



Nunawading Triathlon Club

Nuna Tri Club



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Bunch Riding Rules and Etiquette

1. Riders new to the NTC bunch

Riders new to the NTC bunch should take time to learn the bunch's rules communications and etiquette. New NTC members should read a copy of these "Bunch Riding Rules and Etiquette". Each week NTC has 3 ride options, each with a designated ride leader / coach. The 3 rides are –

- Advanced Ride
- Intermediate Ride
- Beginner / Development Ride

Information and updates about the rides start times, destinations, distances, average speeds and required experience can be obtained from the NTC chat forum or by contacting one of the ride leaders / coaches or more experienced members.

Awareness of your personal fitness, average speed capacity and experience relative to that of the bunch are important for you to decide which the most appropriate bunch is for you, and when you have sufficient experience to join a particular NTC bunch. There are NTC rides to cater for many category of riders from beginners to elite; it is your responsibility to determine whether you are fit enough to participate in a particular bunch. More experienced NTC members and affiliated coaches can assist you to determine which bunch is best for you. You should not ride in a bunch which has an average speed, distance or duration that is too fast for your level of fitness or experience since this can lead to fatigue and a greater risk of accidents.

2. Leadership by Experienced NTC Cyclists

If you are an experienced NTC Cyclist, you have a responsibility to demonstrate leadership and responsible cycling behaviour to less experienced members, this may include:

- Familiarise yourself with the NTC Bunch ride rules and etiquette
- Set a good example by complying with Bunch rules and etiquette as well as road rules such as not running red lights
- Assist less experienced and slower riders with advice and encouragement
- Assist the bunch to ensure riders with flat tyres and mechanicals are being looked after.

3. The correct bunch formation

Riders should pair off in 2 by 2 formation. Try to maintain about a 60 – 90cm distance off the rear of and slightly off to the side of the rider in front. (Increase this distance in wet weather). You should not

sit directly on the wheel of the rider in front. The reason you offset slightly is to get better vision down the line, giving you more time to react to any problems or dangers on the road.

4. Sitting on the wheel

Focus on the rider in front of you and those further up the bunch. You should not focus on the rear of the wheel of the rider in front. By focussing on the person in front you will be more aware of what is happening in the bunch. When riding in the 2 x 2 formation, ride side by side; handlebar to handlebar with the rider next to you. Do not “half wheel” since this can obscure your actions to the rider next to you and cascades back through the bunch. Do not overlap wheels. This is dangerous, since any sideways movement could easily result in a collision of wheels and an accident for yourselves and the riders behind. Sometimes the rider in front of you will get out of their saddle and pedal standing; this can result in a momentary interruption to this rider’s momentum. Anticipate situations where this is likely to happen (i.e. at the start of a hill) and be prepared to adjust your speed accordingly. If you are about to pedal standing up, try to minimise any change of speed to allow for following riders. By allowing adequate space between yourself and the rider in front, you will allow enough time for you to react to changes in the speed of the front rider.

5. Position on the road

As cyclists we have clearly defined rights on the road that in simple terms allows us to occupy a full lane, ride in pair formation and have the same responsibilities as motorists.

Unfortunately not all motorists are aware of the rights that cyclists have. As a cyclist, you must anticipate the dangers of motorists nearby, and ensure that your riding is consistent and predictable to other road users, including motorists. Inconsistent movements can create confusion and make it hard for others to predict your trajectory.

Riding too close to the gutter can also create problems for riders. Slipping off the roadway into the gutter can bring you down as you try to get back over the lip of the gutter. Great skill is required to hop out of the gutter, so if you find yourself in this position, slow down and stay in the gutter until it flattens out. Then exit at an angle.

Train tracks are another hazard, (especially in the wet) ensure you ride over at an angle, preferably perpendicular.

When riding in a bunch don’t ride between lanes of cars stopped at the lights, stay in the lane behind the line of cars since this is more visible to motorists, and less likely to cause confrontations.

Overtaking another rider: When overtaking another rider, pass to the right of the rider only, riders expect to be overtaken on the right, not the left.

6. The lead riders

The two riders on the front have the most significant responsibility for the safety of the bunch. They set the pace, make the calls for road obstacles and warn the bunch of any traffic changes. Lead riders should examine the road ahead to determine hazards and other potential risks to the bunch.

When riding in the 2 x 2 formation, as hazards are identified, the lead riders make a call. If a hole in the road is seen, the lead rider calls “hole left” (if it’s on the left of the left lead rider) “hole middle”

(between the riders) and “hole right” (if it’s on the right of the right lead rider). Other more specific calls for hazards can include “glass”, “rubbish” “rock” etc.

