Cascade Bicycle Club
Ride Leader Guidelines

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Why Lead? To share the love of bicycling.

As a certified Cascade Ride Leader, you can inspire others to climb aboard two wheels, motivate them to achieve success, and excite them about bicycling, all while enjoying the outdoor beauty of the great Pacific Northwest and beyond.

Active Ride Leaders build other riders’ confidence by showing them how to safely cycle on well-led Cascade rides. Ride Leaders have shared success stories of novices who can barely shift gears on one of their first outings then blossoming into avid and sometimes intrepid cyclists later in the season.

As a certified Cascade Ride Leader, you get to choose and design the route, select the pace, and determine the stops. It’s a perfect way to select the best possible bicycle outing to suit your talents and to share a great ride with others on your favorite roads to your chosen destinations, at your comfortable pace.

As a certified Cascade Ride Leader, you will meet new people who are eager to learn new routes, and with whom you can share some of your personal interests. It’s like you’re hosting a party at your favorite venue – one that others may not even know exists. Your volunteer effort as a Ride Leader expands the pool of potential riding partners, fosters friendships, and even attracts others to consider volunteering as well.

Leading rides is not necessarily just about riding a route. Some Ride Leaders have created theme rides to include local railroad history, antiquing events, yard sale soirees, overnight bikepacking, bistro and bakery bonanzas, “kidical mass” events, and a multitude of other unique outings revolving around cycling.

And as a certified Cascade Ride Leader, you are contributing to the community while creating an opportunity for you to ride yourself.
We asked our riders: What do you like about Cascade Ride Leaders?

They responded -- A good Ride Leader:
- Welcomes all
- Promotes Cascade Bicycle Club
- Emphasizes safety
- Shows concern about the riders
- Knows the route

Rides Committee

The Cascade Rides Committee is comprised of volunteer Ride Leaders who meet monthly to discuss issues affecting the Free Group Rides. This committee sets policies and procedures for the Free Group Rides program and is chaired by Cascade’s Rides Manager. Cascade’s Senior Director for Events and Rides provides executive oversight to the committee.

Ride Leaders who have questions regarding a particular Free Group Rides policy or practice should contact the committee at ridescommittee@cascade.org

Ride Leader Code of Conduct

The Cascade Bicycle Club Rides Committee has established a Code of Conduct for all volunteer Ride Leaders. The Club expects all of its Ride Leaders to follow this code, embracing the spirit of bicycling for all, while ensuring safe, high-quality riding events that engage all participants.

As a Cascade Bicycle Club Ride Leader, I will:
- Represent Cascade Bicycle Club with professionalism, dignity, and pride.
- Conduct myself in a respectful manner, exhibit good sporting conduct, and be a positive role model.
- Promote and support Cascade Bicycle Club’s Free Group Rides Program.
- Promote inclusion by encouraging all, regardless of their race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, marital status, or sexual orientation.
- Work cooperatively as a part of a team with Cascade Bicycle Club staff and other volunteers.

Cascade Bicycle Club Ride Leader Guidelines
Display respect and courtesy for club staff, other volunteers, program participants, visitors, clients, and property.

Keep personal opinions and actions separate from those made as a representative of this organization.

Avoid conduct, both on and off duty, that would jeopardize the program’s effectiveness.

Not promote any commercial activity or event on any Cascade ride, nor solicit donations or signatures for other organizations/events on any Cascade ride.

Respect and follow Cascade Bicycle Clubs policies (Code of Ethics, Privacy Policy, Conflict of Interest Policy, and Volunteer Code of Conduct) and procedures, including event registration.

Keep Cascade Bicycle Club Rides Committee and/or staff, as appropriate, informed of concerns and problems I notice during any Cascade ride or event in which I participate.

Getting Started

What kind of ride do you want to lead?

Planning a successful group ride requires some thought prior to selecting a particular route. These items should be considered in order to prepare for a group ride that suits your desires and abilities:

**Pace.** What pace are you comfortable leading? While you may be content riding at one particular pace on your own, leading a group takes additional energy. So perhaps a slower pace than what you ride individually will make the ride more manageable and enjoyable.

**Type of ride.** Do you want to focus on training, attracting new riders, or hosting a social event? Other options include cycle touring, fitness, family and children, women’s rides, sightseeing or recreation.

**Time of day.** Think about what time the ride should start. If it’s an after-work ride, keep in mind that riders may not be able to make a start earlier than 6 p.m. Be aware that a Saturday ride starting at 10 a.m. or later tends to draw a larger crowd than a ride starting earlier.
**Season.** How hot or cold will it be at the start and finish of your ride? Is it likely to rain during your event? And what’s the available amount of daylight? For many, riding in cold, damp rain into darkness is not much fun.

**Distance.** Early in the cycling season, or during rainy months, shorter rides may attract more riders. In mid-summer, when people tend to be more active, longer rides may be more appealing. You should also consider the total time your ride will take, just a couple of hours, or a whole day’s outing?

**Other Events.** Check to make sure the start location and route don’t conflict with other events. For example, you wouldn’t likely be happy with the results if you were to try to lead a ride from Gasworks Park the same day the Fremont Summer Solstice Parade ends there. Other sources of schedule conflict could include riding across the Montlake or University bridges in early May on the opening day of boating season (when both bridges are up for many hours), or around Lake Washington the first weekend of August during the Seafair boat races.

