

Provincial Ride Guidelines

Recreational cycling continues to grow in Ontario. People love cycling for its freedom, its ability to let you see the province in a new way, and it helps people stay active and healthy. The best rides are the ones where people have fun and where riders feel safe. Below are some ideas from urban, to suburban, to rural areas based on the core values of safety and fun.

Prerequisites your Club Must Consider:

As per OCA rules all participants must be a member in good standing (Dues and insurance up-to-date).

Other Things to Consider as Prerequisites on Your Club Rides:

1. Each member should have a road bike in good working order (you can change the type of bike for the various rides your club offers; however, this document was written with road rides as the foundation).
2. Each member should be self-sufficient. Do not rely on others for flat repairs, water, food etc. Bring a charged cell phone, ID, emergency information and the proper clothing.
3. Each member should have a certain minimal level of fitness. This is hard to define, but set some minimal thresholds for your rides. These thresholds can vary for your different rides.
4. Encourage rides to have a basic understanding of group riding skills. Does your club offer beginner riding skills clinics?
5. Set Club Ride Guideline and a code of ethics and require members to review them annually.

Other Tips to Pass on To Your Club Members:

1. Ride smooth and steady all the time. No sudden, abrupt movements or over reactions to potholes, road debris, etc.
2. When following a wheel be just slightly offset, ie. 3-4", so that if there is a sudden stop you don't immediately slam into the wheel ahead. The offset gives you some additional space to recover.
3. Don't be that person who surges when it's their turn to pull or leaves gaps in the rotation and finally never ever overlap.
4. If your club breaks up into groups on big rides, as people to be realistic when selecting a group to ride with. It's better to be comfortable in your group then maxed out all the time.
5. When you see someone committing a ride foul politely say something. We are all responsible for the quality of our rides. But be polite and do not yell.
6. If you get a flat, let those around you know. That way people can allow you to come to a controlled and safe stop. And hopefully you have a ride marshal or point person who can help the person with the flat.
7. Do not yell obscenities to motorists or get into arguments with the police. It's never productive. Have a point person to deal with this situation; ask all other riders to leave the scene.

There are some things that are common to incorporate in all riding areas, whether urban, suburban, or rural:

The Highway Traffic Act

Under the highway traffic act a bicycle is defined as a vehicle and is legally permitted to use the roads in Ontario, unless otherwise denoted (i.e. 400 Series Highways). Attached is an appendix that details some of the laws that cyclists are expected to follow. Remember to stop at red lights, to have lights on your bike if you're riding before dawn or after dusk,

Local Bylaws

Local bylaws will vary with each jurisdiction. Make sure you know the bylaws for the jurisdiction of where the club meets, plus any areas that your club may cross into.

Some bylaws will permit you to ride on their paved shoulders, some bylaws restrict how many riders you may have abreast of the road (i.e. 1, 2, or unlimited)

Infrastructure to Ride On

Groups should endeavor to ride on roads that are lower volume, lower speed roads where possible. If possible groups should also ride on roads that encourage cycling; roads with cycling infrastructure, such as bike lanes or paved shoulders, or roads with 'Share the Road' Signs.

Ride Marshals

Have a leader, or two! When someone is there to lead, to manage the group, and to keep your group safe everyone has a better ride. Also having a rear marshal who can make sure no rider is left behind or to help out with mechanicals goes a long way to improving your ride quality.

Know What Type of Club you are:

- Competitive
- Non-Competitive
- Private Team
- Supporting Business

More information on club type can be found on the OCA website under Clubs and Teams: <http://www.ontariocycling.org/clubsteams/>

Descending

There are no heroes on a decent. Respect your fellow teammates. If you want to be at the front of a decent, make sure you are at the top of the hill first! Passing each other on a downhill can be very dangerous and is discouraged.

Communication

Communication is essential to a good ride. Make sure you point to and call out hazards and traffic situations, but remember to do it in a polite way. It is essential not to yell and 'spook' other riders.

Traffic Volumes, Traffic Volumes

Roads with lower traffic volumes and lower speeds are best for recreational cycling.

