunch riding offers many safety features for cyclists, most notably, being more visible to other road users, as well as pedestrians.

To ride safely in a bunch requires a number of important factors including –

- appropriate riding experience,
- fitness,
- a mechanically sound bike,
- alertness,
- consistent riding style, and
- excellent communications through clear and universally understood signals.

If these factors are not adhered to, the rider is putting him/herself in danger as well as the Bunch. A small or simple error in bunch riding can lead to a disastrous outcome.

It is important for the HRCG to be recognised as a respected group of responsible and competent cyclists, who are held in high regard for their;

- Strict adherence to the Qld Road Rules
- approach to bunch riding,
- support of our riders, and
- commitment to these Bunch Riding Rules and Etiquette.

A key principle of HRCG bunch riding etiquette is that the pack is as fast as the slowest rider. That is, we stick together as a focused and supportive unit.

We will always advise pace and distance in advance

Safe cycling and see you on the road..... **Roll on.....**

BUNCH RIDING

Bunch riding provides the opportunity for people from many diverse backgrounds and levels of fitness to train and socialise together. Whether you are a weekend warrior or at pro level, it is very important that you understand and practice the basics of bunch riding etiquette.

For an enjoyable and safe ride with an HRCG Bunch, the following principles should be followed:

- All bunches **MUST** obey the road rules including traffic signals and road signs, and respect other road users.
- All bunches **STOP** and **WAIT** for mechanicals, punctures and accidents. **NO EXCUSES**
- Bunches start together and finish together. No rider shall be dropped or abandoned.
- Bunches will stop, wait and regroup at the top of each climb – stopping where it is safe to do so.
- If a bunch is split by traffic or other reason, the front part of the bunch will slow and wait for the remainder to rejoin.
- If any rider feels the pace is too slow, either take a longer turn on the front or ride away from the bunch **from the back** – having told the designated ride captain /coordinator what's occurring. **DON'T race off the front.** This fragments the bunch and can lead to confusion.
- Pass all calls up and down the bunch. Do not assume that other riders have heard the call.

MAIN POINTS

- Always obey ALL road Rules
- Check ahead for traffic and hazards and always warn the riders behind
- **Do Not** use aero bars, 'bunny hop' or leave gaps.
- NO ipods or other electronic noise making devices. **Do not** talk on the phone when riding.
- Don't abandon a mechanical victim unless they can cope.
- Don't brake suddenly, it shocks the rider behind and you could end up wearing them.
- Ride side by side (two abreast).
- Don't half wheel your partner; keep your handlebars even with theirs.
- Maintain your pace and your separation.
- **Never, ever overlap** the wheel of the rider in front of you.
- Watch the rider in front, not just their back wheel.
- Don't surge, it's tiring and causes gaps.
- If changing the route, warn the bunch well ahead.
- If **on the front**, warn of traffic and hazards ahead.
- If **last rider**, warn of traffic behind.
- Listen for shouts and watch for hand signals.
- **Always pass on warnings** inside the bunch. **NEVER assume** that the rider in front or behind has heard a call.
- When single file is called, merge rider on right in front of rider on left.
- Be aware of who and how many are in your group.
- Accept inevitable corrections with a smile.
- **Be tolerant, Be responsible and Be supportive**

Riders new to HRCG / Riders joining the bunch

Riders new to our rides should take time to learn the bunch's communications methods, the calls and signals made and general riding etiquette. The best and safest way is to read this Bunch Riding Rules and Etiquette thoroughly and then put it into practice at the back of the bunch by observing and listening as well as talking to one of the experienced or designated 'buddy' riders.

After a few rides and evidence of good communications, riding skill and feedback from the rider him/herself, the rider may feel confident to take the lead at times and join pace line riding.

