



BUNCH RIDING RULES AND ETIQUETTE

Bunch riding offers many obvious safety features for cyclists, most notably, being seen by other vehicles on the road, as well as by pedestrians.

However, 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 general factors are not followed, 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.

Tour de Cure Bunch Riding Rules and Etiquette guidelines are an amalgam of opinions and recommendations from experienced cyclists, designed specifically for Tour de Cure riders.

It is important to note that all riding groups may have slight variations on signals and calls, on formations and etiquette and when riding with other groups, it is prudent to ask first what their bunch riding etiquette rules are.

An aim of Tour de Cure is to be recognised as a respected pack of responsible and competent cyclists, held in high regard for their approach to bunch riding, their support of team riders and their commitment to Tour de Cure's Bunch Riding Rules and Etiquette.

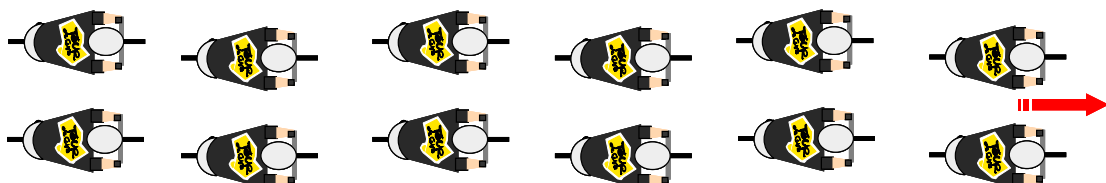
A key principle of Tour de Cure's bunch riding etiquette is that the pack is as fast as the slowest rider. That is, we stick together as a focused and supportive unit.

We also call the ride in advance as to the anticipated level – pace line ride, moderate pace, recovery pace, for example to allow riders to assess the group speed and distance to cover. Erratic riding with break-away groups pressuring the tail end riders to pull back in can lead to rider fatigue and tired and sloppy riding technique which puts the bunch at risk of an accident.

1. The bunch formation

Riders pair off in 2 x 2 formation. Keep a distance of approximately 1 – 1.2 metres off the rear of and slightly off to the side of the rider in front. (increase that distance approximately three fold in wet weather). Positioned slightly off to the side gives the rider better vision down the line and more time to react to hazards. Don't sit directly on the wheel of the rider in front.

Tour de Cure Bunch Riding



Safe bunch riding – it's a team effort



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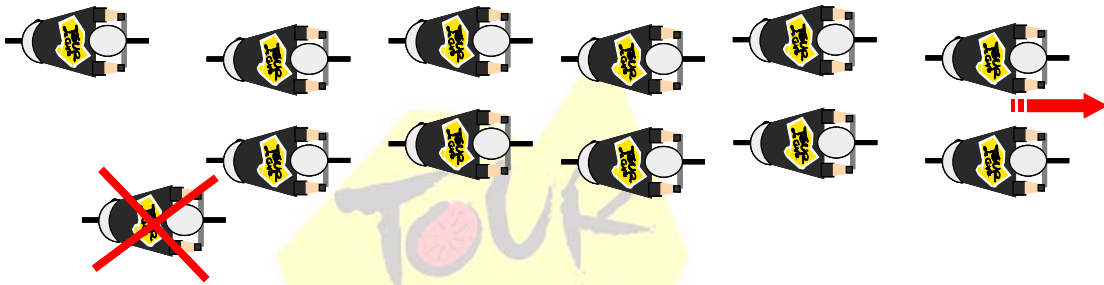
2. Sitting on the wheel

Focus on the person in front of you. Do not focus on the rear of the wheel. By focusing on the person you will be more aware of what is happening in the bunch.

When you ride a 2 x 2 formation, your goal is to ride evenly with your partner, hub to hub, handlebar to handlebar.

Do not "half-wheel" or overlap wheels. This is extremely risky as you will be positioned in the front rider's blind spot and any sideways movement by that rider could result in wheel hits and an accident involving any number of riders.

Tour de Cure half-wheeling



Do not stop pedalling when you drink / eat as this causes a ripple effect through the bunch. This can cause a rear end collision.

