



Birmingham Bicycle Club

Helping everyone enjoy cycling

Rider Leaders Guide

Thank you for your interest in leading a ride for the Birmingham Bicycle Club! Group rides are a major offering of our club. Ride Leaders provide the opportunity for riders of all abilities to enjoy this activity, so by choosing to be a ride leader, you are providing your club with an invaluable service.

A goal of the BBC is to offer rides on weekends during the year, and on weeknights during daylight savings time. Ideally, multiple rides at varying levels of ability would be offered on the weekends as often as possible. And preferably, on long rides (those greater than 40 miles) two leaders would be available—one to lead and one to sweep at the back. So, by volunteering to lead rides, you are helping accomplish these goals.

There are some general aspects of ride leadership to be aware of. These guidelines are meant to help you make group riding an enjoyable and safe experience for both you and your riders.

Choosing a ride:

Choose a ride you are familiar with and enjoy. You are setting the tone for the ride, *so you should feel comfortable* with the route. You don't have to come up with a ride on your own--most riders are willing to share rides they've done. You can ask any Ride Leader for help with a route you like. Consider the start location and any factors that may affect the ride, for instance, a church parking lot on a Sunday morning may not work. Check activities in the community that may affect traffic in the area as well. (Tannehill Days, Homestead Hollow in Springville, Talledega, Chelsea Christmas Parade etc.)

Scheduling a ride:

Send your request for a Ride to bbc_president@bhambikeclub.org for approval. Once approved it will be placed on the BBC Calendar as an official ride thus covered by the BBC Insurance program.

Use of BBC Facebook page and Birmingham Ride Finder is best to get the word out. An email to the BBC membership with the details of the ride will follow.

Begin by naming your ride. Each ride will start out with “BBC” and then the Name of the Ride. For example “BBC 3rd Saturday of the Month”

Include the:

- Date, Start Time and Location of ride.
- You can add a Description of the Ride (Sample provided below), that will enable the club member to determine if this is an appropriate ride for them. Describe features of the ride such as distance, terrain, pace, type of climbs, minimum temperature, number of rest stops, Strava / RWGPS Route Links, Leader’s policy on slower or faster riders, etc.

EXAMPLE:

BBC 3rd Saturday of the Month

Saturday, January 05, 2025 10:00 AM

BBC Shelby County – Weather Permitting - Temps will be in the 40's.

Rolling at 10:00 AM – Union Church Parking Lot

Due to the later start time, we will be staying off HWY 47 going into Columbiana. Please look at the routes ahead of time and download the route you want to ride to your head unit or phone.

As for Ride Leaders we will organize based on attendance.

It will be 40 deg and 4 mph forecast winds at 10:00 am so dress for the weather. Will only get to 50 during the day. The Sun should be out!!!

30 Mile Route 13/15 mph <https://ridewithgps.com/routes/49277579>

1 Rest Stop Hudds

44 Mile Route 15/16: <https://ridewithgps.com/routes/49277524>

2 Rest Stops – Columbiana and Hudds

50 Mile Route 17/18 - <https://ridewithgps.com/routes/49277548>

2 Rest Stops – Columbiana and Hudds

60 Mile Route 18 - Zone 2 ish - [Link - https://ridewithgps.com/routes/49531241](https://ridewithgps.com/routes/49531241)

Ride Classification

Expert: Rides for those who enjoy riding substantial distances, or significant hills, or a sustained brisk pace or all of the above. Not intended for the average recreational rider. “A+”, “A”, “B+”. Pace is typically 18+ mph average.

Experienced: Rides for those who usually enjoy a ride of 35 miles or more, and who are comfortable navigating if separated from the ride leader. “B”. Pace is typically 16 -18 mph Average.

Sociable (Average): Rides designed to be kinder and gentler. The ride leader will usually average less than 13-15 mph average pace and will be attentive to the slower members of the group. No one will be dropped off the back of the pack. “B- C”

Novice/All Riders: Suitable for beginners. A ride leader usually rides with the slowest rider, and questions are welcome. No one will be dropped.

- Indicate rest stops (if any). Remember that the average and sociable riders will require more regrouping and rest stops.
- Add a downloadable Strava / RWGPS Ride Link if you have one. Most experienced Riders will have a Cycling Computer or Phone App they will use. For less experienced Riders indicate if maps will be provided.
- List directions to the ride start. If it is a ride that has been done before, the ride captain may have that information.
- Provide a contact phone number. Include a mobile or cell phone number if you don't mind providing it, since ride conditions may change, and members may not be able to reach a leader at home.
- Add anything else you'd like -- make it as interesting or amusing as you like. This is supposed to be fun.
- Indicate policy regarding late arrivals. This is up to the Ride Leader. For instance, in the ride description, “Ride will begin at 10:00 a.m. sharp”. Or “Leader will wait no longer than 10 minutes for late arrivals”.

Day of a ride:

ANY CONDITIONS THAT ARE CONSIDERED UNSAFE FOR CYCLING ARE REASONS TO CANCEL A RIDE. It is up to the Ride Leader to make that decision. However, if you do cancel, out of courtesy to those who may show up, please report to the ride start to announce the cancellation.

You *may* wish to bring the following items with you, BUT THESE ARE ***NOT*** the responsibility of the ride leader.

- Repair equipment, such as patch kit, pump, spare tire, tools, etc...
- Basic first-aid equipment, such as antibiotic ointment, cleansing wipes
- Sunscreen
- cell phone

Arrive at the ride start promptly. If you are unable to do the ride as scheduled, please either get a substitute, or have someone available at the ride start to announce the cancellation.

As riders arrive, welcome them and introduce yourself.