**Conflict with a Cascade Club event.** Your route should neither share any of the same route, nor cross the path of one of the club’s major events. Please check the [calendar](#) for dates of all major rides starting with the Chilly Hilly (February) though to the end of the event season (September).

**What are the basic steps for leading a ride?**

- Determine the type of ride you want to lead
- Select a route and pace for your ride
- Submit the ride for listing on the Cascade calendar at least two working days in advance of the event
- Once approved, list the ride on [Meetup.com](#)
- Pre-register for your own ride
- Show up 30 minutes before the ride start
- Get the waiver checked off/signed and count riders
- Give SMART briefing
- Ride the ride -- be safe and have fun!
- Submit the waiver form of the completed (or canceled) ride within seven days.
Selecting a route

General considerations

Route safety is paramount when planning a ride. Remember, a route that may be acceptable for one or two riders may not be favorable for a large group. For example, an urban, downtown route during times of heavy auto traffic congestion may be too dangerous (and unnerving) for a large group of novice riders.

Check to make sure you don’t have route conflicts. For example, watch out for big events like marathons, parades, or other Cascade events.

Choose a starting point that people can find easily and that has ample parking. If possible, the starting point should have a nearby restroom. Please be considerate of other users of parking areas. Don’t overload a park’s parking lot, a commercial area or town center. Be aware of parking time limits or fees and note these in your ride description.

While you may be familiar with your route, road conditions frequently change. If possible, you should try to pre-ride or pre-drive your route a few days before the event. Sometimes, especially in winter, park restrooms are closed and water fountains are turned off, so checking on those, if you plan to use one, is also important.

If you have been on the route, but not recently, you may want to go over it again to ensure that nothing significant has changed, such as roadwork or detours.

If you are using a new route, it’s even more important to ride it in advance, preferably on a bicycle.

Consider food, water, and restroom breaks. It’s always good to mention where you plan to take rest breaks in your ride description.
Most area trails have posted speed limits, many at 15 mph, some at 10 mph. Always observe these limits. Sometimes the best option is to avoid multi-use trails when possible, especially on sunny weekend days when all sorts of other users will be present. In general, trails aren’t built for speed and can have heavy traffic of children, runners, dogs and walkers. Also, avoid riding on sidewalks. While it may be legal to do so in some areas, most pedestrians are not expecting a group of cyclists as they amble on sidewalks.

Wherever you go, remember to respect private property and ride only in places where bicycles are welcome.

**Using an existing route**

The best choice for a route is often one that you’ve ridden and enjoyed. If you have ridden a route with another ride leader and want to use that for your own ride, as a courtesy, check with them to see if they would mind you using their route. Feel free to add your own variations to established routes. Just because you’re borrowing someone else’s route doesn’t mean that you can’t give it your own touch. Some ride routes are available on the [Ride Leader Information page](#) and others are in the [Ride Leader Library](#).

**Designing your own route**

If you decide to design your own route, here are a few suggestions. These suggestions generally apply to slower rides with novice riders. Adjust accordingly for faster rides with more-experienced riders.

- Safety is the deciding factor for all route-related decisions. If you can’t find a safe way to get somewhere, don’t go there. Riding with a group is much different than riding by yourself.
- The route should be appropriate for a large group of riders who don’t know each other.
- Avoid intersections and turns that are too close to a hill or a curve if the opposing traffic isn’t required to stop. You want your riders to have an ample view of oncoming traffic and vice versa.
- Avoid streets that are too narrow for cars to pass unless you’ll only be traveling there for a short distance. For example, some streets with medians only have enough room for one lane of traffic in each direction. Some streets with traffic diverters only have enough room for one lane of traffic.
- If possible, avoid crossing busy streets and making left turns except at controlled
intersections (those with stop signs or stop lights).

Avoid heavily traveled, multi-lane roads whenever possible. If you find yourself with no good alternatives, at least try to avoid making left turns. Even with the best of riders, getting a group safely across two lanes of traffic so they can make the turn can be difficult.

In general, avoid taking a group on sidewalks. On occasion, a short stretch of sidewalk is clearly the safest, best way to get from point A to point B.

Unless you’re leading a mountain-bike ride, avoid difficult riding surfaces whenever possible. Examples of these include rough or rutted roads, cobblestones, bridges with metal decks, dirt, gravel, grass, stairs, and so on. And remember, crossing railroad tracks can be hazardous.

Try to avoid surprises. For example, a route on which there’s a steep uphill just after a turn. If you can’t avoid the problem, try to warn everyone before you get to that location.

In the city, “dead end” and “local traffic only” signs often apply only to cars. And in some metro areas, bicycles are allowed in “Bus only” lanes.

If you know a ride leader who has led rides in the area where you want to go, contact them and ask for suggestions on roads to use/avoid, food stops, scenic overlooks, and other relevant details.

**Using ride mapping software**

Many Ride Leaders design routes and create cue sheets using bicycle-friendly mapping sites such as ridewithgps.com and mapmyride.com. Both of these sites offer free access to basic mapping programs. Cascade Bicycle Club has special discount offered on premium ridewithgps.com accounts.

Cascade occasionally offers Ride Leaders classes on how to use ridewithgps.com, and many helpful hints on how to use this website are listed here.

**Making a fun ride**

Consider choosing a theme for your ride. If you live for sweets, lead a ride that takes in several bakeries or candy shops. If you’re fascinated with defunct streetcar lines, lead a ride to Ballard by way of the Counterbalance, and stop along the way to point out where the streetcars once traveled.

