

## **LSC Rules of the Road**

To increase the enjoyment of group cycling LSC encourages our members to take responsibility for their own safety and the safety of their fellow riders. Here are some rules of the road to help. Many thanks to our friends up in the Plano Bicycling Association who graciously allowed the use of their Ride Rules from which the following is taken, with a few modifications for our club.

### **1. We follow the instructions of the ride leader**

- To hear the instructions, we do not wear any sort of headphones, earbuds, or other soundmaking devices
- We do not ride “off the front” of the ride leader (generally out of sight or hearing)
  - unless we have informed the ride leader, and
  - we have agreed upon a re-group point, which may be the end of the ride
  - we accept responsibility for finding the way

### **2. We do not take over the ride leader’s position unless asked to do so**

- only the ride leader gives instructions to the group about starting, stopping, route changes, etc.

### **3. We keep the ride leader informed**

- If riders have to stop or slow down, then word is passed forward to the ride leader
- If we want to go back or take a shorter route – so the remainder of the group does not have to wait for someone who has turned back
- If we are not feeling well (tired legs not included!)
- If we know about hazards or construction on the planned route
- If we want to ride off the front

### **4. We observe and follow all road signs and traffic signals.**

Have you ever seen someone pedaling down the wrong side of the street, facing oncoming traffic like a pedestrian? Doesn’t that drive you crazy? Yet many of us are viewed in a similar way when we ride and don’t obey the traffic laws. This makes us unpredictable for drivers. Yes, I have been known to ride through stop signs. But for the most part I try to obey the traffic laws and when I get lax, I appreciate a friendly reminder. Let’s encourage each other to obey traffic laws so that our riding buddies and the drivers will know what to expect.

A word of caution: be careful about being a nice person and letting the traffic go when it’s your turn. The riders coming up behind you may not know you’ve waved the driver on and proceed with the right of way that is theirs. By the same token, when you approach an intersection be alert to what the other riders are doing as well as the vehicles.

### **5. We use hand and vocal signals**

- To indicate turns
- To indicate slowing and stopping
- To warn each other of hazards such as
  - pot holes, bumps, glass, gravel, and other debris
  - railroad tracks
  - water and mud

- approaching cars from either direction
- cross traffic

I have compared LSC with other clubs and we are definitely in the top of our class when it comes to communication on the road. New riders and those who have not ridden with groups (or groups that don't communicate as well) need a brief lesson on our verbal and hand signals. Most really enjoy learning and practicing this new skill.

A strong word of caution here: when someone yells "Clear" at an intersection, each rider is still responsible for checking for themselves. That "clear" can change quickly or may in fact be wrong. Always check for yourself and be prepared to stop.

One last reminder: if you are riding at the front of a group, be aware that riders tend to follow without much thought. Even if you can make it through an intersection be aware that riders behind you may follow without looking, no matter what you are shouting. In these situations, it may be best to stop so the entire group does not try to dash across the road with you.

#### **6. We follow the "rules of the road" by**

- Being predictable to motorists and fellow bike riders
- Being assertive by taking the right-of-way when we have it
- Being alert to what is going on around us (scanning)
- Being courteous by yielding the right-of-way when we don't have it
- Yielding to cross traffic
- Yielding to pedestrians

#### **7. We maintain safe position on the road by**

- Staying to the right of the road
- Staying in a single lane on multi-lane roads
- Never riding more than two abreast
- Riding single file to let traffic go by on one-lane roads
- Using caution when overlapping wheels. A front wheel overlapping and then touching someone else's back wheel can cause the rider in back to fall down
- Avoiding passing other cyclists on the right
- Riding a good line by not weaving from side to side, especially while turning

#### **8. We always stop as a group when**

- The ride leader shouts "STOPPING" as a group directive
- A rider has an accident
- A rider has a flat tire or mechanical problem
- There has been a split in the group due to a red traffic light. The front group waits for the rear group to catch up
- We come upon a stopped rider, whether in our group or not, who may need assistance (remember: the next time it may be you who needs assistance)

#### **9. If we have to stop**

- We stop as a group
- We always pass the message to stop from the back of the group to the front or vice versa
- We wait in places that are out of the flow of traffic (example: off the road; several yards before

a stop sign)

- We resume riding as a group

#### **10. We wait at intersections where there is a change of direction**

- So those in the back of the group know where we are going
- So those who want to turn back, or take a shorter route, can inform the leader

#### **11. We ride in a pace line**

- To share the workload on windy days
- To ride faster as a group
- When conditions on the road allow us to do so safely
- Because it is a lot of fun

#### **12. When riding in a pace line or echelon**

- We are expected to go to the front and take our turn if we are able to do so
- We never use our aerobars in a pace line
- We stay in our line and only change lines at the front when it is our turn to do so
- If we want to 'sit in', we are expected to stay out of the way of the pace line
- If we all can't fit across the road in the echelon, we form a second echelon so that more riders can find shelter from the wind