**TCOS Ride Protocols**

**Overview**

TCOS considers the safety of its members of paramount importance. This document sets out what we consider to be the responsibilities of the TCOS committee, our ride leads and our riders with respect to TCOS-organised group rides.

In summary:

* The TCOS committee is responsible for designing and implementing a framework (the TCOS ride protocols) that seeks to ensure the safety of our member cyclists when participating in TCOS-organised group rides.
* Ride leads are responsible for reminding riders of the TCOS ride protocols (as set out in this document) and adopting them on TCOS-organised group rides.
* Riders are responsible for: familiarising themselves with the TCOS ride protocols and adopting them on TCOS-organised rides; the roadworthiness of their bikes; their own safety on the road (wear appropriate clothing, carry bicycle spares and tools); their own health and fitness (advise TCOS of any pre-existing medical conditions and carry with you, your TCOS-issued personal information card).

**TCOS committee responsibilities**

The committee is responsible for:

* The design and implementation of a framework (the TCOS ride protocols) that seeks to ensure the safety of our member cyclists when participating in TCOS-organised group rides.
* The appointment of ride leads and first aiders for TCOS-organised group rides.
* The issuance of personal information cards to all TCOS members.
* The go-ahead or abandonment of TCOS-organised group rides in forecast adverse weather conditions.

**Ride lead responsibilities**

**Before setting off on a TCOS-organised group ride**

Ride leads should:

* Familiarise themselves with the route being cycled and complete a pre-ride risk assessment if one hasn’t already been completed.
* Familiarise themselves with the TCOS ride protocols and remind riders of them.
* Ensure they or another rider in their group is first aid trained and carry a first aid kit.
* Consider appointing someone with suitable experience to act as ‘rear support’ - someone who ensures the pace is suitable for everyone in the group, that riders are cycling safely and who can liaise effectively with the ride lead.
* Have What3Words installed on your mobile phone so that in the event of an incident that requires callout of the Emergency Services a precise location can be given.

**During a TCOS-organised group ride**

Ride leads must:

* Lead the group at an appropriate speed on the designated route in accordance with the TCOS-organised ride protocols, ensuring the group remains together at all times. Ride at a pace that the slowest rider in the group is comfortable with and do not leave any rider behind on a ride.
* Manage any incidents that occur on the ride, administering first aid as necessary and calling the emergency services when circumstances deem such action appropriate.
* Ensure when the group stops for any reason that this is done so in a safe manner by locating a safe place away from oncoming traffic. Consider appointing someone in the group to direct any oncoming traffic.
* Ensure that if someone has to leave the group for any reason to return home that they are able to do so safely, and if necessary appoint someone to accompany them on their return.
* Abandon a group ride or amend the designated route if in his or her opinion the road or weather conditions make it unsafe to cycle as a group.

**After a TCOS- organised group ride**

Ride leads should:

* Consider de-briefing the group as necessary, advising of any significant observations made on the ride (such as significant breaches of the ride protocols or ‘near misses’).
* Consider discussing with any riders the merits of moving up or down a speed group.
* Liaise with the TCOS Welfare and Well-being Officer if there are any potential incidents to record in the TCOS Incident Logbook.

**Rider responsibilities (including ride leads)**

**Road safety**

* Familiarise yourself with the Highway Code.
* Do not elect to ride in a group that is too fast for you.
* Ensure your bike is roadworthy by checking it before a TCOS-organised group ride and having it regularly serviced (Richardsons give us a 10% discount). Check that your brakes and gears work properly and that your lights work. Check your tyre pressures and carry at least one spare inner tube, tyre levers, a pump and a multi-tool.
* Wear appropriate clothing for your own safety and for the forecast weather conditions.
* Take a mobile phone and money with you.
* Carry your TCOS-issued personal information card with you.

**Road positioning**

* Generally, ride two-abreast, and as a tight unit (so that you are effectively a slow-moving vehicle that car drivers need to overtake safely at an appropriate point in the road and at an appropriate time).
* Where the road is narrow (and on tight bends) it is often safer to ride single file.
* Do NOT brake suddenly or turn suddenly, or there is likely to be a group crash.

**Communication**

* Inform other cyclists (verbally and by hand signals) of approaching hazards, such as potholes, approaching vehicles (from the front or rear), pedestrians, horses, tight bends, junctions, roundabouts.
* Remember, in a tight group the people at the rear cannot see clearly what is approaching and communication is essential to avoid incidents.
* Typical verbal instructions include: car back, car up (front), pot holes, gravel, diesel, horses, runners, slowing/stopping, braking, turning left, turning right, clear (to indicate that the road is clear, but always conduct your own check). Don’t be shy in communicating verbally and shout out clearly and loudly!
* Hand signals are usually obvious, but ride leads will demonstrate typical hand signals before every ride.