The Basics

- **Be on time**, ready to ride at appointed departure time
- **Maintain your bike** in good order
- Carry **enough food**, water and spares
- Learn to **call and signal all hazards**
- **Stay alert** and chat only when it's safe to do so

Sharing the Road

Practising courtesies and our etiquette within the bunch is important. Furthermore; **responsible and non-aggressive cycling** in the bunch is necessary to gain mutual respect and harmony on our roads. To improve safety and consideration, when sharing our roads, all riders are asked to adhere to the following guidelines:

- **Respect other road users** – be courteous and anticipate mistakes.
- **Be predictable** and always indicate your intentions -use hand signals from the front of the bunch to the tail.
- Ride two abreast, but be courteous, riding single file when necessary. Whilst cyclists' are fully within their legal rights to ride 2 abreast, there are times when cyclists should not exercise this right e.g., when the road narrows or when the bunch is small.
- At lights and intersections, stay in position **behind** queued vehicles. DO NOT roll up alongside stopped traffic unless when using a vacant turning lane to turn
- Wear a helmet at all times.
- Use lights when riding in low light conditions.

Riding Tips on Bunch Etiquette

If you join on the road, keep on the back unless you have permission to move towards the front. Some bunches are groups of cyclists who are paying a coach and others may not be keen to ride with a cyclist that they do not know.

Don't join a bunch unless they show some kind of support. Ask to join.

ACCELERATING. Accelerating away from lights and across lanes should be done in a controlled manner so that cyclists behind are not dropped.

BRAKING. Avoid braking as much as possible and give warning beforehand.

When stopping for lights, do so gently without slamming on the brakes. The same applies for stopping pedalling suddenly, which can cause an accident.

CORNERING. Give your partner plenty of room in the corner and keep level with them. Corner at a safe speed so that everyone behind can keep up and hold your wheel.

DOWNHILL. If you are at the front of the bunch, keep pedalling down gentle gradients. If you don't, others behind you will be applying their brakes.

HALF WHEELING. Half-wheeling occurs when one rider rides slightly in front of his partner, which then puts the whole bunch out of sync. It is essential that you keep level with your partner. Keep your handlebars level with the handlebars of the rider next to you, rather than your front wheel level with theirs.

SITTING ON. Keep reasonably close to the cyclist in front of you and keep level with your partner. If too much of a gap is left, the bunch has to play 'catch up'. Keep your head and eyes up. Don't focus on the gap between bikes. Scanning ahead will give you early warning of changes.

FILL THE SPACE. When a gap occurs in front of you in the bunch, move forward to fill the space.

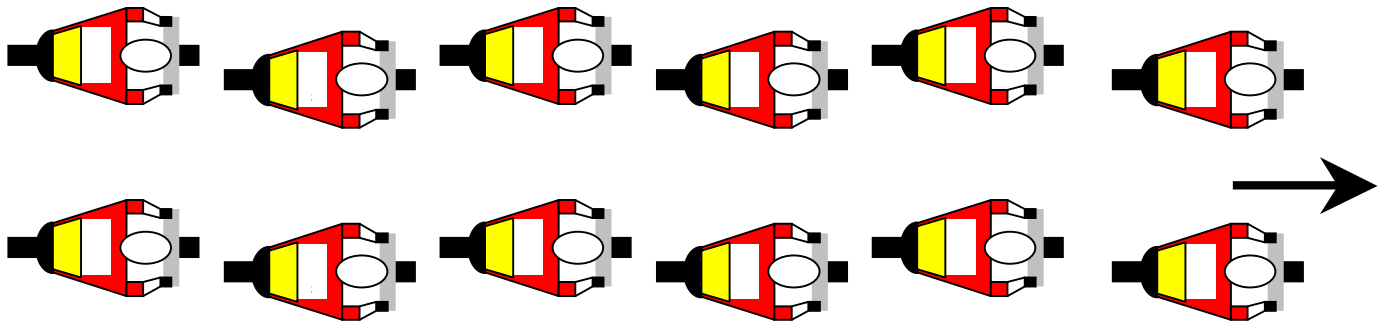
UPHILL. In some bunches, riders split up and ascend at their own pace while other bunches try to stay together. If you feel like dropping off, pull off quickly so that others don't get caught behind you. When climbing a hill and deciding to get out of the saddle, do it in one continuous flowing movement. Otherwise the bike slows momentarily and can hit the wheel of the cyclist behind, causing a fall.

