



Ride

Leader

Guidelines

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Why lead a ride?

We wanted to start with some words of inspiration, some explanation of why you'd want to lead a ride. Someone said, "Why *do* we lead rides?" and there was a pause. "Because it's fun." Another pause. Then a wild, careening peloton of ideas burst from nowhere:

- You get to choose the route, the pace, and the food stops. This means that you get to share *your* favorite destinations and routes, ride at *your* preferred pace, and bring a lot of people to *your* favorite eateries.
- You meet new people who share at least one of your interests. This expands your pool of potential riding partners (and friends), particularly folks who like to ride the same way you do.
- You can share your *other* interests, knowledge, or talents with people by leading theme rides. At one time or another, leaders have led railroad history rides, antiquing rides, yard sale rides, kid rides, camping rides, moonlight rides, bakery rides, and rides with a multitude of other themes.
- You can inspire people, motivate them, get them excited about bicycling. Ride leaders who lead regularly have countless tales of novices who can barely shift gears on their first ride but who blossom into avid cyclists by the end of a season.
- You can exercise your creativity in finding a route, writing the ride description, designing the map or cue sheet, and creating the event.
- You contribute something to the community.
- Leading a ride makes you go riding yourself.
- The club throws parties four times a year to thank recent ride leaders.
- The club occasionally offers free first-aid training to ride leaders.
- From time to time, the club offers snazzy rewards to regular ride leaders. In the past, these rewards have included jerseys, vests, jackets, and assorted other biking garb.
- Other people have to call you "Leader."

What's in this booklet?

If you've led rides for the Cascade Bicycle Club in the past, some of the information in this booklet will already be familiar to you, but we've updated it with ways to make your rides even safer. If you *haven't* led rides before, this booklet will give you a good introduction to how you go about leading a safe, enjoyable ride. You'll find information on how to select a route; what to do before, during, and after the ride; how to handle problems and accidents; and how to make a ride more fun. At the end, you'll also find tips on safe biking.

These guidelines are primarily intended for one-day rides. If you'd like to lead multi-day tours, please contact the Rides Committee chairperson, who is listed in the *Cascade Courier* and on the Cascade Bicycle Club website, <http://www.Cascade.org>.

See the checklists at the back: We included a couple of day-of-ride checklists at the back, which give a quick summary of the items you may want to bring to a ride and what to do before and during the ride.

Not all guidelines apply to every ride: These guidelines are written for all Cascade rides, but some guidelines apply more to social rides with regular rest and food stops while others apply more to faster training rides with few or no stops. Note that our fitness training series (Cascade Training Series/CTS) has special additional ride leader guidelines.

If you've never led a ride before

If you've ridden on a lot of club rides, you already know much of what you need to know to lead a ride of your own. Not everything about leading rides is intuitively obvious, though. Thankfully, there are several resources available for learning more about becoming a ride leader. This booklet is intended to give you a good introduction.

In addition, we require you to attend a certification session for new ride leaders. These sessions, which are offered by the club several times a year, are listed in the club's newsletter, the *Cascade Courier*, and on the Cascade website. We recommend that you attend the GearS (Group Riding Skills class) for ride leaders, offered several times each year. The Cascade Bicycle Club Education Foundation also offers classes and

clinics for riders, and CPR and first-aid classes, which you may find valuable.

Finally, familiarize yourself with the “Daily Rides” pages on the Cascade website, <http://www.Cascade.org>. The “Ride Leader Information” page lists the current requirements for becoming a ride leader, and the “Newcomers,” “Rides Classification,” and “Ride Start Points” pages will be helpful as you contemplate leading your first ride.

What kind of ride do you want to lead?

Before you can select a route or make any of the other preparations necessary for a successful ride, you need to decide what kind of ride you want to lead. Here are some issues to consider:

- Decide who you want to ride with: racers, who never stop for anything; parents with children, who stop for every butterfly; or average riders, who slow down when riding up hills and stop for a great view or a snack.
- Decide on a pace, and be sure it matches the folks you want to ride with. If you want to keep the company of parents and their children, you won’t be leading a fast ride. Also, be sure the pace you choose is one that you can *very* comfortably maintain for the duration of the ride. If you’re already at the outside edge of your abilities and you drop back into the pack to check on one of your riders, you may have trouble catching the front of the group. Paces are listed on the Cascade website on the form that you fill out when you sign up to lead a ride and on the “Ride Classifications” page on the Cascade website, <http://www.Cascade.org>.
- Decide on a distance. As with the pace, tailor the distance to the people you want to ride with.
- Think about what time the ride should start. If it’s an after-work ride, keep in mind that most folks won’t be able to make a start earlier than 6 p.m. Consider, too, that a Saturday ride starting at 10 a.m. tends to draw a larger crowd than a ride starting earlier.
- Consider the season, particularly with respect to the probable weather and the amount of available daylight. Most folks don’t think of riding in a cold, dark rain as being all that much fun.
- Be sure you’re not conflicting with anything that could make your ride *very* unpleasant. For example, you wouldn’t likely be happy

with the results if you were to try to lead a ride from Gasworks Park (or anywhere else) on the 4th of July, over the Montlake or University bridges on the opening day of boating season (when both bridges are up all day), or around Lake Washington during the Seafair boat races.

- Consider food and bathroom stops. Fitness riders often want to bring their own snacks and stop only briefly, while recreational riders will want longer stops and may want to buy food or lunch.

Ride series and repeating rides

A lot of rides are part of one of the club's many long-standing series of rides, some of which have their own coordinator. If you want to lead a ride that is part of a series, you must first talk with the series coordinator. Often, coordinators are looking for new leaders and would be glad to add you. For more information, see the "Repeating Rides," "Cascade Training Series," and "High Performance Cycling" links on the "Daily Rides" page on the Cascade website, <http://www.Cascade.org>.

Kids' rides

Rides for kids have their own advantages and challenges. You get to entertain kids, save the cost of hiring a babysitter if you bring your own young kids along, and hopefully instill in kids a lifelong love of bicycling. To keep kids entertained, you need to choose the pace, distance, and destination carefully. Shorter and slower is always better.

Note: Parents must stay with their children at all times. A ride on which a parent does not stay with their kids must be organized as an event run through the Education Department, and the club must perform a background check on all of the leaders for the event.

Here are some suggestions for leading kids' rides:

- Bring young kids along in trailers or on trailer cycles (also known as trailer bikes), and lead the ride at an easy or leisurely pace. For the sake of parents who don't have thighs of steel, you'll want to avoid extremely hilly routes. It's also a good idea to avoid roads with heavy or fast traffic. Make sure the ride is short enough that the kids don't get bored, and plan to stop at a playground or park at the midpoint of the ride. Bring snacks for the break or suggest that parents bring snacks.

- If your kids are old enough to ride their own bikes safely on the trail or on quiet streets, have them help co-lead a kids' ride. (One ride leader calls this "a ride for kids who bring their parents along.") Choose an easy pace and a short distance with a stop at midpoint for snacks and playtime. Use the ride as an opportunity to teach your own kids leadership skills and to teach kids who come along safety skills.
- Lead a ride to a special event, for example, the summer days when Lake Washington Boulevard is closed to cars from Seward Park to Mt. Baker Beach.
- For additional suggestions, or rides with teens, contact the club's education director.

Multi-day tours and rides

The club sponsors and advertises multi-day tours that are led and organized by club ride leaders, and that include amenities like official sag vehicles and hotel stays. If you want to lead one of these official tours, and if you expect to handle money for hotel costs for other riders, then you must get the permission of the Rides Committee and receive additional training.

If you're up for a bit more adventure, you can lead your own multi-day ride, where riders make their own reservations and each pay for their own accommodations. These rides can range from a short weekend jaunt with a leisurely stop at a hotel to a more ambitious multi-day ride through the mountains while carrying camping gear. Whatever you choose, make your itinerary and intentions clear to your group.

For all trips, especially multi-day camping tours, make sure you're prepared for a variety of weather conditions. Whether you want to do a credit-card tour, where you stay in hotels and carry a minimum of gear, or a self-supported camping trip, there are plenty of ride leaders who have done these trips and can give advice. Contact the club's Rides Committee chairperson for suggestions.

Selecting a route

It's easy, right? You just draw lines on a map and make a bunch of copies. Close, but there are a few things you should consider first.

General considerations

- Regardless of the means you use to choose a route, you should pre-ride or pre-drive it so you know everything necessary about road conditions, mileage, and water, lunch, and restroom stops.

If you've been on the route but not recently, you may want to go over it again to ensure that nothing has changed significantly—no long detours over gravel roads, for example.

If you're using a route that you've never ridden or that you're designing on your own, it's even more important that you travel it before the ride, preferably on a bicycle. Some of us have painful memories of the hills on a route that the ride leader chose from behind the wheel of a car.

- Choose a starting point that people can find easily and that has ample parking. If possible, the starting point should also have nearby restrooms.
- Consider food, water, and restroom breaks. Everyone needs to eat and drink, and some bladders are weaker than others. If you're planning to stop for a lunch break, there's a psychological advantage to stopping after the midpoint rather than before. The riders who are feeling a bit tired can take solace in the knowledge that you're over half way.

