

Code of Safe Riding Standards

All members must familiarise themselves with our Code of Safe Riding Standards and consent that you are willing to abide by it.

New BCC Members

- All new BCC members are required to join one BCC Induction Ride before joining other BCC rides.

The induction ride is not an introduction to cycling, but an introduction to riding safely with BCC. We will take you through our group safe riding standards, and how we ride in order that everyone can have a safer ride. During this ride we will also talk about the BCC group skill levels, which rides might suit you, and the BCC qualifying time trial if you haven't already completed it.

- We also encourage current members to join the Induction Rides from time to time, to refresh yourself on the group riding expectations and of course to welcome and meet new members.

Group riding skills

- BCC will aim to run group riding skills sessions at least once a year for new and current members as a refresher of our Code of Safe Riding Standards and putting it all into practice.
- All members are strongly encouraged to attend one of these sessions to refresh their skills to ensure you continue to understand and abide by our safe riding standards.

Code of Safe Riding Standards

Riding is safest and most enjoyable when a few simple guidelines are followed:

1. **Get yourself, your bike and equipment organised**
2. **Check before you ride**
3. **Group safe riding standards**
 - How we roll – safety and etiquette
 - Calls – what do they mean and who makes them

1. Getting Organised to Ride - the basics to have sorted before you come along for a ride:

- **Helmet** – is compulsory for all LBOYB and BCC rides. Make sure your helmet meets the Australian standards and is fitted correctly to your head.
- **Gloves** – give you better control whilst riding and some padding in a fall.
- **Bike** – must fit properly and be well maintained with good tyres and bakes (pads, cables and adjusted correctly) and chain oiled at a minimum. It's recommended to have professional bike fitting and to get set-up correctly on your bike. A poorly maintained bike will fail more regularly leading to ride hold ups and impact on yours and your riding buddies riding experience. It may even end up causing you injury. Go to a reliable mechanic to service your bike and ask for a safety check. Ask us if you need any assistance or recommendations.
- **Bell** – Vic Roads law states that all bikes must be fitted with a bell.
- **Cycling clothing** – we strongly recommend you have high quality cycling knicks to minimize discomfort and distraction. Cycling kit is purpose made and more practical and comfortable than t-shirts, jeans and casual shorts. Where possible wear our LBOYB or BCC jerseys/gilets so we stand out as a group of proficient riders, as well as be visible to all road and path users. Alternatively, wear light-coloured clothing to stand out. Layering through Winter with merino undershirts, thermal long tights and long figured gloves are recommended.
- **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 if a fall were to occur.
- **Training** – practice bike handling in various conditions. We offer private or group lessons if you need some coaching/training or tips. If you are wearing cleats, make sure you are comfortable clipping in and out of pedals prior to joining a group ride.
- **Alcohol** – this 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.

Code of Safe Riding Standards

2. Check Before you Ride (best done the night before):

- **Tyre pressure** - make sure your tyres are pumped up to the correct psi before every ride. This will help you avoid unnecessary pinch flats. The minimum and maximum tyre pressures are printed on the side of your tyres.
- **Lights** - when riding at night and in low-light Vic Roads Law states you must use a front white light and a rear red light. The light can be flashing or steady but must be seen from 200 metres away. It is also good to use flashing lights during the day to help make you more visible to other road users. **Good quality lights are required** for all rides on the road, in particular our early morning road rides, and on gravel rides. Test your lights the night before a ride by turning them on and leaving for a couple of minutes.
- **Tyre changing** - every cyclist must carry (and know how to use) tyre changing equipment. At a minimum, you will need a spare tube, tyre levers and a handpump or CO2 cylinder and dispenser. You carry this in a saddle bag or in your jersey pockets.
- **Emergency contact** - you must carry an up-to-date ICE card with your 'in case of emergency' contact details (new members will receive an ICE card at their ride assessment or at the induction ride). Please ask us if you need a new one.
- **Phone** – carry a fully charged phone and a form of payment, card or cash, if you need to get a taxi home or your MYKI to catch a train, and to pay for coffee!
- **Assistance** - consider joining either the Bicycle Network Rider Rescue or RACV Bike Assist service. These services are great when you have mechanical issues, a flat tyre you can't change or are fatigued.
- **Drink** - 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 longer rides you may need 2 bottles.
- **Rider insurance** – all BCC members are required to take out rider insurance either with AusCycling or Bicycle Network. Speak to us for further details.

