

**Attachment 15****Lambton Outdoor Club****Bicycle Safety Guidelines**

*We all believe bicycle safety to be a serious matter and we want and expect you, our participants, to share in that commitment. Following the guidelines below, as well as using common sense while cycling, will help ensure that you are not the cause of any problem or accident.*

**Bicycles are Legal Vehicles** - and so have the right to share the road with motor vehicles. This right carries an obligation to be responsible, ride cautiously and courteously and obey all laws.

**THE MAJOR AND BASIC POINTS:-**

1. **Helmets are Required** - You must wear one at all times while riding a bicycle at any LOC event.
2. **Obey all applicable traffic regulations, signs and signals as if you were driving a car.**
3. **Ride single file on busy roads** - if the group is large it is advisable to split into smaller units of 4 to 5 and leave a gap of at least 50m between each group. This enables vehicles to pass more easily. Riding two abreast is only possible on quiet roads but cyclists must be vigilant in dropping into single file when there are vehicles approaching.
4. **Ride with the flow of traffic.**
5. **Share the roadway** - If a shoulder is provided for bicycles, use it, if not, ride one meter from the edge of the pavement or as close to the right as is safe.
6. **Ride in control** - Keep several bike lengths between you and other cyclists. Be able to ride in a straight line, including while starting and stopping. Riding down steep hills is challenging and requires care: Leave at least 50m between bikes at the top and never let the speed get too high (stay below ~20 km/h).
7. **Ride Predictably** - Let fellow cyclists know of your intentions with verbal communication and hand signaling. Unfortunately, bikes don't have signals or brake lights, so many accidents can be avoided by a loud "on your left" when passing, and a back of the palm held out together with a yell of "stopping" when YOU decide to hit YOUR brakes.
8. **Ride Defensively** - Make eye contact with drivers: Smile, wave and WAIT for their acknowledgement. The individual cyclist must make their own independent decision as to the safety of a turn or crossing in the road. Cyclists should never call out "CLEAR" at an intersection or turn in a road. It is appropriate to warn of danger such as calling out "car back" but not to tell someone that it is safe to do something.
9. **Be Aware** - To ride safely you must know what is going on around you. You should be able to see and hear clearly and a mirror is particularly useful for seeing vehicles coming from behind. Watch for cars coming out of driveways, overtaking you in the lane, and pulling out of side streets. Remember, the driver is USUALLY not on the lookout for cyclists.
10. **Watch for road surface hazards** - Such as potholes, railroad crossings, bridges, gravel, drainage grates or other slots in the direction of travel, wet metal, painted surfaces, assorted debris and other irregularities in the road surface.

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11. **Be Smartly Outfitted** - Injuries can occur because you and your bike are not properly equipped.
12. **The “Alright Bike”** - Ensure that your bike is in proper working order, and that you are competent with all operating controls. Keep tires at the proper pressure to avoid “snake bite” flats. Carry a spare tube, pump, patch kit, tire levers and a multi tool for the inevitable problem. Use proper bags or panniers to carry equipment and make sure your bike is equipped with a bell, a mirror, and lights if riding after dark.
13. **Wear high visibility clothing** - that catches people’s attention - colours like bright yellow, bright orange or light green are a good idea and reflective stripes are excellent if riding after dark. The alternative is to wear a safety vest over less visible clothing.

