

Wayfarers Ride Leader / Back Marker Guidelines

Introduction

Leading a ride is a chance to choose routes you enjoy and share with the group.

As a leader you are not responsible for the individual action of every participant but you do have a duty of care. More information is available in the CUK [Ride Leader's Toolkit](#). You must be a paid-up member of CTC (CUK) and you must be registered with HQ as a Volunteer/Ride Leader. This is arranged by the CTC SWL Secretary.

Preparation:

Have realistic aims – ensure that the ride length is reasonable for the group, time of year, weather, terrain, etc. Seek advice from more experienced leaders if unsure.

Book the lunch venue. Do they need confirmation of numbers on the day?

Recce the route – not mandatory (though very strongly advised especially for any off-road sections) but will depend on the leader's familiarity with the route and use of tools such as StreetView.

Think how are you going to navigate? – GPS/map/route sheet? May impact on need for/extent of the recce. How confident are you to lead direct from the GPS and keep a ride flowing?

Be aware of any hazards (very busy roads/challenging junctions/hills/poor surfaces) where extra care or warning to the group is required.

Publishing advance details on the blog is optional but anything unusual should be advised ideally by 6pm Monday for Wednesday rides, such as significant off-road or a more challenging ride than usual.

If the weather forecast is bad consider your options. Be prepared to cancel or curtail in case of snow, ice or exceptional weather.

Appoint a back marker, if possible in advance (particularly for complex rides, eg London) and swap mobile phone numbers. Brief the back marker on the route with a map, turn directions or GPX.

On the ride:

Know who is on the ride – are they all CTC members? Understand the rules for new/guest members. At a minimum ensure you have the name and mobile phone number of any new rider. Brief them on your planned ride and ensure they are familiar with the etiquette of riding in a group. If you think necessary, ask an experienced rider to keep an eye on the newcomer.

Tell the group who is back marking.

Apply ride guidelines - Use standard calls and signals. Find safe places to regroup preferably away from junctions and not obstructing traffic. Treat pedestrians and all vulnerable road users with respect. When approaching horse riders from behind, always warn them of your approach, advise them of the number of riders in the group and do NOT overtake until it is safe to do so.

Keep the ride flowing – Ask for corner markers at every junction that's not straight on. Corner markers should stay until the back marker has signalled that they have seen them. Regroup regularly. Wait for a clear ALL UP from the back marker and adjust the pace if riders are struggling.

Work with the back marker to tell the group to split into sections of max 6-8, single file, on busy roads where overtaking is difficult.

Back Marker Guidance

Swap mobile phone numbers with the leader

Ensure no-one gets left behind and that the leader is aware of any issues in the group. If necessary enlist the help of other riders to go forward and alert the leader.

Signal to corner markers when you have seen the corner. Signal to the leader when everyone is present. "All Up" or a raised arm is the recognised signal. Helpful to wear distinctive colour clothing.

Know who is on and who has left the ride. Inform the leader if someone leaves.

Handle any incidents that the leader doesn't see (punctures/mechanical/accidents) and inform the leader.

Encourage ride discipline, in particular not blocking the road when stopped and leaving gaps between groups. Report any issues to the leader for possible inclusion in the ride report.

After the ride:

Write up report and post on the blog

Any lessons learned? They may make you a better leader / back marker.

Share any concerns with the Rides Secretary or the rider concerned

Incidents (summary only – see CUK's [Ride Leader Handbook](#) – p48 Emergency Operating Procedures)

Fortunately these are rare and in most cases minor and can be handled with common sense. If you are unfortunate enough to be leader or back marker in a more serious situation then a few actions are essential:

Stay calm. Ensure that the scene is safe – cyclists off the road, manage approaching traffic

Assess the casualty. Is medical help required? Better to be safe than sorry.

How are those involved going to get home? The victim may be in shock and not have a realistic judgement of his/her capability to proceed. Do contacts need to be notified? Appoint someone to take care of those left behind unless you are confident they can make it home unassisted.

If the incident is serious assess whether the ride should continue.

Incidents must be reported if they involve serious injury or are likely to result in a claim by any of those involved. In case of accident ensure 3rd party details are taken and enough information, gathered for completion of a CTC Incident Report. Make notes to ensure that you have a concise, current record of events. Take photos if appropriate for insurance/legal purposes. Complete as much as you can of the Incident Report and work with a committee member to finalise the report.

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