If you are **about to get out of the saddle**, make sure you;

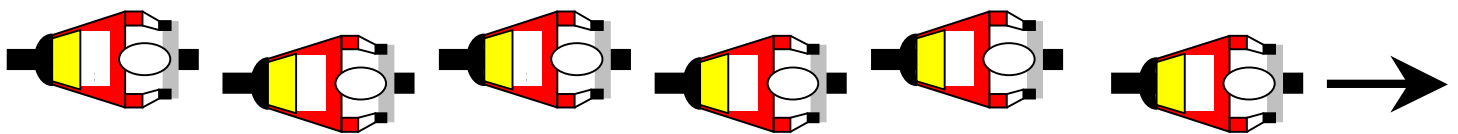
- are at the top of your pedal stroke and have pressure on the pedal.
- change to a lower gear before standing and
- Call – "**STANDING**"

The Bunch Formation

Riders should pair off in 2 abreast formation. Keep a distance of about 30cm distance off the rear tyre of the rider's wheel in front of you and ride slightly off to the side of the rider in front. Don't sit directly on the wheel of the rider in front of you until you are confident of that rider and your own riding skills. Newer riders may need to leave a larger gap.



Two abreast



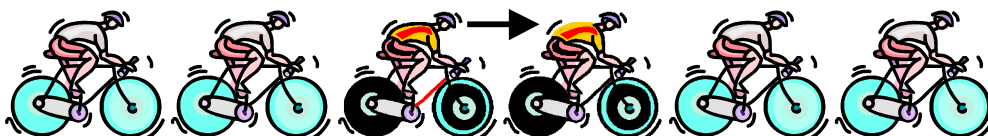
Single file

When the rider in front of you is riding slightly off, as described above, compensate your position in the opposite direction so that an echelon formation is avoided and you have better vision down the line and thus allowing more time to react to hazards.

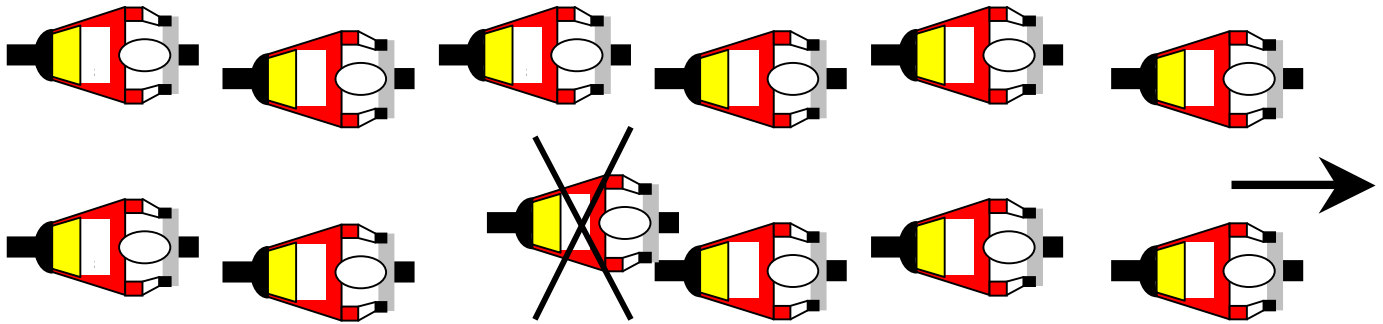
Sitting on the wheel

Pay attention to the rider in front of you but do not focus on the rear of their wheel.

Look ahead of the rider in front of you.



Do not overlap wheels. This is extremely dangerous and any sideways movement by either rider could result in wheel hits and an accident involving other riders.



Overlapping Wheels

Do not stop pedalling when you drink / eat as this causes a ripple effect through the bunch and can cause a rear to front end collision. **Show your bottle to the side before drinking.**

Position on the road

Riders have clearly defined rights on the road in accordance with the Qld Road Rules, that in simple terms allow riders to occupy (not block) a lane and ride in pair formation, but they also have the same responsibilities as motorists. However, not all motorists are aware of the rights of cyclists. As a cyclist you must take this into consideration and ensure all movements that you make are clear, noticeable and predictable to all of those around you. **Erratic or inconsistent cycling** puts pressure on drivers of vehicles.