Code of Safe Riding Standards

3. Group Safe Riding Standards

Every ride you join may have different riders who may not have ridden together before. To ensure that everyone is as safe as possible it is essential that each rider is familiar with and abides by our Group Safe Riding Standards. Members are encouraged to positively educate and support new members on the standards.

From time to time, we all may need a gentle reminder, so let's look out for each other. Should someone in the group have a word about the standard/safety of your riding DO NOT take it personally. Everyone is looking after their own and your safety.

- **Communication among the group** – in a group ride communication, (hand signals, verbal cues) are critical to keep every rider safe and aware. No matter where you are in the group, if you see something hazardous or unsafe, let the group or rider involved know by gesturing and calling out in a positive way. If you see something unsafe, say something!
- **Ride leaders** – all rides have a ride leader who will direct the group, organise the group to split, if necessary, set/agree the route/pace, mention any safety precautions – road/path conditions, weather, and generally help everyone to stay on track and enjoy the ride. Many of our ride arrangers are volunteers who love cycling and offer to lead social rides. It is important to listen, always respect and follow instructions of the ride leader.
- **Joining ridings** - arrive a few minutes before the ride meet time - this gives the ride leader time to share details of the route etc. If you are unable to make the ride, make sure you put a comment up in the Team App event, or text the ride leader, and change your Team App reply to 'No' as soon as possible so that others on the waitlist can join the ride with sufficient notice, and so the ride leader isn't waiting for you. Be respectful of numbers on the ride that the leader has set. Ride leaders will always consider how to include all on the wait list, but sometimes it is not possible to have larger group sizes based on the planned route and road conditions.
- **Group levels** - rides are advertised in Stack Team App based on the group – e.g. BCC - Di2, Gears, Cleats or a combined ride, or LBOYB – Bells, Saddles, Wheelies. You will be allocated to a specific group based on your ride assessment, or for BCC your time on the qualifying ride. The leader and the group will discuss/agree the pace for the ride.
- **Group size - 8-10** is our recommended group size on the road (as it's roughly the same as a truck and we can operate as a single unit, without unduly affecting traffic). On LBOYB path rides the group size is set based on the group level, i.e. Wheelies 8, Saddles 10, Bells 12. If there are 12 or more cyclists, the group must split into 2.
- **Distractions** – when riding in a group on the road or the path you must keep scanning between the rider in front, up the road/path ahead to see what is happening, and the wheel of the rider ahead - as well as be aware of what is happening amongst the group. Avoid conducting involved conversations (save it for coffee time) – excessive chatting is a distraction that takes away your focus from your surrounds, including traffic and pedestrians. It can put the safety of you and the group at risk. We all have the same goal in mind to get home safely and in one piece.
- **Braking/Slowing/Stopping** - when riding in a group brake smoothly and call "slowing" or with the hand signal – an extended arm with palm flat pointed down and back towards the rider behind you in a 'waving motion' to indicate slowing. Or call "stopping" or with the hand signal - an extended arm with palm flat pointed down facing the rider behind you with a push backwards to indicate you are stopping. Use your voice - at times you might not be able to signal using your hand, use your voice. 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.

Code of Safe Riding Standards

- **Hazards** - It is important to identify what is deemed hazardous to the group. Calling hazards that pose no risk to the group is dangerous in itself e.g. the hazard is too far to the side to pose a risk to the group, the hazard is too minor e.g. a few leaves, a small amount of sand. If non risk hazards are continued to be called it is likely the ride 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 group