Key into special events. For example, you might want to lead a ride to Folklife or
Bumbershoot, to the bicycle races at the Marymoor Velodrome, to a street fair or community festival, to a music festival, to a small-town event, or to some similar gathering. Make your group aware of whether there is a return to start time or they are on their own to return.

Have fun with the ride description. People will be more inclined to show up for a ride whose description captures their imagination.

Do something out of the ordinary. Ride through back alleys, cross wooden bridges, meander through parks, stop at yard sales and interesting houses, visit public art, historical venues, trolls, and viewpoints.

If something interesting happened, you could also write as a guest contributor for [Cascade’s Blog](#).

**Entering your ride on the Cascade.org website**

For detailed information on how to post your ride on the Cascade website, a multi-page document is provided under Ride Leader Resources: [How to Post a Ride](#).

**Cascade’s no-discrimination policy**

All Cascade Free Group Rides are open to everyone who is able and willing to participate safely and cooperatively. In your ride description, you can specify who a ride is primarily intended for, but you can’t specify who the ride isn’t for. For example, you can specify that your ride is a Norwegians ride, but you can’t specify that it’s a Norwegians-only ride or that it’s a no-Swedes ride.

The club’s no-discrimination policy does not prevent you from asking a rider to leave a ride based on the rider’s abilities, equipment, or actions on that ride or on previous rides.

**Commercial activities**

Cascade rides are non-commercial, so you can’t try to sell anything on your ride. However, you may start the ride from your place of business, especially if you own a bakery. Cascade rides should not be used to promote personal political activities, collect...
signatures, or promote fundraising not related to Cascade Bicycle Club. You should also be clear about any non-bicycle riding activities planned in your ride description.

**Fielding phone calls and emails from prospective riders**

Riders may contact you with questions before your ride. Typically, riders will want to know whether they can successfully complete your ride. How you answer this question depends on the difficulty of the ride and on your preference as a ride leader.

If the ride is difficult, you’ll obviously want to be clear with the inquirers about the distance, the speed, the number and size of hills, and so on.

If the ride is less demanding, you have more discretion. For a slow, short, social ride, you may want to encourage the prospective riders. If you take this approach, you must be prepared to wait patiently at the top of every hill for the sightseers. Your reward is the chance to meet people who don’t happen to be great cyclists and to make occasional riders into better, stronger, more enthusiastic cyclists.

If you’re not prepared to wait for everyone, by all means make that clear to those inquiring. Convincing folks that they can handle your ride and then dropping them may discourage cyclists from ever joining a Cascade ride again.

From time to time, you may get a phone call from a parent who wants to bring one or more children along. The club doesn’t forbid children on rides, but a parent must sign the liability waiver for anyone under age 18. Be cautious about encouraging parents to bring children along on a ride. Not all parents may have a realistic perception of how far or how fast their children are able to ride, or how safely the children are able to ride in a group.

Minors on rides must be accompanied at all times by their own responsible adult and in all cases have the permission of the ride leader 24 hours ahead of time. It’s at the ride leader’s discretion to allow minors on the ride.

Children 15 and under must have advance permission of the ride leader and be accompanied by parent or legal guardian OR must have parent/legal guardian designating a guardian for them on the ride.

Youth ages 16-17 may ride without a parent or guardian with advance permission of the
ride leader and a signed parental consent form that must be given to the ride leader at the start of the ride.

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<th>Does a parent have to ride with a minor?</th>
<th>Can a parent designate an adult to ride with a minor instead?</th>
<th>Does a parent have to present a parent consent form?</th>
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</tbody>
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*Because a parent or designated adult is riding with a minor.

What you should bring to the ride

See the “Day-of-ride checklist” at the end of this booklet.

You should be ready to ride at least 20 minutes before the advertised ride start. This means you should arrive at the start at least 30 minutes in advance in order to have time to get your bike ready. It’s a great practice to be ready to roll early and greet others as they arrive at the start.

- Have your bike ready to roll and remember to bring your helmet.
- Print out the Cascade Bicycle Club liability waiver with pre-registered riders’ information entered.
- Offer copies of the map/cue sheet if you advertised that you would provide them.
- Carry blank copies of both the CBC Incident Report and the CBC Witness Report.
- Bring a couple of pens.
- Don’t forget your water.

You may also want to bring:
- Food for yourself.
- Basic tools: a portable bike pump; an extra tube or patch kit; tire levers.
- A basic first-aid kit. See “What to carry in a first-aid kit” later in this booklet.
- A bike lock (especially if you plan indoor stops, like at a restaurant or museum).
- A rag, individual towelette, or something of the sort for cleaning up after roadside repairs.

Cascade Bicycle Club Ride Leader Guidelines
If you need to cancel a ride

In some situations (usually bad weather) a ride needs to be canceled. A Ride Leader is not required to go to the ride start point if:

- There is a regional weather occurrence (widespread snow, ice, or strong winds) severe enough to make travel to the start difficult or dangerous, OR:
- It's clearly stated in the ride description you will not be at the start in the event of adverse weather (see example below), AND,
- The cancellation of the ride must be posted on Cascade ride posting and Meetup (if applicable) comments section AT LEAST TWO HOURS before the ride start time.
- Additionally, the ride leader must provide their contact information in the ride posting and monitor phone/email until ride start time, just to make sure that all would be participants get the word regarding cancelation.

