

A Code of Conduct for Cycling



Why have a Code?



A Message from Louise Padgett

More people are riding bikes with increasingly more bikes sold each year than cars. Half of all Tasmanian households have access to a bicycle. People are commuting, training, racing, mountain biking and riding for fitness and recreation.

The Road Rules are the things we must do – obeying the rules is one of the greatest contributions we can make towards maintaining respect and support from the community. Adopting the voluntary principles in the Code will help to make interactions between different road users safer and smoother.

Bike lanes and trails are making riding safer, yet there will never be complete separation and vehicles and riders must ***share the road***.

Bicycles are recognised as vehicles and have a legitimate right to be on the road. However, obeying the law, showing courtesy and using good techniques will increase the safety of cycling and help to create a positive image of cyclists.

This Code aims to point out, to both new and experienced riders, the rights and responsibilities that go with safe cycling. It contains principles and expectations that should be considered binding on responsible bike riders. It aims to build mutual respect between all users of the roads, trails and paths that we share and with the wider community.

Safe Riding

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www.amygillette.org.au

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Tasmanian Police, DIER, West Tamar Council, Northern Midlands Council, Cycling Tas, RACT, TBUG, LCC Bike Committee, Cycling South, Meander Valley Council.

Rules and Safe Practices

Obey all relevant Road Rules. There are some specific rules for bikes that are not well understood by either cyclists or drivers and cause confusion.

Bike riders are legally permitted to ride **two abreast**. On a road that is NOT multi-lane, riders must not ride over 1.5 metres apart from each other. On a multi-lane road, it is permitted, and often safest, to actually take the left lane. Riders are more visible two abreast and, if they take a lane, drivers are less likely to squeeze riders or pass a single rider too closely.



Often drivers are trying to get on with busy lives while you are in leisure time. As responsible road users sharing the road, cyclists should try to reduce the effect that relatively slower moving bikes have on the normal traffic flow. Without compromising your own safety, ride single file for a time when: passing may force drivers to cross double lines or when a build up of traffic occurs eg up a hill or on a narrow road.

Bike Lanes are for the exclusive use of cyclist and are *indicated by specific signage* on or beside the road. Where a Bike Lane is provided, cyclists must ride in the lane unless it is impractical to do so, such as avoiding potholes or making right hand turns.



A motor vehicle is not permitted to drive in a Bike Lane except to pass a right turning vehicle or to enter or leave a parking space or side street or if a bus or taxi is picking up or dropping off passengers. Drivers must not drive in a Bike Lane for more than 50 metres and must give way to cyclists.

Past a “Lane Ends” sign, cyclists must again share the road and normal road rules apply. A road shoulder marked only by an Edge Line is not a Bike Lane.

At intersections, riders may overtake on the left of a motor vehicle unless the vehicle is signalling and in the process of turning left.

Footpaths. Cyclists can share footpaths except where “No Go” zones are designated. Riders must keep left, give way to pedestrians and ride with due care and consideration for other users.



“No Go Zones” are usually in shopping areas and are sign posted and may also have pavement markings.

Footpaths and shared trails are not for high-speed training.

Signalling Clearly signal your intentions to move or vary your line of travel. Make eye contact with drivers or other road users when signalling or changing directions.

Be Seen – Be Safe Bright clothing, hi-vis and reflective vests help you to be seen. Hi-vis back pack covers are good for commuters.



... The further away drivers can see you the more time they have to give you space.



Use lights visible for 200m in poor light conditions - a flashing or steady white light on the front and a flashing or steady rear red light. Consider using flashing lights at all times.

Be constantly aware of what traffic is around you – helmet or bar mounted mirrors let you know what's behind and where your ride partners are.

Bunch Riding Etiquette

Well organised bunches can ride further and faster than solo riders or non-organised groups. Rider safety is improved by making the entire group much more visible other traffic, especially from behind and it's also much more sociable.

However, *if not done correctly*, bunch riding can be hazardous and create tension between riders and other road users.

There are many technical rules for riding in a bunch but adopting the following principles can directly effect on other road users. However, while there is safety in numbers, you must continue to be responsible as an individual rider.



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Always obey the Road Rules

Know the Rules and follow them.



There is a link to the complete road rules on the Cycling Tasmania web site: www.tas.cycling.org.au . A summary is provided in Appendix 1.

Keep the bunch tight and compact.

- When you are leading, monitor potential problems and give plenty of warning of obstacles, impending stops or changes of pace.
- Make sure you know the ride route so that there are no indecisions at junctions.

Be predictable and hold consistent lines.