When the rider in front of you stands up, that is, gets out of the saddle, the bike will move back. This can happen any time, however climbing or preparing for a sprint are the most common. 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. Always allowing enough space between you and the rider in front is a good approach.

3. Position on the road

Riders have clearly defined rights on the road that in simple terms allows riders to occupy a full lane, ride in pair formation and have the same responsibilities as motorists. However, not all motorists are aware of the rights cyclists have. 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.

Riding too close to the gutter also can create problems for riders. Slipping off the roadway into the gutter poses risks as you try to get back over the



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lip of the gutter. 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 until it flattens out. Then exit at an angle.



Train and tram tracks are other hazards. Ride over at an angle, ideally perpendicular to the tracks, otherwise your wheel may get caught.

On narrow roads, take the lane. Signal your moves to drivers. Ride solidly to show drivers you are trying to keep with the flow of traffic as best you can. Whilst you may slow traffic, you may gain more respect by riding fast, within your abilities and maintaining safety.

“Pick a Plank” Bridges: Australia also has wooden bridges where the planks run lengthwise. You need to position yourself in the bunch prior to arriving at the bridge to be able to stay on the same plank. Keep your line of sight approximately 10m – 20m in front to help maintain balance and keep the plank. This prevents your wheel getting caught in one of the gaps.

When in slow traffic, do not ride between lanes to move past vehicles. This causes a risk and makes it very difficult for drivers to see cyclists and gauge what they will do next. Stay with the lane. It may mean the trip takes a couple of minutes longer, but you are reducing then likelihood of an accident.

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

Overtaking another rider. When passing another rider, pass on the right hand side of the rider. Over taking on the inside lane is hazardous as the rider needs to be aware of traffic movements on both sides of the bike. Overtake on the right and make sure sufficient room is available to pull in to line, without causing the cyclist you have passed to brake suddenly.

Riding 2 Abreast: Whilst cyclists' are fully in their legal rights to ride 2 abreast there are times when cyclists should not exercise this right.

Uphill left hand bends are especially dangerous in both single lane and duel lane roads. eg. The Old Pacific Highway is a flagged risk due to motor cycles. They travel at speed and are not as maneuverable as a car. Get off the road if you need to.

4. The lead riders

The lead riders take the greatest responsibility for the Bunch. They set the pace, they make the calls for road obstacles and warn the bunch of any traffic changes. This is not the time for the social chat.

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

When riding in pair formation and obstacles are identified, the lead rider makes the call. If a hole in the road is identified, the lead rider calls **"hole left"** (of the left hand lead rider) **"hole middle"** (of both lead riders) or **"hole right"** (of the right hand lead rider). The calls also apply for all hazards including rocks, glass, sticks, branches and other debris, car doors opening, pedestrians, stray animals that may cause a risk to the bunch.

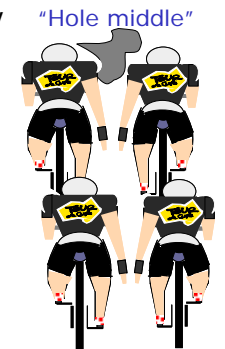
A rider or group of riders ahead also need to be called. The call **"riders up"** and the hand signal behind the lead rider's back to move across is given by the lead rider.

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. The call of **"door"** is made and the bunch readies itself to move across from the risk. The call can also help alert a driver to take care when opening the vehicle's door.

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 (eg the hazard is too far to the side to pose a risk to the group, the hazard is too minor (eg a few leaves, a small amount of light gravel) as the group will start to ignore the lead riders' calls. Later, when a real threat has been identified and signalled, there is the risk that it will be ignored by the bunch.

When approaching a set of lights the lead riders have responsibility in making the call. It will either be **"lights...stopping"** or **"rolling"**. The lead rider may also hold a hand up signaling to stop. Remember that the bunch is one vehicle so if the bunch is committed to roll don't make decisions in the middle of the bunch to suddenly stop. This will cause heavy braking towards the back of the bunch and possible accidents.

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 most sense that the front riders continue this communication at traffic lights. Tour de





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Cure lead riders are therefore responsible for making **"lights...stopping"** or **"rolling"** calls, with the one vehicle committing to the call.

When entering a roundabout or turning at an intersection the lead riders must call **"clear"** or **"car left / right"** or **"stopping"**. All calls should be relayed clearly and swiftly down the line so that each cyclist makes the call for the riders directly behind.