Road Riding in a Peloton

- **Pairs** – we ride in pairs when the roadway conditions allow. The ride leader and or group will agree when pairs or single file is required. The left rider should position themselves 0.5 to 1 meter out from the gutter.
- **Ensure you ride evenly with your partner** - hub to hub, handlebar to handlebar. Ride no more than two abreast and no more than 1-1.5m apart. Keep approximately 1.0 metre off the rear of and slightly off to the side of the rider in front (more in wet weather). This gives you better vision down the line and more time to react to hazards.
- **DO NOT 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.
- **Passing on the left** – it is extremely unsafe, bad etiquette and foolhardy to pass a rider or a group on the left. Please don't do it. No exceptions. Always overtake on the right.
- **Scan behind** - when riding in a group regularly scan behind you to ensure the riders immediately behind you are still 'on'. If there is a gap let the riders in front know by calling 'ease-up' everyone is not on. When the group is all on then the call is 'all on'.
- **Standing Up** - 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. The sign to indicate you are about to stand up, is to flick both of your elbows, then stand up.
- **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.
- **Wet roads are slippery** - slow down, watch out for painted surfaces and metal surfaces, in particular tram/train tracks. Increase the space between you and the rider in front when riding in wet conditions. Be aware of the type of brakes you have, as rim brakes are less effective in the wet than disc brakes.
- **A tidy peloton is a thing of beauty** but more importantly it is very clear to motorists that it is a group (obeying the road rules) and needs to be treated with respect. Disorganised groups and gaps in the peloton can lead to confusion by other road users.

Turns/rotations in pairs

- **Rotations** – our groups roll in an anti-clockwise "up and over" chain pattern. The front riders will agree when to rotate, the rider on the front right will indicate the change with a flick of the right elbow and verbally call 'rotating'.

Code of Safe Riding Standards

How rotations work - key steps

- The front left-side rider will ease the pace slightly. The right-side rider will accelerate slightly and move across to the left in front of the left-side rider. It's helpful for the left-side rider to call 'clear' when the rotating person's back wheel is clear of the left-side rider's front wheel.
- The rider directly behind the rider who has rotated from the right, moves up to the front, keeping the same pace and scan behind to ensure the rider behind them has moved up. If not, slow down slightly and wait for the rider to catch up.
- The rest of the riders in the group will then move up two spots in the group. The last rider in the group should let the next person in front of them know they have reached the 'last wheel' position as they are moving across to the back right-side.
- Keep the rotations as smooth as possible, keeping the same pace, without surging. Don't stay on the front of the pack for too long. Give everyone a turn and share the load. If conditions are windy the group may agree to rotate every 5th light post or similar.
- Don't rotate on a hill - as a courtesy to other riders, lead riders should not rotate just before the commencement or in the middle of a hill. A rotation should always occur on the flat.
- Stay in formation - 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

Turns/rotations when in single file

- **Rotating when in single formation** – the rider at the front indicates with a flick of the elbow to alert the rider behind they intend to rotate.
- **The front rider will then smoothly pull to the left side** before easing up a bit, causing them to drift back alongside the rest of the group. As the rider who has rotated reaches the last rider in the line, they may need to slightly increase their pace and move back into the line.
- **The new front rider must continue to keep the same pace** so as not to create gaps in the group and be checking behind to ensure the next rider behind is still 'on'. Likewise the rider now in 2nd position must also check behind to ensure the rider behind them is still 'on', and so on for the rest of the riders.

Riding at the Front of the Group

- **Role of riders at the front** – must always keep pedalling, especially when going downhill, so that the rest of the bunch are not forced to sit on their brakes.
- **Communicate** - 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, the potential of car doors being opened, oncoming traffic, glass, grates, debris, animals (dogs). If the obstacle is dangerous enough, then call out as well as pointing it out.
- **Single file formation** – the lead riders are responsible for calling 'single file' formation when the road narrows, traffic increases, a cycle lane is marked on the road or there is a parked car or other hazard. A raised hand above the helmet with your index finger pointing up and call 'single file'.
- **The right side rider goes in front, and the left side rider falls in behind their ride partner** in each pair. We pass the parked car or hazard in single file formation so that we **do NOT cross the centre lane of the road** and thus remove the risk of being in the path of oncoming

Code of Safe Riding Standards

traffic. It also means another group of cyclists has room to pass safely in a single file and not cross the centre lane of the road.