Defensive Cycling

Be predictable. Be safe. Mitigate your risk. Cycle to protect your life in spite of the conditions around you and the actions of others, "with an aim to reduce the risk of collision by anticipating dangerous situations, despite adverse conditions or the mistakes made by others."ⁱ Always be

aware of where cars are and what they are doing, be on the lookout for situations that frequently lead to collisions between cyclists and motorized vehicles.

Urban, Suburban, and Rural Riding Guidelines

1. Urban Riding Situations

What type of infrastructure will you encounter?

- 2- to 6-lane roads (1- to 3-lanes in each direction)
- Speeds between 30 and 60 km/h
- Volumes from <1000 vehicles per day to 10000+ vehicles per day

Suggested ride formations:

- Stay in one lane. If it is a two lane road, do not cross the yellow line. On 2+ lane roads stay within the most right lane and do not cross the dashed white line.
- Ride 0.5 to 1m from the curb and 0.5 for the yellow line or dashed white lane-line
- Ride one, two, or three abreast depending on the lane width. When you are on a 2 lane road (1 lane in each direction), it depends if there are cars present and how wide the road is. In general, despite lane width, if there are vehicles present, cyclists should endeavor to ride single-file; when there are no cars present cyclists can ride two- to three-abreast. When you are on a multilane road (2+ lanes in each direction) you can ride two+ abreast, as long as stay in the right lane.
- How many people should be in your group? On 2+ lane roads, groups as small as 2 and as big as 100+ are acceptable. On 1-lane roads you may need to manage group size and ride as a smaller group; assess each situation individually

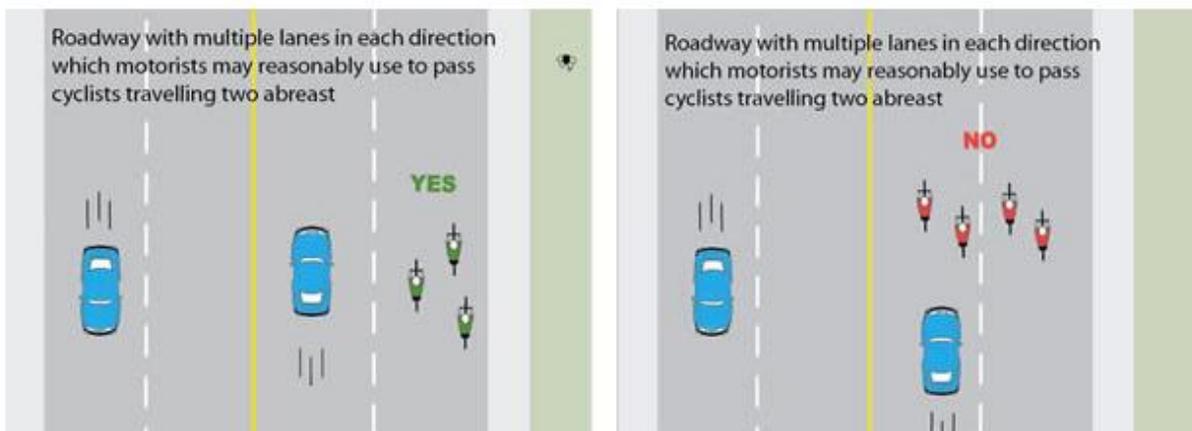


Figure 1: Suggested Ride Formation on a 2+ lane Road in an Urban Area (Note: You can ride two-abreast side by side and do not necessarily have to ride in stagger formation)ⁱⁱ

