‘‘🚲 ‘🚲‘ 🚲 🚲 Safety and Etiquette when cycling ‘‘🚲 ‘🚲‘ 🚲 ‘‘🚲

SAFETY

- You are responsible for your own SAFETY
- THE RULES OF THE ROAD APPLY TO ALL ROAD USERS, EVEN WHEN YOU ARE PART OF A GROUP (SEE BELOW)
- Don’t overlap wheels (50cm gap). Note 50cm is about two thirds of the diameter of standard wheel (70cm).
- Don’t freewheel, avoid standing on pedals. You will slow down immediately - the cyclist behind you will have to brake
- Don’t let gaps form
- Follow rider in front, but don’t stare at his wheel – look ahead
- Bring phone for emergencies – always stop to use it
- No Headphones that prevent you from hearing
- Never pass inside of bus/lorry. Even if there is a cycle lane.
- When abroad, Coloured tape or elastic band on right hand side of handlebars, so you remember which side of to travel on. Alternatively, a bright wristband on your right wrist.

THE RULES OF THE ROAD

These apply to all road users – in general terms, for cyclists, this means:

- Having a bike that is in proper working order and that fits.
- ALWAYS stopping at a red traffic light.
- ALWAYS stopping at a STOP sign and yielding appropriately at a YIELD sign.
- ALWAYS stopping at pedestrian facilities (Zebra crossings, pedestrian lights etc.) if someone is crossing.
- ALWAYS cycling in the same direction as the rest of the traffic when on the road or a bike lane.
- ALWAYS obeying lane markings; unbroken centre lines cannot be crossed.
- ALWAYS use hand signals to indicate your intentions.
- Only cycling on the path if there is a suitable cycle track/path.
- When turning, giving way to pedestrians who have started to cross the road. In general, giving way to pedestrians.
- Stopping and pulling in to use a mobile phone.
- Cycling no more than two abreast, and, keeping to single file to facilitate flow of other vehicles in traffic, unless it is safer to prevent an overtake where the road is narrow. Single file when there are parked vehicles causing a narrowing effect.

BIKEMANSHIP

- Be there 10 minutes before start time
- Check: Helmet, Gloves (even a small fall on gravel is very painful), appropriate clothing, glasses (sun, bugs)
- Check: Weather, Sun Protection, Rain protection
- Check: Route Plan
- Carry tubes, pump, tools and lock.
- Are your spare tubes the correct size for your bike?
- Carry food and water
- Don’t lie your bike on its right-hand side (damage to derailleur and chain)
- Don’t stand your bike with no rear wheel, (damage to derailleur). **The rear derailleur is delicate**
- Pump tyres hard (100 psi – check tyre for the correct pressure for your bike) to avoid punctures and to go faster
- Keep bike clean – it will go faster and last longer

PHONE

- Have Emergency Phone numbers/forms
- Be able to send a location by WhatsApp
- Know who to send it to
- Keep phone fully charged
- Check you are in the appropriate WhatsApp group, especially if you switch groups

CYCLE LANES / PATHS

- **A mandatory cycle lane** is edged by a continuous white line between it and the rest of the road – no drivers may drive or park on it, except to cross it for access.
- **A non-mandatory cycle lane** has a broken white line and drivers may move into it when there is no cyclist using it, to pass a vehicle waiting to turn to the right. Drivers may park for up to thirty minutes to facilitate loading or unloading of a vehicle.
- A cycle path is off-road. You need to **watch out for traffic/pedestrians crossing**, who may not notice you.
- Cyclists also need to **check all round before moving off a cycle path** onto or across a road, as vehicles on the road have right of way.
- **By law, a cyclist must use any cycle lane provided** as part of a pedestrian street or area or as part of a contra-flow cycle lane.
- **A cyclist can use the same lanes as buses**, even where there is a parallel cycle lane, but needs to be careful of buses and taxis stopping along the route.
- **Advanced Stop Lines** mark out an area ahead of the main stop line at a junction, where cyclists can stop in front of traffic – this allows bikes to get in position to turn **to the right (in Ireland, left on the continent)** while waiting for the light to turn to green.

ARE CYCLE LANES AND CYCLE PATHS MANDATORY?

