

ANZA Cycling Group Ride Guidelines

Cycling, like all sports has its dangers, however these can be reduced by a number of factors and by being part of a peloton (bunch) of cyclists you have taken the first step to improving your safety and visibility on the road. This also brings certain responsibilities to look after yourself and others to make sure that everyone returns home safely. Take responsibility for your actions and the decisions you make.

Bunch riding is safest and most enjoyable when a few simple guidelines are followed;

- Get yourself and your bike organised
- Check before you ride
- Bunch expectations
 - a) Rides – know which group to join
 - b) How we roll – safety and etiquette
 - c) Calls – what do they mean and who makes them

1. Getting organised to ride:

Get this stuff sorted before you even think about coming along for a ride and you'll be starting out well... Better than a cure and a lot less painful. Spend the time and the money to make yourself comfortable, protect your head and body and have the skills to control your bike.

a) Helmet – No helmet is natural selection in action (enough said)

b) Gloves – Give you better control whilst riding and some padding in a fall

c) iPOD/Headphones – definite NO NO in the bunch. They have no place in a group ride and are generally very dangerous to use in any road cycling (traffic) situation. Save your music for the stationary trainer.

d) Bike – Must fit properly and be well maintained with good tyres and bakes (pads, cables and adjusted correctly) at a minimum. Get a proper bike fitting done and get your set-up sorted. A poorly maintained bike will fail more regularly and therefore hold up the bunch and spoil your ride. It may even end up causing you injury. Go to a reliable mechanic to service your bike and ask for a safety check.

e) Comfort – Have high quality cycling shorts to minimize discomfort and distraction. Cycling kit is purpose made and more practical and comfortable than t-shirts and casual shorts.

f) Glasses – Personal choice, but offer protection from flying hazards. Make sure the arms are on the outside of your helmet straps so that they can dislodge in a fall.

g) Visibility – Be visible and wear light-coloured clothing. Have good lights front (white) and rear (red), and turn them on! Other coloured lights (eg: blue) are distracting for other cyclists and also against the law.

h) Weather – Wet roads are slippery, wet metal plates and paint are lethal and visibility may be reduced. Think about staying at home to ride another day.

i) Training – Practice bike handling in various conditions, ask for advice and attend formal or casual training on offer. Make sure you are comfortable clipping in and out of pedals before joining a group ride.

j) Fatigue – Concentration levels are reduced, handling compromised. Leave more room between riders when tired. Firstly, choose a ride within your capability, don't push beyond your limits and if you're having trouble ask for a pace to be slowed by calling "steady".

k) Alcohol – shouldn't need to be said but same rules apply as driving a car. If you've had a night on the booze, your perception and bike handling skills will be compromised. If you drink and ride, you're a bloody idiot.

i) Home run – Don't become complacent when you get close to home. Crashes often happen close to home.

2. Check before you ride (best done the night before an early morning ride):

a) Check your tyre pressure. Make sure your tyres are properly pumped up before every ride. This will help you avoid unnecessary pinch flats.

b) Make sure your lights are working. As well as making good sense, you are required by law to have working front (white) and rear (red) lights during hours of darkness. Test your lights the night before a ride by turning them on and leaving for a couple of minutes. Just turning them on doesn't cut it as often a battery that's going dead will seem to be working for a minute or so before fading away – best to avoid a last second battery search as you're heading out for an early morning ride.

c) Check your tyre changing/emergency gear. Every cyclist should carry (and know how to use) tyre changing gear. At a minimum, you will need a spare tube, tyre levers and a handpump or CO2 cylinder and dispenser. You can carry this in a saddle bag or in your jersey pockets. You should also carry up-to-date ICE contact info (such as on a [OneLife ID band](#), which all members are entitled to when they join), your phone and enough cash to get a cab home if needed.

d) Fill up your bidon/s (cycling-specific bottles). It's a good idea to carry at least one bidon (with either water or electrolyte) for any ride. For rides of 2 hours or longer, you'll need 2 bottles or more.

e) Don't forget your helmet. Helmets are compulsory on all ANZA Cycling rides.

3. Joining the peloton – Bunch expectations:

When you turn up for a ride, introduce yourself and ask if there is a designated Ride Captain (RC). All Saturday morning rides from Food Canopy have an RC appointed before the group departs. The RC should be able to direct the group, call for a split if necessary, answer any questions re the route/pace and generally help everyone to stay on track and enjoy the ride. Other mid-week rides may not have a designated RC as such but rather a core group that often rides together and performs the same duties as an RC.