Note: If you're planning a restaurant stop, choose somewhere that serves both vegetarian and non-vegetarian dishes. The vegaphobes among us can have a tough time making a meal of the offerings at a vegan restaurant.

- Especially when there's a chance of rain or snow, plan a possible short cut in your route to take if the weather goes bad.
- Stay off of in-city trails (for example, the Burke-Gilman trail) as much as possible when traffic is heavy, for example, on sunny summer weekends.

These trails aren't built for speed, and they *certainly* aren't built for crowds. On most trails in the city, there's already too much traffic without you and a slew of other cyclists adding to the hubbub. If you

do ride on in-city trails, ask your riders to ride single file, and slow down and let others know when you're passing by calling out or by ringing a bell, which is more audible to someone wearing headphones. Trails in the country, on the other hand, are often spectacularly beautiful and nearly deserted.

- Wherever you go, remember to respect private property, and ride only in places where bicycles are welcome.

Using an existing route

The best choice for a route is often one that you've ridden and enjoyed. Ride leaders rarely mind if someone repeats one of their rides, so you needn't worry about plagiarism. Feel free to add your own variations; just because you're borrowing someone else's route doesn't mean that you can't give it your own touch.

Choosing a published route

Your neighborhood bike shop or book store very likely carries several books of bike routes in the Northwest, as well as individual bike maps for specific areas. Local websites also often have routes. If you photocopy a copyrighted map, or use a map from a website, scratch a note somewhere on the map that indicates the source and author so riders who like the route or the map know which book or map to look for. You may also want to include the total distance and a brief description of the terrain, for example, "hilly" or "flat."

Designing your own route

If you decide to design your own route, here are a few suggestions. These suggestions apply most of all to slow rides with inexperienced riders. If you're leading faster, more-experienced riders, adjust accordingly.

- Safety is the deciding factor for all route-related decisions. If you can't find a safe way to get somewhere, don't go there. Keep in mind that riding with a group is *much* different from riding by yourself, and rarely is it easier.
- Avoid intersections that are too close to a hill or a curve if the opposing traffic isn't required to stop. You want your riders to have an ample view of oncoming traffic and vice versa.

- Avoid streets that are too narrow for cars to pass unless you'll only be traveling there for a short distance. For example, some streets with medians only have enough room for one lane of traffic in each direction. Some streets with traffic diverters only have enough room for one lane of traffic, period.
- Avoid crossing busy streets except at controlled intersections (those with stop signs or stop lights).
- Avoid heavily traveled, multi-lane roads whenever possible. If you find yourself with no good alternatives, at least try to avoid making left turns. Even with the best of riders, getting a group safely across two lanes of traffic so they can make the turn is a dicey proposition. With inexperienced riders, it can only get worse.
- In general, avoid taking a group on sidewalks. On occasion, a short stretch of sidewalk is clearly the safest, best way to get from point A to point B. However, if we're to be taken seriously as operators of vehicles, we can't be spending a lot of time on the sidewalk like a bunch of six year olds.
- Unless you're leading a mountain-bike ride, avoid difficult riding surfaces whenever possible, for example, rough or rutted roads, cobblestones, bridges with metal decks, railroad tracks, dirt, gravel, grass, stairs, and so on. However, don't miss out on a stunning overlook or a ride along the water just because the path is a short stretch of gravel. Simply suggest that people walk if they'd rather.
- Try to avoid surprises. Suppose, for example, that you choose a route on which there's a steep uphill just after a turn. If you don't remember to warn riders in advance, they'll all be so distracted trying to get into the correct gear that they won't watch out for one another or for traffic. With an inexperienced group, some riders will simply stop, with no thought to whether anyone might be behind them.

Note: If you can't circumvent a problem that may stymie your riders, try to warn everyone during the ride, possibly at a stop immediately before you get to that location.

- Study maps in search of promising back roads. However, be sure you pre-ride these roads before the day of the ride, so you don't run into a washed-out bridge or 20 miles of rough gravel.
- Many local cities and counties have bike maps, and several websites provide bike routes, including RideTheCity.com, Bikely.com, and Maps.Google.com. However, the technology on map websites still

has room for improvement, so, as with routes you find by studying maps, you should pre-ride a route that you identify this way.

- Explore. The best way to find spectacular views, pedestrian over-and underpasses, wooden bridges, unusual houses, beautiful gardens, or anything else that won't show up on a map is by traipsing around.
- In the city, “dead end” and “local traffic only” signs often apply only to cars.
- If you know a ride leader who has led rides in the area where you want to go, call and ask for suggestions on roads to use or avoid, good places for mid-ride snacks, scenic overlooks, mean dogs, and other relevant details.

Making maps and cue sheets

When you submit a ride description for publication in the *Cascade Courier* (see “Submitting a ride description,” on page 14), you'll indicate whether you'll provide riders with a map or cue sheet. In general, giving riders a map or cue sheet is a good idea unless the route is short and simple. In all likelihood, *someone* on your ride has never been on some or all of the route you've chosen and could easily get lost if separated from the group. Even if you lead a ride over the same route week after week, you should have a map or cue sheet for riders who have never been on your ride.

Choosing between maps and cue sheets is primarily a matter of personal preference. With a map, riders who somehow miss a turn can find their way back to the route (or back to the starting point), assuming they haven't ridden off the map. On the other hand, the details of a map are more difficult to grasp while you're moving; it's easier to glance at a cue sheet and see that the next turn is a left onto Madrona. With a cue sheet, you can also describe quirks of the route that won't be obvious from a map (“at the pedestrian crosswalk, turn right onto the wooden footbridge”). Ideally, you'd provide both and let people choose for themselves, but that's a lot of extra work.

Note: The club reimburses ride leaders for reasonable copying expenses. Please try to keep the cost low by making only as many copies as you expect to need and by avoiding color copies, fancy paper, and the like.

Just accumulate your receipts until you have \$5.00 or more in copying expenses, fill out a reimbursement request form (available online or from the office), and mail the receipts and the form to the office. Remember to include your name and address, so we know where to send the check. You might want to include a daytime phone number, too, in case the bookkeeper has any questions.

Making a map

The simplest and most common way to make a map of your route is to get a map of the area, photocopy the relevant portion, mark your route on the copy, and then photocopy the marked copy. If you choose this method, here are a few suggestions:

- Try not to run the route right up to the edge of the map. If your photocopied map includes some of the neighborhood outside the route, riders are less likely to ride off the map if they happen to miss a turn.
- If you highlight the route with a highlighter, map details will show through when you make photocopies. This may not work with all colors of highlighter or all copiers, so you may want to experiment first.
- Include directional arrows, so riders know which direction they're supposed to be riding. This is even more important if the route crosses itself at some point, as city rides sometimes will.
- If you know the total distance, mark it on the map somewhere. You also might want to include a brief description of the terrain, for example, "hilly" or "flat."
- Play with the density setting on the copier until you get good results.

You might also want to augment a cue sheet with a quick, hand-drawn map. You don't need to show every turn; just include enough to give folks a rough idea where you're headed. If you choose this alternative, be sure the relative proportions are at least a vague approximation of reality, and be sure that north, south, east, and west don't meander unduly.

Making a cue sheet

A cue sheet is a set of written instructions on how to follow a route. In its simplest form, a cue sheet includes the distance from one place to the next (“1.8 miles” or “2 blocks”), where the next place is (“Madrona Avenue”), what you do when you get there (“turn left”) and maybe the total distance up to that point in the ride. Following is a short (fictional) example.

Distance	Total	Direction	Notes
			Starting point —parking lot at Magnuson Park
0	0	L	Onto Baker Avenue
0.1	0.1	R	Onto 15th Avenue
0.3	0.4	Warning!	Big pothole at 103rd Street
1.6	2.0	L	Onto Madrona Way (bottom of the hill). Heavy traffic. Ride single file.
0.3	2.3	R	At the pedestrian crosswalk, cross the wooden pedestrian bridge. Ride slowly and yield to pedestrians.
0.1	2.4	L	At the far end of the wooden bridge
0.2	2.6	L	At the next intersection (no street sign)
0.4	3.0	Stop	Carkeek Park. Rest stop, restrooms, water fountains.

Here are some suggestions on what to include on a cue sheet. If the route is long or circuitous, not everything suggested here will fit:

- **The starting point:** Six months from now, when you look at this cue sheet again, you’ll want a reminder of where the ride started, so you don’t have to decipher it from the details. To make it easier for your riders to use the cue sheet later, you may want to include directions to the starting point from some known location (“from Seattle...” or “from I-5...”).
- **Clear instructions:** Be sure there’s no mistaking what you’ve instructed riders to do. For example, at a five-way intersection, there may be two left turns. Make it clear whether folks should make a hard left or a soft left.
- **Mileage:** Include the distance between landmarks and the total distance as of each landmark. If you forgot to note a distance as you were pre-riding the route, you can always estimate from a map.

