



Peloton Guide

Bunch riding guidelines

Bunch Riding Guidelines

Smiling for Smiddy's reputation is based upon our riders being responsible road users and ensuring the safety of all participants and road users. For this reason and to continually promote safe and responsible cycling practices we have developed this 'Peloton Riding Guidelines' document.

As a Smiddy Rider and ambassador we ask that all participants read and have a comprehensive understanding of these guidelines. This will help to ensure all Smiddy events and training rides are consistent with the road rules. But most importantly it will ensure everyone makes it through their event safely, and your safety is at the core of everything we seek to do.

Peloton Etiquette

Every Smiddy event and training ride will include new Smiddy riders and we cannot take for granted others knowledge or understanding of cycling's protocols or 'unwritten laws'. It is important to note that all riding groups have slight variations on signals and calls, on formations and etiquette. For these reasons it is vital each participant reads the guidelines to understand the basic riding etiquette rules that Smiling for Smiddy will always follow.

Regardless of how experienced you may be as a cyclist, as a peloton rider, or how fit you are and how well you communicate calls and signals, safe peloton riding relies on a consistent team effort.

The following information gives descriptions of the riding formations and basic rules all riders are required to know and adopt for every Smiddy ride.

Before you even hop on your bike there are two very important things you need to do to become a Smiddy rider.

Firstly you must ensure you know and understand the relevant road laws for the state you are riding in, secondly you must ensure your bike is in good condition and fully roadworthy.

Insurance

It is a requirement that all participants in Smiling for Smiddy events hold appropriate 3rd Party/Public Liability insurance to protect themselves in the event of an accident or incident.

While cyclists are not required to hold CTP or third party insurance by law, you may still be liable for any damage you cause to others and/or their property. There have been recent cases where accidents involving cyclists have resulted in large payouts to other parties. Without insurance you would become personally liable.

We require you take out a suitable insurance to cover such risks. This can easily be obtained via the various state based cycling organisations such as Bicycle Queensland or Cycling Australia.

Up to date insurance is a requirement for both training rides as well as all Smiddy events.

The Road Rules

1. Road Rules for cyclists

Smiddy rides operate in various states around Australia and while similar, each state does have a different set of laws that apply to cyclists. It is important that you are fully aware of the laws that are applicable to your event. While Smiddy events are often run with a Police Permit or relevant authority permission and have front and rear vehicles, we are not excluded from following the road rules, and due to our higher visibility, should exercise an ever greater awareness to the laws and other road users.

[Click here](#) for an overview of road rules relating to cycling in Queensland.

1.1 Traffic lights, stop signs & give way signs

- We must always obey red lights, stop and give way signs.
- If lights change while the peloton is part way through, the riders not in the intersection must stop.
- Do not panic or try to stay on by running the lights, you will have the rear support vehicle with you who will communicate with the group ride leaders and lead car to slow or stop the group ahead.

2. Equipment

For your safety and enjoyment of the ride and that of your fellow riders please ensure your bike is serviced and in good working order before the commencement of the ride.

In the weeks leading up to the start of the Tassie Smiddy Challenge we will be sending you a Bike Inspection Certificate for signing by your local bike mechanic to certify your bike is ready for the ride.

You should also ensure your bike is in good order on training rides. Some key areas for keeping your bike in good working order -

- Clean your bike regularly removing dirt from the frame and running gear;
- Wipe down the chain and drive train regularly and re-apply chain lube;
- Check your tyres for cuts and nicks, also ensure tyres are regularly pumped up;
- Keep brakes clean of dirt and grit and check they are correctly aligned;
- If you experience gears jumping, slow / sloppy gear changes, dropped chains or flat tyres – your bike may need more attention and a visit to the mechanic.

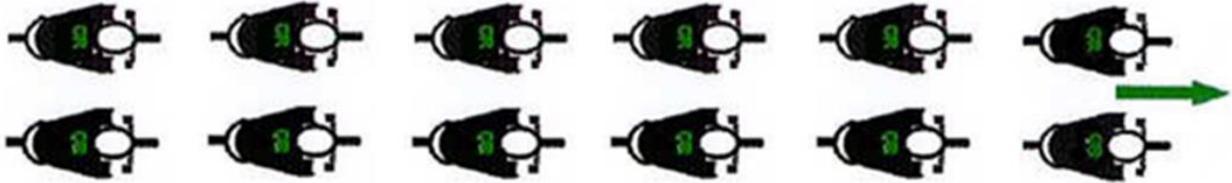
If you would like some advice or guidance on your bike or equipment please give the Smiling for Smiddy team a call.

