



Central London CTC

Group riding session: 1* and 2*

Bike check

Make sure your bike is roadworthy before setting out on the ride.

At the minimum:

- Check front and back brakes work and will stop you effectively
- Both tyres are pumped up
- The chain is oiled and the gears work

Riding together

- Keep a bike length between you and the rider in front. This should be more on descents.
- Ride in a predictable manner with no sudden movements or braking, unless absolutely necessary.
- Tell people if you need to stop suddenly.
- Maintain a steady pedalling rhythm and speed.
- Look ahead and plan gear changes in good time.
- If you do run out of gears on a climb and need to get off to push, let others know behind you and pull to the left to let them pass before stopping
- Cover your brakes as much as possible so you are always ready to stop
- If you are riding alongside someone and need to pull in (e.g. to let a car pass), the person on the outside should let the inside rider go ahead.
- DO NOT pass other cyclists on their left
- DO NOT overlap wheels

Communication

Tell people if you intend to stop suddenly.

You only need to alert people if they need to take action

If you are towards the front:

- Point out or call hazards such as pot holes
- Let the group know about approaching drivers. Only do so if the group needs to take action such as singling out on narrow roads (see below for more information).

If you are at the back of the group:

- Call out drivers approaching from behind
- Let the group know if a rider is falling behind

If you are in the middle of the group:

- Pass the messages you receive from the riders in front and behind through the group

Awareness

Cycling in a group is a friendly and sociable activity. It gives you a chance to ride alongside and chat with others in the group. However, do stay aware of what's going on around you at all times.

- Listen out for instructions from the ride leader and others about approaching hazards.
- Be aware of who is behind you at all times
- Pay especial attention on busy roads or when making a turn. You may need to interrupt your conversation until you are off the busy road or the manoeuvre has been completed

Dealing with other road users

Drivers

Some drivers are uncertain how to behave around large groups of cyclists. This can sometimes cause them to take action that might be dangerous. You can help them.

If you are at the back of the group check back regularly to see if anyone is approaching from behind.

- Call out to let the group know when a driver is approaching
- The group can then take appropriate action.
- Look back at the driver behind to acknowledge their presence. This can reassure the driver and can modify their behaviour.

If you are in the group be prepared to:

- Single out when it is safe to allow the driver to pass
- Slow down to give the driver an opportunity
- Pull over if there is no safe place for the driver to pass
- Break into smaller groups to allow the driver to pass the group in stages. This might be the case when we have to ride on busier roads. Everyone will regroup once the ride leaves the main road.
- DO NOT wave the driver through. Allow them to make their own decision to pass.
- DO NOT confront a driver even if you think their behaviour is dangerous. Let dangerous drivers pass you. It is better that they are in front rather than behind you.

Horses and riders

Horses were originally prey animals stalked and killed by wild animals. This is still in their folk memory. On your bicycle, hunched over the handlebars, to a horse you can look like a predator about to leap. This is what can spook them.

As you approach horses and riders:

- Slow down
- Let your group know
- Greet the rider in good time. This lets the horse know you are a human being which they understand. It also gives the rider time to turn their horse so it can see you properly
- Ride slowly and be prepared to stop.
- Pass wide. If there is no room to pass safely, wait.
- If you are at the front of the group let the rider know how many cyclists there are.
- If you are the last cyclist, tell them
- DO NOT Use your bell.

Pedestrians

Pedestrians always have priority over you

Avoid riding close to the kerb so that you are less likely to hit a pedestrian stepping into the road

On shared use facilities give priority to pedestrians (this includes country lanes where there is no pavement):

- Ride slowly and be prepared to stop
- If you're at the front, ring your bell or call out to alert the pedestrians in good time
- Repeat as necessary if they have not acknowledged you
- If they are still not aware of you be prepared to stop

Other cyclists

There may be occasions when you need to pass other cyclists ahead of you

- Let them know you are going to pass
- Ride together as a group past the cyclist
- Maintain your pace to pass the cyclist. Do not slow down once you have passed them. Remember there are other cyclists still attempting to overtake the rider.
- If you are the last in your group let the cyclist know as you pass them

If a cyclist is approaching on a narrow road, let your group know and be prepared to single out to allow them to pass