



RIDE LEADER HANDBOOK

www.hanovercyclers.org

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Ride Leader Handbook

Why Lead a Ride?

There are many reasons to lead a ride for the club...

First and foremost, you'll ride the ride that YOU want to ride! The route, the pace - it's all up to you!

You'll also find you may just make new friends as riders show up to your rides. Club rides can be a fun social event filled with conversation, compelling you to ride even more!

Club rides can also help to attract new club members. As new riders hear about our rides and participate, we help to grow the club membership. Those new riders then might participate in helping to run the club and offer new experience.

You'll also find a great satisfaction on a ride well done, helping to encourage you to try new routes and ride farther distances than you may currently!

Lastly, the club recognizes frequent ride leaders at our annual Christmas party. Ride leaders are the heart and soul of our organization - we want to make sure you get the recognition you deserve!



Ride Leader Handbook

Problems You'll Face

Let's be honest - sometimes there are problems! While bikes are generally reliable, they're still a machine and things can go wrong, including but not limited to:

- Flat/cut tires (probably the majority of problems)
- Loose parts like headsets
- Broken/skipping chains
- Mis-adjusted/rubbing brakes

Not to mention other potential issues like:

- Rain/wind/snow/cold
- Forgotten water bottles
- Crashes/accidents
- Insect/bee stings

That's not meant to discourage you however - because although problems can happen, they are rare and the majority are very minor problems that are easily fixed or ignored until the end of the ride.

Just know as ride leader you are **not** expected to be a bike mechanic or EMT. People will however generally lend a hand to fellow cyclists, and in rare event of emergency there is 911.



Ride Leader Handbook

Planning Your Ride

Route Planning

So you've decided you want to lead a ride. Great! Now what to do? Fear not, we're here to guide you!

First and foremost you'll want to plan your route. It's easy to create routes/maps on the following sites:

<http://www.mapmyride.com>

<http://www.ridewithgps.com>

<http://www.strava.com>

<http://connect.garmin.com>

We can't provide you specific directions for each site but they are all very similar, just a little different. For the most part you click a start point, then click along the roads of the route you want to plan. When you're done, save the route. Give it a good name!

Don't forget while you're planning you'll want to include rest stops if the ride is of considerable distance. Try to plan a water stop every 20-25 miles if possible, or at the very least a place to pull over and rest.

Lastly - you may want to check the route. Drive it in your car or ride it - make sure roads aren't closed and that roads aren't gravel (unless you want gravel!)



Ride Leader Handbook

Planning Your Ride

Cue Sheets and GPX/TCX files

Once your ride is planned out and all is good you'll want to create a cue sheet. If you don't have a GPS that can give you directions, you'll need a cue sheet to keep you on route, and for other riders to find their way. Try to print out several cue sheets so riders can have one if they want one.

You can find a cue sheet template in Excel format on the club website under the ride leader tab. You'll have to manually enter the route:

<http://www.hanovercyclers.org/rideleader>

Online sites like mapmyride, Strava or ridewithgps can also allow you to print out your route as a cue sheet, but may have limited format options to do so.

Make sure your cue sheet is accurate with street names, and at least approximately accurate with distances. Make sure all turns are clearly communicated, and note any special instructions like rest stops, etc.



Ride Leader Handbook

Planning Your Ride

Cue Sheets and GPX files

You may also wish to provide a GPX file for club members with GPS units, like the popular Garmin Edge series. GPX files can be used by Edge units like the 800 and 1000, or the Touring models to provide turn by turn navigation, in lieu of a cue sheet. Other models such as the 500 series can provide a breadcrumb display to follow.

The on-line sites like mapmyride, Strava or Ride-withGPS allow you to export your route in several formats. Choose the GPX format for maximum compatibility. It may name the GPX file as a number (usually the route number the site uses) but you can change the name to the name of your ride when saving.

To share the GPX file, you may email it to: rides@hanovercyclers.org and we will place the file in our dropbox and provide you a share link. GPX files can be accessed by anyone on the club website by clicking the button on the left side of the main page. This accesses our dropbox and rides are categorized by area.



Ride Leader Handbook

Planning Your Ride

Hanover Cyclers' Ride Calendar

So now your ride is planned. Now what? Now you'll want to pick a date and get it on our ride calendar! You can do this one of two ways -

- 1- Email the ride information to rides@hanovercyclers.org and we will put the ride on the ride calendar and communicate it to the club.
- 2 - Use the club calendar and list it yourself. This is very easy to do and encouraged!