Calls and/or signals from the front:

- **'car up'** beware of slow/parked vehicle ahead. The group may need to change to single file to go around – remember to pass the call up to the rear of the group. 'Car up' may also be called on narrower roads if the group is riding in pairs, and they need to change to single file formation so the car ahead can pass safely.
- **'rider/runner up'** – beware of a cyclist or pedestrian ahead. Also used to alert the cyclist/pedestrian to the group's approach.
- **'stopping/slowng'** – call or hand signal - the peloton must prepare to slow or stop.
- **'rolling'** – the peloton will keep moving or start moving off.
- **'stay behind me'** – due to parked car or hazard, signal by placing bent left or right arm behind your back.
- **'single file'** – one finger pointed up from an extended arm.
- **'pair up'** – two fingers pointed up from an extended arm.
- **'bollard'** – call out when approaching one as you may block it from view from behind
- **'passing' or 'riders back'** – if you pass a rider(s) or runner/pedestrian

Riding at the Back of the Group

- **Role of riders at the back** – it is up to the riders at the back of the group to determine when it's 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.

Calls from the back:

- **'car back'** – a vehicle is approaching/overtaking, hold your line and make sure you **pass the calls** up and down the bunch as well.
- **'ease up'** – slows the pace momentarily to close gaps and allow riders in difficulty to get back on the bunch.
- **'all on'** – indicates all riders are back in the bunch and the normal pace can resume.
- **'clear' or 'clear back'** – when it is safe for the entire group to change lanes or move out of the lane.
- **'wait'** – the road/lane is not clear to enter. Wait until 'clear... over' is heard before attempting to change lanes.

Traffic Rules

- **Follow the traffic rules** - 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.
- **The law is clear** – two bike riders are allowed to travel two abreast if they are no more than 1.5 metres apart. It is legal in any traffic lane on single and multi-lane roads. It is NOT legal for MORE than two riders to travel together side-by-side, but a third rider can overtake riders who are two abreast. Even if there are no cars coming from behind, we should still be merging into single file formation when passing parked cars or when the road narrows. With the right person going first and then regrouping. DO NOT cross on to the other lane, or other side of the road.

Code of Safe Riding Standards

- **Traffic lights** – the front riders are responsible to make the ‘stopping’ call on the approach to a red/orange light, or the ‘rolling’ call on approach to green/orange lights. Remember to think of the group as a slow-moving vehicle, if the back cannot get through safely, then stop the group. The ‘rolling’ call is not a blind invitation to those following to proceed through a red light. If you are say the 4th pair and decide it is no longer safe to go through the light, then you should stop – BUT you must then make your own loud and clear ‘stopping’ call to make those behind you aware of your intentions. Riders behind must stop.
- **Roundabouts** - at roundabouts, once it is clear the group takes the lane so motorists don't attempt to overtake whilst negotiating the roundabout.
- **Always check for traffic** – All riders need to check for vehicles themselves at intersections and stop with a call and hand signal to warn the riders behind.
- **When coming out of a side road or junction think of the group as one big vehicle.** Wait until there is a gap for the whole group to move off together. Having cars between the group is dangerous. Should this happen DO NOT overtake cars to re-join the group in front.
- **Ride for the conditions** – especially if its windy, or with lots of traffic – consider increasing the distance between wheels to give some wobble room, rotate more often, consider single file if extremely windy. If the roads are very wet and slippery, consider pulling over and stopping.

Ascending/decending in a Group

- **Ascending** - on gentle or rolling inclines the group should stay together, maintaining the speed of the lead rider. When commencing an ascent, the lead riders should accelerate into the hill to avoid the bunch slowing as normal speed would reduce going into a hill. Once at the crest of the hill the lead riders need to keep pedalling for another 100m or so 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 will result in riders following having to slow or even brake before they have reached the crest.
- **Descending** – lead riders need to keep pedalling downhill. The bunch behind will have the advantage of a ‘slip stream’ and can travel faster without pedalling. To avoid the concertina effect, the lead riders must always pedal downhill and upon reaching the bottom of the hill, pedal faster to maintain the same speed for 100m or more. If you are in the leading pair, continue pedalling on all but the steepest downhill sections, the draft you create allows those behind you to increase their speed even when not pedalling. When descending, open up the distance between riders to a couple of lengths and continue pedalling. Riders don't like having to ride constantly under brakes.

Near Misses

- They do happen. On any ride there are risks and there may be some lucky escapes and near misses. Those incidents are important to note with the group and discuss at a later stage. Identifying near misses, assessing what could have occurred and considering how best to avoid such an incident in the future is a simple way to help boost the group's safety. We can learn from mistakes, but we can learn more from the more frequent “near misses”.