



Rider Guidelines – Alton Cycling Club

The purpose of these guidelines is to help riders enjoy club rides and understand what to expect from the club's ride leaders. It's not definitive and there are few hard and fast rules. **We want our club rides to be fun and enjoyable.**

1. The Key Points

Our ride leaders act on the club's behalf as 'club officials'. Club officials are covered by the club's British Cycling insurance. They do not need to be qualified to perform the role, so we require all of the riders to be individually responsible for their own safety and for being properly equipped and insured. Both British Cycling and Cycling UK memberships provide rider insurance.

The leader has a duty of care and is there for 2 main tasks:

- 1. To follow a route**
- 2. To make sure no one gets lost and that everyone gets home safely**

The only mandatory rules are:

- **Everyone must wear a helmet**
- **Groups must ride together and no one gets left behind (splits may occur because of terrain, but the group should regroup as soon as possible)**

2. Before the ride

The Leader will prepare for the ride by getting familiarised with the route. The route destinations are published on the club website and there is a different route for each week in the month. **The leader should share their route with the group prior to the ride.** Download the route onto your GPS device.

The ride leader will check the weather forecast and consider options for varying the route to suit the conditions and communicate this via the WhatsApp group.

Make sure you bring the right gear (mini pump, 2 inner tubes and tyre levers or tubeless plug kit, multi-tool (ideally with chain tool), rear light, mobile phone, cash, your own food and drink for the ride. If you have one, a fully-charged GPS unit with route loaded).

3. At the meet

Arrive a few minutes early. There is an upper limit of 12 riders per group, including the leader. **If there are more than 12 riders, the group will split and a second leader will need to be allocated.**

If you are new to the club, please introduce yourself to the group. The ride leader will check that you have the right kit, that it is suitable for the conditions and ask about your riding experience to see which group you should ride with. It's much better for you to try a group that is easier to start with and to move up than it is to have a ride where you struggle. Let the ride leader know your details (name, mobile number, emergency contact, confirm insurance cover and email address).

If necessary, the ride leader will allocate a backmarker to ensure that no one gets left behind

The ride leader will usually give a quick briefing before you set off. This is to introduce new riders and explain clearly any particular points about the route and the planned stops. One of the benefits of group riding is sharing the work at the front. The ride leader will explain how they want this to happen on the ride and how hand signals and route directions will be given.

4. On the road

- **Ride with the group:** Ride together in the formation directed by the ride leader. If you find the pace is too quick for you, let the ride leader know and they will adjust the pace. It may be necessary for you to ride with a slower group after the coffee stop.



- **Communicate with the group:** Let other members of the group know if you need to stop or have a mechanical or other issue.
- **Follow the Highway Code** and ride legally
- You are representing the club on the road and our club kit makes us easily identifiable, so **be polite and courteous to other road users**
- **Use hand signals** to highlight particular hazards to the group eg. steep descents, very bad road surfaces, deep potholes, parked cars or pedestrians in the road and use warning calls for oncoming vehicles (car down), vehicles approaching from behind (car up), sudden holes in the road or gravel
- **Avoid stopping on bends and brows of hills**
- If you stop, make sure that you and your bike are **off the road** and not obstructing pedestrians

5. End of ride

The ride will typically end at a pub. If you decide not to stop or to drop out of the ride before the end, make sure the ride leader is informed.

6. If the worst happens on the ride

Riders do fall off, particularly when it's wet or icy. Bikes break and people get lost. **We ask all of our riders to be responsible for their own safety, so it is not the leader's fault or responsibility if something goes wrong.**

A faller:

- If someone falls off, one of the first things to make sure of is that other vehicles do not make the situation worse. If someone is down on the road, quickly have someone front and back checking and warning vehicles.
- Don't immediately try to move the faller until you know there are no injuries that would be worsened by moving them. Better to inconvenience the odd driver.
- Make sure everyone else is out of the way and off the road if possible
- Each group should contain a trained first aider. If required, let the group know if you have a first aid qualification.
- Apply first aid to the faller
- The ride leader will call for an ambulance if necessary and give them clear instructions as to where you are (a mobile phone or GPS device can give you a precise location and the "what3words" app can give you a code for any 3 metre square on or off road)
- Riders in the club have access to In Case of Emergency (ICE) tags which have details of a next of kin to be contacted. Call the nominated contact to inform them of the situation.
- The ride leader will call the police if there are other vehicles involved
- Puts on any spare clothing to keep warm if necessary

If you get lost:

If you get lost, do everything you can to inform the ride leader where you are. They will give you instructions on where to meet. If you cannot contact them, ride home and then inform the ride leader that you are safe.

Mechanicals and Punctures

These are inevitable, though can be minimised with good maintenance and careful riding. **Riders are responsible for making their own running repairs, though the group may help you.** Make sure that any debris, such as old inner tubes, is disposed of carefully.