The ride calendar is web based and available several places:

<http://www.hanovercyclers.org/event-and-ride-calendar/>

Our [Facebook Page \(click the ride calendar tab\)](#)

Or simply bookmark this web page:
<https://teamup.com/ks315b9485e45b95a5/>

All of these locations provide the same calendar that you can add your rides to. You cannot modify them after they are created however (we have to do that).



Ride Leader Handbook

Planning Your Ride

Hanover Cyclers' Ride Calendar

The ride calendar works just like any other calendar you've used - switch between months at the top left of the calendar. Switch to month, week, agenda views, etc at the top right.

To enter a ride, just click on the date you want. A window will pop up on the screen where you type in the ride information:

The screenshot shows the 'Add Event' form with the following fields and options:

- Title: [Text input field]
- When: 3/25/2016 to 3/25/2016 [All day checkbox]
- Calendar: A Ride - 18MPH - FAST x [Dropdown menu]
- Who: [Text input field]
- Where: [Text input field with location pin icon]
- Repeats: [Checkbox]
- Rich text editor with a toolbar containing Bold, Italic, Underline, Paragraph, Link, Unlink, List, and other icons.
- Buttons: Less, Save, Cancel



Ride Leader Handbook

Planning Your Ride

Hanover Cyclers' Ride Calendar

Now you just type in the information! Be sure to give the ride an interesting and unique title to attract riders. Uncheck the "all day box" and enter the start and approximate end times of the ride.

Enter your name and email address in the "who" field - and note that rides without this information **WILL BE DELETED.**

Pick the ride class from the drop down menu, and enter the street address for the start location. Entering the actual street address, rather than "meet at Joe's" will allow others to click the pointer and see it on the map! If the ride is going to repeat daily or weekly, click the repeat button and enter appropriate start/end dates.

Finally, click the "more" button to expand the field and enter any other information you'd like communicated. Include things like ride length, description (where are you going?), and any special instructions like cancellation in case of rain or temperatures.

Finally, if you have questions or need help please email rides@hanovercyclers.org and we will assist you!



Ride Leader Handbook

Communicating Your Ride

Once your ride has been added to the calendar, we receive a notification by email. The club will tweet out the ride if it takes place after the weekly rides report has been sent out on Sunday. This will also show up on the club's Facebook page.

If the ride takes place in an upcoming week, it will be added to the weekly ride report which is sent to every club member.

You may also easily share the ride (or other rides) personally through the club calendar. Clicking on an existing event on the ride calendar brings up the event details. At the top is a share button, which allows you to share the event via Facebook (your own page), Twitter, or email. Please feel free to send it to your friends to get as many riders to attend as you can!



Ride Leader Handbook

Ride Waiver

The last piece of the ride puzzle you will be responsible for is the club ride waiver. You will need to print out and bring along the waiver (sign in sheet), and are responsible for ensuring all riders sign the sheet.

The sign in sheet does several things:

1. Protects the club and ride leader from negligence and assumption of risk for the ride.
2. Provides written proof of riders in attendance for club insurance. If a rider does not sign, they cannot make a claim on the insurance.
3. Provides quick reference for emergency numbers.

Note that non-club members **ARE NOT** covered by club insurance, and you should communicate this to them at the start of the ride.

Any riders that refuse to sign are not allowed to attend the ride. You cannot actually stop them from following the ride, but make it clear they are not part of the ride.

Keep the waiver in your jersey for the ride, to have access to cell phone numbers in case someone gets lost.

After the ride, email points@hanovercyclers.org with rider names and ride info for points (you will receive a reminder email).



Ride Leader Handbook

LET'S RIDE!!!

It's ride day, time to lead your ride!! We know you're excited, so calm down and review this checklist first:

- 1 - Do I have cue sheets? Bring along 5 or so at least.
- 2 - Do I have ride waivers? This is mandatory!
- 3 - Don't forget your helmet!
- 4 - Check your gear (spare tubes, etc)
- 5- Don't forget a PEN to sign the waiver with!

Do a quick check of your bike before leaving - **AIR, BRAKES, CHAIN** and **QUICK RELEASE**.