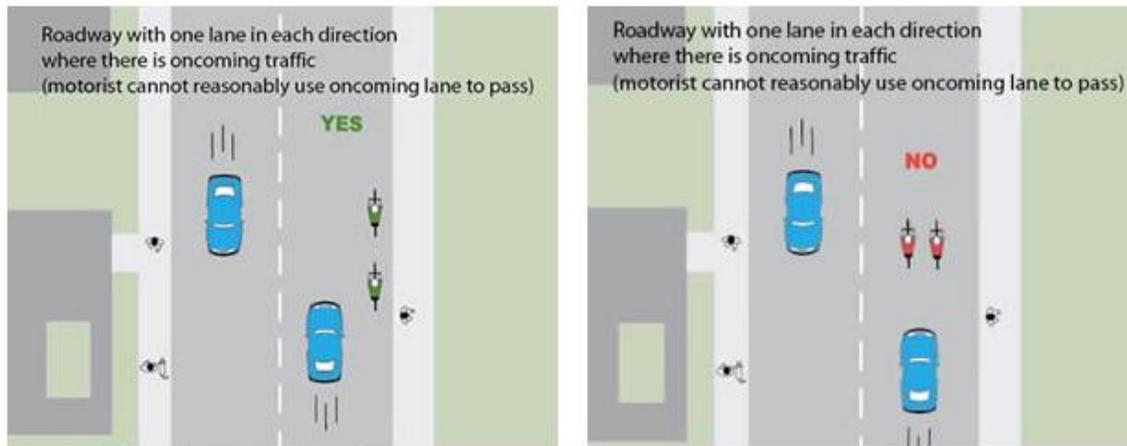


Figure 2: Suggested Riding Formation on a 2-lane Road with Traffic in an Urban Area (If there is no traffic groups may consider riding two-abreast)ⁱⁱ

2. Suburban Riding Situations

What type of infrastructure will you encounter?

- 2- to 8-lane roads (1- to 4-lanes in each direction)
- Speeds between 30 and 80 km/h
- Volumes from <1,000 vehicles per day to 10,000+ vehicles per day

Suggested ride formations:

- Stay in one lane. If it is a two lane road, do not cross the yellow line. On 4+ lane road (2+ lanes in each direction) stay within the most right lane and do not cross the dashed white line.
- Ride 0.5 to 1m from the curb and 0.5 for the yellow line or dashed white line
- Ride one-, two-, or three-abreast depending on the lane width. When you are on a 2-lane road (1 lane in each direction), it depends if there are cars present and how wide the road is. In general, despite lane width, if there are vehicles present, cyclists should endeavor to ride single-file; when there are no cars present cyclists can ride two- to three-abreast. When you are on a multilane road (2+ lanes in each direction) you can ride two+ abreast, as long as stay in the right lane.
- Try to ride on roads with minimal friction; minimize routes adjacent to highways and routes that intersect with interchanges (on- and off-ramps)
- How many people should be in your group? On 4+ lane roads (2+ lanes in each direction), groups as small as 2 and as big as 100+ are acceptable. On roads that are 2-lane (1 lane in each direction) you may want to consider limiting group size to be no bigger than a standard sized transport truck (approximately 20 riders deep. i.e. 40 riders if riding two-abreast)
- Please see above in *Urban Riding Situations* the formations for 2-lane (single file) and 4+lane roads

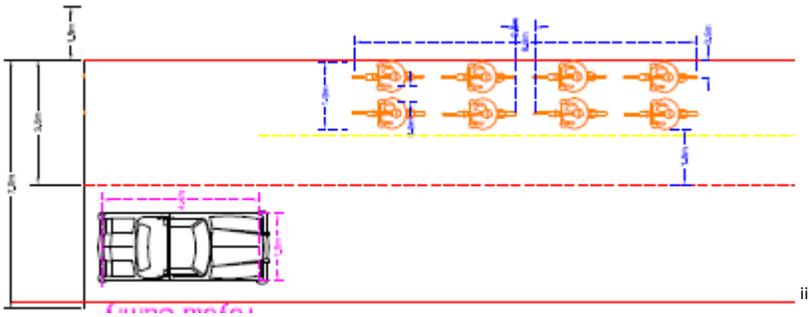


Figure 3: Suggested Ride Formation for Suburban 2-lane Roads with no to low traffic volumes

3. Rural Riding Situations

What type of infrastructure will you encounter?

- 2- to 4-lane roads (1- to 2-lanes in each direction); mostly 2 lane roads. For 4 lane roads, follow the suburban guidelines
- Speeds between at 60km/h to 90km/h
- Volumes from <1000 vehicles per day to ~5000 vehicles per day

Suggested ride formations:

- Stay in one lane. Do not cross the yellow line. On roads without painted lines stay on one half of the road.
- Ride 0.5 to 1m white line or edge of pavement and 0.5 for the yellow line or approximate centre of the road
- Ride one, two, or three abreast depending on the road width and traffic volume of the road. In general two-abreast should be the general practice for your cycling group, in an organized, predictable fashion (this allows drivers to see through and around you to pass you safely)
- How many people should be in your group? You may want to consider limiting group size to be no bigger than a standard sized transport truck (approximately 20 riders deep. i.e. 40 riders if riding two-abreast), but smaller groups are recommended.