- ***The important things in life:*** Include restrooms, water fountains, regrouping points, rest stops, and so on. You also might want to include bike shops close to the route and, for long trips in the country, places where riders can get refreshments.
- ***Road hazards:*** Point out blind curves, dangerous intersections, narrow roads, and similar potential problems. Make recommendations for safe riding as appropriate (“ride single-file”).
- ***Points of interest:*** Mention scenic overlooks, eagles’ nests, noteworthy art or architecture, a bakery where you can get a really good brownie, the place where your mom and dad first met.
- ***Frequent landmarks:*** If you travel a long distance on the same road, include landmarks every few miles or so, just so folks know they’re still heading in the right direction. Tired riders who don’t have a bike computer will have a tough time telling the difference between 15 miles and 20 miles.
- ***Readily visible landmarks:*** Wherever possible, use big, obvious landmarks, especially when it’s a long distance between landmarks. You don’t want riders to spend miles wondering whether they’ve already passed the mailbox that looks like a little barn.
- ***Unchanging landmarks:*** If you plan to use the same cue sheet again some day, try to use landmarks that are unlikely to change. For example, don’t tell riders to turn left at the big white house, or someone is sure to repaint it pink. Likewise, watch out when specifying business names, a number of stop lights or stop signs, and alterable natural features. “Left at the third light” has a new meaning if the city adds another light, and big trees can be cut down.

Here are some suggestions on how to make a cue sheet:

- ***Use a mapping tool:*** You may want to start by getting your cues from an online mapping application, for example, the biking feature of Google maps. As with the route itself, verify the cues provided by an online application before you use them.
- ***Make the text big:*** If you’re using a computer to produce the cue sheet, so you’re able to change the size of the font, make the text **BIG**. Folks will be reading your cue sheet at 15 or 20 miles an hour. Don’t make it hard for them. 14-point type is a good size. This sentence is in 10-point type, and that’s too small for a cue sheet.

- **Make the important stuff stand out:** Again, if you’re using a computer to produce the cue sheet, you can change the font to **bold**, *italics*, or ***both*** to make it stand out better. Just don’t overdo it, or nothing will stand out.
- **Use standard abbreviations:** Instead of spelling everything out, use “L” (left), “R” (right), and “S” (straight) to indicate directions. Some folks also use “BL” and “BR” (bear left and bear right), but that’s a bit obscure.
- **Lay out the cue sheet for easy folding:** Divide the cue sheet in half or in quarters, label the parts, and try to avoid putting instructions on the folds, for example:

1				3			
Distance	Total	Direction	Notes	Distance	Total	Direction	Notes
			Starting point —parking lot at View Park	0.7	3.7	R	Onto the Burke-Gilman Trail. <i>Ride single file.</i>
0	0	L	Onto Baker Street	1.1	4.8	Warning!	Blind curve
0.1	0.1	R	Onto Penny Lane	1.2	6.0	L	Onto 42nd Street
0.3	0.4	Warning!	Big pothole at 103rd Street	0.4	6.4	Stop	Onto Purple Avenue
1.6	2.0	L	Onto Ventura Highway (bottom of the hill). Heavy traffic. Ride single file.				

2				4			
Distance	Total	Direction	Notes	Distance	Total	Direction	Notes
0.3	2.3	R	At the pedestrian crosswalk, cross the wooden bridge. <i>Ride slowly and yield to pedestrians.</i>	0.6	7.0	L	Onto Peyton Place
0.1	2.4	L	At end of wooden bridge	0.3	7.3	R	Onto Broadway
0.2	2.6	L	At the next intersection (no street sign)	1.8	9.1	S	Wait at the top of the hill
0.4	3.0	Stop	Carkeek Park. Rest stop, restrooms, water fountains.	1.5	10.6	L	Into the Lakeview Park parking lot. Swimming.

Including the “Tips for safe riding” and the membership form

It’s a good idea to copy the “Ride Smart Tips” brochure or the “Tips for safe riding,” on page 42, onto the back of your map or cue sheet, or hand out the “Ride Smart Tips” brochure, which is available in generous quantities from the club office. The list of tips is short, simple, and a good reminder for people who haven’t ridden a bicycle since they got out of grade school.

If there’s still room on the back, you might want to copy the current Cascade Bicycle Club membership form, or hand out copies of the form to new riders. Many rides attract a lot of non-members, who will be more inclined to join if it’s easy. You can also tell folks that they can join on the Cascade website, <http://www.Cascade.org>, or by calling the office at 206-522-3222.

Submitting a ride description

To have a ride listed in the *Cascade Courier*, submit a ride description on the Cascade website, <http://www.Cascade.org>, by the deadline, which is currently the first of the month for the following month’s newsletter. If you missed the deadline for the newsletter, you can also have rides listed only on the Cascade website. For these web-only listings, you must submit the ride description by noon on the Monday before the day of the ride. For these rides, add “WEB ONLY” to the beginning of the ride title.

As you fill in the web form, err on the conservative side. If you don’t know the exact mileage, it’s better to overestimate than underestimate, so no one is unpleasantly surprised. Also, a ride that you may think of as only a little hilly may be *very* hilly to some riders. Finally, be realistic about the pace at which you intend to ride. If you’re very comfortable riding at 18 to 20 miles an hour when you ride on your own, you’ll really need to rein yourself in to lead a group at 12 to 14 miles an hour.

In your ride description, remember to include any cautions, quirks, or special requirements for your ride. Don’t identify anything as “required” unless you intend to enforce the requirement; instead, make “requests” or “recommendations.” Here are some examples of items worth including:

- If you’re planning a lunch stop, indicate whether people should bring a lunch or bring money for lunch.

- If the ride begins or ends after dark, riders must bring headlights and taillights. (Be conservative. If there's a reasonable chance that you won't finish riding until after dark, include that information in the ride description.)
- If you're climbing three mountain passes in the same day, *warn* people in the ride description so you don't get riders who aren't up to it.
- If you're planning to spend three hours at an antique fair in the middle of a 15-mile ride, mention this so potential riders know that the ride isn't just a quick loop. This is especially true for training or fitness rides, on which many riders don't have much patience with stops other than snack and restroom breaks.
- If you're taking a route that's shy of amenities like restaurants and restrooms, caution people so they can bring their own food and toilet paper.
- If you're starting off by taking a ferry, specify a start time that's 15 minutes or more before the next ferry, so everyone has time to get a ticket. Also, specify what the fare is, so riders know how much extra money to bring.
- If you're leading a ride that starts in a remote location, try to encourage carpooling. For example, you might specify a carpooling place and time and then either arrange for someone to drive by that location or pass by yourself on the way to the starting point.

Important! If you want to include any non-biking activities as part of the ride, make these activities optional. Riders must be able to choose between participating in extra activities and waiting for the ride to resume. If you're stopping at a museum, a concert, a restaurant, or an event with an entry fee, list the approximate cost in the ride description.

If your ride includes any non-biking activity that could be considered hazardous, such as rock climbing or kayaking, or an activity that involves alcohol, such as winery and brewery stops, then the activity must occur after the ride is over. Insurance for club rides does not cover these kinds of activities.

Cascade's no-discrimination policy

All Cascade rides are open to everyone who is able and willing to participate safely and cooperatively. In your ride description, you can specify who a ride is primarily intended for, but you can't specify who

the ride *isn't* for. For example, you can specify that your ride is a Norwegians ride, but you can't specify that it's a Norwegians-*only* ride or that it's a no-Swedes ride.

This no-discrimination policy does not prevent you from asking a rider to leave a ride based on the rider's abilities, equipment, or actions on that ride or previous rides. It is a good idea to have a witness if you must tell a rider to leave a ride.

Commercial activities

Cascade rides are non-commercial, so you can't try to sell anything on your ride or solicit money for any charity; violators will be banished to the Land of Perpetual Headwinds. However, you may start the ride from your place of business (especially if you own a bakery), or choose a theme or optional activity related to your business. For example, if you're a real estate agent, you can lead riders on a tour of houses that are currently for sale, but you can't require riders to look inside those houses, and you can't give any sales pitches.

Non-Cascade rides and events

The rides calendar in the *Cascade Courier* doesn't include rides that are sponsored by other organizations. For example, if the Fraternal Order of Slugs sponsors a Spring Slime Ride, the ride can't be listed on its own in the rides calendar. However, you can lead a Cascade ride that includes the Spring Slime Ride as part of the route. In the ride description, mention that you'll be joining the Spring Slime Ride, and include the amount of the registration fee, if any. In addition, start your own ride early enough that you can get to the starting point of the Spring Slime Ride before registration closes. You also could lead a ride that ends at the starting point of the Spring Slime Ride, so your riders can join the Spring Slime Ride, or not. If you want to lead a joint ride with cyclists from another bike club and list the ride in both clubs' newsletters, then you must have leaders present from both organizations at the ride, and you must have riders sign waivers for both clubs.

Fielding phone calls from prospective riders

The ride description form asks you to provide a phone number so riders can call with questions before the ride. Typically, callers will want to know whether they can handle your ride. How you answer this question depends on the difficulty of the ride and on your preference as a ride leader.

