



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 guidance for members to promote safe and enjoyable Club group riding, and includes:

- Structured group riding – what is it?
- Tips for group riding
- Hand signals &
- Verbal signals

Structured group riding – what is it?

Generally, groups should ride two abreast where it is safe to do so. Change to single file when necessary e.g: when road conditions dictate; there is a hazard that requires riding in single file or where it will allow vehicles behind to overtake

1. Single File

When in tight single file configuration, rotate* clockwise off the front (when safe), and re-join the back of the group, rather than accelerating from the back onto the front, creating a surge effect, and potentially creating a dangerous environment for someone about to rotate off

**What is Rotate off?*

Simply put, glance over your shoulder for any oncoming traffic, flick the left elbow (so no ambiguity about your intentions). Ease off the line to the right (into the middle of your lane), to allow the person behind to take the lead, and slowly drift back and enjoy the recovery before you re-join at the back.

2. Two abreast

A two abreast formation (when the road allows), can be a very social configuration, as well as an efficient use of group energy. The key is to not keep the same configuration for too long. After a few minutes** the lead rider on the inside left will call “rotate” & signal so the whole group can hear.

Rotate can be practiced in either direction (wind dependent), but as a default we generally as a club go in a clockwise direction (faster moving on the left).

Simply put, the inside lane will pedal a little faster so the front person can pull into the right lane when clear of the bike on the right. The lead bike on the right can call "clear" to assist the “docking”.

*** How long should I spend on the front?*

In both of these formations, the length of time you spend on the front should be discussed at the start of the ride and take into account how strong you are relative to the rest of the group

Group riding videos:

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

<https://youtu.be/HDxXRq5fo8A> (courtesy of GCN)



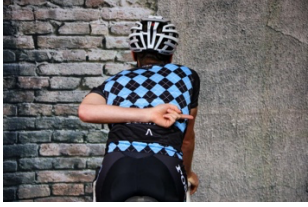


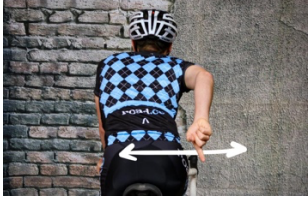
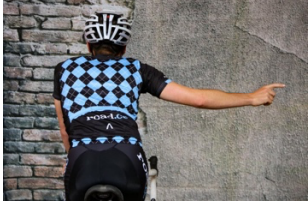



Tips for Group Riding – Courtesy of British Cycling

Relax	If you're not use 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 braking too heavily. 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 riding 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 their 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, stay on the front a bit longer 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 as their use is not safe for group rides
Road positioning	Avoid riding in the gutter / too close to the kerb



Hand Signals (Courtesy of road.cc)

	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"
	SLOWING Put your arm out to the side and move it slowly up and down. Calling out "Slowing" is usually appropriate
	OBSTRUCTION Point behind your back in the direction you need to move. Used to indicate obstructions such as a parked car or pedestrian
	ROAD SURFACE HAZARD Position your arm out to one side so that your hand is visible to riders behind you.
	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
	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
	TURNING When you're approaching a turn, stick your arm out at shoulder height to indicate the change in direction.
	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



Verbal signals

The following are the most common verbal signals used when riding in a group. In general, you should try & limit the verbal signals you use to these as others may not be understood / recognised:

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 two 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