

Dorking Cycling Club

Group riding guide



Welcome to Dorking CC. Riding in a group can bring great benefits, but there are a number of points you need to be aware of. The following document is prepared to provide guidelines for members to promote safe and enjoyable Club group riding.

Generally, groups should ride two abreast when appropriate. Change to single file when requested by a member of the group e.g: when road conditions dictate or there is a hazard that requires riding in single file

Group riding video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-GeRonLnj70> (courtesy of BC)

Top 10 Tips for Group Riding – Courtesy of British Cycling

Relax	If you're not used to riding in a group, it can be a bit nerve wracking but try to stay relaxed, follow these tips and avoid tensing up.
Ask	Let the other riders know you are fairly new to group riding and that you'd appreciate their patience, advice and tips. Make sure you ask if they say or do something you don't understand and remember, everyone was new to group riding once
Communicate	Successful group riding is all about good communication. Along with verbal calls, there are a number of hand signals that you should be aware of. Again, if you are unsure what a signal means, ask. Always pass signals on through the group. Communication is especially important if you're on the front of the group when you'll need to point out obstructions, hazards and any upcoming turns
Look through the group	Don't just stare at the wheel or backside in front. Look through the group at the road ahead and try to anticipate how the riders ahead will react
Don't overlap	It's okay to leave a bit of a gap to the wheel ahead and even to ride slightly to one side of it. However, always avoid overlapping your front wheel with the rear wheel of the rider in front as, if they have to swerve to avoid a hazard or just have a lapse in concentration, they'll take out your wheel
Easy on the brakes	Avoid grabbing handfuls of brakes. Freewheel, sit more upright or use light braking to adjust your speed gradually. This is one of the reasons why looking through the group and anticipating the actions of the riders in front is so important
Don't half wheel	If you're on the front, avoid pushing the pace and constantly moving ahead of the rider next to you. Known as half-wheeling, it'll push up the speed of the group and is considered bad form
Avoid kicking back your rear wheel	On rises, be aware of your rear wheel kicking back when you stand out of the saddle as it can catch the rider behind you unaware if they close on your wheel. With good technique, a smooth rise and correct gear selection it can be avoided.
Don't surge or slow	When you come to the front, try to keep the pace/intensity of the group consistent. Don't surge if you're feeling strong and conversely, if you're struggling, don't try and slow the group. If you're on a good day, just do a long turn and, if not, just put in a few pedal strokes before pulling off and settling back in the wheels.
Mudguards on, tri-bars off	In the winter especially, your ride mates will definitely appreciate you having mudguards and some clubs insist on them. Also, if you have clip-on tri-bars, take them off for group rides



Hand Signals (Courtesy of road.cc)

	<p>STOP Hand straight in the air. When group needs to stop, e.g: at traffic light, or some-one has a puncture. Usually accompanied by call "Stopping"</p>
	<p>SLOWING Put your arm out to the side and move it slowly up and down. Calling out "Slowing" is usually appropriate</p>
	<p>OBSTRUCTION Point behind your back in the direction you need to move. Used to indicate obstructions such as a parked car or pedestrian</p>
	<p>ROAD SURFACE HAZARD Position your arm out to one side so that your hand is visible to riders behind you.</p>
	<p>GRAVEL If there's a patch of gravel (or something similar) that could be loose and treacherous, put your arm out and wave your palm towards the road surface</p>
	<p>Speed bumps, railway tracks and cattle grids Warn riders behind of features that run across the road ahead by pointing down at the surface and waving your hand laterally. Shout out the type of hazard you're about to encounter; riders behind definitely need to know there's a cattle grid coming up, for instance, especially in wet conditions</p>
	<p>TURNING When you're approaching a turn, stick your arm out at shoulder height to indicate the change in direction.</p>
	<p>COME THROUGH When you've finished your time at the front of the group and want to drift off towards the back, let riders behind you know by flicking your elbow forwards before moving. Flick your left elbow if you want people to come through on the left, flick your right elbow if you want people to come through on the right</p>



Verbal signals

The following are the most common verbal signals used when riding in a group:

Car back / up	Vehicle is coming up behind the group
Car front / down	Vehicle is coming towards you
Clear	Junction is traffic free (although you should also check yourself, and not rely wholly on others)
Ease up	Slow down, e.g to allow the rest of the group to catch up
Gravel / ice (etc.)	To warn others of specific hazards on the road
Junction	Approaching junction - prepare to stop
Single up	Move from abreast to single file. This may be used when conditions demand
Slowing	Reduce speed
Stopping	Come to a halt as quickly as possible without causing a collision