If the ride is difficult, you'll obviously want to be clear with callers about the distance, the speed, the number and size of hills, and so on. One ride leader, who regularly leads fast rides of up to 100 miles in the foothills of the Olympics, starts by saying, "No, if you had to call, you can't handle it." He's willing to be convinced otherwise, but he's (rightly) extremely cautious about encouraging riders who aren't in top condition.

If the ride is less strenuous, you have more discretion. For a slow, short, social ride, you may want to encourage anyone who isn't wheezing into the phone to come along. After all, everyone needs to start somewhere. If you take this approach, you must be prepared to wait patiently at the top of every hill for the sightseers. Your reward is the chance to meet delightful people who don't happen to be great cyclists and to make occasional riders into better, stronger, more enthusiastic cyclists. You should also suggest that the caller read the "Newcomers" page on the Cascade website, <http://www.Cascade.org>.

If you're not prepared to wait for everyone who needs to be waited for, by all means make that clear to callers. Convincing folks that they can handle your ride and then leaving them in the dust is a great way to discourage them from ever joining a Cascade ride again (and a pretty good way to make them drop their membership).

Allowing children on your ride

From time to time, you may get a phone call from a parent who wants to bring one or more children along. Children may join regular club rides with advance permission. Note the following:

- Children 15 and under must be accompanied by a parent or legal guardian, or must have a parent or legal guardian sign a consent form designating a guardian for them on the ride.
- Children ages 16 or 17 may ride without a parent or guardian with your advance permission and a signed parental-consent form, which they must give you at the start of the ride. The form is available on the “Daily Rides” page on the Cascade website, <http://www.Cascade.org>.
- Unless you’re just riding around the parking lot at Magnuson Park, be cautious about encouraging parents to bring children along on a ride. Parents don’t always have a realistic perception of how far or how fast their children are able to ride, or how safely the children are able to ride in a group.
- Leaders may refuse permission for children to join their ride even if the parent is also on the ride.

What to bring to the ride

The items on this list also appear on the “Day-of-ride checklist,” on page 43.

Arrive at least 10 minutes early with the necessary stuff:

- Your bike and helmet.
- Plenty of copies of the map or cue sheet if you advertised that you’d provide one.
- Two copies of the Cascade Bicycle Club liability waiver, a copy of the Cascade Bicycle Club Incident Report, and a copy of the Cascade Bicycle Club Witness Report.
- A couple of pens.
- A pump and tire gauge, an extra tube or patch kit, tire levers, and basic tools. (You can probably leave the truing stand at home.)

You may also want to bring:

- Food and full water bottles.
- A rudimentary first-aid kit. See “What to carry in a first-aid kit,” on page 37.
- A bike lock. If you bring a cable lock, you can lock several bikes together.
- A bike computer to monitor your pace.
- A cellphone.
- Membership forms and Ride SMART brochures.
- Newsletters to give away.
- Rags, WetWipes®, or something of the sort for cleaning up after road-side repairs.
- Toilet paper or tissues, if you’re planning to be away from basic amenities like toilets for very long.
- Name tags and a felt marker.
- A watch.
- Money, including change for phone calls in case you’re out of cellphone range.

At the beginning of the ride

If you cancel a ride: If you cancel a ride, show up at the starting point or have someone else go and announce that the ride has been canceled, unless it's obvious from the weather conditions that the ride is canceled. You must still complete the top portion of the liability waiver and submit it for the club's records.

If you can't lead a ride: If, for some reason, you can't lead a ride yourself, try to find a club-certified ride leader as a replacement. The head of the Rides Committee may be able to help you find someone.

If you advertised that the ride would include a map or cue sheet, be sure your replacement has them.

Get signatures, check on helmets, and get a count

- Fill out the top of the liability waiver, and sign legibly on the ride-leader line. If you're leading the ride alone, you might want to enter dashes on the line for a second ride leader so your riders don't sign in there. In the blank for an emergency-contact phone number, enter the number that you'd like the hospital to call in the event of an accident. Don't enter "911," or some of your riders will do the same, which could endanger them if they're severely injured. (If you notice riders entering "911," discourage it. While you're at it, try to ensure that emergency-contact phone numbers are legible.)
 - Have everyone sign the waiver for the ride. On a large ride, you can't know whether everyone has signed, but make a good-faith effort. You may want to announce that this is a liability waiver and that riders must sign even if they're not members of the club. Carry the liability waiver with you on the ride in case of an emergency, and mail the original to the Cascade Bicycle Club office within one week after the ride.
 - If you allow any children on the ride, ensure either that they're accompanied by a parent or guardian or that you have a signed parental-consent form for each child.
-

Important! Children may also join regular club rides. Children 15 and under must be accompanied by a parent or legal guardian, or must have a parent or legal guardian sign a parental-consent form designating a guardian for them on the ride. Children ages 16 or 17 may ride without a parent or guardian if you've given permission in

advance and if the child, parent, or guardian gives you a signed parental-consent form at the start of the ride. If you have doubts about whether the child will be able to safely complete the ride without holding up the group, you should discuss it with the parent. You may refuse to allow a child on the ride if you believe the child's participation would be unsafe or disruptive.

- Don't let anyone ride without a helmet. The club requires all riders to wear helmets on all rides. In addition, in most of the local area, helmets are required by law. Never lend a helmet to a rider, which could expose you to legal liability if the rider gets into an accident. You can suggest that a helmetless rider try the nearest bike or skate shop; most shops rent helmets. If you often have riders coming to your rides without a helmet, you can talk with the Education Department about getting a supply of inexpensive helmets to sell, and about getting training in fitting helmets.
-

Important! If someone refuses to sign the liability waiver or insists on riding without a helmet, make it clear to everyone, including the uncooperative rider, that he or she is not part of the group. Thankfully, this problem rarely occurs.

- Count the riders in your group so you can determine if you have everyone at regrouping points and when leaving rest stops.

Make a pre-ride announcement, including a reminder about safe riding

The list of topics worth covering in a short pre-ride announcement could easily turn into a lecture as long as the ride itself. However, if you chatter on for more than a couple of minutes, everyone will stop listening and will start talking among themselves.

Cover the first three items on the following list before every ride: introduce yourself, welcome new riders, and discuss general safety (the Ride SMART tips). Then add other items as applicable. If you lead rides regularly, emphasize different topics from time to time. If you copied the safety tips onto the back of your map or cue sheet, you can point that out, too.

Note: The items on this list also appear on the “Day-of-ride checklist,” on page 43 and on the “Ride Leader Briefing Card” that is given out at the certification class.

- **Introduction:** Introduce yourself, and identify your sweeps, co-leaders, and other helpers. If the ride will be breaking into two or more groups, explain who will be leading each group.

If you don't already have someone to ride sweep, you may want to ask if anyone wants to volunteer. For more information on sweeps, see "The benefits of having a sweep," on page 28.

If the group is small, you can also ask the riders to introduce themselves. If the group is larger, you may want to pass out name tags.

- **Welcome to new riders:** Ask if there are any riders who have never been on a Cascade ride and, if so, welcome them to the group and invite them to join the Club. In addition, encourage the regular riders to check in with the newcomers during the ride and ensure that they're doing all right. In a group that rides together regularly, a new rider, shy or not, may not feel welcome if the regulars spend the entire ride talking among themselves.
- **Safety:** You can't teach safe biking in the few minutes you have before people stop listening, but you can quickly cover the Ride SMART tips:
 - **Stay alert:** Remind riders to watch out for traffic and for hazards like potholes in the road and posts on the trail. Ask that everyone use hand signals before turning or stopping, and that they point out road hazards. Earbuds, headphones, and cellphones are not allowed while riding.
 - **Move off the road:** If riders need to stop, ask that they pull off the road and that they not block intersections or driveways.
 - **Act like a car:** Point out that a bicycle is a vehicle and that bicycle riders are, therefore, expected to obey traffic regulations.
 - **Retain space between riders:** Remind riders to watch out for one another. On a group ride, they're much more likely to have an accident with other riders than they are with a car.
 - **Tell others when you're passing, and pass on the left:** Ask riders to communicate with one another about what they're doing, and ask that they pass only on the left.

You can also talk in general about safe riding, and remind riders that each person is responsible for his or her own safety. They may have

heard it all before, so say it some amusing or vivid way that they can't forget. You might emphasize that riding like lemmings is not a good idea. Or that just because the rider ahead of you made it through an intersection without being run over doesn't mean you can, too. Or that cars kill cyclists one at a time. You get the idea.