Keeping left and overtaking

Sections s129, s131, s151, s141 of the Queensland Road Rules, Transport Operations (Road Use Management — Road Rules) Regulation 2009 state in part that you must:

- ride as near as is safely possible to the far left side of the road — *on a multi-lane road or a road with two or more lines of traffic travelling in the same direction as you*, you can occupy a lane and travel in the right hand lane when necessary (for example, to make a right turn)
- ride to the left of any oncoming vehicle
- not overtake another vehicle on the left if that vehicle is turning left and giving a left change of direction signal
- not ride more than two abreast unless overtaking
- ride within 1.5 m of the other rider if riding two abreast.

Riding too close to the edge of the road can create problems for riders. Slipping off the roadway edge poses risks as you try to get back over the lip of the road surface. Drains, grates and rough edges also present hazards. Skill is required to hop out of the gutter, so if you find yourself in this position, slow down and stay in the gutter/verge until it flattens out.

Train tracks can be hazardous. Negotiate tracks at 90 degrees (straight-on) to avoid your wheel being caught.

Signal your moves to drivers. Ride confidently to show drivers that you are trying to keep with the flow of traffic as best you can. Show common courtesy by

- acknowledging the presence of drivers in front and behind
- thanking drivers for their patience, and
- waving drivers through when they have been held up by you or the bunch.

When in slow traffic, do not ride between lanes to move past vehicles. This creates a risk and makes it very difficult for drivers to see cyclists. Stay within the lane.

When traffic is stopped at intersections, the bunch is to unclip and stop behind the last stationary vehicle as you would in a car. A cycle bunch will cover a greater length than most other vehicles and should move like other vehicles.

Over taking another rider. When passing another rider, pass on the right hand side of the rider. Over taking on the left is hazardous. Overtake on the right and make sure sufficient room is available to pull into line, without causing the cyclist you have passed to brake suddenly.

Always tell a rider that you have come on from behind, that you are there and that you are passing. Call: '**PASSING**' or '**ON YOUR RIGHT**'.

The Lead Riders

The lead riders have the greatest **responsibility for the Bunch**. They set the pace, make the calls for road obstacles and warn the bunch of any traffic changes.

Lead riders should **scan the road ahead** for obstacles and other potential risks – scanning up to 100m ahead and back to the front of their own wheels. The lead riders must be focused on what lies ahead at all times.

When riding in a bunch formation and **obstacles** are identified, the lead riders make the call. E.g., if a hole in the road is identified, the lead rider calls **"HOLE"** and points to the hole with the hand on that side of the bike. The calls also apply for other hazards including **"GRAVEL"**, **"GLASS"**, **"STICKS"**, and other debris, car **"DOOR"** opening, stray animals (**"DOG" etc**) that may cause a risk to the bunch.

A rider, group of riders or pedestrians on the left ahead also need to be called. The call, **"RIDERS UP"/"WALKERS UP"** is given and the hand signal of placing the bent left arm behind the back to warn riders following to move across to the right, is given by every rider in the bunch.

The opening of **car doors** by drivers who do not look first can pose a real hazard to cyclists. Lead riders also scan for cars that may have pulled into the curb ahead, or the shopper who has just returned to the car, to assess whether the threat of an opening car door may prevail. **(It is a good principle to prepare for all car doors to be opened and allow sufficient space accordingly)**

The lead riders are to indicate if riders should move across, e.g., with obstacles on the side of the road, such as described above. The **bent left arm signal** behind the back of the lead rider closest to the obstacle will indicate to riders behind to move over.

It is important to identify what is deemed hazardous to the group. **Calling hazards that pose no risk to the bunch is dangerous in itself**, i.e. the hazard is too far to the side to pose a risk to the group or the hazard is too minor (e.g., a few leaves, a small amount of light gravel), as the group may start to ignore the lead riders' calls.

When approaching a set of lights the lead riders have the responsibility for making the call. It will either be **"LIGHTS ...STOPPING"** or **"LIGHTS ...ROLLING"**. When stopping, the lead rider should also hold the right hand up, signalling to stop (this is passed down the line). Be aware of the length of the bunch and be certain that all will negotiate the lights safely and together. **Always** act on the side of caution and safety.