Since August 14 2018 Cycle Paths and Cycle lanes are no longer mandatory. (Reference: S.I. No. 321 of 2018) This is because many cycle tracks are not fit for purpose. However:

- A cycle track/path in a pedestrianised area is mandatory
- A contra-flow cycle lane (going in the opposite direction to the traffic) is mandatory
- **It is still advisable to use cycle lanes and paths at all times** – unless the cycle track itself is a danger.
- Cycle tracks will always be used on Willow Wheelers cycles unless they are unsuitable.
- If cycling abroad, use the cycle tracks – the local laws may mean that they are mandatory - even if they are not, they are probably safer.
- Its is safer to use a cycle lane, when available, than a bus lane.

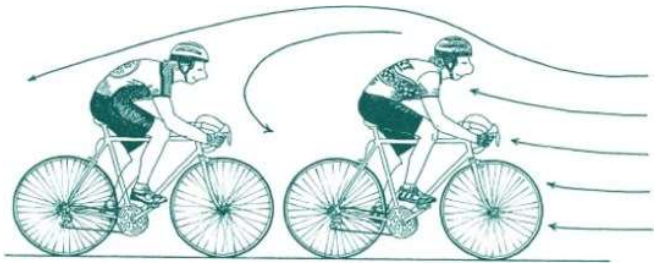
Safety and Etiquette when cycling

GROUP RIDING

- On a hill maintain your effort, not your speed
  - 50cm gap (about 2/3 wheel length) - larger gaps when climbing or descending
- Don't look down replacing your bottle (keep straight line)
- If struggling with a gap wave stronger rider through
- If tired, drop backwards (avoids mistakes happening under pressure), stay ahead of last man
- Back mudguard in winter, as courtesy to other cyclists
- Scan at least 3 bikes ahead
- Keep speed constant - remember you will slow down – immediately, if you freewheel or stand
- Keep straight line, follow cyclist in front
- Signal changes in speed etc
- Signal turns in advance
- When stopped, get off the road
- Wait at turns, top of hills and appropriate waypoints.
- Two Abreast - only when safe and only when already competent in single file
  - One metre apart, no half-wheeling (cycle beside each other, don't push ahead a bit)
  - Not advised when:
    - City, narrow road or when there is a white line on road
    - Passing parked cars
    - When "single file" is called

DRAFTING

- Drafting is riding in the slipstream of the riders in front of you
- Take advantage of drafting when cycling in a group
- Use up to 36% less power for same speed, more in a headwind
- Up to 5km/hr faster than you normally cycle for same power
- You lose this advantage if you slip off the back of the group
- Stronger cyclist should cycle at the front of the group
- Tired cyclist should take advantage of the groups slipstream



Position	Effort
1st	100%
2nd	71%
3rd	64%
4th	64%
5th	64%
6th	64%

How much energy do you save by drafting?

CALLS *Communicate clearly*

- *Call hazards that are actually hazards, i.e. may cause puncture or worse. Not just minor discomfort*
- *Not everyone needs to call every pothole; message passes down line, but not through every person*
- SLOWING / STOPPING / GOING
- WAIT (e.g. waiting for traffic to clear)
- CLEAR (it's clear for cyclists to proceed)
- SINGLE FILE / DOUBLE UP
- PUNCTURE (the cyclist who has puncture, raise your hand if safe)
- POTHOLE / GRAVEL / GLASS
- CAR UP (car coming from front), CAR BACK
- BIKE UP, BIKE BACK
- ON YOUR LEFT/RIGHT (if you are passing a cyclist). Let the cyclist ahead know that you are about to overtake.

Important Note: Different clubs may have different calls e.g. in the USA and in some clubs Car Up and Car Down is used instead of Car Up and Car Back. We will use only use CAR UP and CAR BACK to avoid ambiguity. However, remember that that you may hear other calls, always look and listen to see where the danger is.

HAND SIGNALS

- *Always combine both calls and hand signals, when safe.*
- SLOWING: Arm out, move up and down
- STOPPING: Arm out palm open
- MOVE OUT: Hand behind back, point to safe side (away from the obstruction) i.e. riders should move this way. Alternatively, Hand behind back, wave hand in the direction to move out – Shout "LEFT/RIGHT"
- PUNCTURE: The person with puncture raises hand high and calls "Puncture" stop when safe
- HAZARD: Arm out, point at harard, call "Pothole" or as appropriate
- LOOSE, GLASS OR UNEVEN: Arm out rock hand back and forth to indicate uneven surface
- COME THROUGH: Keep hands on handlebars, indicate which side to pass by cocking elbow – or wave through with hand