You are part of a larger entity when riding in a peloton and you need to adjust your riding and thinking accordingly. Your actions are no longer independent and must be considered as to their impact on the bunch. A peloton is not as simple as an individual and so must approach intersections, lights, hazards, traffic congestion etc accordingly.

a) Which ride? See our Rides section for more information.

When you arrive at the meeting point, you should already know or quickly determine which ride you are planning to join. You should at least know which route, so that you are properly prepared for the distance.

Rides are advertised based on average terminal speed, which means the average speed of the group at the end of the ride – NOT rolling speed, ie a 'Kranji 32' will do a Kranji loop route and finish with a 32kph average speed. The group will be rolling on the flat sections at 36+kph.

If you're coming along for the first time, we always recommend joining an 'easy' group or one that you should not find too challenging to stay with. You can then concentrate on learning how we roll rather than worrying about hanging on. You can always join a more challenging ride next time.

10-14 is our recommended group size (as it's roughly the same as a lorry and is able to operate as a single unit, without unduly affecting traffic). If there are 16 or more cyclists, we suggest the group splits into 2. A late split is sometimes necessary when people join the group just after the start and the leaders may not be aware of the group size. The recommendation is to check the group numbers continuously and if necessary arrange a split.

Bunch ride V. training ride – The advertised pace of the ride should be adhered to unless agreed by the bunch on the day to alter it. If you're not wearing a number on your back then you're not racing. Don't set out to 'smash' a ride, just because you feel strong on the day. There are no prizes for bringing yourself or someone else down. It's not cool.

b) How we roll... (check out [this youtube clip](#) for an animated explanation)

Configuration

Pairs – We ride in pairs, which means keeping your handlebar aligned with the person's next to you. Any more than 2 abreast and the middle person is unable to avoid obstacles. When you sit half a wheel or so ahead of your partner, it's called 'half-wheeling' which is not only poor form and annoying as it causes surging in the group with riders constantly trying to align with the wheel in front, but is also quite dangerous as the rider in front may swerve unexpectedly e.g. to avoid an obstacle, and will clip your front wheel if it is overlapping. Never ride up the middle of the group.

Turns/rotation – Unless otherwise stated our groups roll in an anti-clockwise 'up and over' chain pattern. When rotating, the front right-side rider will indicate the change, the front left-side rider will ease the pace slightly, allowing the right-side rider to move up and across, in front of the left-side rider and the next rider on the right side, moves up into the first position. It's helpful to let the person in front of you know when they've reached the 'last wheel' position (as you are moving across to the back right-side. This should all be accomplished smoothly, without surging and in a timely fashion. Don't be a hog on the front of the pack. Give everyone a turn and share the load.

No gaps but leave space – Gaps (more than a metre) reduce the drafting benefit, disrupt the pairings, encourage riders to pull in on you and make negotiating intersections when signals are changing much more hazardous than a group acting as a single entity. Conversely it's not a race so keep back 30+cm from the wheel ahead and stay offset. Align your front wheel with the quick release of the wheel in front as a guide. Try and stay one side or other of the bike in front rather than moving back and forth.

Sprint sections – Most rides have a section or two with a short sprint. Learn where these are and don't turn the whole ride into a series of random sprints. Wait at the designated regroup point. Don't push on and drop the slower riders.

Handling

Smooth movements – Be cool. Be predictable and smooth in the bunch. Signal your intentions to fellow riders and don't make unexpected changes of speed or direction.

Brake smoothly and call "stopping" or "slowing" first if necessary. If you have to brake heavily, try and leave the maximum room for those following you to react and stop.

Be aware that if you stand up out of the saddle (when going up a rise) your bike can seemingly 'lurch' behind you. Make sure you are well clear of the rider behind in this case. When leading off from a standstill, eg. a red light, ease the speed up slowly so that the bunch can stay together.

Riders at the back should call 'on' to indicate when the peloton has regrouped and is ready to gradually increase the speed. Always keep pedaling when on the front of the group, especially when going downhill, so that the rest of the bunch are not forced to sit on their brakes.