Some riding groups call **"ROLLING"** from the rear to indicate to the front riders to keep rolling. As the front riders have best view of the traffic signals and call

"CLEAR" or **"STOPPING"** at intersections, it makes sense that the front riders continue this communication at traffic lights.

When entering a roundabout or turning at an intersection, the lead riders must call **"CLEAR"** or **"CAR LEFT / RIGHT"** or **"STOPPING"/ "SLOWING"**. All calls must be relayed clearly and swiftly down the line so that each cyclist makes the call for the riders directly behind.

Slowing

When slowing, the call is given and when circumstances permit, at the same time, the right arm is extended downward, with a waving motion and the palm facing down.

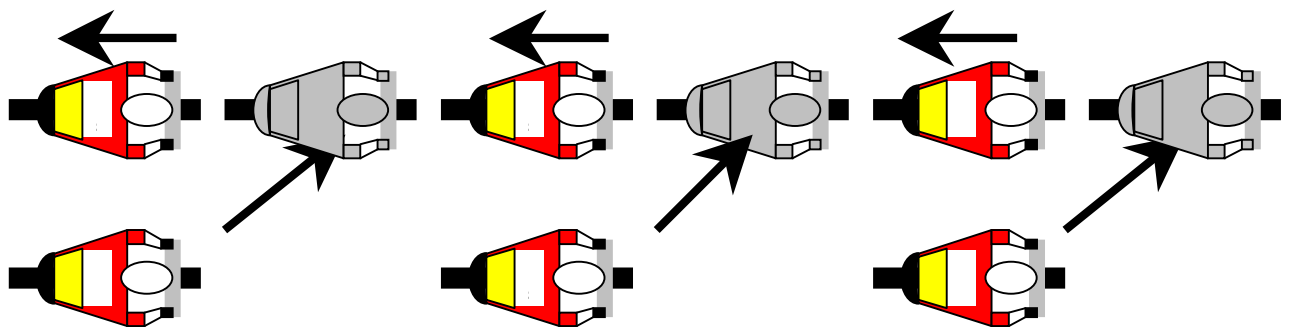
Changing Direction

When the group needs to change lanes or move across to turn right, the lead rider on the side of the direction change, should raise an arm, pointing in that direction to signal to the group that a change of direction needs to occur. The rear rider will give the call of either **"WAIT"** or **"CLEAR BACK"**, ensuring that it is clear for all riders. All riders, but especially the rear rider, are to indicate the change of direction with the appropriate hand signal.

Single File

The lead riders are responsible for calling **"SINGLE FILE"** formation when the road narrows, or traffic conditions dictate. The rear rider has the same responsibility when traffic from behind dictates.

To form a single file from 2 abreast, the rider on the right moves in front of the rider on the left as the left side rider eases off speed momentarily and the right side rider maintaining speed, moves left into line.



Pace setting

To ensure that the group is able to stay with the lead riders, the lead riders should focus on keeping a constant speed that is comfortable for the group.

On **gentle or rolling inclines**, the bunch should stay together, maintaining the speed of the lead riders. Once at the crest of a hill the lead riders need to keep pedalling to let the riders behind complete the hill at the same constant speed. If the lead riders relax at the crest and slow, a "concertina effect" will result.

On **hills** that are steeper or longer, riders may agree to climb at their own pace. If agreed, the bunch will break up for the climb. After the top of the hill, the lead riders will nominate a safe area to stop and wait for the group to re-bunch, ensuring that all waiting riders are off the roadway proper. Lead riders should continue pedalling when **going down hill**. The bunch behind will have the advantage of "slip stream" and will normally travel faster without pedalling.

The Tailenders

On a narrow or single lane road the last rider must warn of vehicles behind. A call of "**CAR BACK**" is a simple call that all should understand. The same applies for when a cyclist, or bunch, is over-taking our bunch. The last rider must warn other riders by a call of "**RIDERS PASSING**".

