

Highlands Pedalers Suggestions for a Safe and Enjoyable Ride

Purpose and Guiding Principles

These suggestions for a safe and enjoyable bicycle ride summarize the expected behaviors for participants in all scheduled Highlands Pedalers group rides.

Behavior, Courtesy and Respecting the Rights of Others

We recognize that the public judges all bike riders by our actions and behavior and that cycling's reputation with the non-cycling public is at stake. We understand that our conduct, whether it is good or bad, becomes an example to others. Therefore we encourage our members and fellow cyclists to...

- project a positive public image by practicing responsible, considerate cycling behaviors.
- recognize the rights of others using the roads and trails.
- avoid confrontations but report incidents to the police when appropriate.
- avoid language that is obscene, insulting or threatening, even when provoked.

The Highlands Pedalers neither encourages nor condones any disregard for traffic laws. Such actions may endanger or injure yourself and others and can lead to possible civil and/or criminal actions by third parties including law enforcement authorities. Florida DOT "Bicycle Law":

http://highlandsbikefest.com/pedalers/cycling_laws.php

Group Riding Best Practices

- Choose a ride distance and advertised average speed that is within your experience and capabilities.
- If you are concerned about getting lost because of your inability to keep up, let another rider know. You may be advised to wait for the slower group on the same ride or a rider may be willing to accompany you.
- Don't leave the group without notifying another rider.
- Warn before "**slowing**" or "**stopping**". Use hand and verbal signals to alert riders to upcoming turns, road surface hazards, pedestrians, cars, potholes, etc. (e.g. "**car back**", "**car up**", "**dog**", "**walkers up**", "**hole**", "**glass**", etc.)
- Be alert and aware of riders and cars behind, along side and in front of you.
- Ride assertively taking the space you need on the road to avoid hazards. Ride no less than 2 feet from the edge of the useable pavement to avoid trash, pavement joints, the gutter, motorists passing you too close, etc.
- In a pace line ride a steady pace, accelerating and decelerating smoothly to avoid frustrating other riders.
- Maintain a safe gap from the rider in front of you, providing space and time to brake in an emergency.
- Ride in a single-file pace line most of the time. Ride no more than two abreast on the road at other times.

- Do not consistently overlap the front wheel of your bicycle with the rear wheel of another bicycle.
- Overtake slower bikes on their left side giving ample clearance (3') and warning "**on your left**" as passing.
- To relinquish the lead position in a pace line signal by slapping your right hip then move to the left and let the group pass on your right. Always check for a "car back" before this maneuver.
- Pace lines longer than 15 riders can become resented obstacles for motorists under certain road and traffic conditions. If necessary to keep faster vehicle traffic passing comfortably, divide into groups of 15 or less.
- Passing vehicles on the right is always dangerous and should be avoided with the possible exceptions of when passing a car that is clearly turning left or when vehicular traffic is completely stopped in a traffic jam. Even then, be sure to pass carefully giving the vehicles ample clearance. Stay out of mandatory turn lanes when going straight through an intersection. Do not stop at a light in mandatory turn lane if going straight.
- Abide by traffic signals (e.g. red and yellow lights) and be very cautious at stop signs, yield signs, etc.
- Avoid being "doored". Ride at least "1 meter (3.3 feet)" from sides of parked cars. Look for signs a parked car may be leaving.
- Do not ride closer than one car length behind a moving motor vehicle & never hold on to or draft one.
- No person shall operate a bicycle while wearing a headset, headphone or other listening device, other than a hearing aid or instrument for the improvement of defective human hearing. (Section 316.304(1), F.S.)
- If a designated "no-drop ride" group becomes split (e.g. at an intersection or hill) riders in the forward group should slow down or find a safe place to stop off the roadway to reform the group.

Dealing with Mechanical Problems and Emergencies

- Assure that your bike is properly equipped and maintained before each ride.
- Stop and offer assistance to a fellow cyclist in the event of a mechanical breakdown or flat tire.
- Rider's kits should include: a pump or other means of inflating tires; spare inner tube or a tube repair kit; tire levers; tightening tool(s) appropriate to your bike; cell phone; personal ID; list of Emergency Contacts (phone numbers, names and relationship); and medical insurance card.

Food and Clothing

- Helmets are mandatory on club rides. We think your brain function is a valuable asset.
- You should carry enough drink and nutrition to get you through the planned ride distance. Ask for tips.
- Dress appropriately and be prepared for changes in the weather (rain, wind, temp, etc.)
- At night use bright or reflective clothing and lights.

Aero Bars

- If mounted on your bike, aero bars need not be removed for club rides; however, we recommend aero bars not be used in pace lines except when you are the lead rider "pulling" the

others. Cyclists using aero bars have less firm control of the handlebar and less ability to reach the brakes in time of an emergency.

Child Protection Policy

- A parent must accompany riders under 18 years of age and a signed Liability Waiver may be required.

Role of the designated "Ride Leader" when there is one

- Please welcome and introduce "new" riders and describe the route, planned rest stops, distance and speed.
- Please encourage the group to stay together, provide assistance with mechanical problems during the ride, and call 911 for a seriously injured rider.
- Allow enough time for your group to negotiate obstacles, hills and intersections.
- Please consider designating a "sweep", i.e. an experienced rider that will keep the entire group in front of him or her to help the group identify slow riders and mechanical problems that arise.
- Please visually confirm that each rider has enough water bottles and a helmet.
- Please **lead by example**, advocate safe riding practices and educate yourself and ride participants as needed about **Florida Bicycle Law** http://highlandsbikefest.com/pedalers/cycling_laws.php.
- At the end of your ride encourage riders to consider joining the club if they have not already done so.

Limitation of Liability

- The Highlands Pedalers club is not responsible for errors and omissions in this document or for injuries or damage caused or incurred by riders during club related rides or because of these guidelines.
- Highlands Pedalers members may be required to sign a liability release when they complete or renew their club memberships.