The lead riders also will indicate if riders should move across, eg, with obstacles on the side of the road, such as parked vehicles or garbage bins. A hand signal behind the back of the lead rider closest to the obstacle will indicate to riders behind to move over. The signal is passed down the line.



Lead rider signalling lane change

When the group needs to change lanes, (eg to move across to turn right at an intersection) the lead rider on the side of the lane to move into should raise an arm up, pointing high in the direction of the lane, to signal to the group that a lane change needs to occur. The rear rider will give the call of either "wait" or "over", ensuring that is clear not only for the rear rider to move, but for all riders.

Single File

Single file



The lead riders are also responsible for calling "single file" formation when the road narrows, or traffic increases. A raised open hand above the helmet pointing forward and the call **"single"** indicates to the bunch that single file formation is to occur.

Tour de Cure's rule is for the left side rider to maintain speed with the right side rider easing off speed momentarily and moving left into line. The rider on the right moves in behind the rider on the left.

Pace setting

Ensure 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. When commencing an ascent, the lead riders should accelerate into the hill to avoid the bunch slowing as normally speed would reduce going into a hill. Once at the crest of the hill the lead riders need to keep pedalling for another 100m 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" (where the bunch closes in and then expands repeatedly) will result with the following riders having to slow or even brake on an uphill session.

The "Concertina Effect"



Safe bunch riding – it's a team effort



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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.

Lead riders need to pedal when going down hill. The bunch behind will have the advantage of "slip stream" and can travel faster without pedalling. To avoid the "concertina effect" the lead riders should always pedal downhill and upon reaching the bottom of the hill, pedal faster to maintain the same speed for 100m. This allows the following cyclists to maintain a constant speed down into the flat, avoiding the concertina effect.

5. The tailenders

The riders on the back of the line also have a huge responsibility, particularly the rider on the right hand (outside) side. This person must call the bunch across a lane or lanes (see above) or warn of trucks, cars etc that are approaching when on narrow and/or single lane roads.

When crossing over lanes the call from the tailender, after checking to assess the situation, is either "**wait**" or "**over**". It is important that the instruction is relayed up the line and when crossing over the bunch moves as one and does not fragment. The rider on the outside rear must maintain a distinct hand signal until the maneuver is completed.

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. "Car up", "Pedestrian up", "Riders Up" are examples of calls signaling that vehicles, cyclists and people ahead of the bunch.

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' right**".

When the bunch is not riding in the kerb side lane, i.e. the inside lane, (due to a merging traffic lane from the left or perhaps an upcoming right turn) and a vehicle passes the bunch on the inside lane, the tailenders call "**car inside**" not "car left".

The call of "left" can cause some riders to move over to the left which could end in a serious collision. The term "inside" is more specific and from trials, Tour de Cure riders have felt more confident with that call.

The tailenders need to ensure whenever their sight is off the riders in front that they have assessed the motion is steady and that they have moved back from the rear wheel of the rider in front of them in case the bunch suddenly slows.

6. Communicating the messages down the line



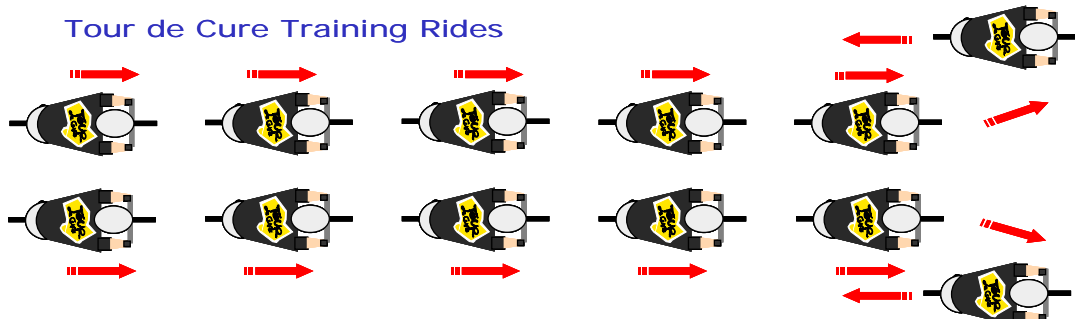
All riders play an important part in bunch riding and clearly relayed communications is paramount. The lead riders can give the best signals possible but unless they are acted upon by being passed down the line, substantial risks can remain. In bunch riding there can be a tendency for riders in the middle to hear the call and react by avoiding the hazard, but omit to act by passing the call down the line. Sometimes a middle rider may assume the call was loud enough to be heard well behind, but we know the risk of making assumptions. The middle of the bunch must be alert to relay the calls at all times to ensure the entire group's safety.