Communicating the messages down the line

All riders play an important part in bunch riding and clearly relayed communications are paramount. The lead riders can give the best signals possible but unless they are acted upon by being passed down the line, substantial risks can remain. In bunch riding there can be a tendency for riders in the middle to hear the call and react by avoiding the hazard, but omit to pass the call down the line. A middle rider should never assume the call was loud enough to be heard behind or in front.

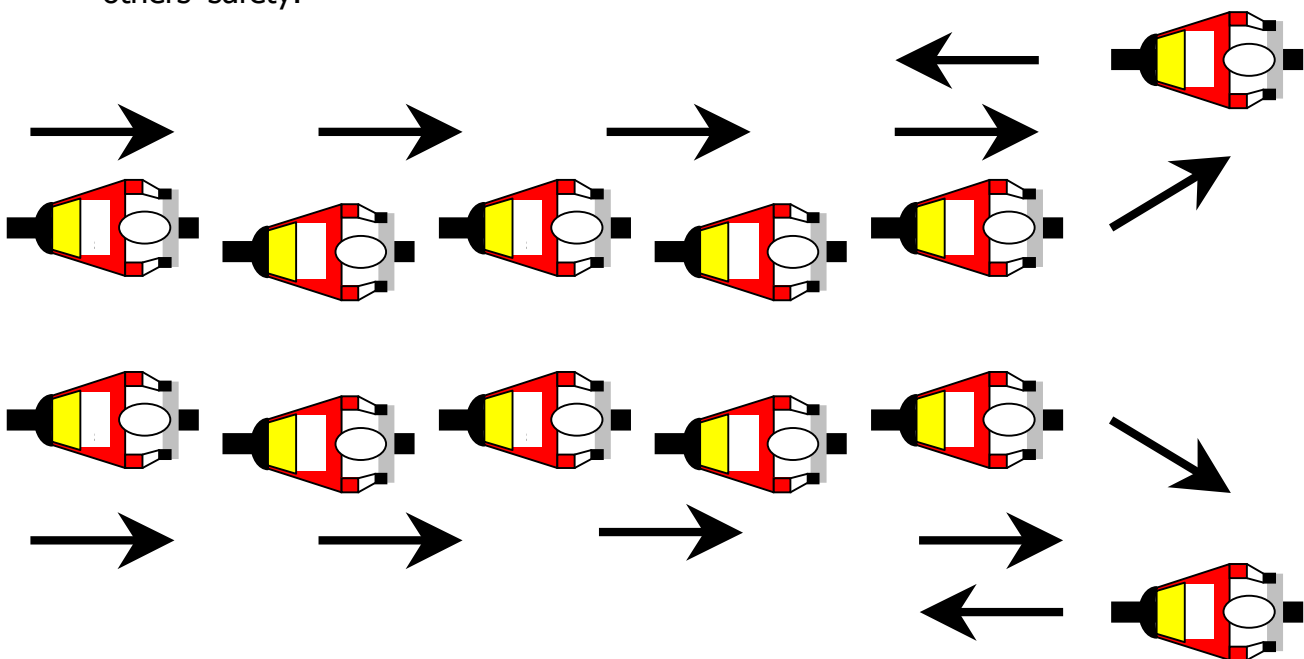
The middle of the bunch must be alert to relay the calls at all times to ensure the entire group's safety.

Rotating the lead

The lead riders should not attempt to stay on the front too long. Ten to fifteen minutes is plenty on our rides. Fatigue is also an important factor to consider for lead riders. They have been concentrating on hazards and risks as well as maintaining the pace. Rotating the lead gives every one a chance to go to the front. If you feel that you are not fit or strong enough to do a turn, go to the front, advise your partner and both immediately roll off. Do not suddenly pull out of the line prior to getting to the front. This only leaves gaps. **Sudden movements create risks.**

The **roll over procedure** is simple. The two front riders, on a safe section of road, move approximately a metre each to the left and right respectively, without reducing their speed. This will leave a gap for the following two riders and the rest of the bunch, to move through. The two riders rolling over will simultaneously then wave the following riders through as they then soft pedal until the bunch has passed them, whereby they slot in at the rear.