Plan to arrive at least 15 minutes early. Use this time to get your waiver ready, and have riders sign in as they arrive. While you will likely have ridden with a lot of the riders before, introduce yourself to anyone you may not have ridden with and identify yourself as the ride leader. The new riders/non-club members will appreciate this gesture. Welcome non-club members and explain the ride to them, and encourage them to join the club if they enjoy the ride!

Once the group is assembled, take a moment before leaving and give everybody a quick overview of the ride. Pass out any cue sheets to people who want them.



Ride Leader Handbook

LET'S RIDE!!!

You will also likely want to appoint a SWEEP. The sweep rider is a rider that rides towards the rear of the group and takes care of stragglers.

Ask for a volunteer to be the sweep, and make sure they have a cue sheet, or at minimum are familiar with the route. You may also want them to co-lead and switch positions during the route.

RIDING YOUR ROUTE

When you are leading the ride it is your responsibility to keep the group on direction and on pace. If you advertised a 15 mph average pace ride, don't try to make the group ride at 25 mph. Likewise, don't advertise a 20 mph ride and ride at 10 mph pace. During any ride, you will be riding at various speeds from slow to fast so try to pay attention to your overall pace, not necessarily what you may be doing up a hill.

Pay attention to your cue sheet, and call out turns well ahead. Use appropriate hand signals so the group can see when a turn is about to take place, and aren't surprised by it. Basically - just point in the direction you are going to turn. Left hand pointed down, palm out indicates you are stopping.



Ride Leader Handbook

LET'S RIDE!!!

RIDING YOUR ROUTE

You are also responsible in making sure the group rides safely, and follows applicable traffic laws. All club members are given the Pennsylvania bicyclists handbook when they join. Review it if you are unfamiliar, or might have forgotten cycling laws.

Be courteous to drivers and other vehicles on the road. Remember we represent not just our club, but all cyclists and want to present as positive and responsible users of the roadways. Be sure to wave thanks and smile when a car lets you go at a stop sign. A little goes a long way!

When you are at the front, be sure to point out obstacles that might be block from the view of riders behind you. Point at things such as potholes, grates, debris and other things littering the roadway.

Keep track of those behind you regularly, and stop as necessary to let the group catch up. If the pace is fast, or it's a particularly hot day stop a minute and encourage everyone to take a drink and stay hydrated. DON'T assume people are drinking, make sure they are!

Finally - the entire reason we ride - **HAVE FUN!!!**



Ride Leader Handbook

Uh-Oh! Now What?!?

Unfortunately, not every ride is going to be problem free. If you lead enough rides, problems will occur. People will get flat tires. People will have parts break. They may even crash.

Fear not! Come prepared!

Hanover Cyclers recommends that you have a saddle bag on your bike (or carry stuff in your jersey pockets). At minimum you will want:

- 1 - A multi-tool with a chain breaker
- 2 - Quick release links (KMC or CONNEX) for your chain
- 3 - Spare tubes (2)
- 4 - CO2 inflater and cartridges (2), or frame pump
- 5 - Tire levers (2 or 3)
- 6 - Dollar bill or candy bar wrapper

For simple things like a flat tire (the most likely thing you'll ever have happen), stop the group. If the rider is no proficient in changing a flat tire, offer assistance or ask if anyone can help - usually help is offered without asking. Offer a tube or inflater if the rider doesn't have one.

For mechanical problems like a mis-adjusted dérailleur, most can be solved, or at least adjusted enough to get rolling again with a multi-tool.



Ride Leader Handbook

Uh-Oh! Now What?!?

Another common problem with STI shifters is a cable breaking. If a rider has a shift cable snap, this too is a relatively quick and easy fix with a multi-tool and a simple trick. Remove the shift cable from the dérailleur using the appropriate Allen key on the multi-tool.

If it's the front dérailleur, it will default to the small chainring. This is normal, and they will have to pedal with the small ring. Adjust the set screw so the chain doesn't rub.

If it's the rear dérailleur, turn the HIGH set screw in as far as it will go. This will push the dérailleur in a few cogs so you're not riding in the tallest gear, and you can use the small and large chainrings. It will be tough, but the rider can pedal back.

In the event of a failure that cannot be fixed and the bike cannot be pedaled or ridden (like a crank arm breaking off), ask for volunteers to stay with the rider. Give the stranded riders a cue sheet, and ask them to stay where they are if safe, or to walk the route to the safest pickup spot. Finish the ride as quickly as possible, and ask for volunteers to go with you to pick the riders and their bikes up.