Suggested wording for inclusion in ride description:

“The Ride Leader will not be at the ride start should conditions be as noted in “Weather Cancels” above. Ride Leader will announce the cancellation in the comments section below at least 2 hours prior to the ride start and will monitor the phone and/or email listed in the Contact information. If you have questions about the weather, please call (or email) before you leave for the ride.”

NOTE:

Even if the ride is canceled, a waiver must still be submitted with the words “Ride Canceled” written at the top. The club keeps track of canceled rides.

If you can’t lead a ride because of illness or injury: It’s OK to cancel a ride and doing so early is best. If for some reason you can’t lead, try to find a replacement ride leader, if you know another Ride Leader who may be available to attend your ride.

At the beginning of the ride

Get signatures, check on helmets, and get a count.

Make sure all participants are listed on the liability waiver. If a participant has pre-registered, then make sure they have checked off their name. If not, the rider must
provide their information and signature on the waiver form. Make sure you too have signed the waiver.

Review the waiver form and make sure you can read the participants’ names and contact numbers.

Carry the liability waiver with you on the ride in case of an emergency. At the end of the ride, either mail it to the Cascade Bicycle Club office, or send a .pdf copy (not a photo) of the waiver to cascadewaiver@cascadebicycleclub.org promptly after the ride.

Don’t let anyone ride without a helmet. The club requires all riders to wear helmets on all rides. The use of earbuds and/or Bluetooth speakers is prohibited on Cascade Free Group Rides.

If someone refuses to sign the liability waiver or insists on riding without a helmet, make it clear to other riders that the uncooperative rider is not part of the group.

Count the riders in your group so you can determine if you have everyone at regrouping points and when departing rest stops.

Pre-ride announcements including SMART talk

**Introduction:** Introduce yourself, and identify your sweeps, co-leaders, and other helpers. If the ride will be breaking into two or more groups, explain who will be leading each group. If the group is small, you may ask the riders to introduce themselves.

**Welcome to new riders:** Ask if there are any riders who have never been on a Cascade ride and, if so, welcome them to the group.

**Waivers, maps/cue sheets:** Ask if everyone has signed the liability waiver and has received the map or cue sheet (if you are providing one.)

**Pace:** Announce the pace and explain what it means. If you don’t intend to wait for slow riders, you should make this clear.

**Regrouping:** Indicate whether the riders will stay together, regroup at the top of hills, or regroup at a specified point.
**The route:** Briefly describe the ride, including food and rest stops, difficult hills, unusual or dangerous conditions, the first regrouping point, and hazards and tricky turns before that point.

**Safety:** Talk about safe riding and remind riders that each person is responsible for his or her own safety.

*Give SMART talk*

**Hand signals:** Remind riders to use hand signals for turning or stopping. It’s also a good idea to point out road hazards: fixed objects like posts and potholes, road debris, and railroad tracks.

**Voice signals:** Give riders a quick overview of voice signals: “Car up/back/left/right,” “On your left” to indicate that you’re passing another rider or a pedestrian, “Glass/pothole/etc.” to indicate road hazards (combined with hand signals as appropriate). Emphasize that “Car back” means a car is coming from behind, so riders should start riding single file.

Discourage riders from calling out “Clear” at intersections to indicate that no cars are coming. “Clear” is a subjective and temporary condition, so riders should always look for themselves.

**Keep the leader informed:** Ask riders to pass the word if someone leaves or breaks down, and to notify you if they’re planning to leave the ride before the end.

**After-ride refreshments:** If you’re going somewhere after the ride for a meal or a snack and wish others to join you, let everyone know where the fun continues.

**Questions?** Ask if there are questions.
Leading the ride

Every ride is different, so it’s impossible to anticipate everything you might encounter on a ride. Here’s a list of items to consider.

Set a good example
Ride safely and remember that you represent the Cascade Bicycle Club.

Courtesy
Anticipate situations where your group may inconvenience others. For example, when you stop to regroup, be sure your riders aren’t blocking the road or the sidewalk. When you re-enter the roadway, wait until there’s a break in traffic, so drivers aren’t forced to slow down for your group. At busy four-way stops, have groups of 4 to 6 riders at a time proceed together through the intersection, yielding to other road users as appropriate.

Unsafe riders
Unsafe riders endanger everyone around them, ruin the experience for others on the ride, and give cyclists a bad image. If you’re uncomfortable with a rider’s actions, quietly and politely explain your concern. If the situation doesn’t improve, ask the rider to leave your ride.

New riders
Check in with each of the new riders periodically to ensure that they feel welcome and are comfortable riding in the group.

Pace
Ride at or near the front to lead the way and set the pace at the advertised speed. Make sure riders know that, if they go off the front, they are on their own. Your responsibility is to lead the ride at the advertised pace, and keep track of those who are doing the same.

Too-fast and too-slow riders
At the first regrouping point, if some riders are clearly too fast or too slow for the group, consider splitting into more than one group. You can also ask the fast or slow riders if they’d prefer to break off from the group and ride on their own or return to the starting point. If they choose to leave the group, try to ensure that they have a map or cue sheet, or that they know the area well enough to find their way. (This suggests that the first regrouping point should be relatively close to the starting point, so riders can find their way back to the start, if necessary.)
Keeping track of participants
You can’t always keep track of all riders, but do the best you can. Assess how the riders at the back of the group are doing and adjust the ride as appropriate. Try not to leave anyone behind or lose them. However, you’re not obligated to go back and look for anyone. You may consider asking someone ride at the back of the group to encourage and keep track of the slower riders (another ride leader is a great choice for this task). For more information, see “The benefits of having a sweep,” below.