If you are in the line and must pull out, advise your partner and then you should drop to the back of the bunch. If you are not fit or strong enough to stay with the bunch, pull away. It is much safer than trying to "hang on" and risk your and others' safety.



Supporting the callers

Give encouragement from time to time to the lead riders, the tail enders and other riders who have been making clear, responsible calls. It offers recognition and encouragement, and reinforces to all riders the importance of good signals and calls in bunch riding. Without positive feedback, there can be a tendency for riders to reduce the calls and signals made.

Pace Lining

This usually involves cycling at high speeds that can be anywhere from high 30 kph to high 50kph, depending on riders' abilities, wind speeds and duration of pace lining.

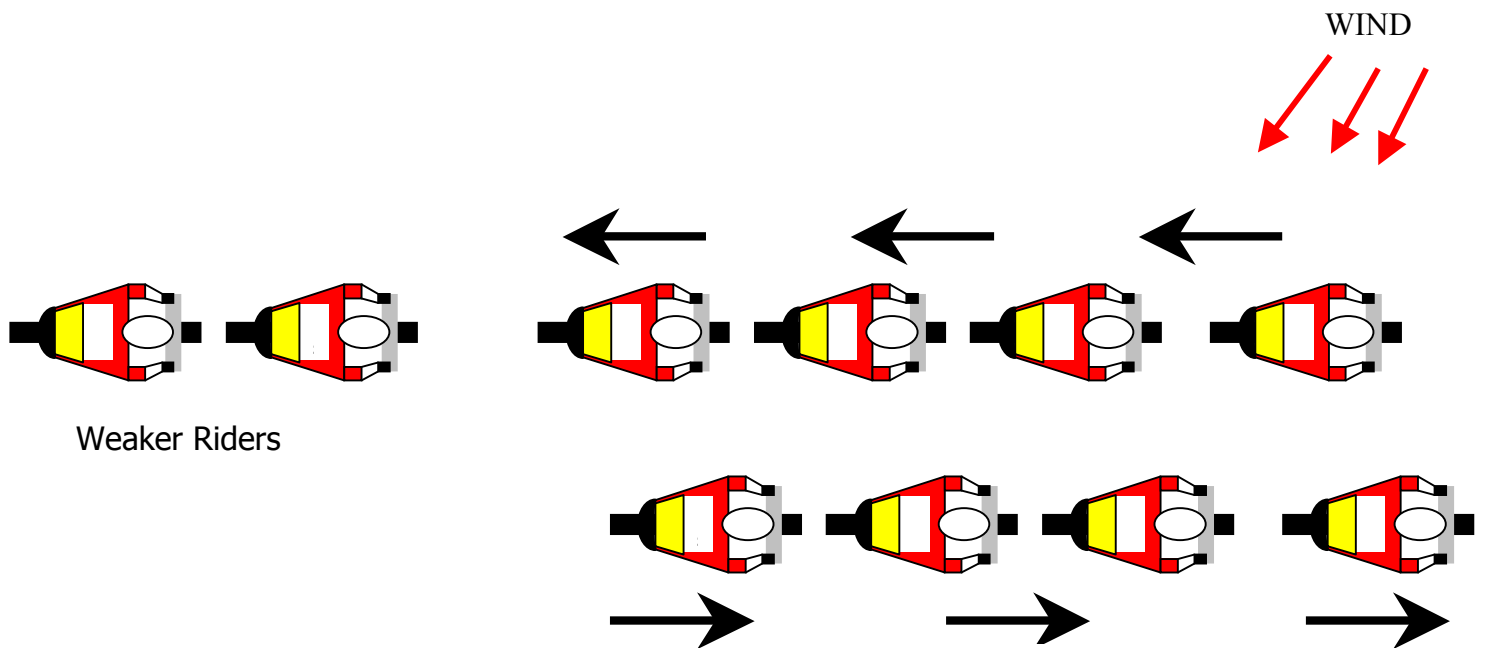
The rotation is different to the rollover procedure above. It is similar to a chain with the links rotating. The way the lead rider rolls off is normally dependent on wind direction. Rolling off to the windward side enables the 'pulled off' line of riders to provide a wind break to the line of riders that are 'moving up' the line. That is, the rider rolls off to the side from which the wind is coming.