7. Rotating the lead

TRAINING RIDE

The lead riders should not attempt to stay on the front too long. Five kilometers, or fifteen-twenty minutes is plenty. 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 and sudden movements create risks.

The roll over procedure or rotation involves the two front riders, on a safe section of road, to move out approximately a metre. This will leave a gap for the following two riders to move through. The two riders rotating over simultaneously wave the following riders through. They then soft pedal until the bunch has almost passed, slotting in at the rear.



Lead riders should not roll off just before the commencement of a hill, as they may find they are unable to hook back on to the bunch. Rolling off should occur on the flat.



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If you are in the line and must pull out, tell your partner and both should drop to the back of the bunch. If you are not fit or strong enough to stay with the bunch, do not over-exert. Pull away. It is much safer than trying to “hang on” and risk your and others’ safety.

PACE LINING

This usually involves cycling at high speeds, and with Tour de Cure riders that can be anywhere from high 30kph to high 50kph, pending riders’ abilities, wind speeds and duration of pace lining.

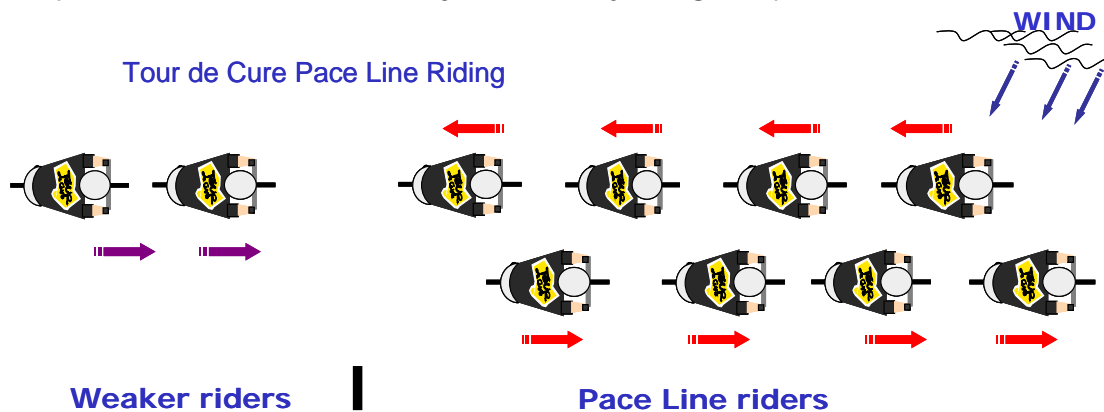
The rotation is different to the rollover procedure above. It is similar to a chain with the links rotating. The way the lead rider rolls off is normally dependent on wind direction. Rolling off to the windward side enables the ‘pulled off’ line of riders to provide a wind break to the line of riders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

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 to the right quickly enough and then get dropped. This gets worse the faster the pace line is going.

If you cannot do a turn at the front, stay off the pace line, rather than try 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.