Look forward – Don't look back, down or sideways. Things happen fast and a moment's lack of attention can be all it takes. Calls for lane changes should come from the back of the group. If you're at the front, make it clear when a call is needed.

Hands – Keep both hands on the bar with at least one finger hooked under the bar to avoid being dislodged when hitting unexpected hazards (bumps, holes). Never take both hands off the bar when in the bunch. You might think you look like Eddy Merckz but it can make the people around you very nervous (and we don't like that).

Drinking – When you need to take a drink, do it when conditions are predictable. Signal to those behind you that you are drinking, (and do not have both hands on the bars) by sticking your bidon out to the side. If you're not confident replacing a bidon whilst riding, wait until stopped to take a drink.

Aero/profile/Tri-bars – are for time-trialling and non-drafting triathlon. Aero bars are not to be used in the peloton as they take your hands away from ready access to your brakes and reduce your control. You may ride a TT bike or a road bike with aero bars on group rides but hands are to remain on the hoods while in the group.

Wet roads are slippery. Slow down, watch out for painted surfaces and metal plates (otherwise known as black ice). Coming down Mt Faber is especially dangerous in the wet.

Don't stop where it is dangerous to do so. Fix flat tyres etc in a safe place. Be prepared to remind others who may be preoccupied with the events at hand to notice the danger they are in.

Traffic Rules

Follow the traffic rules and resist the urge to engage if a road-rage incident arises. It's not worth it and any engagement usually just fuels the anti-cyclist sentiment...

One lane – We share the road and expect drivers to have patience and respect us. We can reciprocate by using a single lane on multi-lane roads, not blocking the road, not making groups too big, leaving enough space between bunches and going in single file on two-way roads/narrow sections (ie, South Buona Vista).

Red lights – We stop at red lights. If approaching an orange light, the front pair will call either 'rolling' or 'stopping' based on whether they believe the peloton can safely stop/ continue before the light turns red. When we stop, we are still a bunch, we stay in our pairs, stop behind the traffic and do not filter through between cars/ up the left side to get to the lights.

c. Making calls

Call out/point out – Sitting in a bunch means the view forward is often blocked by riders ahead. Everyone behind is relying on you and the riders ahead to make them aware of obstacles, be they holes in the road, pedestrians/joggers, slower cyclists, parked cars, oncoming traffic, metal plates, glass, grates, debris, animals (dogs, monkeys etc). If the obstacle is dangerous enough then shout it out as well as pointing it out. It is up to the riders at the back of the peloton to

determine when its clear to change lanes and call this out as well. If you are 'last wheel' remember this is your responsibility so that the riders at the front are not straining to see behind when time to change lanes. The call should be 'clear... over' if clear to change. If a car is approaching/overtaking the call is 'car back'. Make sure you **pass the calls** up and down the bunch as well.

Calls primarily from the front

'car up' – beware of slow/parked vehicle ahead. The peloton will need to check if clear to go around.

'rider/runner up' – beware of a cyclist or pedestrian ahead. Also used to alert the cyclist/pedestrian to the group's approach.

'stopping/slowng' – the peloton must prepare to stop.

'rolling' – the peloton will keep moving or start moving off.

Calls primarily from the rear

'steady' – slows the pace momentarily to close gaps and allow riders in difficulty to get back on the bunch.

'on' – indicates all riders are back in the bunch and the normal pace can resume.

'car back' – a vehicle is overtaking the peloton. Hold your line and be aware of cars approaching from behind.

'clear' – the road/lane is clear to enter.

'wait' – the road/lane is not clear to enter. Wait until 'clear... over' is heard before attempting to change lanes.

'out' – the peloton can *momentarily* move into the next lane to bypass an obstacle, eg parked car, fallen tree branch.

'over' – the peloton is clear to change lanes.

Lastly...

All these things should and will become second nature to you after riding with ANZA Cycling for a while. Being a transient membership there's always a significant number of new faces in the bunch so it's up to all of us to lead by example rather than follow by accident.

None of this happens without a dedicated committee and supportive members. Rides and events don't just happen so if you can organise a ride or help out in any way then please let a committee member know as help is always very much appreciated.

Keep in mind

- It's not a race.
- It's a hobby not a livelihood.
- We have day jobs we have to go to after the ride which are harder with a broken collarbone or smashed wrist.
- We have family and friends who love us. Get home safe!