

BICYCLE ETIQUETTE and SAFETY

Three categories of safety are included in this document; they are all extremely important and will keep you and others safe. You are responsible for reading and understand all etiquette and safety measures before heading out for a ride. If you have a question, PLEASE ask a more knowledgeable cyclist on your team; they will be happy to help.

- “Keeping the PELOTON Safe”
- “Keeping YOURSELF Safe”
- “10 Ways to NOT get Hit by a Cars”

It is for your safety AND for the safety of all your friends in the Peloton that you exercise these points every time you ride.

Keeping the PELOTON Safe

YELL OUT

1. **Yell out well before you get to an obstacle** (especially if you are the lead cyclist); this gives the others behind you sufficient time to prepare and react accordingly. Yelling out AND giving hand-signals for an obstacle is the safest approach.
2. **Only call out an obstacle in the road if it’s something that can take you down**; this makes for a more relaxed ride for everyone.
3. **When calling out an obstacle in the road, yell “... in the road”**; Include the word obstacle, bump, hole or whatever the obstacle might be. As it can be difficult to distinguish between an alert and casual conversation, a standard and generic “... in the road” that is always a part of the phrase will make the alert more recognizable. Remember, the whole idea is to alert the others giving them time to look and adjust.
4. **Yell “stopping /rolling” as required**; verbal commands are advised for these actions as they can involve drastic speed changes that will affect the whole peloton; getting the word out quickly is key.
5. **Do NOT blindly follow those in front of you through a changing traffic light**; Deciding what to do when a street light is changing can be a very tense and confusing situation. For the safety of others, it is better to stop.
6. **During a traffic light change, if you hear ANYONE say “stopping”, you should plan on stopping as well.** If some decide to roll and others decide to stop, it creates a very unsafe environment.
7. **Right or left arm extended down at a 45 degree angle AND yelling “stopping”** is the most effective way to notify all the other riders.

HAND SIGNALS

8. **Use hand signals**; hand signals are important for communicating with cars and they are also important for communicating with your fellow cyclists. Yelling out AND giving hand-signals for an obstacle is the safest approach.
9. **Extend your left arm “straight out” to mean you’re turning left.**
10. **Extend your right arm “straight out” to mean you’re turning right.**
11. **Extend your right arm pointing down at a 45 degree angle** when pointing at an obstacle on your right; a 45 degree angle is visible to more than just the immediate rider behind you. (Use your left arm if the obstacle will be on your left).
12. **Do NOT use any hand signal directly behind your back** as the only rider who can see it is the cyclist directly behind you; the others will have no idea that a signal has been given.

POSITIONING

13. **When passing another cyclist, move into the space ahead of him/her only after you have passed with adequate distance** and then make the transition as gentle as possible ; fast, drastic transitions with little room between the two of your wheels is a recipe for disaster.
14. **Always “hold your line” especially on a turn;** this allows an adequate amount of space for other riders to navigate the road with you when you are in close proximity of each other.
15. **Always track a straight line;** this reduces sharp and drastic position changes that will affect the whole peloton.
16. **No wheel crossing;** if you overlap the wheel of the cyclist in front of you and he/she makes a sudden left/right movement, it will likely take you down and possibly others as well.
17. **YOU control the traffic if it’s required for safety;** this means moving your bike in front of a car to take control of the road ahead when necessary; do this only if the car is moving at a speed equal or slower than you.
18. **Do not pass other cyclists on busy downhills** especially if there is no bike lane; position yourself ahead of time if you intend to be ahead of someone.
19. **Do not take the lead in the peloton unless you know the course.**
20. **Do not take the lead in the peloton unless you are prepared to vocalize obstacles** in the road and able to do so well in advance of reaching the obstacle.
21. **The lead rider is responsible for picking the safest line;** this is important because the peloton trusts the leader and will automatically follow his path.
22. **The Lead rider should never “bunny hop” an obstacle;** they should navigate around it rather than leading the peloton through it.
23. **A Pace Line leader should wiggle their left elbow and take 2-3 good strokes prior to peeling off the front;** this notifies the rider behind you that you are relinquishing the lead and creates a little more wheel space before you move over.
24. **A Pace Line leader that has peeled off should drift gradually to the back of the line;** peel off to the same side as those who have done so ahead of you.
25. **In general, do not pass on the right** of another cyclist as the intention of the other cyclist is to move to the right if they hear someone coming up on them; so you should pass on the left.
26. **In general, you should NEVER ride more than 2 abreast** and only when the bike lane will accommodate both of you.
27. **When riding 2 abreast, ride handlebar to handlebar;** if the two of you should bump, it will most likely be with handlebars or elbows which is much easier to recover from than bumping elsewhere.
28. **If there is a bike lane, do your best to stay in it;** that’s what it’s there for.
29. **Keep your speed steady with smooth speed adjustments** as required; sharp and dramatic speed changes in a peloton can throw off the riders behind you.
30. **If you are going to get out of the saddle, make sure the rider behind you is at least a full bike length behind** since your speed drops noticeably when you stand up.
31. **When you need to get out of your saddle, make sure your speed does not slow down during the transition;** a slight drop in speed can have a big impact on the rider behind you who doesn’t know it’s coming.
32. **When drafting another, keep a close eye on their back wheel all while looking past them to the road and cyclists ahead;** looking past the rider in front of you gives you more timely information about the road and/or hazards coming up.
33. **Do not play cat and mouse on the bike just to prove your manliness.** If you cannot stay ahead of the person you are passing for a reasonable period of time, you should not be passing them to start with. AND, learn to accept the fact that there are women out there who are stronger than you; let them go.
34. **Continually spin the pedals even if you are not generating any propulsion;** this eliminates drastic cadence changes that can startle those behind and possibly cause a dangerous chain reaction.