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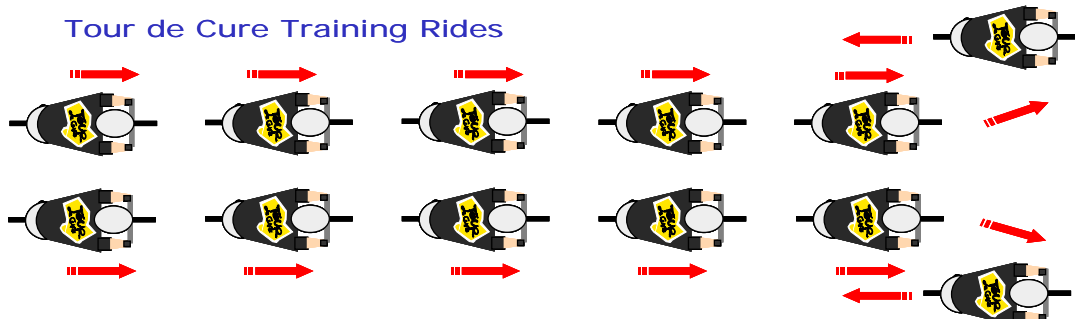
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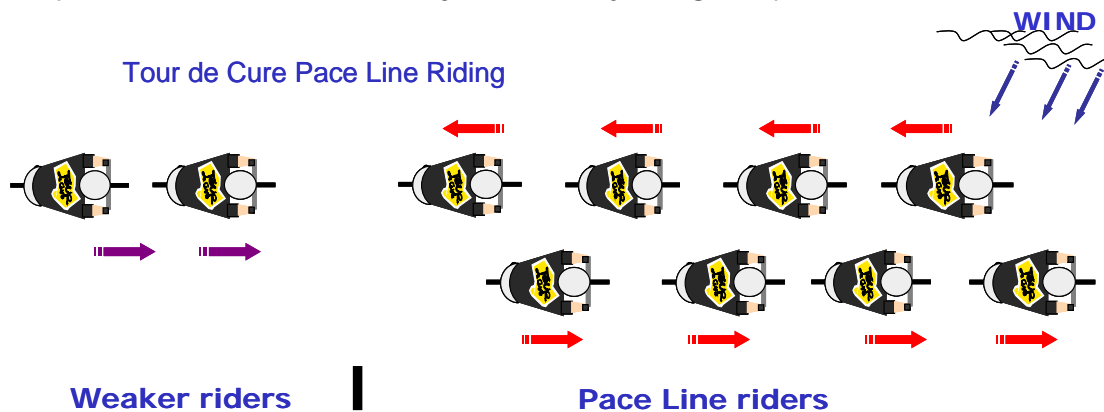
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BUNCH RIDING RULES AND ETIQUETTE

8. Riders new to Tour de Cure / riders joining the bunch

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

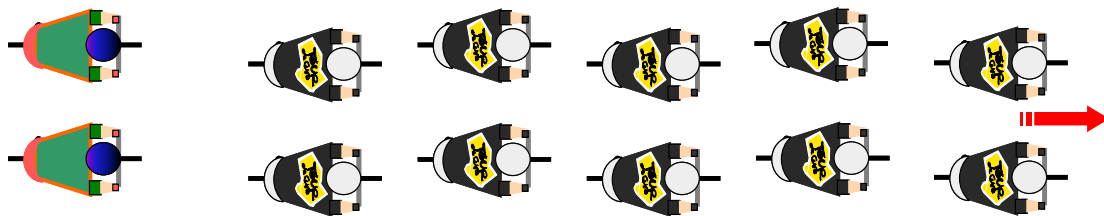
After a few rides, and evidence of good communications, riding skill and feedback from the rider him/herself, the rider will be invited to join the main bunch, take the lead at times, join pace line riding etc.

Regardless of the cycling experience of the new rider, it is vital to bunch safety to ensure uniform communications are known and understood by all parties, and that Tour de Cure's riding etiquette is closely observed.

This is particularly so when a sole rider, or a couple of riders join the Tour de Cure bunch out on the road. Unless the riding and communication skills are well known to the whole bunch, the rider/s joining must be told they may join but remain at the back of the bunch. Outline diplomatically the reasons why. The explanation should satisfy a responsible rider's query. If the rider is not happy with the rationale, ask them to continue with their own ride. The same applies if the rider's riding poses any threat to the bunch.

When a rider new to Tour de Cure or a rider/s want to join the bunch on the road, ask yourself these questions, 'Do I have confidence in the rider's calls and signals for hazards, for slowing, stopping, and do I have trust in the rider's calls (if any) of "over" or "clear"? If there is doubt, a risk presents itself to you and therefore the bunch, and strategies should be adopted to reduce the likelihood of the risk occurring.