Lead riders will often take one hand from their handlebars and point with their hand to the location of the hazard to alert following riders. Pointing is only done if the rider can comfortably gesture as well as maintain control of their bike. If there is any potential difficulty with pointing, both hands should stay on the handlebars and a clear verbal call is made.

If riders ahead are about to be overtaken, this also needs to be called by the lead riders, “riders” alerts both the riders about to be overtaken as well as following riders, this is also accompanied by a hand signal behind the riders back indicating the bunch should be prepared to move across or overtake.

When the lead riders see another bunch up ahead, to determine whether to overtake, or ride behind they must firstly assess whether their relative bunch speed is consistently faster, and whether it is safe to do so. When overtaking, the lead riders ensure their bunch has passed before they merge in front of the other bunch. Don’t cut the other bunch off, and remember you may be driving a bunch with the dimensions of a bus.

A car door opened by drivers without looking is a common cause of accidents to cyclists. Lead riders should be alert to the possibility of open doors by noticing if a car has a driver in it, that may be about to open a door. In this case, the call of “door” is made to warn following riders. If there are other obstacles up ahead on the left that requires the bunch to move right, these should also be called; accompanied by a left hand behind the back gesture.

When approaching a set of lights the lead riders have absolute responsibility in making the call. It will either be “lights - stopping” or “rolling”. Remember that the bunch is one vehicle so that if the bunch is committed to roll through; don’t make decisions in the middle of the bunch to suddenly stop. This will cause heavy braking towards the back of the bunch.

When entering a roundabout or turning at an intersection the lead riders must call “clear” or “car left”, “car right” or “stopping”. Lead riders and following riders should not cut lanes if there is more than one lane on the roundabout.

When the leaders see an obstacle up ahead that will require the bunch to change lanes, the lead riders will raise a hand to alert the tail end riders that they need a call whether is safe for the bunch to move over “over” (if safe) or “wait” (if not safe). The tail enders should call “wait” until any cars have overtaken the whole bunch. If it is not safe for the whole bunch to overtake in pairs, then the leaders will call “single file” and raise an open hand, then the bunch will carefully merge into one line, this call can also be used if the road narrows.

7. Setting the Speed

The lead riders should be aware of the capabilities of the bunch and set the speed accordingly. Lead riders should pedal down hills so that following riders who are taking advantage of the slip stream don’t need to brake. Efforts should be made by all riders to maintain a consistent speed and avoid the bunch having the “concertina” effect.

8. The tailenders

The riders at the back of the bunch also have an important role, particularly the rider on the right hand (outside) side. This person must call the bunch across lanes or warn of trucks, cars etc that are approaching when on narrow and/or single lane roads.

When crossing over lanes the call is either “wait” or “over”, (no other words should be used that are less clear), “over” should only be called by the tailender once overtaking vehicles have cleared the whole bunch. Calling “over” prematurely can have predictably disastrous consequences. It is important that the instruction is relayed up the line and when crossing over the bunch moves as one and does not fragment.

The rider on the outside rear must maintain a distinct hand signal until the manoeuvre is completed. On a narrow single lane road the last rider must warn of cars behind. A call of “car back” is a simple call that all should understand. “Car up”, “Walker up”, “Runner up”, “Riders up” and “Dog up” are also examples of calls warning of vehicles, people or animals ahead.

If a cyclist or bunch is overtaking our bunch, the last rider must warn riders ahead by calling “riders right”.

9. Communicating messages down the bunch

The two front riders and tailenders can be providing the best calls possible...but unless these are effectively understood and acted upon by the rest of the bunch, substantial risks remain.

All calls should be effectively relayed up and down the line, remember it is often hard for riders further up or down the bunch to hear calls as a result of wind and traffic noise.

10. Swapping the lead

The lead riders should not stay on the front of the bunch for too long. Five kms or 10 minutes is plenty. This gives everyone in the bunch a chance to go to the front, and the bunch average speed is increased. If you feel that you are not strong enough to do a turn, go to the front, advise your partner and roll. Do not suddenly pull out of the line prior to getting to the front. This only leaves gaps and sudden movements create risks.

The NTC roll over procedure is simple, when safe to do so, the rider on the left will stay tight left and the rider on the right will move slightly right allowing the group to make the way through the middle. The 2 that were leading join at the back of the group.