- This makes the ride safer between riders in the bunch and also makes it easier for vehicles to negotiate around the bunch. It makes it easier and safer for vehicles to share the road.

Point out obstacles

- Point out obstacles such as loose gravel, broken glass, holes, rocks or debris on the road.
- Call out "hole" etc as well as pointing in case someone is not looking when you point.

Look ahead

- Do not become obsessed with the rear wheel directly in front of you. Try to focus four or five riders up the line so that any problem will not suddenly affect you.
- Stay relaxed but alert for warnings and changes in pace. Try to watch what's happening four or five riders up the line and pass on warning signals and calls.
- Scan the road ahead for potential problems; red lights etc, and be ready.

Stay together

- When riding two abreast, stay close. Don't ride too far away from your partner because the wheel in front of you intimidates you.
- The gap you've left between you and your partner is a waste of space and to a motorist behind, it appears that you are three wide. This will antagonise motorists.



The Road Rules state that "When riding two abreast riders should not be more than 1.5m apart."

Brake carefully

- If you are inexperienced and too nervous to ride close to the wheel in front of you, stay alone at the back and practice.
- Avoid sudden braking and changes of direction. Try to maintain a steady straight line.

Rolling through - swapping off - taking a turn

- It is safer for everyone if you get to the back **as quickly as possible** as the group is possibly riding three or four-abreast until you and your partner slot in at the back of the bunch.
- Check the road behind is clear before you swap off.
- Experienced bunches have techniques for swapping off that mean they are never more than two abreast.

Be smooth with turns at the front of the group

- Avoid surges as they cause gaps further back in the bunch which in turn creates a "rubber band" effect as riders at the back have to continually chase to stay with the bunch. This has the effect of unnecessarily extending the length of the bunch.

Pedal downhill when at the front

- If you don't, following riders will have to brake, increasing the risk of crashes and making the bunch line less predictable for following traffic.

Hold your wheel

- An appropriate gap between your front wheel and the person in front is around 50cm.
- Keep your hands close to the brakes in case of sudden slowing.

Don't overlap wheels or "half wheel"

- You could touch wheels and crash. Half wheeling disrupts the even flow of the bunch, is dangerous and is bad etiquette.



Do not panic if you brush shoulders, hands or bars with another rider – ride relaxed

Be responsible for your own actions

- Remember that when you are in a bunch you are still responsible for your own actions and the safety of others – in a bunch it is important to continue to be responsible as an individual.
- While there is safety in numbers, it's important not to get over confident or ride in any way you would not when riding on your own.

Limit your bunch size

- Large bunches may be inappropriate for many roads and traffic conditions eg when there are traffic lights to negotiate or passing opportunities are limited.
- The maximum length for a B Double truck is 26 metres. A bunch size of over 20 therefore exceeds the length of a long truck.
- Being stuck behind a big bunch is not good for relations between cyclists and drivers
- Tails of bunches must not "run" traffic lights - it is both illegal and dangerous
- In very large bunches, warning signals don't get telegraphed all the way down the line meaning those at the rear don't see hazards, often resulting in crashes and falls.



Timing of bunch rides

- When possible avoid bunch riding during peak periods, particularly on busy roads and around schools at pick up and drop off times.
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Antisocial behaviour

- Be aware that using bad language spitting and snorting can offend people when done in the wrong time and place. To build goodwill with the community, restrict any anti social behaviour so as to not offend others.

Experienced riders should share their knowledge

- Experienced riders need to point out any mistakes made by less experienced riders. This must be done diplomatically of course, but it is important to make people aware of unsafe or anti social riding and help them learn the right behaviour. Riding in a bunch is about everyone's safety.



...“Road rage” is not a solution for either riders or drivers. Everyone makes mistakes while driving and riding. Stay calm but report any obvious dangerous behaviour to Police on 131 444 On the other hand, acknowledge courtesy and recognition by other road users – a smile or a wave promotes good relations.

Join your local Cycling Club or Bicycle Users group (BUG) to learn from others and be represented.

The Code of Conduct brochure was printed with support from the Department of Sport and Recreation and the RACT Community Fund. RACT Bike Assist, part of RACT ROADSIDE Ultimate Membership, provides breakdown assistance for cyclists.- peace of mind on your bike. For more information phone 13 27 22 or see www.ract.com.au



Help when you need it most.