Tour de Cure New Riders Bunch Position



New riders

Tour de Cure bunch

Safe bunch riding – it's a team effort



BUNCH RIDING RULES AND ETIQUETTE

9. Wet weather

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.
- Deflate front and rear tyre pressure from maximum by approx 20psi to enable more tyre grip on road. You won't go as fast, but that is good.
- Be wary of materials that are slippery in the wet. eg. metal plates, grills
- Be wary of white paint or road paint generally (crossings, lane lines)
- Avoid the centre position of a lane where vehicles drip oil from their sump and in the wet becomes hazardous.
- Check your lights are in working order with new batteries for maximum light strength and having a second tail light will only benefit



10. 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, 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.

11. Near misses

They will happen. In any workplace, in any social activity there are risks and there will be some lucky escapes and near misses. Those incidents are important to note with the bunch and discuss at a later stage. Identifying near misses, assessing what could have occurred and giving consideration to how best to avoid such an incident in the future is a simple way to help boost the group's safety. The cliché 'we can learn from our mistakes' is only half of it. Importantly, we can also learn much more from the more frequent "near mistakes".

12. 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 normal traffic noise and riders' calls when bunch riding. It is imperative that all riders hear for calls and listen out for traffic and other potential hazards. If the group agrees to split for a long hill climb on a low traffic road, the rider may decide to 'wire up' – one ear only - but immediately upon rejoining the bunch, all audio is switched off.
- Lights. Front (white) and rear (red) working lights
- Hand signals. At times hand signals cannot be made by the lead riders due to the need to keep both hands on the handle bars (eg rough roads, tight cornering etc) In those cases, the lead rider always makes a clear and loud call.
- Check all attachments to the bike are fastened secure (light fittings, pumps – preferably in the back pocket or better still gas cylinders, bidons and cages are secure)
- 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, 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 who is in your group. If a rider has dropped off, one or two riders should turn back to check 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 rides and bunch rides:

- A repair kit (and know how to use it); A pump, or gas cylinders; 2 tubes; Levers; Money; **Identity** including contacts in case of emergency ("ICE ICE1, ICE2..") in phone or details on laminated paper; Mobile phone (in water proof carry case)

Regardless of how experienced you may be as a cyclist, as a bunch rider, or how fit you are and how well you communicate calls and signals, safe bunch riding relies on a highly responsible team effort.



BUNCH RIDING RULES AND ETIQUETTE

COLLISION AVOIDANCE AND ACCIDENT PROCEDURE POINTS FOR TOUR DE CURE

By Martin Pearce

13. Collision avoidance

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

14. In the event of an accident

Self Safety: Good SA is essential. Do not race 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 conspicuousness once you have dismounted from your bike with lights.

Safety Cars (present on Tour):

The initial actions on of the rear safety car is to make a radio call of **"riders down-riders down"** and then park the vehicle in a position to best protect the fallen riders. The best orientation of the vehicle is cocked off 45 degrees with the front of the vehicle pointing into the centre of the road thus protecting the scene 'downstream'.

If there are fallen riders lying across more than one lane then the rear safety car should park more cocked off in a position that protects the most offside, i.e. the furthest from the kerb, fallen rider. By parking cocked off you present a wider profile to approaching traffic, forcing that traffic to take a wider berth. It also presents a clearer image that "something is wrong" and allows traffic to react appropriately. Once again good SA is required as safety car occupants alight from the vehicle.

The actions of the lead safety car will be dependant upon whether the incident occurs on single or dual carriageway. On dual carriageway the lead safety car will need to return to fallen riders by the safest possible means and park in a position to further protect the scene. On narrow single carriageway oncoming traffic may present a greater threat and the role of the lead car will be to protect the scene from that direction.



BUNCH RIDING RULES AND ETIQUETTE

- Traffic Marshals: In the event of an accident that is on a high speed road or in a position of limited visibility it is essential to post some traffic marshals beyond the corner / over the crest / to signal to approaching traffic.
- First Aid: The rear safety car will be carrying First Aid equipment. If fallen riders are uninjured or have only minor injuries our priority will be to clear the scene as soon as possible to minimise our risk (and negative PR) exposure. Minor first aid will be performed at a safer location. **However any seriously injured or dazed/confused rider will not be moved until assessed by the team medic.**

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Safe bunch riding – it's a team effort