

Ride Leader Framework

Purpose

This document is a framework which summarises the principle points a ride leader requires to consider when, planning, preparing, leading and reflecting on a ride. Further information is found at: <https://www.cyclinguk.org/group/page/help-potential-new-ride-leaders-and-mentors>

We have a group of truly amazing, talented leaders who are aware of these points when volunteering to lead a ride. Heroes appreciated by all members of your club. Thank you.

This framework can be used by current ride leaders and new ride leaders being mentored. Treat it as a useful aide-memoire document.

Note – not every element will always be included during the process of leading a ride, (there are a LOT!), however, you will inherently have decided if the element is required or not based on the likely needs of the ride.

Overall, the target when delivering a ride is to ensure that you:

- Plan a suitable route.
- Create a welcoming and friendly atmosphere.
- Lead the group in a safe and enjoyable manner.

Remember, ultimately all riders must take responsibility for their own health and safety. However, as a ride leader you have a “duty of care” to plan, prepare and lead the ride appropriately.

Planning of a Ride

Create a route based on the Needs of the ride.

The Needs are based on the ride being supported (Sun/Tue/Wed) & time of year. These set a “standard” of participants “likely” needs, but remember that it is YOUR ride, so provide something you are comfortable & confident of supporting, in a safe manner.

When planning a route (own route / borrowed one), consider:

- Route, road type/surface : use of quiet roads, tracks/terrain (consider attendees skill level).
- Length, elevation gain, gradients (consider experience/fitness of participants).
- Does the route have a focal-point/theme/purpose/destination – reason why you have selected.
- Use of planning tools, maps/apps (Strava, Komoot, Ride with GPS, Plot a route, Mapometer).
- Start Location/Time – you can be different to the “norm”.
- Identification of any risk points(hazards) – busy roads, awkward junctions/roundabouts, places group may get split etc.
- Likely weather.
- Allowance for time of year (season) & day light length.
- Actions to reduce risks/hazards – identify alternative route options if need to shorten ride, due to bad weather, mechanicals etc. (Consider alternative transport options).
- Identifying stopping points: lunch, café, toilets. (Any constraints for lunch stop).
- Identifying safe stopping points to regroup; rest at top of hill, warn of hazards ahead etc.
- Speed of ride & expected timings; lunch arrive/depart, finish etc.
- Experience & fitness of likely attendees.

- Consider group size, maybe set a maximum limit.
- Identifying any extra requirements: lights, tools, locks, layered clothes, phone, £ etc.
- Undertaking a recce, reviewing and amending ride based on “discoveries”. Learn from the recce and remember to keep your plan at a level which is achievable.

Preparing to Lead a Ride

Prior week to the ride

- Send out invitation email, (using group standard format), gather feedback in line with your request, eg attendees, note those joining at different start point, lunch menu requests, etc.
- Access ICE sheet and update with planned attendees (if you asked members to sign-up for the ride).
- Check the weather forecast, be comfortable to CANCEL/AMEND route for adverse weather (wind, ice/snow, rain).
- Be prepared for last minute changes and share these if time.

On the day - Pre-ride Briefing

- Arrive early at start location, review with other leaders any last minute thoughts.
- Welcome attendees as they arrive, in particular any new group riders, know names of riders. Make all feel welcome, especially “newbies” (who should have read the ride guidelines).
- Awareness of others joining later in the ride.
- Set the tone to be inclusive & kind to yourself & others.
- Update ICE list, to show who is attending, gather ICE info for anyone not on the list.
- Make sure the group know of any information which may affect the way you ride today, eg minor injury which could slow you down, your first lead – that they should be kind to the leader.
- Provide an overview of the ride.
- Include any special points of interest:
 - Hazards.
 - Stopping points: refreshments, toilets ... & landmarks, etc.
 - Any specific difficult/unusual sections.
 - Any last-minute adjustments (eg route changes) due to weather, road diversions etc.
- Any special reminders (maybe 2 or 3) you want the group to focus on; which support ride etiquette/ride guidelines eg:
 - Group sizes.
 - Single file vs 2 abreast (highway code).
 - Courteous to other road users (vehicles, cyclists, horse riders, walkers, etc) & at stopping (lunch/café) points.
 - Communication signals (hand/voice) of directional change, hazards.
 - Marking of junctions.
 - Options to return early if have an issue.
 - Equipment (phone with your contact details, tools etc).
 - Your bike is roadworthy.
 - Low sun, wet leaves.
 - What to do if become separated from the group.
- Ask for volunteer back marker, ensure they have a phone with your number and all know who it is.
- Opportunity for questions, or talk to me separately on route (if don't want to share with others).
- Have I forgotten anything?
- Final head count + full list of riders (ICE sheet) before departure.

Leading the Ride

This is where your excellent planning and pre-ride chat pay off, time to enjoy your bike lead.

- Route finding, following planned route, with signalling to help others: directional change, hazards.
- Following safe route, with points of interest and welcoming stops for lunch, café etc.
- Stopping to regroup in places which are safe – away from the traffic flow, away from junctions.
- Stopping to describe any upcoming hazards etc.
- Checking with backmarker + others, to see all is good, pace ok, etc + provide opportunity for feedback – check in with anyone who may be struggling.
- Appropriate pace so group is cohesive.
- Awareness of risks (dynamic route assessment) – take action during ride to minimise.
- If required – route amendments to cater for arising issues, eg road closures, deteriorating weather, excessive punctures (recently cut hedge).
- Position in the group – lead from front, taking control at “key” points, eg hazards
 - Confident to mix with others on quieter roads which have limited directional change.
 - Demonstrate good road positioning, as per guidelines/highway code (be a “model” cyclist).
- Prior to departure from lunch, review what has gone well and reminders of any key points/issues to be aware of for homeward section.
- If an incident occurs, (mechanical/injury) use the strength, skills & knowledge of those in the group; they will be happy to help. Keep a record of what happened.
- Awareness of numbers in group as riders depart near the end.

Post Ride - Review of Key Learning

- Destroy ICE sheet (unless an incident occurred and a CyclingUK incident form requires to be completed).
- Reflect on the ride, what went well, any opportunities to learn/change in the future
- Do you want further support?
- Did you meet the key targets:
 - Plan a suitable route.
 - Create a welcoming and friendly atmosphere.
 - Lead the group in a safe and enjoyable manner.

Thank you on behalf of all group members for offering to lead rides. May you continue to enjoy the rewarding experience of leading enthusiastic members to destinations of your choice.