Tasmania

Resources and further reading

www.tas.cycling.org.au

2009 Update of Road Rules for Cyclists Fact Sheet (PDF)

Sharing the Road in Tasmania Brochure

Complete Road Rules

www.cyclingsouth.org

Summary of Road Rules for Cyclists

www.tasbicyclecouncil.org.au

The peak body for transport and recreational cycling in Tasmania

www.tbug.org.au

Tamar Bicycle Users Group

www.rta.nsw.gov.au

NSW Bicycle Riders Handbook

www.vic.cycling.org.au

Vic Code of Conduct for Training Cyclists

Photography by robburnettimages

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Appendix 1

Summary of road Rules for Cyclist

Reproduced from Cycling South website www.cyclingsouth.org

Cyclists are bound by the same rules as motorists but there are some exceptions. We've also listed a few rules that may be of interest.

- Cyclists can make [hook turns](#) at all intersections unless signage prohibits hook turns by bicycles (Rule 35). *See link to hook turns for description of how to carry out a hook turn.*
- Cyclists riding through multi-lane roundabouts who travel on the far left line of traffic must give way to any vehicle leaving the roundabout (Rule 119).
- A driver on a road with a dividing line may drive to the right of the dividing line to avoid an obstruction if the driver has a clear view of any approaching traffic; and it is necessary and reasonable, in all the circumstances, for the driver to drive to the right of the dividing line to avoid the obstruction; and the driver can do so safely (Rule 139).
- A driver must not overtake a vehicle unless the driver has a clear view of any approaching traffic; and the driver can safely overtake the vehicle (Rule 140).
- A driver (except the rider of a bicycle) must not overtake a vehicle to the left of the vehicle (with some exceptions). The rider of a bicycle must not ride past, or overtake, to the left of a vehicle that is turning left and is giving a left change of direction signal (Rule 141).
- A driver overtaking a bicycle must pass at a sufficient distance to avoid a collision or obstructing the path of the bicycle; and must not return to the marked lane or line of traffic where the bicycle is travelling until the driver is a sufficient distance past the bicycle to avoid a collision or obstructing the path of the bicycle (Rule 144).
- A person must not cause a hazard to a cyclist by opening a door of a vehicle, leaving a door of a vehicle open, or getting off, or out of, a vehicle (Rule 269).
- Cyclists cannot ride *more* than two abreast unless overtaking. When riding two abreast riders should not be more than 1.5m apart. This rule also applies on bike paths, shared paths and shoulder of the road (Rule 151).
- A driver must not drive in a bicycle lane unless the vehicle is entering or leaving the road, avoiding an obstruction or right turning vehicle, stopping or parking or a bus or taxi picking up or dropping off passengers. The driver

should not travel for more than 50 metres in the bike lane (Rule 153 & 158).

- A bike rider must have at least one hand on the handlebar (Rule 245).
- The rider of a bicycle must not carry more persons on the bicycle than the bicycle is designed to carry eg: no dinking (Rule 246).
- The rider of a bicycle riding on a length of road with a bicycle lane designed for bicycles travelling in the same direction as the rider must ride in the bicycle lane unless it is impracticable to do so (Rule 247).
- The rider of a bicycle must not ride across a road, or part of a road, on a marked foot crossing, unless there are bicycle crossing lights at the crossing showing a green bicycle crossing light (Rule 248).
- The rider of a bicycle riding on a footpath or shared path must keep to the left of the footpath or shared path unless it is impracticable to do so; and give way to any pedestrian on the footpath or shared path (Rule 250).
- The rider of a bicycle riding on a bicycle path, footpath, separated footpath or shared path must keep to the left of any oncoming bicycle rider on the path (Rule 251).
- The rider of a bicycle must wear an approved bicycle helmet securely fitted and fastened on the rider's head, and any passengers (eg: child in child seat) must also wear an approved helmet (Rule 256).
- The rider of a bicycle must not tow a bicycle trailer with a person in or on the bicycle trailer, unless the rider is 16 years old, or older; and the person in or on the bicycle trailer is under 10 years old, the bicycle trailer can safely carry the person; and the person in or on the bicycle trailer is wearing an approved bicycle helmet securely fitted and fastened on the person's head (Rule 257).
- The bike must have at least one effective brake and a warning device such as bell or horn (Rule 258).
- In poor light conditions or at night the bicycle must have a flashing or steady *white* light that is clearly visible for at least 200 metres from the front of the bicycle; and a flashing or steady *red* light that is clearly visible for at least 200 metres from the rear of the bicycle; and a red reflector that is clearly visible for at least 50 metres from the rear of the bicycle when light is projected onto it by a vehicle's headlight on low-beam (Rule 259).

On 1 December 1999 Tasmania joined all other Australian States and Territories in adopting a national set of road rules. A few of the Tasmanian road rules have changed as a result. For a quick summary visit

http://www.transport.tas.gov.au/road/transport_tas/arr.html