3. Basic Peloton Riding Formation

Smiling for Smiddy rides are group rides operating generally as a single peloton. Therefore, being able to ride in a group is an essential skill. A well formed group is safer, more efficient and more predictable to other road users. Generally a Smiddy peloton should always:

- Ride in 2 x 2 formation where safe and appropriate to do so,
- Keep a distance of approximately 0.5-1m off the rear wheel of rider in front,

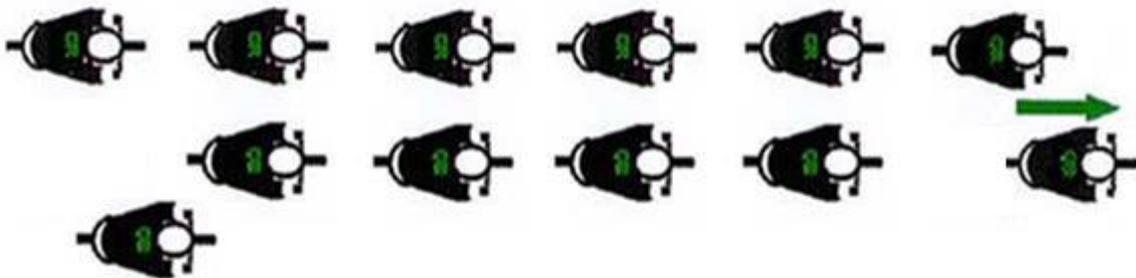
- Maintain a distance of no more than one metre between yourself and the rider beside you.



ABOVE: Basic Pack Formation: riders maintaining two straight lines with each rider sitting level to the rider next to them and a safe distance from the wheel in front.

Tips for bunch riding

- Don't look directly at the wheel in front of you – try to focus 2-3 riders further up the group to gain advance warning of changes.
- Look and listen for gear changes, whether riders further up are pedaling or coasting, slowing, signaling or moving outwards. This will allow you to better anticipate, read and react to what is happening ahead.
- When riding 2 x 2 formations the goal is to ride evenly with your partner, avoid half-wheeling your partner.
- Avoid stopping pedaling as you drink/eat, as this causes a ripple effect through the group. Try to remain smooth and consistent with your pedal stroke and speed as you reach for food or drink.
- Keep pedaling downhill – don't roll down as this causes riders behind to brake;
- When standing be careful not to 'throw' the bike back into the riders behind;
- Do not half-wheel.



* Two examples of half-wheeling positions – rider at the front constantly pulling ahead of their partner, while rider at rear overlapping wheels.

3.3 Position on the Road

3.3.1 Traffic

Smiddy events are conducted in a variety of locations and traffic conditions. It is important to always be aware of your surroundings out on the road. It is also critical when riding in a group that the entire group act in unison and with predictability for your fellow riders and other road users. Not all traffic situations can be described and a common sense approach must be used.

- When riding in slow traffic do not ride through the traffic to move past vehicles. The group should always 'stay in the traffic' occupying the lane.

- You should move as if every rider is connected so any movements in and around the traffic can be followed safely without disrupting other traffic.
- When traffic is stopped, stop behind the last stationary vehicle as you would if you were in a car. A large bunch is as big as a vehicle on the road and needs to behave like one.
- You should never overtake a car on the left that is indicating to turn left.
- We will often occupy a lane of traffic; however we should still keep to the left of the lane and keep as far away from the centre line as possible.
- Although cyclists have rights on the road, be aware that some motorists have no regard for this. Ensure that all your movements are clear, noticeable and predictable to everyone around you.

3.3.2 Interactions with other Road Users

As cyclists we know that not all road users tolerate our presence on the road. We must remember that we are ambassadors not only for Smiling for Smiddy but the cycling community as a whole.

- If another road user does sound their horn or abuse us we ask that you refrain from retaliatory actions at all times.
- While the behaviour is unacceptable we do not want to inflame the situation, irate drivers are irrational and any reaction can cause an irrational response.
- Our preference would be to get the vehicle past and away from us as quickly and safely as possible without further escalation.
- If the incident requires reporting to police then the Smiddy support vehicle drivers will do so on our behalf. We ask that you don't take matters in to your own hands and act out against other road users.

3.3.3 Changing Lanes

When the bunch has to change lanes –

- The front riders must hand signal in preparation to move but wait until they have clearance from the rear that it is safe to move across;
- The rear riders must scan behind to ensure the road is safe and then make the call 'wait' or 'take the lane' to indicate it is safe to move across;
- Remember every rider in the peloton has a responsibility to pass the call to the front riders.
- Move across as quickly and smoothly;
- Instructions will also come from the front/read vehicles via ride leaders on lane changes.

3.4 Riding two abreast / Single file

Riding two (2) abreast is the basic riding formation that will be maintained when safe and practical to do so. However, if the road becomes too narrow, dangerous or traffic volumes too high we may need to drop to single file. Moving to single file can be dangerous if everyone is not well versed in the procedures.

- Calls to change to and from double to single files and vice versa should come from either the rear vehicle and /or ride leaders.
- Rider leader will clearly call "Single" for single file and "Double" to return to two abreast. The call should be passed down the bunch to ensure everyone is aware. They may also indicate by raising hands above their heads showing one or two fingers.
- The rear vehicle may also toot the horn once for single or twice for double;

- To move to single the riders on the left will have 'right of way' and riders on the right should move in behind them.
- Riders in both lanes will need to adjust their speeds slightly to leave sufficient gap for the rider on the right to move left. It is important that the lead rider does not slow down and maintains their speed so the riders behind do not bunch up.
- The group should remain in single until an instruction to change comes from a ride leader or rear vehicle;
- When call is made to return to double, riders should return to their prior position – that is riders in positions 2, 4 6, etc will return to the right and 1, 3 5 etc will stay on the left.