Be aware of those you recognize as new to the group and introduce them to others. This may be their first group ride and this may be their first impression of the BBC!

Prep your bike and gear for the ride early, in case others need your help.

All riders must wear helmets.

Start the ride promptly. Some people may have other plans after the ride, and usually have a time frame in mind. Ideally the ride should depart on time. Late arrival policy is up to you as the Ride Leader. How to handle late-comers is up to the discretion of the Ride leader but remember this is a scheduled group ride and your responsibility is to those that are gathered. You might encourage the late comer to join as quickly as possible, ask the group if they mind waiting, or offer the rider a map to follow the group. Situations vary—use common sense as the situation dictates.

Script to be read before the start of the ride!

- Introduce yourself as the Ride Leader. It is imperative that you mention the bullets in Red below.
- **Announce - This is a “BIRMINGHAM BICYCLE CLUB” ride so all BBC Club Members are covered by the Club Insurance Policy. If for some**

reason, there is an injury and or accident during this Ride and you suffer physical injury a claim can be filed for review.

- As the Ride Leader, if an incident warrants filing a Claim, you will be asked to give a Statement for our Insurance Company.
- Choose someone you feel is responsible to provide a witness statement as well as you may not have witnessed it yourself.
- Ask - How many people are BBC Members?
- Ask - How many are riding a BBC ride for the first time?
- Explain - that for those that are not members they can ride but they need to be aware that they are not covered by the insurance, and they are agreeing to **not** hold any BBC members liable during the ride including the Ride Leader, support team and the Officers/Directors of the Club. They can ride but if they do ride, they are agreeing to those terms. They can join the Club by visiting our homepage and choosing the Membership link to sign up and sign the waiver.
- Inform the riders that if they leave the site of the Ride Leader by riding ahead or falling off the back with no notice to riders ahead they are on their own and not covered by the BBC Insurance if involved in an accident.
- Introduce any Support People that you may have.
- Ask if they have downloaded the route to their Cycling Computers or Cell Phones. Distribute maps/cue sheets. (Old School)
- Review the route and known hazards on the route.
- Mention relevant safety concerns such as heavy traffic, steep descents, etc...
- Indicate where the rest stops are.
- If you want the riders to regroup at rest stops or turns, indicate that.

You set the tone for the ride. If you want the riders to remain together, communicate that expectation to them. If faster riders attend a ride with a slower pace, you may indicate that they are welcome to go ahead but the ride will be led as advertised. On longer rides it will be difficult to stay together, and it is probably unrealistic to expect them to do so. You can regroup at the rest stops.

Announce that riders are expected to obey Alabama motor vehicle traffic regulations.

- Stopping at all stop signs and traffic lights
- Using hand signals
- Riding no more than double-file, and single-file in traffic

Emphasize safety, asking riders to ride courteously and predictably. - Point out or call out road hazards

- Signal or call out turns
 - Call out and signal that you are slowing and stopping
 - Call out “car back,” “car up,” etc..
 - Avoid getting too close to or overlapping another rider’s wheel.
 - Look before changing position in a group and make sure the lane is clear before merging back in.
 - Ride 2-3 feet from the edge of the road to avoid debris and have room to maneuver if being passed.
 - ***When stopping to regroup, always pull OFF the road!!***
- Go around the group and do introductions.

Indicate where the ride is pulling out, point out the first turns, and tell where you will be during the ride (lead from the rear, in front, etc.)

During a ride:

- ***Ideally***, on long rides (those of 40 miles or more), there would be two ride leaders—one to lead, and one to sweep at the back. You may designate someone (BBC Rider Leader) that shows up to act as a second Ride Leader—someone familiar with the route. This is also a good plan to have if there are riders of varied abilities on the ride—someone will be in the back with the slower ones.
- Follow the route plan. Do not deviate unless everyone is there when that decision is made. You are responsible for getting each rider home safely.
- Lead the ride as written in the calendar. Stick to the posted pace.
- If you change route or regroup points, make certain that all riders are aware of the change.
- If there are problems, address them early. Use common sense. You may address the issue or ask someone to leave the ride if they are riding in an unsafe manner or presenting a danger to others. This is very uncommon—most riders try to ride safely, but do not hesitate to address what you consider a danger to the group.
- Try to stay with the slowest rider or delegate a volunteer to stay with them. If a rider has chosen a ride beyond his or her abilities, unless someone is willing to accompany him or her back to the ride start, stay with him or her. Decide on a plan for them to safely get back to the ride start.

- Don't abandon a rider. There is a distinction between abandoning a rider and allowing a rider (presumably familiar with the area) to depart from the group when he can't/won't keep pace and/or chooses to go his/her own way. The ride leader should request that they should be informed when anyone decides to split off. There is also an assumption that those who show up for group rides have done so as responsible adults. There are practical limits to the degree of responsibility a Ride Leader can assume. As with everything, use common sense to negotiate these occurrences.
- If there is a physical or mechanical problem, do your best to resolve it before continuing the ride. If you can't resolve it and safety is an issue, suggest the rider pull off the road until help can be arranged.
- Be aware of traffic around your group and alert them accordingly.
- Ride according to the principles of vehicular cycling.
- If a rider is injured, ***DO NOT ATTEMPT*** to move him or her unless it is determined he or she is not seriously injured. In such a case, post other riders on the road to warn oncoming vehicles or solicit assistance. Contact emergency personnel when necessary.

After a ride:

- Account for all riders.
- Thank them and ask for comments on the ride.

Pat yourself on the back for a job well done! It is your willingness to lead a ride that supports our club. Always remember that people do appreciate your time and effort.

Thank you for being a BBC Ride Leader.