Regroup frequency
How often you stop to count heads and make sure everyone is fine varies. If you have some slower riders who are consistently falling behind but you don’t want to ask them to leave the group, or if you’re leading one of those meandering in-city rides on which you turn every time you get to another intersection, you’ll need to regroup pretty regularly. If you’re riding on the same road for the next 20 miles with a bunch of self-sufficient riders, you may not need to regroup at all. Base your decision on the comfort of the slowest cyclists, not the fastest.

Stop lights, stop signs, and crosswalks
- It’s the law to stop for red lights, stop signs, and pedestrians in marked and unmarked crosswalks.
- Don’t stop too close to the intersection to wait for the group to catch up. Instead, proceed past the intersection and find a safe spot off the roadway.
- At a stop sign or stoplight, join the line of cars. Don’t pass cars on the right, and don’t wait in the right-turn lane. Instead, wait your turn in the queue. In many situations, passing on the right is prohibited, even for bikes.
- If you’re leading a slow ride and only part of your group gets across at a stop light or stop sign, you may want to regroup at the first safe space or leave a “corner person” (see below) to provide direction and reassurance to the riders at the back end of the group.

Unforeseen problems
If you run into unforeseen problems -- new construction, bad weather, unusually heavy traffic, a closed bakery -- be creative. Change the route, take shelter, or choose a different rest stop. Consider safety above all else. Don’t be afraid to ask for suggestions from your riders. They may know the area better than you do. However, as Ride Leader, you should only make changes with which you are comfortable.
**Mid-ride announcements**
At each regrouping point, announce the next regrouping point. Re-emphasize safety, especially related to upcoming conditions. For example, if you need to move into the left lane to make a turn, remind riders to look before they change lanes. If there’s a steep uphill immediately after a turn, try to warn riders in advance. If you’re getting onto a trail, remind riders to stay on the right half of the trail and to be considerate of other trail users.

**Restroom and food stops**
When it’s time to start riding again, announce your departure enough in advance that everyone has time to stash their extra cookies, get their helmets and gloves on, and untangle their bikes from others. In addition, be alert for riders who have wandered off or are in the restroom.

**Riding after dark**
If you’re riding after dark, slow down and keep the group together. A group of cyclists, each one with a proper headlight and rear reflector, is much more visible after dark than an individual rider.

**Leading from the front or the back of the group**
You don’t necessarily need to lead a ride from the front of the group. As long as you’ve passed out a map or cue sheet, you may be able to serve your riders as well by leading from the back as you can from the front.

Some ride leaders spend the ride making their way back and forth between the front and the back of the group, checking to see that everyone is doing all right. Other ride leaders choose to spend the entire ride at the back of the group. This ensures that they’ll eventually come upon anyone who has stopped for any reason.

If you choose not to lead from the front, here are a couple of things to watch out for:
- If it’s a stick-together ride, remind everyone what the pace is and ask them to maintain that pace.
- If you want riders to stop in a particular location, be sure everyone understands where that is.
- Remind riders to watch the map or cue sheet carefully and stop if they have any doubts about which direction they should be going.
The benefits of having a sweep
If you lead from the front, you may want to have someone ride sweep, that is, ride at the back of the group. On most rides, the chief advantage of having a sweep is that the leader knows when everyone has arrived at a regrouping point (assuming no one in the middle of the group missed a turn). However, if you have unusually slow riders, mechanical problems, or an accident on your ride, a good sweep can be invaluable.

Using corner people to keep riders from getting lost
If you want to keep your group together during the ride, you may want to try using corner people. At the beginning of the ride, explain to your riders that, whenever you turn a corner, you’ll ask the person closest to you to be the corner person. This person then stays at the corner and points riders in the proper direction until the sweep comes by. Be sure everyone knows to be on the lookout for corner people.

A few suggestions:
- Try to spread the duty around a little bit, so no one starts to feel put upon. Rather than designating corner people, you might also want to call out “Any volunteers for corner person?” Almost always, someone will call back “I’ll take it.”
- If you designate a corner person, make sure that person hears you and stops at corners.
- Don’t use corner people under unfavorable conditions. A cold rainy day is not the time to ask for a volunteer corner person.

Controlling pace lines
In general, the club discourages pace lines during free group rides because they can be dangerous, especially for novice riders inexperienced with the close riding involved. On some roadways it’s better to stay in single file and not have a rider continuing to roll to the back, a characteristic of pace lines. However, if you’re going to allow pace lines on your ride, here are some suggestions for safe pace line riding:

- Call out stops, hazards, and changes in direction loudly, clearly, and early.
- Don’t allow riders to lead a pace line if they don’t know the route, particularly on descents.
- Don’t allow riders to ride in a pace line if they’re using aero bars like those found on a time trial/triathlon bikes. In a pace line, the ability to stop quickly is paramount, and when using aero bars, the rider cannot brake quickly.
- Be extra careful if you have single bicycles and tandems in the same pace line.
A tandem with two riders weighs a lot more than a single bike and rider, so it isn’t as maneuverable in an emergency.

Limit pace lines to a reasonable length, preferably eight or fewer.

After the ride

After the ride, thank riders for coming and ask for comments or suggestions. Did riders enjoy the ride? Did they like the route? Is there anything you could have done differently?