11. Nutrition and Hydration

Being properly hydrated and having sufficient energy before and during a bunch ride is important. If you become dehydrated or have a “hunger flat” you will increase the risk of fatigue and accidents for yourself and your club mates in the bunch. You should have sufficient coordination and experience to be able to safely drink from your water bottles or eat a bar or energy gel whilst riding before joining a bunch ride.

12. Tri Bars and Aero bars in the bunch

You should never use your Tri bars or Aero bars whilst in the NTC bunch, this is extremely dangerous since it doesn't allow you sufficient time to get back to your brakes if the rider in front suddenly changes speed or a hazard appears that results in the bunch suddenly changing speed. If the only way you can keep up with the bunch is by using your aero bars, then you should be riding with a slower bunch. This is why triathlons are mostly non-drafting. If you are in a bunch, you get a 30% aero advantage from drafting behind the rider in front, but the trade off is "no tri or aero bars". The only exception is for the lead front riders who may periodically use their aero bars, but only when safe to do so.

13. Lights & Visibility

When it is low visibility (dark, foggy, heavy rain or dusk or dawn), lights are essential. The law requires cyclists to have a white light up front, and red tail light on the back. These lights should be capable of operating in both steady and flashing modes, and be effectively seen for 200m. Being hit from behind by a car in low light is one of the most common causes of accidents and injuries to cyclists, appropriate rear lights can help to reduce this risk.

14. Wet Weather

Wet weather can provide additional dangers such as:

- Road surfaces become more slippery
- Visibility is reduced for both rider and driver
- Braking distances decrease since brake pads and wheel braking surfaces are wet, brake pads can collect metal and other fragments from the road and wear quicker.
- There is increased debris on the road
- Tyres become softer and more prone to puncture
- Riders exposed to conditions can become fatigued more easily if not appropriately clothed

Wet weather hazards can be minimised by:

- Increase the gap between riders, allowing for more time to react
- Reduce speed, and moderate acceleration and deceleration to reduce risk of skidding.
- Decrease tyre pressure 20 psi from the maximum tyre pressure. This puts more tyre surface area on the road and therefore increases grip and handling. There will be a slight increase in rolling resistance (drop in speed), but the grip advantages will be well worth it.
- Be aware your brakes will not be as effective, and may need to be squeezed a couple of times to clear water in advance of braking properly.

15. Bike maintenance, mechanicals and flat tyres

If you participate in a NTC bunch ride, you have the responsibility to ensure that your bike is in good mechanical condition, this is important for yourself as well as other members of the ride. This can include ensuring:

1. Tyres are in good condition, have been recently inspected, are not too worn, cut up or with bulging side walls,
2. Shoe cleats are in good condition and not too worn.

3. There are no loose objects on the bike, (lights, pumps and bottle cages particularly)
4. The bike has been recently serviced
5. Wheel skewers are tightened

16. Other reminders

- No iPods or personal music players are to be used in the NTC bunch, this is because reception of and communication of signals within the bunch is so important. It is also important to have your hearing available, so that you know when there is a car nearby.
- You should bring a repair kit that includes the following on your bunch rides: 2 spare tubes, gas canister or pump, allen key, tyre levers.
- If you or a fellow rider has a puncture whilst in the NTC bunch, the call of “puncture” is made loud enough to alert the other bunch riders. If safe to stop, other riders from the bunch should stop to wait with the rider who has a puncture, assist with the repair, and help to pace the rider back to the bunch. The rest of the bunch should slow down and pull over to the side of the road when safe to do so.

17. In case of an accident

In the event of an accident –

- Stop where it is safe to do so,
- Stay with the rider and assist,
- Ensure the Ambulance and Police are called as appropriate,
- Get witness details and the number plate and license details of any cars involved.
- Your group leader should be a current first aider and should assist where applicable.

18. Common Causes of Cyclist Accidents

a. Cyclist hit from behind by car :