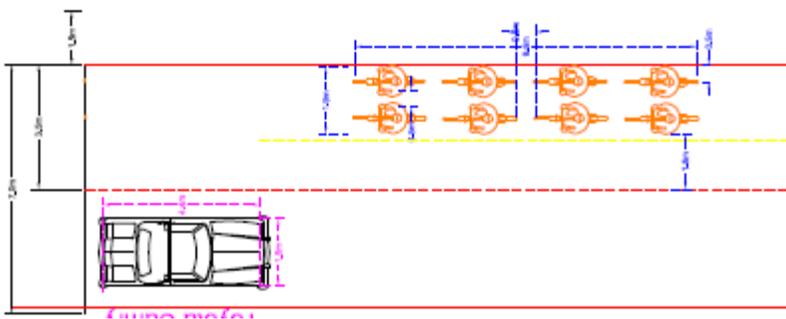


Figure 4: Suggested Ride Formation for Rural 2-lane Roads

Appendix A: Cycling and the HTA

HTA 144/136 - Traffic signals and signs

stop for red lights and stop signs and comply with all other signs.

HTA 153 - One-ways streets

ride in the designated direction on one-way streets.

HTA 142 - Signalling a turn

before turning, look behind you and signal your turn. Cyclists can use their right arm to signal a right turn.

HTA 140(1) 144(29) - Crosswalks

yield or stop for pedestrians at crosswalks.

HTA 140(6)/144(29) - No riding in crosswalks

walk your bike when crossing at a crosswalk.

HTA 166 - Streetcars

stop two metres behind streetcar doors and wait until passengers have boarded or departed and reached the curb. **HTA 175 (12) - Stopped school buses**

stop for stopped school buses when the upper alternating red lights are flashing. Set fine: \$400.00

HTA 62(17) - Lights

a bike must have a white front light and a red rear light or reflector if you ride between 1/2 hour before sunset and 1/2 hour after sunrise and white reflective tape on the front forks and red reflective tape on rear forks.

HTA 75 (5) - Bell

a bike must have a bell or horn in good working order.

HTA 64(3) - Brakes

a bike must have at least one brake system on the rear wheel. When you put on the brakes, you should be able to skid on dry, level pavement. **HTA 218 - Identification**

Cyclists must stop and identify themselves when required to stop by police for breaking traffic laws. The police officer will ask you for your correct name and address.

HTA Reg. 630 - Expressways

Bicycles are prohibited on expressway / freeway highways such as the 400 series, the QEW, Ottawa Queensway and on roads where "No Bicycle" signs are posted.

HTA 178(2) - Passengers

Passengers are not allowed on a bicycle designed for one person

HTA 104 - Helmets

Every cyclist under the age of eighteen must wear an approved bicycle helmet. Parents or guardians shall not knowingly permit cyclists under sixteen to ride without a helmet.

HTA 179 - Dismounted bicyclist

Cyclists are required to ride on the right-hand side of the road. If you are walking your bike on a highway where there are no sidewalks, you are considered a pedestrian and you should walk on the left-hand side of the road facing traffic. If it is not safe for you to cross the road to face traffic, you may walk your bike on the right-hand side of the road.

Section 56

States that the Demerit Point System is for the regulation of **motor** vehicles, and so as such does not apply to cyclists.

ⁱ Defensive Driving as defined by the *Safe Practices for Motor Vehicles Operations*, ANSI/ASSE Z15.1, defines **defensive driving** as “driving to save lives, time, and money, in spite of the conditions around you and the actions of others.”

ⁱⁱ www.toronto.ca/cycling

ⁱⁱⁱ Thanks to Jody Wilson and the Collingwood Cycling Club for these drawings. See their ‘Tight and To the Right’ Ride Guidelines