You should follow up with a call to any rider who was injured or lost during the ride.

Mail the liability waiver to the address listed on the back of the waiver, or scan and email a .pdf (not a photo) to cascadewaiver@cascade.org. Include any relevant documents such as Incident Reports.

The liability waiver exists to legally protect you and the bike club in the event of an accident. If a rider calls you to ask for the phone number of someone else on the ride, do not give out that information.
Handling injuries

Handling severe accidents – call 911

If there is any question about whether professional medical attention is necessary, call 911 immediately.

Important! If a rider has an accident and lands on his or her head, neck, or shoulders, you must consider the possibility of a neck or back injury.

If the person is conscious: Ask if the person has neck or back pain, weakness, or loss of limb function or sensation. If so, you should suspect spinal cord injury and have the person stay very still.

If the person is unconscious: You have no way to know what injury the person may have suffered, so do not move an unconscious person.

If an unconscious person regains consciousness before help arrives: Keep the person as still and quiet as possible. You may need to be firm. Someone who is in shock or suffering a concussion isn’t the best judge of what to do at the moment. Be sympathetic but firm.

If the injured person is in a roadway, divert or stop traffic rather than move the person, and wait for help to arrive.

What to do if one of your riders has a crash and is seriously injured

Stay calm: Pause, take a deep breath, and survey the situation before you act. If the injured rider is in the roadway, have other riders divert or stop traffic until you can determine if the person has a possible neck or back injury.

Get all other riders and their bicycles off the road.

Important! If you determine that the person has a possible neck or back injury, continue to divert or hold up traffic until help arrives. Do not move the person.

Determine if the person is injured seriously enough to require medical attention: The
injured rider should get medical attention if he or she:

- Is bleeding heavily
- Has a head injury and lost consciousness, even briefly
- Can’t remember what happened
- Has obvious pain when moving an injured limb
- Has trouble opening his or her jaw

If you don’t know much about first aid yourself, ask if anyone in your group does.

If the person has no obvious injuries, you still should pay careful attention to determine if the person is confused or disoriented, which could also indicate a head injury.

**Again, if there is any question about whether professional medical attention is necessary, call 911 immediately.**

**Care for and reassure the injured rider until help arrives:** Be helpful and remain positive, given the situation and the available materials. In particular, keep the person as warm and dry as possible. Regardless of the rider’s condition, act calmly, speak in reassuring tones, and be sure that everyone around you does the same.

**Make sure the person’s contact information is available for the ambulance.**
If possible, ask the ambulance crew to take the rider’s bike. If the emergency responders won’t do that, make arrangements to leave the bike somewhere safe to be collected.

**Important!** Be sure you know the rider’s name and contact information so you can call later to check on their condition, return the rider’s bike, and file an Incident Report with the club office. You should contact cbcrides@cascde.org as soon as possible.

**Other concerns in the event of a severe accident**

In addition to taking care of the injured rider, you need to be concerned about the other riders and about the injured rider’s bike and gear.

**Continuing the ride:** In some cases, you may need to continue the ride before the injured rider has recovered enough to start riding again or before the ambulance has arrived. For example, if it’s evening and you’re running out of daylight, you’ll need to get the other riders back to the starting point.
Do not leave an injured rider alone. If the other riders can find their way back to the starting point, you and someone who knows first aid should stay with the injured rider.

**Who to notify in the event of an accident**

If an injured rider is taken to the hospital unconscious, and if the person provided an emergency contact phone number, call that number immediately and calmly explain what happened.

If the rider is conscious, he or she can decide who to contact and when.

If someone was seriously injured, call the club office and/or the Rides Committee Chairperson as soon as possible.

The club provides Incident Report and Witness Report forms. You should fill out an Incident Report form and mail it into the club office even if the incident didn’t require a trip to the hospital. In addition, you should have any witnesses fill out Witness Report forms and return them to you, so you can mail them to the club office along with the Incident Report form.

**Other Medical Issues**

**Hypothermia**
If you’re riding in cold or wet weather, keep an eye on all of your riders to ensure that no one is suffering from hypothermia. Mild hypothermia is characterized by shivering and can be treated by getting the person out of the cold and into dry clothes. If there’s nowhere to get out of the cold, try sharing body heat. More severe cases are characterized by confusion and lack of coordination; in this case you need to get the person to medical care. Call 911

**Heat exhaustion and heat stroke**

Heat exhaustion is characterized by pale, clammy skin, profuse perspiration, and extreme tiredness or weakness. The person may have a headache and may vomit. With heat exhaustion, the person’s body temperature is approximately normal. The treatment for heat exhaustion is rest. If the person is alert, offer oral fluids,
preferably water or sports drinks. Don’t give the person coffee, tea, or alcoholic beverages.

**Heat stroke** is far more dangerous. The body’s temperature control system has stopped working, so the person doesn’t sweat anymore. Body temperature may rise so far that brain damage may result.

The symptoms of heat stroke include hot, red skin; no perspiration; extremely high body temperature; dizziness; nausea; headache; rapid pulse; and confusion, disorientation, or unconsciousness. If heat stroke develops, the rider will need medical care, possibly including intravenous fluids.

Get the person out of the heat immediately and cool their body quickly. Soak the person in cool but not cold water, or pour water over the body. Stop and observe the person for 10 minutes, then cool some more if the person’s body temperature is still above $102^\circ$. If the person is alert, offer oral fluids, preferably water or sports drinks. Don’t give the person coffee, tea, or alcoholic beverage.