- ***Courtesy:*** Ask riders to be courteous to motorists. Drivers who are impressed with the courtesy of a group of cyclists will be more inclined to treat other cyclists with respect.
- ***Pace and Mileage:*** Announce the mileage and pace and explain what it means. If you don't intend to wait for slow riders, you should announce this, too.
- ***Stick-togetherness or regroup frequency:*** Indicate whether the ride will stick together, regroup at the top of hills, or regroup at a specified point.
- ***The route:*** Briefly describe the ride, including food and rest stops, difficult hills, unusual or dangerous conditions, the first regrouping point, and hazards and tricky turns before that point.
- ***Waivers, maps/cue sheets:*** Ask if everyone has signed the liability waiver and has received the map or cue sheet.
- ***Helmets:*** Make sure everyone has a helmet.
- ***Group-riding techniques:*** For the benefit of new riders, mention group-riding techniques, including:
 - ***Riding single file in traffic:*** Make it clear that riders are *not* to block traffic by riding two or more abreast.
 - ***Riding on trails:*** If you'll be riding on trails, remind riders to stay on the right half of the trail (which may require riding single file), and to be considerate of other trail users.
 - ***Voice signals:*** Give riders a quick overview of voice signals: "Car up/back/left/right," "On your left" to indicate that you're passing another rider or a pedestrian, "Glass/pothole/etc." to indicate road hazards (combined with hand signals as appropriate). Emphasize that "Car back" means a car is coming from behind, so riders should start riding single file.

Discourage riders from calling out "Clear" at intersections to indicate that no cars are coming. "Clear" is a subjective and temporary condition, so riders should always look for themselves.
 - ***Stop lights and stop signs:*** Caution riders not to run stop lights or stop signs out of fear of being left behind.

- ***Special equipment:*** Remind riders about any special equipment that's required for the ride, for example, lights or lunches.
- ***Keep the leader informed:*** Ask riders to pass the word if someone leaves or breaks down, and to notify you if they're planning to leave the ride before the end.
- ***Cellphone:*** If you aren't carrying a cellphone yourself, ask if anyone else has one.
- ***First-aid kit or first-aid training:*** Ask if anyone has a first-aid kit or first-aid training.
- ***After-ride refreshments:*** If you're going somewhere after the ride for a meal or a snack, tell everyone where you're going now. You probably won't get a chance after the ride because everyone will scatter to the four winds.
- ***Questions?*** Ask if there are questions.

Leading the ride

Every ride is different, so it's impossible to anticipate everything you might encounter on a ride. Here's a quick list of some items to attend to.

Note: Not all of these items apply to all types of rides. For example, if you haven't promised to keep everyone together, you don't have to worry about whether everyone made it through the last stop light.

Also note: The items on this list also appear on the "Day-of-ride checklist," at the back of this booklet.

- ***Set a good example:*** Ride safely, be kind to strangers, pet dogs, kiss babies, and remember that you represent the Cascade Bicycle Club.
- ***Courtesy:*** Anticipate situations where your group may inconvenience others. For example, when you stop to regroup, be sure your riders aren't blocking the road, a sidewalk, or a driveway. When you re-enter the roadway, wait until there's a break in traffic, so drivers aren't forced to slow down for your group.

If you're taking the group on a trail, especially a busy, in-city trail, ask everyone to stay on the right half of the trail, regardless of how wide the trail is. This may mean that everyone must ride single-file, which will make socializing more difficult. However, having to shout to one another is better by far than forcing other trail users off

the trail and leaving them with an indelible bad impression of group rides and riders.

- **Unsafe riders:** Unsafe riders endanger everyone around them, ruin the experience for others on the ride, and give cyclists a bad image. If you're uncomfortable with a rider's actions, quietly and politely explain your concern. If the situation doesn't improve, ask the rider to leave the group, preferably with another rider witnessing the conversation.

If you notice a rider riding with earbuds or headphones, or talking on a cellphone while riding, ask them to stop. If necessary, stop the group until the rider complies.

- **New riders:** Check in with each of the new riders periodically to ensure that they're getting along all right and that they feel welcome.
- **Pace:** Ride at or near the front to lead the way and *set the pace at the advertised speed*. (A bike computer can help.) Make sure riders know that, if they get ahead, they're on their own. Your responsibility is to lead the ride you've advertised and to keep track of the people who are doing the same.
- **Too-fast and too-slow riders:** At the first regrouping point, if some riders are clearly too fast or too slow for the group, consider splitting into more than one group. You can also ask the fast or slow riders if they'd prefer to break off from the group or return to the starting point. If they choose to leave the group, try to ensure that they have a map or cue sheet, or that they know the area well enough to find their way. (This suggests that the first regrouping point should be relatively close to the starting point, so riders can find their way back to the start on their own, if necessary.)

You can't always keep track of all riders, but do the best you can. Assess how the riders at the back of the group are doing, and adjust the ride as appropriate. Try not to leave anyone behind or lose them. However, you're not obligated to go back and look for anyone.

You may want to have someone ride at the back of the group to encourage and keep track of the slower riders. For more information, see "The benefits of having a sweep," on page 28.

- **Regroup frequency:** How often you stop to count heads and make sure everyone is fine depends on a multitude of factors. If you have some slower riders who are consistently falling behind but you don't want to ask them to leave the group, or if you're leading one of those meandering in-city rides on which you turn every time you get to another intersection, you'll need to regroup pretty regularly. If

you're riding on the same road for the next 20 miles with a bunch of self-sufficient racers, you may not need to regroup at all. Base your decision on the comfort of the slowest riders, not on the testosterone levels of the fastest.

- ***Sharing the Road:*** Don't ride more than two abreast, and ride single file when cars approach. If your group is large, split into smaller groups of four or five riders, and allow enough space between groups for cars to pass.
- ***Stop lights, stop signs, and crosswalks:*** Stop for red lights, stop signs, and pedestrian crosswalks. Not stopping endangers your riders, opens you to liability in the event of an accident, and gives onlookers the impression that cyclists are a bunch of scofflaws. Ride leaders must set an example for the group, even out in the middle of nowhere, out of sight of anyone who might look askance at scofflaw bikers.

Don't stop too close to an intersection to wait for the group to catch up; you don't want to block traffic. Drivers have enough to cope with at intersections without having to worry about a gaggle of cyclists.

At a stop light or stop sign, join the line of cars in groups of four or five to go through the intersection. Don't pass cars on the right and make your way up to the intersection. The cars will just have to pass you again after the intersection, and this *really* makes some drivers *mad*.

- ***Unforeseen problems:*** If you run into unforeseen problems (new construction, bad weather, unusually heavy traffic, a closed bakery), be creative. Change the route, take shelter, ford a stream, choose a different rest stop. Consider safety above all else, and don't be afraid to ask for suggestions from your riders. They may know the area better than you do. However, you're in charge, so don't let yourself be railroaded into something that you think is unwise.
- ***Mid-ride announcements:*** At each regrouping point, announce the next regrouping point. Re-emphasize safety, especially related to upcoming conditions. For example, if you'll need to move into the left lane to make a turn, remind riders to *look* before they change lanes. If there's a steep uphill immediately after a turn, try to warn riders in advance. If you're getting onto a trail, remind riders to stay on the right half of the trail and to be considerate of other trail users.

- ***Restaurant and restroom stops:*** Whenever you stop somewhere with your group, encourage your riders to be considerate of the non-riders around you. Try not to leave folks with the impression that cyclists are a bunch of ill-mannered ne'er-do-wells. If you happen to inconvenience someone, apologize profusely and do your best to rectify the situation immediately.

When it's time to start riding again, announce your departure enough in advance that everyone has time to stash their extra cookies, get their helmets and gloves on, and untangle their bikes from all of the other bikes leaning against the same tree. In addition, be alert for riders who have wandered off or are in the restroom.

- ***Messes:*** Wherever you stop, make sure you and your riders clean up after yourselves. Don't make your mark on the world with banana peels, energy bar wrappers, and dead inner tubes.
- ***Helpers:*** Ask for volunteers to fix flat tires, to pump air into tires, to give shifting lessons, or to be "corner people," riders who wait at corners and point riders in the right direction until everyone has passed. (See "Using corner people to keep riders from getting lost," on page 29.)
- ***Good will:*** Smile, wave, and call out thanks whenever anyone (especially a driver) is even unintentionally helpful to your group.
- ***Riding after dark:*** If you're riding after dark, slow down and keep the group together. A group of cyclists, each one properly lit with a headlight and taillight, is much more visible after dark than an individual rider.
- ***Injuries and other problems:*** If one of your riders is injured, follow the guidelines under "Handling injuries," on page 32. For information on handling a variety of other problems, see "Handling other problems," on page 38.
- ***Have a good time yourself:*** Some rides are a joy to lead, while others are unadulterated drudgery. If you aren't having a good time yourself, think about what you could do differently next time. Moreover, if you aren't having fun, some or all of your riders probably aren't either. Be bold and ask *them* how you could make the ride more enjoyable.

Leading from the front or the back of the group

You don't necessarily need to lead a ride from the front of the group. As long as you've passed out a map or cue sheet, you may be able to serve your riders as well by leading from the back as you can from the front. Some ride leaders spend the ride making their way back and forth between the front and the back of the group, checking to see that everyone is doing all right. Other ride leaders choose to spend the entire ride at the back of the group. This ensures that they'll eventually come upon anyone who has stopped for any reason.

