



## Group Riding Safety Protocol (DRAFT)

*“There are no accidents. There are only incidents of errors and lapses of judgement.”*

**Guiding Principle:** The following safety protocols have been developed with the CanBike principles of **Manoeuvrability, Visibility, Predictability** and **Communication** applied to *Group Riding* situations.

### Keeping your distance

- **When Riding single file**, stay one to two bike lengths apart. Do not overlap wheels. The rear rider inevitably receives the worst of it in the event of a wiggle or sudden braking.
- **One or two bike lengths** allow room for braking and to manoeuvre around road obstacles.
- **Increase distance** between riders on gravelly roads, wet roads, wet leafy roads, rough roads with potholes and patchy shadows
- **When Riding two abreast**, maintain one to two bike lengths behind the rider ahead and about 1 metre apart from the rider next to you. (This is endorsed by police who say cyclists have a right to occupy a lane occasionally)

**Riding two abreast** is the safer option on roads *without a shoulder or bike lane*. This allows faster moving vehicles to overtake properly rather than encouraging traffic to squeeze past slowly.

### Riding three abreast (or more!) is not permitted

Three persons abreast reduces manoeuvring space for the middle rider and our roads aren't wide enough to also accommodate unexpected oncoming farm vehicles, wide trucks etc. It also takes too long to re-form back into single file.

### Passing others

- Always pass on the left.
- NEVER pass on the right.
- Communicate loudly and clearly “Passing on your left” or “On your left” — leave plenty of physical space (minimum of 3ft—preferably more) to manoeuvre in case either of you encounters obstacles, pot holes, rough surface etc.
- Do not pass unpredictably—too close, unannounced or at high speeds

### Communicate with hand signals and/or voice

- When passing
- When stopping
- When slowing down
- When encountering obstacles, debris, potholes,
  - Call out – “car back”, “car up”, “walker up”, “on your left” (when passing) or if unsure – “heads up”
  - Know the hand signals for turning, stopping, slowing down, and obstacles
  - Do not call “All clear” at junctions—It is every rider's responsibility to negotiate junctions as an individual.



### **Hill Ascents**

- All riders must stay as far to the right as is **practicable**. *The slower you are, the further to the right you should be*
- Ride single file unless passing
- Pass when necessary but return to single file after passing
- Do not pass near the summit—the group must be in **single file as you crest the hill**.

### **Hill Descents**

*Descents are when we go the fastest, have the least time to react and are at our most vulnerable. We must be extra vigilant to:*

- All riders must stay as far to the right as is **practicable**. *The slower you are, the further to the right you should be*
- Leave additional space around and others, especially when passing
- Passing: Communicate “On your left!” allowing sufficient time for the person to anticipate you
- Maintain situational awareness—Be mindful of each others road positions and speed
- Ride at a speed appropriate for the conditions, your skill level & confidence
- Be aware of hazards—potholes, loose gravel, debris, wet patches, patchy sun and shade that can mask potholes, wet leaves, roadkill
- Leave room for the unexpected - cars pulling out from driveways, dogs running out, potholes!

### **Red lights and Stop signs**

- **DO NOT** congregate at junctions for re-grouping, discussions or shade-breaks—position yourself 20 meters *before* or *after* the junction and off the road.
- **DO NOT** wait for other riders at a stop sign. Proceed through the intersection and wait at the *other* side clear of the intersection if necessary, at least 20 metres away and off the road out of harms way.
- **DO NOT** communicate “*All clear*” at intersections: The cyclist in front cannot ensure safety for those who follow. Proceeding safely through an intersection is the responsibility of each individual to assess before proceeding through.
- **DO** communicate observed hazards such as “*Car left*” or “*Car right*” that you notice as you proceed through the intersection.

### **Group size & Gapping**

It is recommended that big groups (10-12 plus) split into smaller ones where conditions merit, such as riding on roads without bike lanes where faster moving vehicles will pass, and roads with frequent hills and curves. 6–8 riders are easier for other road users to interact with.

### **Carry ID**

Carry a card with you that has your name, birthdate, emergency contact info and Health Card #, medications and allergies.