**Road rash**
The person should clean the wound thoroughly, apply some antiseptic cream or ointment, and cover it with clean gauze. For open cuts or abrasions, the rider should seek medical care if he or she hasn’t had a tetanus immunization in the last five years.

**What to carry in a first-aid kit**
If you decide to carry a first-aid kit for the occasional minor injury, here are some suggestions on what to include:

- Large gauze squares for cleaning road rash or as protection from further harm
- A roll of gauze for covering larger areas of rash
- Non-adherent sterile pads
- Antiseptic cream or ointment
- A roll of tape to secure bandages
- Band-Aids® for small cuts and blisters
- Second Skin for open blisters
- Ibuprofen or Tylenol® to minimize swelling or general minor pain
- Over-the-counter antihistamine, in case someone has an allergic reaction
- Latex gloves
Getting first-aid training

If you’re interested, first-aid training is readily available. Fire departments and employers offer free CPR training. For information on more extensive training, you can call the Seattle/King County Red Cross, or your local Red Cross chapter.

Handling other problems

Riding in the rain
In a light rain, you can probably keep riding, but you need to be especially careful on painted road markings, metal plates, downhills, wet leaves, railroad tracks, and metal bridge decks.

In a rain that’s heavy enough to affect visibility, you should consider stopping, moving off the roadway, and if possible, find shelter until the rain slows.

If the weather does not look good at the start, have some bailouts or shortcuts in mind.

Avoiding lightning
If you happen to encounter lightning, use the “Flash-To-Bang” method of measuring lightning distance. This is the amount of time that elapses between when you see the flash and when you hear the thunder. For each five-second count, lightning is one mile away, so at 25 seconds the lightening is five miles away. At a count of 15 seconds (three miles) take immediate defensive action:

- Where possible, find shelter in a building or in a fully enclosed metal vehicle such as a car, truck, or van with the windows closed.
- Avoid water.
- Avoid metal objects such as bicycles, electric wires, fences, machinery, railroad tracks, tent poles, and so on.
- Don’t stop beneath small open-sided rain shelters or isolated trees.
- Avoid hilltops, open spaces, ditches, and depressions.
- If your hair is standing up, you have a tingling sensation, the count between flash and bang is less than five seconds, or lightning is striking nearby, you should:
  o Remove all metal objects.
  o Crouch down and put your feet together and your hands on your knees.
  o Avoid direct contact with other people.
Aggressive drivers
If you have trouble with an aggressive driver, get everyone off the road and wait until the driver goes away. Don’t antagonize the driver in any way. If you can, discreetly take a photo of the vehicle license number and driver. Contact the police.

Dangerous riders in your group
If you have a careless rider in your group, and that person continues to be troublesome after you’ve spoken with him or her about being more careful, insist that the rider leave the group. If necessary, stop the group and wait until the rider leaves before you continue. You are the Leader and safety of the group is paramount. Asking an unsafe rider to leave can be one of your most important safety decisions!

Mechanical problems
Ride leaders are not expected to fix other riders’ mechanical problems. If there’s an issue, check with your riders to see if anyone has the parts and the expertise to make the repair. If there’s a nearby bike shop, you might take the group on a detour. You could also suggest that the rider go alone and provide instructions on how to rejoin the group later, if possible.

Suggest the bus. All buses in King County are equipped with bicycle racks, as are buses in many of the surrounding areas.

Some problems are not as severe as they might seem:

Broken spokes: Generally, if you don’t have too far to travel, you can just ride with a broken spoke. If you can, remove the parts of the spoke, otherwise tie or tape the broken parts to adjacent spokes. If breaking the spoke also affected the true of the wheel, you may also need to loosen the brakes. Emphasize that the rider should avoid potholes as much as possible.

Broken chains: If someone has a chain tool along, you can simply remove the bad link and put the chain back together. Because the chain will then be shorter, the rider should avoid using the combination of large chain ring (in front) and the large cog (in back).

A hole in a tire: If you have a small hole in a tire, you can keep the inner tube from bulging out through the hole by slipping something inside the tire to cover the hole. A dollar bill works fine, and a section cut from an old tire works even better, but it’s just a temporary fix. You should replace the tire as soon as you can. If the hole is in the sidewall, take extra care because a sidewall cut can cause the tire to fall off the rim.
Tips for safe riding

Helmets
- Always wear an approved bicycle helmet. (Helmets are required on all Cascade rides and are required by law in many places.)

Traffic regulations
- Observe all traffic laws. Your bicycle is legally considered a vehicle, so you’re subject to the same traffic laws as the drivers of motorized vehicles.
- Use hand and voice signals when turning or stopping.
- Ride with traffic. Motorists don’t look for bicycles going the “wrong way.”
- Don’t wear headphones while you’re cycling. It’s dangerous and, in some places, illegal.
- When riding at night, state law requires you to have, at a minimum, a white front head lamp and a red rear reflector, each visible from a distance of 500 feet. It’s also a good idea to have a red taillight or blinker and to wear reflective clothing and safety vests to increase visibility. Flashing headlights are illegal in Washington State.

Hazards
- Make eye contact with drivers so you know that they’ve seen you.
- Cross railroad tracks at a 90° angle.
- Look ahead for road hazards (glass, potholes, wide cracks, metal grates, gravel, and so on), and point them out to other riders. This is extra important when the road is wet.
- Check for traffic yourself. Scan the road in front of you, behind you, and around you.
- Watch for car doors opening in your path.
- Use voice and hand signals to communicate with other riders, especially when you’re riding close together.