If you choose not to lead from the front, here are a couple of things to watch out for:

- If it's a stick-together ride, remind everyone what the pace is and ask them to maintain that pace.
- If you want riders to stop in a particular location, be sure everyone understands where that location is.
- Remind riders to watch the map or cue sheet carefully and stop if they have any doubts about which direction they should be going.

The benefits of having a sweep

If you lead from the front, you may want to have someone, usually another ride leader, stay at the back of the group and ride *sweep*. You can also ask for a volunteer to ride sweep. On most rides, the chief advantage of having a sweep is that the leader knows when everyone has arrived at a regrouping point (assuming no one in the middle of the group missed a turn). However, if you have unusually slow riders, mechanical problems, or an accident on your ride, a good sweep can be invaluable, serving as cheerleader, mechanic, or nurse, as required.

If you're leading a short, slow ride, which will attract a disproportionate number of inexperienced riders, having *any* sweep is better than having *no* sweep. Ideally, though, you should try to find someone who can successfully change a tire, who doesn't pass out at the sight of blood, and who will happily slow down and encourage the riders who are having a tough time on the uphill.

Using corner people to keep riders from getting lost

If you want to keep your group together during the ride, you may want to try using *corner people*. At the beginning of the ride, explain to your riders that, whenever you turn a corner, you'll ask the person closest to you to be the corner person. This person then stays at the corner and points riders in the proper direction until the sweep comes by. (Be sure everyone knows who they're watching for.) If you don't have a sweep, you can count the riders before you start the ride, which is a good idea regardless of whether you're using corner people. Then you can tell each corner person how many riders to wait for.

A few suggestions:

- Try to spread the duty around a little bit, so no one starts to feel put upon. Rather than designating corner people, you might also want to call out "Any volunteers for corner person?" Typically, someone will call back "I'll take it."
- If you designate a corner person, make sure that person hears you and stops.
- Even though you have corner people pointing the way, stop from time to time and regroup. Otherwise, you may end up with corner people peppered all over town waiting for the sweep, who is helping someone fix a flat.
- If you and your sweep both have cellphones, trade phone numbers so the sweep can call if something happens and so you can check in if you've stopped to regroup but the back of the group is unusually slow to arrive.
- If you're leading a slow ride and only part of your group gets across at a stop light or stop sign, you may want to leave a corner person behind so the riders who were caught know they haven't been abandoned.
- If you're leading a large number of riders, you may want to ask a corner person to limit the number of riders who leave a stop sign at one time. If you don't have someone stay at the intersection and say "Next five riders," everyone will probably cross at once, thereby annoying the drivers who are forced to wait.
- If you're leading a ride out in the country, where groups tend to spread out a bit, some riders will resent being asked to wait for the five or ten minutes that it may take for the last rider to pass. In this case, you can use a rotating corner person. The corner person only

waits until the next rider comes along, then the new arrival becomes the corner person.

- Don't use corner people under unfavorable conditions. If you try to designate a corner person in a cold rain, you'll be courting mutiny.

Controlling pacelines

In general, the club doesn't encourage pacelines because they can be dangerous, especially for riders inexperienced with pacelines and for rides on city streets, regardless of the riders' experience. Only a few fast-paced rides currently use pacelines. If you do allow pacelines on your ride, here are some safety suggestions:

- Stop at stop signs. You are not on a closed race course. Even at high speeds, the last person in a paceline is a second or two behind the leader. This is a *long time* when the group is in danger of being broadsided by a fast-moving truck.
- Call out stops, hazards, and changes in direction loudly, clearly, and early.
- Don't allow riders to lead a paceline if they don't know the course, particularly on descents.
- Don't allow riders to ride in a paceline if they're using handlebars that keep their hands far from the brake levers. In a paceline, the ability to stop quickly is paramount.
- Be extra careful if you have single bicycles and tandems in the same paceline. Single bikes and tandems accelerate and stop at different rates.
- Limit pacelines to a reasonable length, preferably eight or fewer.
- Recommend that riders check the quick-release levers on their wheels to ensure that the levers aren't sticking out. If riders overlap wheels and one gets a quick-release lever in the spokes, at least two people will be stopping faster than they might like.
- Caution riders not to overlap their front wheel with the rear wheel of the rider ahead of them. If the front rider swerves suddenly, they could both go down and take down other riders behind them.
- If you're riding in the rain, discourage riders who don't have fenders on their bikes from joining the paceline. Being in the middle of a paceline at 20 miles an hour and being blinded by spray is a good way to become road pizza.

Taking a group on the ferry

If you're getting on a ferry, be sure your riders follow the regulations, which vary by ferry terminal. At some terminals, cyclists can ride onto and off the ferry, while at other terminals, cyclists are required to walk. In addition, Washington State ferries currently require riders who are wearing shoes with protruding cleats to remove their shoes in the cabin.

If there's a ferry ride in the middle of your route, tell riders whether they should wait for everyone to arrive before getting on.

If it's practical, you can save your riders some time and trouble by buying a book of tickets for the group and then letting riders reimburse you. (This may also save a little money.) If you have any leftover tickets, you can use them some other time, but be careful—the tickets expire.

After the ride

Immediately after the ride, you should thank riders for coming along and ask for comments or suggestions. Did riders enjoy the ride? Did they like the route? Is there anything you could have done differently?

When you get home, you should call any rider who was injured or lost during the ride. If you get home too late in the evening to call, be sure you call the next day.

Within a week, mail the original liability waiver to the address listed on the back of the waiver, and include an Incident Report if you encountered any events of special note (accidents, troublesome riders, threats from passing motorists, births). If you don't get the waiver in quickly enough, someone from the club will be forced to pester you about returning it.

Waivers are checked off by volunteers and kept with the original signatures for more than five years. Beyond their legal function, waivers also are used to give you credit for leading rides.

Using the information on the liability waiver: The liability waiver exists to legally protect you and the bike club in the event of an accident. If a rider calls you to ask for the phone number of someone else on the ride, *do not* give out that information. Instead, take the name and number of the person making the inquiry, call the other rider, and pass on the inquirer's name and number.

Handling injuries

Handling simple falls

If a rider falls, have him sit down while you and others check on his bike and helmet. You may meet some resistance, but be firm. Ask the rider where he started riding from, what time he started, and where his car is. If he seems disoriented or cannot answer the questions, see “What to do if one of your riders is injured” on page 33.

Handling severe injuries

Important! If a rider has an accident and lands on his or her head, neck, or shoulders, you must consider the possibility of a neck or back injury.

- ***If the person is conscious:*** Ask if the person has neck or back pain, weakness, or loss of limb function or sensation. If so, you should suspect spinal cord injury and have the person stay very still.
- ***If the person is unconscious:*** You have no way to know what injury the person may have suffered, so ***do not move an unconscious person.***
- ***If an unconscious person regains consciousness before help arrives:*** Keep the person as still and quiet as possible. You may need to be firm. Someone who is in shock or suffering a concussion isn’t the best judge of what to do at the moment. Be sympathetic but firm.

If someone may have a neck or back injury, you should ***almost never*** move the person. You could cause irreparable damage to the spinal cord, possibly resulting in ***permanent paralysis.***

If the injured person is in a roadway, divert or stop traffic rather than move the person, and wait for help to arrive.

In the ***rare case*** where you must move the injured rider, get help from as many people as possible. Make every effort to maintain the ***current*** position of the person’s back and neck. ***Do not try to straighten someone out.***

What to do if one of your riders is injured

1. **Stay calm:** You're no help to the others if you're frantic. Pause, take a deep breath, and survey the situation before you act. Remember, the injured person is not the best one to make decisions—and is often the worst.
2. **Divert or stop traffic:** If the injured rider is in the roadway, have other riders divert or stop traffic until you can determine if the person has a possible neck or back injury. Get all other riders and their bicycles off the road.

Important! If you determine that the person has a possible neck or back injury, or has lost consciousness for any period of time, continue to divert or hold up traffic until help arrives. ***Do not move the person.***

3. **Determine if the person is injured seriously enough to require medical attention:** The injured rider should get medical attention if he or she:
 - Is bleeding heavily.
 - Has a head injury and/or lost consciousness even briefly.
 - Can't remember what happened.
 - Has obvious pain when moving an injured limb.
 - Has trouble opening his or her jaw.

If you don't know much about first aid yourself, ask if anyone in your group does.

If the person has no obvious injuries, you still should pay careful attention to determine if the person is confused or disoriented, which could also indicate a head injury.

4. **If necessary, send someone for help:** If there is *any* question about whether professional medical attention is necessary, call 911 immediately. If no one can get a cell-phone signal and you need to send someone to call, make sure the person who is going can accurately describe where you are. If possible, send two riders: one to direct the emergency vehicle to your location (if necessary), and another who can return to the group when 911 has been reached, so you and the others know that help is on the way.

Important! If you have an emergency and can't get a cell-phone signal, remember that bus and cab drivers, utility crews, and construction crews all have radios that they can use to call for help. In addition, practically every passerby is likely to be carrying a cellphone.