When a tail wind or head wind is operating, the lead rider rolls off to the left (gutter side).

When you pull through to take the front position of the pace line, maintain the same speed as when you were drafting. The temptation is to accelerate and this only destroys the pace line formation, as it demands ever-escalating speeds from riders behind.

As the tailender transitions into the faster moving 'pace line' he/she calls **"LAST"**. This informs the new last rider to get ready to move across as well. Without this call, the pace line can easily break up as the riders do not transition quickly enough and then get dropped. This gets worse the faster the pace line is travelling.

If you cannot do a turn at the front, stay off the pace line, rather than trying to slot in mid-line, or stay in the same position. Move to the back of the pack and indicate to riders you are not joining the pace line.



Wet Weather

We don't normally bunch ride in the wet, however the following points are made.

Wet weather poses many additional hazards. Visibility is reduced for both rider and driver.

Road surfaces can become slippery with oil slicks, leaves and other debris.

The incidence of flat tyres increases as road debris sticks to the wet tyres longer than in dry conditions.

To reduce the likelihood of accidents:

- Increase the gap between riders
- Your brakes and wheel rims will be wet. Allow for much longer braking distance and time to slow or stop. Pump your brakes before descending to help clear water build up on the rims and brakes to help improve friction.
- Slower acceleration to avoid skidding
- Slow down. Do not ride as fast, especially when cornering.
- Be wary of materials that are slippery in the wet. eg. metal plates, grills, white road paint (crossings, lane lines)
- Avoid the centre position of a lane where vehicles drip oil from their sump and in the wet becomes hazardous.

Key Reminders for Bunch Riding

- Be **consistent and predictable** with your actions. Braking suddenly, swerving, jolting motions increases the risk of accidents
- Do not make or receive **mobile phone** calls whilst riding. Leave those for the rest stops.
- **IPODS** and anything audio. Do not wear earphones or any apparatus that may reduce your ability to hear normal traffic noise and riders' calls. It is imperative that all riders hear calls and listen out for traffic and other potential hazards.
- **Lights.** Front (white) and rear (red) working lights
- Check that all **attachments to the bike** are fastened securely
- Obey the **road rules** and give drivers the respect you also expect.
- If you brush shoulders, hands or handle bars with a rider, don't panic, or make a sudden direction change. Just roll on and make a slight separation.
- If stopping for mechanical repairs or rest, remember to **get right off the road**
- Ride within your abilities. **Don't over-extend** in bunch riding.
- **Practice.** The best method of developing sound bunch riding skills is to ride frequently in bunches and occasionally with different bunches to observe and learn variations.
- Be aware of **who and how many are in your group.** If a rider has dropped off, one or two riders should turn back to check that all is well, or whether support is needed
- **Dress for the weather** conditions and try to keep your body warm throughout the ride and at breaks

What to Take for Training and Bunch Rides:

A repair kit (and know how to use it);
A pump, or gas cylinders;
2 spare tubes;
Levers;
Money;
Identity including contacts In Case of Emergency ("ICE, ICE1, ICE2.") in phone;
or
details on laminated paper;
Mobile phone (fully charged and in water proof carry case)
Sustenance (bars/gels/choice of food)
Water/re-hydration fluid

Collision Avoidance and Accident Procedure

A rider's ability to safely avoid an unexpected hazard or fallen rider is conditional upon sound bike handling skills and good situational awareness. As riders we should already display a higher level of awareness as we are constantly scanning not just the lane ahead but around us for potential hazards e.g., the car reversing out of the driveway, the unleashed dog running towards the road, the heavy vehicle approaching from behind, etc.

Good awareness as a rider means knowing how you are travelling in relation to other traffic and hazards that have been identified so that when the unexpected does occur, you instinctively know what evasive options are available to you.

In the event of an accident

Self Safety: Awareness of the situation and surroundings is essential. Do not rush to the side of a fallen rider until the scene has been made safe. Be aware of traffic travelling at high speeds and your own inability to walk/run swiftly in cleats. In low light / poor visibility conditions, be aware of your decreased visibility to others once you have dismounted from your bike.