Courtesy
- Take a full lane when safety dictates. If you’re delaying five or more vehicles, pull off the road at the next turnout to allow them to pass.
- If you stop for any reason, move yourself and your bicycle completely off the road or trail.
- On multi-use trails and sidewalks, yield to pedestrians. Slow down when other people are present, and slow to a walking pace if safety dictates.
Pass on the left, and use a bell or your voice to alert others that you’re passing

**Other good ideas**

- When there’s traffic behind you, ride single-file so cars can pass
- Limit pace lines to eight or fewer
- Before every ride, make sure your bike is in good condition ([ABC check](#))
- Bring a pump, spare tube, patch kit, tire levers, and a full water bottle
- Eat before you’re hungry, drink before you’re thirsty
Tips for leading the group

Tips for leading during the ride.

- Have fun! If you are tense, your riders will be too.
- The Ride Leader’s primary responsibility is the safety and well-being of the group on the road.
- Obey all traffic laws. Bicycles are vehicles.
- Observe your group to ensure all riders are adhering to SMART riding practices.
- Ride approximately 18 inches from edge of roadway (or farther from edge as is safe) to allow for space to veer right to avoid hazards.
- Do not block right or left turn lanes if proceeding straight at intersection.
- Avoid sudden movements or rapid slow-downs. Remember you have a train behind you.
- Be smooth. Accelerate and decelerate gradually.
- Riders will follow you anywhere you go, sometimes not looking to see if it’s safe.
- Don’t force a quick turn if not safe, rather stop or continue and turn back around.
- Riders watch what you do – reinforce and model good behavior.
- Acknowledge ‘car back’ and other communication.
- When stopping to address the group, move to the middle so everyone can hear.
- Stop the group and warn them of special hazards or situations (steep descent, congested area, etc.)
- Friendly waves to courteous drivers helps – be an ambassador for Cascade and for all cyclists.
- Trail etiquette:
  - Slow group way down when passing walkers, especially if they have children.
  - Pass as far left as is safe.
  - Cyclists must yield to pedestrians on trails.
  - Limit speed to posted limits and never in excess of 15mph.
- Sidewalks may be used and should be used if safety is a question – note some places may restrict sidewalk use in congested areas (downtown etc.)
- Don’t get distracted by other riders – if you have to, ask them to move back or stop talking. You are not being rude. Your responsibility is group safety.
- Riders will try to talk to you at the worst times, so keep focused on leading.
- Four-way stops – Rather than proceeding as one large group when traffic is present, proceed in smaller groups of 4 to 6 at a time, taking turns with the cars.
Yield to pedestrians in intersections and crosswalks (marked and unmarked).

Stop at lights/stop signs when riding on the shoulder at a T-intersection. – Yes, stop.

Be careful of door zones and right hooks – often it is good to move the group into the traffic lane, out of bike lane to go behind cars and proceed through intersections prior to returning to the bike lane.

Discourage anyone yelling ‘clear’; everyone should look for themselves.

Use curves in route to look back at group and check on them.

**Smaller groups** are easier for traffic to pass – watch for a big string of riders and ask for a float or other strong rider to break the group (7 to 10 riders) and create a hole (3 or 4 car lengths) to allow traffic to “leap frog” past the group. Tell the riders ahead of time this might happen.

Be aware of holding up traffic, use turnouts to pull over and let traffic pass, if needed. (This creates goodwill with motorists.)

Don’t let the fast riders push you into a faster pace. Remember, there could be a rider who is just hanging on.

Flats/mechanicals – Specify in your ride description and brief if you are going to assist and wait as a group. It’s not required for you to hold the group for a rider’s flat tire. Rather, it’s a judgment call. As a minimum, find out if the rider has what’s needed for a fix. Ask for another rider to wait with the person, if possible. Try to avoid leaving someone out in the middle of nowhere. Make sure they know the route or have a cue sheet.

Use hand and voice signals (fixed object, loose object, tracks, pedestrians, movement and braking)

Start out slowly from stop to avoid the “accordion effect”.

Riders should not ride around cars to get to the group at traffic lights. This practice just makes motorists mad and they have to pass the group again.

Gaps will naturally form, but be aware if too large a gap forms, you may need to slow a little to get riders closer together (soft pedaling).

Always remember it’s your ride. Don’t let the ‘know it all’ override your best judgment.
Day of Ride Checklist

What to bring

- Your own bike and helmet
- Plenty of copies of the map or cue sheet (if you said you will provide them)
- The Cascade Bicycle Club liability waiver, a copy of the CBC Incident Report, and two copies of the CBC Witness Report
- A couple of pens
- Food and full water bottles
- Basic tools, pump and tire gauge, extra tube, patch kit, and tire levers
- Rudimentary first-aid kit
- Bike computer to monitor your pace
- Cell phone

Stuff to check on

- Does everyone have a helmet?
- Has everyone signed or checked off their name on the liability waiver?
- How many riders do you have?

The pre-ride announcement

- Introductions
- Welcome to new riders
- Signatures on the liability waiver
- Maps, cue sheets
- Pace of the ride
- Whether the ride will stay together and, if not, where the first regroup or planned rest stop will be
- The route
- SMART briefing
- Keep the ride leader informed
- Questions?
- Have fun!