35. **No hard braking or even medium braking if at all possible**; light, controlled braking is the safest for those behind you. Another technique is to use “wind breaking” which involves sitting up or steering slightly left to get out of the slipstream. This will slow you down without having to use your brakes at all.
36. **Do not use aero bars in the peloton** unless you are the one at the front; braking and steering are not nearly as quick in this position both of which may be immediately necessary if there are others ahead of you.

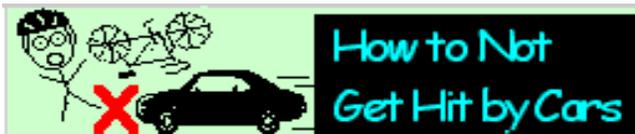
WRAPUP

37. **Make direct eye contact with auto drivers** when you need to be sure they see you; if you know they see you, you will have most likely eliminated that risk.
38. **Give drivers a wave or thumbs up** if they have stopped for you. Change their viewpoint of cyclist’s one driver at a time.
39. **Riding in a peloton reduces the risk imposed by cars BUT increases the risk imposed by fellow cyclists in the peloton.** Keeping them safe and working together will keep you safe.

Keeping YOURSELF Safe

40. **Obey traffic signs and signals**; bicycles must follow the rules of the road like other vehicles.
41. **Never ride against traffic**; motorists aren’t looking for bicyclists riding on the wrong side of the road. State law and common sense require that bicyclists drive like other vehicles.
42. **Follow lane markings**; don’t turn left from the right lane. Don’t go straight in a lane marked “right-turn only.”
43. **Don’t pass on the right**; motorists may not look for or see a bicycle passing on the right.
44. **Scan the road behind you**; learn to look back over your shoulder without losing your balance or swerving. Some riders use rear-view mirrors.
45. **Keep both hands ready to brake**; you may not stop in time if you brake one-handed. Allow extra distance for stopping in the rain, since brakes are less efficient when wet.
46. **Wear a helmet and never ride with headphones**; always wear a helmet. Never wear a headphone while riding a bike.
47. **Dress for the weather**; in rain wear a poncho or waterproof suit. Dress in layers so you can adjust to temperature changes. Wear bright colored clothing.
48. **Use hand signals**; hand signals tell motorists and pedestrians what you intend to do. Signal as a matter of law, of courtesy, and of self-protection.
49. **Ride in the middle of the lane in slower traffic**; get in the middle of the lane at busy intersections and whenever you are moving at the same speed as traffic.
50. **Choose the best way to turn left**; there are two choices: (1) like an auto: signal to move into the left turn lane and then turn left. (2) like a pedestrian: ride straight to the far side crosswalk. Walk your bike across.
51. **Make eye contact with drivers**; assume that other drivers don’t see you until you are sure that they do. Eye contact is important with any driver which might pose a threat to your safety.
52. **Look out for road hazards**; watch out for parallel-slat sewer grates, gravel, ice, sand or debris. Cross railroad tracks at right angles.
53. **Use lights at night**; the law requires a white headlight (visible from at least 500 feet ahead) and a rear reflector or taillight (visible up to 300 feet from behind).
54. **Keep your bike in good repair**; adjust your bike to fit you and keep it working properly. Check brakes and tires regularly. Routine maintenance is simple and you can learn to do it yourself.
55. **Carry ID**; Wear a RoadID and/or carry a driver’s license and medical identification card. Unfortunately, accidents do happen and the best way for first responders to get you the most efficient and accurate care is through this identification.

10 Ways to NOT get Hit by Cars



<http://bicyclesafe.com>