**OTHER IMPORTANT SAFETY POINTS:**

1. **Ride with a buddy** - It is always best to cycle with a road partner.
2. **Carry ID, medical card and a cell phone** - If you have specific medical problems carry your Medical Alert Bracelet or ensure that someone else you are riding with knows about the issues. Never leave any valuables on unattended bikes and never leave your bike unlocked.
3. **When checking behind** - to see if it is safe to turn left, look in your mirror first to make sure nothing is immediately behind, then turn your head and look behind to double check before signaling and making the turn. It is difficult to keep the same distance from the edge of the road when you turn your head so checking in the mirror first is always the safest thing to do.
4. **If you need to cross a roadway or make a left turn in an area of heavy traffic** - dismount at a stop or shoulder, check for traffic, and when safe, walk as a pedestrian to cross.
5. **Never “snake” or zig-zag to ride up a hill** - If the terrain is difficult, get off your bike and walk.
6. **Riding in the Rain** - Riding in the rain takes more caution and care. Reduce your cycling speed and pump your brakes from time to time to ensure brake pads work. Maintain extra distance from other cyclists. Walk non-paved surfaces like metal and wood bridges, wooden pathways, cobblestones, and railroad tracks. If rain becomes so heavy that it impairs vision or interferes with safe handling of the bicycle; stop riding. If you hear thunder or see lightening, stop cycling immediately and seek shelter.
7. **Riding on Trails** - Riding on trails takes a lot of vigilance. Slow down, keep several bike lengths between you and the other cyclists, and maintain an unobstructed view of your path ahead. Keep an eye out for pedestrians, small children, dogs and inexperienced cyclists. Paths are usually busy. You are responsible to keep your fellow cyclists apprised of any obstructions in the trail. Make these obstructions known with loud verbal communication.
8. **Get your bike completely off the roadway when you stop.**



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9. **If you ride on to the soft shoulder at the side of the road** - stop and get off your bike. Then walk it back on to the pavement before getting back on.
10. **Crossing Railroad Tracks - BEWARE OF ALL RAILROAD TRACKS!** Your safest option is to walk across a track. If you choose to ride, all railroad tracks must be crossed at close to a 90-degree angle. This usually involves advanced planning and working with cars as you will be crossing into their lane of travel. Always be ready to stop your bike and walk across a track if sharing the road is not possible or the track is hard to navigate. Assume all wet RR tracks to be dangerous. The above advisories also pertain to crossing metal and wood bridges.
11. **Dealing with dogs** - If a dog gives you undue attention, dismount at once, keeping your bike between you and the animal. Never try to out-race a dog, hit it with your foot or squirt it with your bottle.
12. **Riding in populated areas** - when cycling in towns or other areas where there is a lot of movement and commercialism, stay alert and ride defensively. Never ride your bike on the sidewalk. Watch for car doors opening, cars pulling into traffic, pedestrians darting into the roadway, etc. Window shopping and sightseeing should be done on foot. Park and lock your bike and set out on foot to explore the area of interest.
13. **Taking care of your Physical Needs** - Drink plenty of water throughout your ride: Always drink before you're thirsty and make it a habit to take a few big swallows of water every 20 minutes. The general rule of thumb is to consume 16 ounces of water every hour or so. Of course, this rule varies depending on your body size and needs, the outdoor temperature and the intensity of the ride. **Take every opportunity to re-fill your water bottle. Eat before you feel hungry:** Always start your riding day with a nourishing breakfast. Carry energy snacks with you and create your own rest stops every 15 km or so to get off the bike, take a stretch, lower your heart-rate, and enjoy a "power bar". Pull in at the convenience store to make a break in your route. Make it a point to stop for a leisurely lunch - about 30-45 minutes.
14. **Pace Yourself** - Listen to your body and never push yourself beyond what are your comfortable limits. If you are on the route and you are getting signals from your body that are unusual or even alarming, call (or have someone else call) **EMERGENCY 911** right away. Then let the coordinator or sweep know of your condition.

### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

The above is based on a document prepared by Roger and Suzie Knable who run an organization called "Bike and the Like." (*Several of us in the club have cycled with them.*) They have given us permission to use their set of safety rules as a basis for our own guidelines on cycling safety. Although they originally prepared the document for their own use it appears to have been adopted by other cycling organizations in North America.

### **Revision Log**

Revision No.	Date	Description / By
First Issue	1 <sup>st</sup> January 2015	New Guidelines by Margaret & John Lovegrove