Note: Don't call for an "ambulance," or the person making the call may be liable for charges. Always call 911 and allow them to decide what type of emergency vehicle to send.

5. ***Care for and reassure the injured rider until help arrives:*** Be as helpful as possible given the situation and the available materials. In particular, keep the person as warm and dry as possible.

Regardless of the rider's condition, act calmly, speak in reassuring tones, and be sure that everyone around you does the same. Ask everyone who isn't helping to stand well back, so the injured rider isn't looking up into a mob of worried or horrified faces. Also, caution the others not to discuss the rider's injuries; no one who is injured wants to hear the words "Wow! Look at all that *blood!*"

6. ***Make sure the person's contact information and helmet go with the medics:*** If an injured rider is taken away in an emergency vehicle, be sure the rider's contact information and helmet go along. Someone at the hospital will probably want to examine the helmet to determine the likelihood of head injuries. Ideally, you'll get the medics to take the rider's bike, too, so you don't need to worry about it.

Important! Be sure *you* know the rider's name and contact information, so you can call later to check on his or her condition, send a get-well card, return the rider's bike, and file an Incident Report with the club office.

Other concerns in the event of a severe accident

In addition to taking care of the injured rider, you need to be concerned about the other riders and about the injured rider's bike and gear:

- ***Continuing the ride:*** In some cases, you may need to continue the ride before the injured rider has recovered enough to start riding again or before the medics have arrived. For example, if it's evening and you're running out of daylight, you'll need to get the other riders back to the starting point.

You shouldn't leave the injured rider alone unless he or she is clearly all right and has a way to get back to the starting point or back home. If the other riders can find their way back to the starting point, you and someone who knows first aid should stay with the injured rider. Otherwise, you should ask for volunteers to stay, again including someone who knows first aid.

- ***What to do with the injured rider's bike and gear:*** If you need to leave the rider's bike where it is, lock it up and take all of the removable gear with you (bike bags, headlights, and so on). Return for the bike as soon as possible (preferably before nightfall), and let the rider and the club office know that you have it. Alternatively, you may be able to leave the bike at a nearby fire station or bike shop, or at the home of one of the local residents.

Who to notify in the event of an accident

The liability waiver includes a line for an emergency contact phone number. If an injured rider is taken to the hospital unconscious, and if the person provided an emergency contact phone number, call that number immediately, calmly explain that the rider has fallen, and tell where the medics are taking the person. Do not describe what happened or any injuries. If the rider is conscious, he or she can decide who to contact and when.

If someone was seriously injured, call the Rides Committee chairperson as soon as possible. The Rides Committee chairperson is listed in the *Cascade Courier* and on the Cascade website. If you cannot reach the chairperson, call someone else on the Rides Committee. This applies regardless of whether the person was one of the riders in your group.

If no one was seriously injured, calling the chairperson by the next day is sufficient. The club provides Incident Report and Witness Report forms. You must fill out an Incident Report form and mail it into the club office

even if the incident didn't require a trip to the hospital. In addition, you should have any witnesses fill out Witness Report forms and return them to you so you can mail them to the club office along with the Incident Report form. For falls and scrapes where medical attention was not needed at the time, note on the back of the waiver who was involved and where the accident happened. Sometimes medical issues come up later.

Hypothermia

If you're riding in cold or wet weather, keep an eye on all of your riders to ensure that no one is suffering from hypothermia. Mild hypothermia is characterized by shivering, and can be treated by getting the person out of the cold and into dry clothes. If there's nowhere to get out of the cold, try sharing body heat. More severe cases are characterized by confusion and lack of coordination; in this case you need to get the person to medical care.

Heat exhaustion and heat stroke

Heat exhaustion and heat stroke can be caused by riding in hot weather or by dressing inappropriately when riding in cooler weather. As a cyclist, you need to dress so you can dissipate heat and perspiration. In addition, you need to drink plenty of fluids, so you don't become dehydrated.

Heat exhaustion is characterized by pale, clammy skin, profuse perspiration, and extreme tiredness or weakness. The person may have a headache and may vomit. With heat exhaustion, the person's body temperature is approximately normal.

The treatment for heat exhaustion is rest. If the person is alert, offer oral fluids, preferably water or sports drinks. Don't give the person coffee, tea, or alcoholic beverages.

Heat stroke is far more dangerous. The body's temperature control system has stopped working, so the person doesn't sweat anymore. Body temperature may rise so far that brain damage may result.

The symptoms of heat stroke include hot, red skin; no perspiration; extremely high body temperature; dizziness; nausea; headache; rapid pulse; and confusion, disorientation, or unconsciousness.

Get the person out of the heat immediately, and cool his or her body quickly. Soak the person in cool but not cold water, or pour water over

the body. Stop and observe the person for 10 minutes, then cool some more if the person's body temperature is still above 102°.

If the person is alert, offer oral fluids, preferably water or sports drinks. Don't give the person coffee, tea, or alcoholic beverages.

If heat stroke develops, the rider will need medical care, possibly including intravenous fluids.

Road rash

If one of your riders falls and leaves some skin on the pavement, the person should clean the wound thoroughly, apply some antiseptic cream or ointment, and cover it with clean gauze. If there isn't a nearby source of clean water, using water from water bottles is better than not cleaning the wound at all. If the edges of a deep cut won't fit back together or if the wound is in a place where motion will prevent it from healing, the rider should get medical attention as soon as possible. For open cuts or abrasions, the rider should seek medical care if he or she hasn't had a tetanus immunization in the last five years.

What to carry in a first-aid kit

If you decide to carry a first-aid kit for the occasional minor injury, here are some suggestions on what to include:

- Large gauze squares for cleaning road rash or as protection from further harm.
- A roll of gauze for covering larger areas of rash.
- Non-adherent sterile pads.
- Antiseptic cream or ointment.
- A roll of tape to secure bandages.
- Band-Aids® for small cuts and blisters.
- Second Skin for open blisters.
- A triangular bandage.
- Latex gloves.

Note: If you have first-aid training, you may want to add other items to your first-aid kit, for example, Epinephrine®, which is good for severe asthma, as well as for bee stings or any other anaphylactic reaction. You can also carry an antihistamine, ibuprofen, acetaminophen, or another

painkiller, but you should not give them out unless you're medically trained.

Getting first-aid training

If you're interested, first-aid training is readily available. The club occasionally offers ride leaders courses in first aid, and many fire departments and employers offer free CPR training. For information on more extensive training, you can contact the Mountaineers, <http://www.Mountaineers.org>, American Red Cross for the Seattle area, <http://www.SeattleRedCross.org>, or your local American Red Cross chapter.

Some technical colleges also offer excellent first-aid courses, which are taught by experienced emergency medical technicians.

Handling other problems

Here are some problems that you may encounter on your rides and some suggestions on how to handle them.

Riding in the rain

In a light rain, you can probably keep riding, but you need to be especially careful on downhills, wet leaves, railroad tracks, and metal bridge decks.

In a rain that's heavy enough to affect visibility, you should consider stopping *off the road* until the rain slows. However, standing around somewhere while you're wet and cold is a good way to get hypothermia, so you need to weigh the odds of getting run over against the odds of freezing to death.

In a heavy rain, you're probably best off finding a nice, warm bakery where you can gorge on chocolate until the weather improves. However, be sure you have the permission of the proprietor, be careful not to inconvenience other customers, and be sure you and your riders all *buy* something. Also, recognize that the weather may not improve before sunset, and that you may have to set off in the rain again.

Avoiding lightning

If you happen to encounter lightning, use the “flash-to-bang” method of measuring lightning distance. This is the amount of time that elapses between when you see the flash and when you hear the thunder. For each five-second count, lightning is one mile away, so at 25 seconds the lightening is five miles away. At a count of 15 seconds (three miles) take immediate defensive action:

- Where possible, find shelter in a building or in a fully enclosed metal vehicle such as a car, truck, or van with the windows closed.
- Avoid water.
- Avoid metal objects such as *bicycles*, electric wires, fences, machinery, railroad tracks, tent poles, and so on.
- Don’t stop beneath small open-sided rain shelters or isolated trees.
- Avoid hilltops, open spaces, ditches, and depressions.

Important! If you need to take shelter, make every effort to keep your riders calm. You don’t want folks crashing into one another in a mad rush to get away from the lightning.

If your hair is standing up, you have a tingling sensation, the count between flash and bang is less than five seconds, or lightning is striking nearby, you should:

- Remove all metal objects.
- Crouch down, and put your feet together and your hands on your knees.
- Avoid direct contact with other people.

Dangerous drivers

If you have trouble with a dangerous driver, get everyone off the road, and wait until the driver goes away. Don’t antagonize the driver in any way. In addition, get the vehicle license number and a description of the *driver*, and contact the police. If you can’t describe the driver, the owner of the car can simply claim not to have been driving the car at the time of the incident. If someone happens to be carrying a camera, this might be a good time to use it.

Dangerous riders in your group

If you have a careless rider in your group, and the person continues to be troublesome after you've spoken with him or her about being more careful, insist, with a witness present, that the rider leave the group. If necessary, stop the group and wait until the rider leaves before you continue.