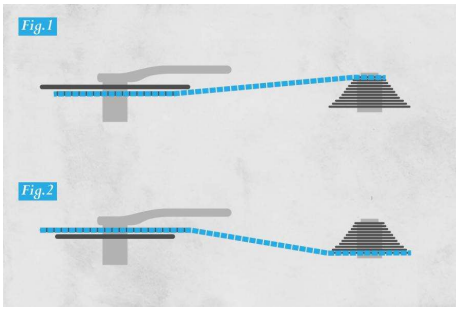
GEARS AND RPM

Low/High actually refers to gear ratios, but you can remember it by:

- Low Gear – for low speed (starting, stopping, climbing
- High Gear – for when you reach higher speeds

Cadence (RPM) *RPM=Revolutions per minute.* While there's no one magic number, *aiming for 90 RPM is a good goal* to avoid leg fatigue and to make the most out of your muscles. Average cyclists have a cadence of about 60 RPM (that's one full revolution every second); advanced and elite cyclists pedal anywhere from 80 to 100 RPMs. High cadence is good, pushing/grinding is bad. "Spin to win."

A crossed chain, like in the diagram on right, is inefficient, will slow you down and will also wear out your chain→ →



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SAFETY AND ETIQUETTE – SUPPLEMENT FOR ADULTS

- *Note that all adults are accompanying all junior cyclists and should be familiar with the following information.*

ETHOS

- Willow Wheelers fosters the joy of cycling as a recreational sporting activity to be enjoyed by members of all ages.
- The Club also promotes a strong community and caring ethos.
- As adult members we are responsible for supporting and encouraging EVERY club cyclist
- We are also responsible for setting an example (e.g. always using cycle lanes)

Consider bringing:

- One more spare tube than you need
- Tools
- Extra food (for tired juniors)
- First aid items
- Extra money (taxi home)
- Phone and numbers
- I.D. and Hotel Address/Phone
- A lock that will link more than one bike

FRONT RIDER

- Is the leader in Willow Wheelers (other clubs usually lead from behind)
- Navigates
- Plans the route, in consultation
- Stays in visual contact with Backmarker/Sweeper
- Slow/stop wait at a safe place if the group is strung out.
- Never assume backmarker/sweeper and stragglers will catch up. They may have mechanical issues, get sick or lost.
- Wait at turns, top of hill and appropriate waypoints
- Stop in safe place if group needs a break

BACKMARKER/SWEEPER

- Stay at back of entire group, boys and adults
- Have the phone number of the leader
- When the leader looks back to check group raise your arm clearly
- Keep count of all boys/adults and signal clearly if someone missing (adult or boy)
- Consider two backmarkers working together: in case one gets a puncture or if there are mixed abilities

MIDDLE RIDERS

- Stay in line, not two abreast unless safe to do so, there is a clear reason or the group is doubled up.
- If group is split for any reason assume temporary lead position of second group.
- Never allow the situation to arise that a boy is at the front or alone
- Avoid a junior cyclist becoming a last rider of a split group
- Watch for potential problems: loose laces, straps, soft tyres

CYCLING WITH MIXED ABILITIES

- Slow yourself down:
  - choose a low gear, spinning is good for your cycling even if it’s a bit slower
  - Or cycle in a higher gear- push/grind a bit – weight training for your legs!
  - Note: of the two suggestions above focus more on spinning
- Verbal encouragement
- Regroup regularly
- Towing /Drafting - take the wind – cycle at the front – protect slower riders
- Help tired riders – do this by placing hand on their back, but don’t actually push

MECHANICAL ISSUES

- At least one member of each group should be competent to remove back wheel and fix a punctures or mechanical issues. Check who in your group has tubeless tyres, can you repair those?
- **When you have a puncture or mechanical issue**
  - Clearly signal
  - Stop when safe
  - Get the group off the road
  - One person fix, one person assist - everyone else is responsible for safety, keeping junior cyclists off the road
  - The side of the road is not the place to learn to fix punctures, practice at home/hotel

TYRE PRESSURE

- Lighter riders can get away with lower tyre pressure (e.g. 70psi) but most adults need max tyre pressure, and it’s still best for lighter riders
- Usually 100 psi, but check your tyres – hybrids and mountain bikes may have much lower pressure (fatter tyres)
- Higher pressure – less tyre on the ground – less resistance – less punctures - but less comfortable too (you’ll get used to that)