3.5 Lead Riders

The riders at the front of the peloton are called the 'lead riders' and are very important for the smooth riding of the peloton. They set the pace, make the calls for road obstacles and warn the peloton of any traffic changes. The front pairing must always be alert and on the lookout.

- Lead riders should keep turns to two (2) minutes then smoothly roll through.
- When going up hills lead riders must ride at a pace that is sustainable for all riders in the group. They should not increase or decrease speeds suddenly, if reducing speeds do it gradually to avoid riders behind having to brake hard then start again from a standing start.
- When travelling downhill the lead riders must continue to pedal and must not free wheel, to avoid the group compressing and braking unnecessarily.
- Lead riders must be aware of the speed being ridden and ensure they are not riding at a speed the group cannot maintain. When the lead riders push the pace the group splits compromising efficiency and the safety of the ride. However if the lead riders are going too slow for the group the riders become compressed and may start riding to the right of the wheel in front also compromising the safety of the ride.
- Lead riders are responsible for sighting and calling potential obstacles such as holes and debris on the road.

3.6 Hazards and Calling

It is important to properly identify what is hazardous to the group. You do not need to call the hazard if it is too far away to be a problem to the bunch, or if it is too minor. Making too many irrelevant hazard calls may lead the bunch to ignore calls.

- Calls must be made in clear and calm voice to avoid over-reactions;
- Overzealous calls of HOLE!!!! indicate a large crater has opened up and will swallow the group and can lead to riders being spooked making unnecessary reactions, hard swerving or tightening up, leading to accidents.
- Remember simple clear calm calls at all times.
- Calls should also be followed by pointing to the issue/obstacle in question;
- The Calls are often made with a direction indicating the location of the issue, such as "Hole Left, Hole Right, Hole Middle".

Common calls riders may make include -

- hole left, hole middle, hole right

- 'rocks', 'glass', 'sticks', 'branches', 'door left' (car door), 'gravel', 'pedestrians'...etc
- 'rider up' (passing a slower rider on the road)
- 'car up' (parked car ahead)
- 'lights' (stopping for traffic lights)
- 'rolling' (through lights/intersection)
- 'single' (ride single file)
- 'double' (returning to double file/2 abreast)
- 'clear' (traffic free — intersection/roundabout)
- 'stopping' (traffic present — intersection/roundabout/lights)
- 'split' (there is a split in the bunch that needs to be repaired)
- 'all on' (group is back together and can return to normal speed)
- 'wait' (not safe to move across lanes)
- 'take the lane' (the next lane is clear and it is safe to move across)
- 'pedal, pedal, pedal' (keep pedaling, especially downhill)

3.8 Communicating the Message

- All riders have responsibility for the safety of the peloton through by relaying calls or messages through the peloton
- The middle peloton riders must relay ALL calls/messages clearly.
- This is more important when there are windy conditions, or there is a lot of other road noise, to ensure the message is being heard by all riders.
- Never assume the rider behind or in front has heard, if you don't hear a relay call then call it again until it is acknowledged.
- All calls for obstacles must be called and signaled all the way to the rear.

3.9 Mechanicals

On our events we will have a qualified bike mechanic as part of the peloton or within the support vehicles following the group. It is their role to attend to any on road mechanical issues that may occur.

Should you have a mechanical (flat tyre, chain off, etc) while riding in the peloton, the key is to not panic, brake suddenly or make sudden movements.

If you have a mechanical follow these guidelines –

- Call out "mechanical", "flat" or "chain off" to alert others around you of an issue and that you may be slowing. If comfortable to do so you may also raise one arm to identify yourself in the peloton.
- Don't brake or stop suddenly or swerve across the lane. Maintain your line and slow gently to give those around you a chance to move around to create space for you to move to the left.
- Always move to the left (even if in the right hand line), by letting those on your left know of an issue they will give you space to move across. Riders on the left need to be aware and provide a gap to allow the rider to move over safely.
- Once to the left slow gently and allow the group to pass you.
- Only the mechanic, if riding, will stop with the mechanical, other riders must continue at the same pace.
- The follow vehicle will stop behind the rider and together with the mechanic will assess and fix minor repairs;

- Once repaired, it is the sole discretion of the Rear Vehicle Driver as to whether you can ride back on to the group. You should expect that you will be placed in the vehicle and driven ahead of the peloton and when safe, dropped on the road side to re-join the group.

If a mechanical issue cannot be repaired in a short space of time you will be placed in the car and the repairs can be made at the next scheduled stop, only minor repairs such as flats and chain offs will be repaired on the road side.

This highlights the need to keep you bike well maintained and serviced prior to the event and to deal with issues that arise during the event immediately and not wait until a mechanical occurs.