Mechanical problems

If someone has mechanical problems, you can:

- Check with your riders to see if anyone has the parts and the expertise to make the repair.
- Take the group on a detour to a nearby bike shop, car repair shop, or hardware store. You could also suggest that the rider go alone, and provide instructions on how to rejoin the group later, if possible.
- Suggest calling home or calling a taxi.
- Suggest the bus. All buses in King County are now equipped with bicycle racks, as are buses in many of the surrounding areas.
- Ask if anyone is willing to go back for a car. If so, make sure the driver and cyclist have some way to communicate.

Some problems are not as severe as they might seem:

- *Broken spokes:* Generally, if you don't have too far to travel, you can just ride with a broken spoke. If you can, remove the parts of the spoke. If removing spoke parts isn't possible, tie or tape the broken parts to adjacent spokes. If breaking the spoke also affected the true of the wheel, you may also need to loosen the brakes. Emphasize that the rider should avoid potholes as much as possible.
- *Broken chains:* If someone has a chain tool along, you can simply remove the bad link and put the chain back together. Because the chain will then be shorter, the rider should avoid using the large chainring (in front) or the large gear (in back).
- *A hole in a tire:* If you have a small hole in a tire, you can keep the inner tube from bulging out through the hole by slipping something inside the tire to cover the hole. A dollar bill works fine, and a section cut from an old tire works even better, but it's only a temporary fix. You should replace the tire as soon as you can. If the hole is in the sidewall, take extra care because a sidewall cut can cause the tire to fall off the rim; use this trick just long enough to *slowly* limp home or to a bike shop.

Making a recreational ride more fun

Consider choosing a theme. If you live for sweets, lead a ride that takes in several bakeries or candy shops. If you're fascinated with defunct streetcar lines, lead a ride to Ballard by way of the Counterbalance, and stop along the way to point out where the streetcars once traveled.

Key in to special events. For example, you might want to lead a ride to Folklife or Bumbershoot, to the bicycle races at the Marymoor Velodrome, to a street fair or community festival, to a music festival, to a small-town event, or to some similar gathering. However, if you've never been to the event yourself, you probably should ask around to ensure that the crowds and traffic won't interfere with safe riding.

Have fun with the ride description. People will be more inclined to show up for a ride whose description captures their imagination. (Space for ride descriptions is not unlimited, so try not to include the entire first chapter of your next novel.)

Do something out of the ordinary. Ride through back alleys, cross wooden bridges, meander through parks, stop at yard sales and interesting houses, and visit trolls and viewpoints. If you want to take an off-road route, make sure your group can ride safely.

Be friendly to anyone who notices and expresses an interest in your group. Wave at bystanders. If you're stopped, chat with anyone who's curious about your ride, and pose for pictures with tourists. Anything you can do to humanize cyclists makes riding safer for everyone.

Take a break at some out-of-the-way place where the food is especially good and the proprietors are grateful to have the extra business.

Be playful. Attach streamers to your handlebar ends or a beanie propeller to the top of your helmet. Get a kids' license plate with your name on it, and attach it to the back of your seat. Stop at a grocery store on your way to the ride, and get a big bag of Tootsie Rolls to share.

Get name tags and pass them out before a ride. This makes it easier for riders to get to know one another, which is the main reason most people ride with groups.

Take pictures and submit them to the *Cascade Courier*. Be sure you include a caption that names the ride and the folks in the picture (if you know everyone's name and if the crowd isn't too big). If something interesting happened, you could also write an article for the newsletter.

Tips for safe riding

Helmets

- Always wear a properly fitted CPSC-, ANSI- or Snell-approved bicycle helmet. (Helmets are required on all Cascade rides and are required by law in many places.)

Cellphones, earbuds, and headphones

- If you need to use a cellphone, pull over safely and stop first.
- Earbuds and headphones are not allowed on Cascade rides.

Traffic regulations

- Observe all traffic laws. Your bicycle is legally considered a vehicle, so you're subject to the same traffic laws as the drivers of motorized vehicles.
- Use hand and voice signals when turning or stopping.
- Ride with traffic. Motorists don't look for bicycles going the wrong way.
- When riding at night, state law requires you to have, at a minimum, a white front head lamp and a red rear reflector, each visible from a distance of 500 feet. It's also a good idea to have a red taillight or blinker, and to wear reflective clothing and safety vests to increase visibility. Flashing lights are not legal headlights.

Hazards

- Make eye contact with drivers so you know that they've seen you.
- Cross railroad tracks at a 90° angle.
- Look ahead for road hazards (glass, potholes, wide cracks, metal grates, gravel, and so on), and point them out to other riders. This is extra important when the road is wet.

- Check for traffic yourself. Scan the road in front of you, behind you, and around you.
- Watch for car doors opening in your path.
- Use voice and hand signals to communicate with other riders, especially when you're riding close together. Riders should echo back these signals.

Courtesy

- Take a full lane when safety dictates. If you're delaying five or more vehicles, pull off the road at the next turnout to allow them to pass.
- If you stop for any reason, move yourself and your bicycle *completely* off the road or trail.
- On multi-use trails and sidewalks, *yield to pedestrians*. Slow down when other people are present, and slow to a walking pace if safety dictates.
- Ride single file on heavily used or busy sections of trail.
- Pass on the left, and use a bell or your voice to alert others that you're passing.

Other good ideas

- When there's traffic behind you, ride single-file so cars can pass.
- Limit pacelines to eight or fewer.
- Before every ride, make sure your bike is in good condition.
- Bring a pump, spare tube, patch kit, tire irons, and a full water bottle.
- Eat before you're hungry, drink before you're thirsty.

Day-of-ride checklist

Stuff you need

- ___ Your own bike and helmet
- ___ Plenty of copies of the map or cue sheet (if you said you'd provide one)
- ___ Two copies of the Cascade Bicycle Club liability waiver, one CBC Incident Report, and one CBC Witness Report
- ___ Pump and tire gauge, extra tube, patch kit, tire levers, and basic tools
- ___ A couple of pens

Stuff you might want

- ___ Food and full water bottles
- ___ A cellphone
- ___ Rudimentary first-aid kit
- ___ Bike lock
- ___ Bike computer to monitor your pace
- ___ Membership forms, Ride SMART brochures, and newsletters to give away
- ___ Rags for cleaning up after repairs
- ___ Toilet paper or tissues
- ___ Name tags and a felt marker
- ___ A watch
- ___ Money, including change for phone calls

Stuff to check on

- ___ Does everyone have a properly adjusted helmet?
- ___ Has everyone signed the liability waiver legibly?
- ___ Do you have parental-consent forms for children?
- ___ How many riders do you have?

The pre-ride announcement

Carry and refer to the "Ride Leader Briefing Card" that you got at the ride leader certification class.

- ___ Introductions
- ___ Welcome to new riders
- ___ Safety, including Ride SMART tips:
 - Stay alert,
 - Move off the road,
 - Act like a car,
 - Retain space between riders, and
 - Tell others when you're passing.
- ___ Signatures on the liability waiver
- ___ Be courteous
- ___ Pace of the ride
- ___ Whether the ride will stick together and, if not, where the first regroup spot (or lunch) will be
- ___ The route
- ___ Maps, cue sheets
- ___ Ride single-file in traffic
- ___ Ride on the right half of trails
- ___ Review hand and voice signals
- ___ Don't run stop signs or stop lights to keep up with the group
- ___ Special equipment required (lights?)
- ___ Keep the ride leader informed
- ___ If you don't have a cellphone, ask if anyone else does
- ___ Ask if anyone has a first-aid kit
- ___ After-ride refreshments
- ___ Questions?

Bibliography

Bike maps and brochures available from the Cascade Bicycle Club

The Cascade Bicycle Club Education Foundation provides free local bike maps and brochures on biking. You can request these maps and brochures on the education page of the Cascade website, <http://www.Cascade.org>, or call the club office for more information.

Before each Cascade event (for example, Chilly Hilly), the route map for the event is available on the Cascade website. Parts of these routes could be used as individual rides.

The Cascade Bicycle Club has a resource library that includes a multitude of maps, books, and routes (both maps and cue sheets) for rides that club members have led. The club is open during the day Monday through Friday and is also often open in the evening for meetings. Call the rides coordinator for an appointment.

Other sources for bike maps and biking books

The bicycling section of your local bookstore is packed with books of local bike routes and books on cycling technique, bicycle repair, riding with children, and innumerable other topics. Go hang out in a bookstore and see what catches your eye.

There are a number of local map stores, including Metsker Maps and Wide World Books and Maps, both in Seattle. For current contact information, see the *Yellow Pages* under “Maps.”

A list of Washington bike maps is available at <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/bike/localmaps.htm>.

Several websites provide bike routes, including RideTheCity.com, Bikely.com, and Maps.Google.com.

Adventure Cycling Association (formerly BikeCentennial), carries some books on bicycle touring, as well as touring maps for the Pacific Northwest and the West Coast. For more information, see <http://www.AdventureCycling.org>.