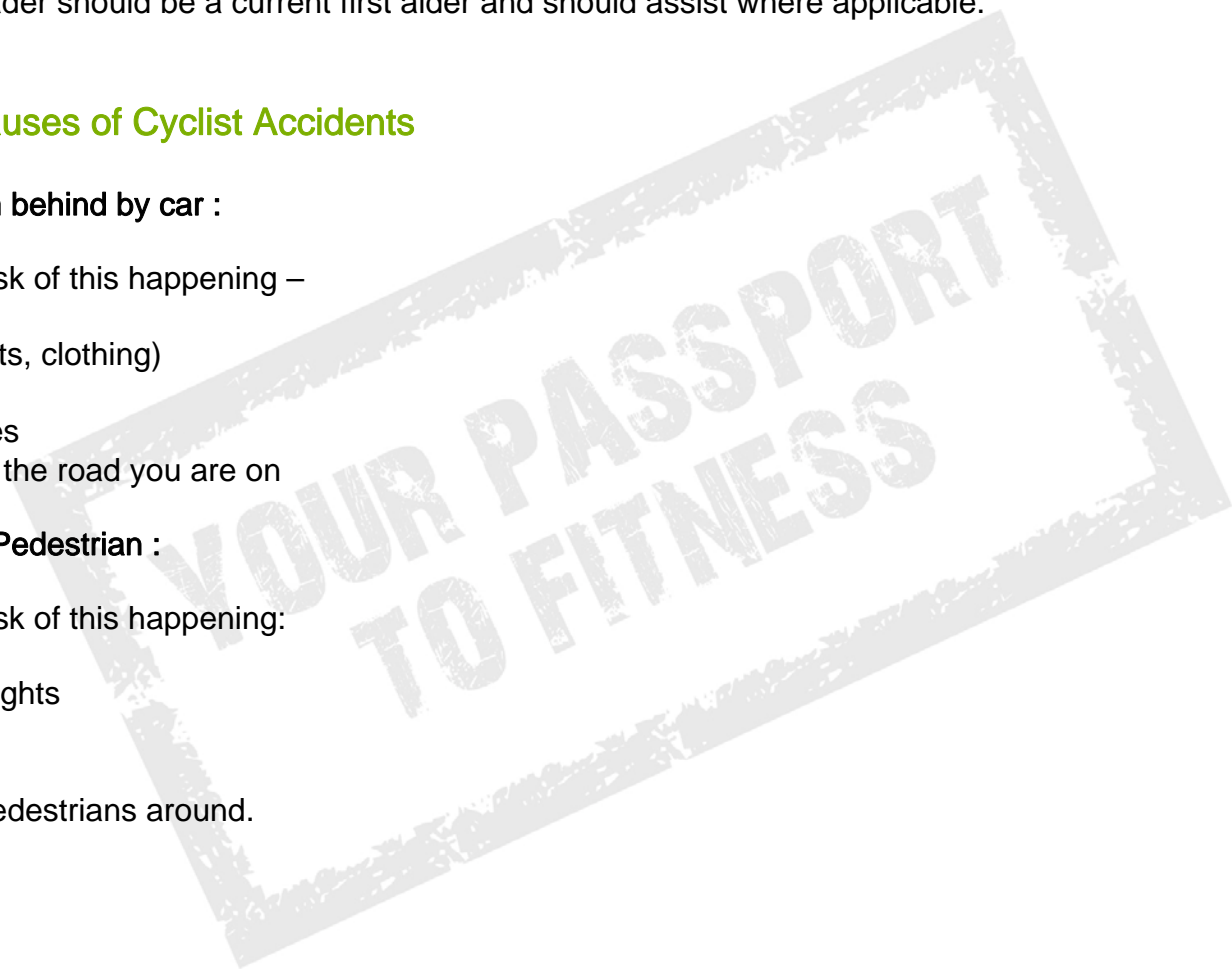
Ways to lessen the risk of this happening –

- Be visible (lights, clothing)
- Be predictable
- Obey road rules
- Be cautious of the road you are on

b. Cyclist hitting Pedestrian :

Ways to lessen the risk of this happening:

- Don't run red lights
- Use lights
- Be predictable
- Be aware of pedestrians around.



c. Cyclist hitting a car oncoming :

Ways to lessen the risk of this happening :

- Don't cross centre line
- Be careful of wheel touches that may throw you into the oncoming lane
- No tri bars in the bunch

d. Cyclist falling as a result of hole, other road hazard :

Ways to lessen the risk of this happening :

- Communication of holes in the bunch
- Practice bike handling skills

e. Cyclist falling as a result of wheel touch :

Ways to lessen the risk of this happening :

- Be aware of movement by the rider in front of you
- Be aware of potential hazards up ahead
- Practice bike handling skills

f. Cyclist being hit by a car door :

Ways to lessen the risk of this happening :

- Be aware of parked cars in front of you
- Keep a 1m distance from parked cars
- Keep your front flashing light on to increase peripheral visibility

Remember, we are all this journey together. Let's make sure everyone arrives safely. It's not the destination but how you get there that matters.

Your Personal Trainer

Scuba Steve

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**MY
FITNESS
JOURNEY**

**YOUR PASSPORT
TO FITNESS**