Ride Leader Handbook

Uh-Oh! Now What?!?

IN EVENT OF A CRASH

Unfortunately, we are humans and make errors. Riders sometimes crash, or may be struck by other vehicles. In such an event, **STOP THE RIDE IMMEDIATELY**. Most importantly, stay calm and don't panic!

Assess the situation, and the riders involved. They may simply have a scrape or two and be fine. They may however need medical attention. You may be riding with someone who is a trained EMT or doctor, and may want to take charge. If so, allow them. However, you may be the one who needs to stay in charge of the situation. If that is the case, the following checklist may be handy:

- 1 - HAVE A RIDER CALL 911.
- 2 - DON'T MOVE THE RIDER.
- 3 - Have riders direct traffic as necessary.
- 4 - MOVE EVERYONE ELSE OFF THE ROAD.
- 5 - Have members who witnessed the crash provide the police with a description of what happened.
- 6 - Ask the police if they can transport/store the rider's bicycle.
- 7 - Refer to the sign in sheet or rider's Road ID and contact their emergency contact. Be brief and don't speculate on the rider's condition. Tell the emergency contact where the rider has been taken so they can make appropriate arrangements.
- 8 - Make sure the remaining riders get back to the start area safely and quickly.



Ride Leader Handbook

REFERENCE MATERIALS

Hand Signals and Calls

Call	Hand Signal	Description
Turning		
"Turning Left"	Left arm out shoulder level.	The bunch will turn left when the road is clear.
"Turning Right"	Right arm out shoulder level.	The bunch will turn right when the road is clear.
Changing Lanes		
	Arm raised up high pointing in the direction of the lane.	The lead rider will do this hand signal when the group wants to change lanes. The bunch will wait for the rear rider's calls to cross over.
"Wait"		The rear rider's call for not changing lanes yet.
"Over"		The rear rider's call for the lane is safe to change into.
Overtaking		
"Riders back"		When overtaking another rider warn them of your passing.
"Rider/s right"		Used when continuing to pass the rider.
Roundabouts		
"Clear"		No cars in the roundabout.
"Car left / right"		There is a car left or right in the roundabout.
"Hold the lane"		The bunch needs to stay in the lane. Like at a two lane roundabout.
Changing Speeds		
"Stopping"	Hand lowered pushing back	The bunch needs to stop.
"Slowing"	Hand lowered pushing back	Used when the bunch is going to slow down.
"Rolling"		Used when the lights turn yellow but it is safe and there is enough time for the bunch to go though.
Changing line up		
"Single up"	One raised open hand above your helmet.	The bunch needs to go into single file.
"Pair up"		It is safe for the bunch to go back to 2 abreast riding.
"On your right / left"		Used when rejoining a group to warn your partner you are on that side.
Obstacles		
"Hole"	Point towards the hole. If riding two abreast, only the rider on the side it is on should point. Both are to point if in the middle.	If a hole is approaching.
"Door"	Hand behind riders back.	Person in car may or has opened their door.
"Car up" "Riders up" "Runner up" "Walker up"	Hand behind riders back pointing to veer right	Approaching person or object that may need you to move off your line to avoid. If in a narrow lane, hug tight to the left.
"Car Back"		Usually called by the rear rider, car behind the bunch wants to overtake.
"Car Inside"		Used on multilane roads when a car is passing on the inside.



Ride Leader Handbook

REFERENCE MATERIALS

State Laws and Other References

Pennsylvania State Bicycle Handbook:

http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/ped_bike/docs/pamanual.pdf

BicyclePA Bike Routes - Maps:

<http://www.pahighways.com/other/bicyclepa.html>

Maryland State Bicycle Laws:

http://apps.roads.maryland.gov/exploremd/bicyclists/oppe/laws/acom_bike_laws1.pdf

Maryland's Bicycle Map:

http://www.mdot.maryland.gov/Office_of_Planning_and_Capital_Programming/Bicycle/Documents/2008_Bicycle_Map_Side1_14_08.pdf

Carroll County Biking routes:

<http://carrollbiking.com/>

Useful Websites

Sheldon Brown - website for all things bikes and bike repairs:

<http://www.sheldonbrown.com/>

Jim Langley - Tips for wrenching and riding your bikes:

<http://jimlangley.net/>

Bicycle Tutor - Articles, videos and help forums for bike repair:

<http://bicycletutor.com/>

