



Handbook

For

Riders

Ride Leaders

and Ride Sweeps

Revision D: August 10, 2023

Welcome

On behalf of the Officers, Board of Directors, and members of the Sumter Landing Bicycle Club, I welcome you to our organization.

This Handbook has been prepared to provide new riders, new members, existing riders, and riders who are interested in becoming Ride Leaders or Ride Sweeps with the information necessary to have an enjoyable and safe bicycling experience with the Sumter Landing Bicycle Club.

We acknowledge that material for this handbook has been contributed by various sources including: Florida Uniform Traffic Control Law (Chapter 316, Florida statutes), The League of American Bicyclists, The Florida Bicycle Association, Florida DOT, Harrisburg Bicycle Club, Louisville Bicycle Club, and various articles written by current and past members of the Sumter Landing Bicycle Club.

Sincerely,

Donald Chiavaroli
Ride Director

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Section 1 General Information

Cyclist Definitions and Roles

Every cyclist who participates in a club ride falls into one of three categories: a Rider, a Ride Leader, or a Ride Sweep. The roles of each cyclist are defined as follows:

Rider: Riders are cyclists who ride between the leader and the sweep. Riders must follow the rules of the road, follow the instructions of the Ride Leader and Ride Sweep, and be courteous to all road users. The rider in front of the sweep should periodically check to see if the sweep is “off the back”.

Ride Leader: Prepares the ride route. Leads the ride and establishes the road position for the group. Ride Leader may rotate out of the lead position. Ride Leaders have the same responsibilities as riders in addition to their distinct Ride Leader responsibilities.

Ride Sweep: The last rider in the pace line, rides to the left of the last rider so the Ride Leader can be seen. The Ride Sweep does not usually rotate in the line. Sweeps have the same responsibilities as riders in addition to their distinct Ride Sweep responsibilities.

Compulsory Club Safety Rules

(Recommendation of combined rules committee on July 18, 2017 and adopted by SLBC Board September 18, 2017)

These rules and tips address important cycling safety issues that foster the safe enjoyment of club rides. They have been reviewed and approved by the Sumter Landing Bicycle Club (SLBC) Board of Directors. There are many benefits to riding in an organized bicycle group including camaraderie, better visibility to motorists, potentially longer and faster rides because more people share the work, and assistance in the event of a mechanical or safety incident. In exchange for these benefits, when a cyclist chooses to ride in a group, he assumes the responsibility to ride in a manner that enhances group safety and does not create a hazard for other cyclists in that group.

Members of the SLBC should review the Florida bicycling laws, regulations and the Compulsory Riding Rules and Tips for Riding in The Villages® presented below. Florida statutes govern the operation of all vehicles operated on Florida public roads. A bicycle is a vehicle under Florida law (Chapter 316.003).

Orderly, predictable, and safe riding habits enhance motorists' perception of bicyclists, contributing to community goodwill and enhancing the Club's public image. They also make for safer group rides.

Riding Rules

1. A signed liability waiver is required before participating in a club ride. If you have registered to be a Club member, you signed the liability waiver as part of that process. If you are NOT a member of the Club, you will need to sign the liability waiver at a ride start prior to participating in the ride. You may only sign the waiver once on your first ride. Per our insurance requirements, to attend subsequent rides, you will have to join the club.
2. Wear a properly-fitted Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) approved helmet with a snug chin strap.
3. A rear-facing mirror, either eyeglass, helmet, or bar end mount, is required.
4. Water or other hydration in a bottle or Camelbak is recommended.
5. Riding group size: When more than 10 riders are present, divide into sections of 8 or fewer riders. A gap of 40-50 yards should be maintained between groups/sections of riders.
6. Club rides have a designated Ride Leader and Ride Sweep. The Ride Leader may request another rider to ride in the front and become the pace setter but the Ride Leader is always in charge throughout the ride. Riders must stay between the leader (or pace setter) and sweep except for brief periods (e.g., climbing hills, passing, leaving a ride or avoiding obstacles).
NOTE: Other than these circumstances riders in front of the leader (or pace setter) or behind the sweep have exited the ride. Once a rider has exited the ride, the rider is no longer covered by the club insurance.
7. Ride single-file for safety and courtesy. (Exceptions: climbing hills, rotating pace lines, and passing or avoiding obstacles for brief periods). Consider double-file when stopping at intersections and roundabouts but single up afterwards.
8. Never overlap your front wheel with the rear wheel of the rider ahead. Leave a safe distance between you and the next bicycle (at 15 miles per hour a bicycle travels 22 feet per second). Designated pace line rides typically ride in close formation.
9. Call out dangers: Audibly inform other riders of risks: "Slowing", "Stopping", "Car back", "Car up", "Car left", "Car right", "Debris", etc. Also, visually point out debris, holes, sand, etc. Pass these warnings up and down the line.
10. Not allowed on club rides:
 - a. Children under the age of 18 years of age due to liability
 - b. Audio equipment (except hearing aids)
 - c. Pets
 - d. Smoking (including e-cigarettes)

- e. Use of the “Clear” command
- f. Use of aerobars (may be mounted on the bike, but cannot be used)
- g. Throttle only operation of e-bikes

11. Give hand and audible signals 100 feet before turning, stopping or slowing. The proper hand signals are described and illustrated below:

- a. Left turn: horizontal left arm pointing left. When safe, signal your intention and aggressively move into the left or turn lane.
- b. Right turn: up-lifted left arm, or right arm horizontal pointing right.
- c. Stopping: Extend either arm downward with palm facing rear.
- d. Slowing: Extend either arm downward with palm facing down..



12. When approaching an intersection as a group, Florida law allows 10 cyclists to pass through the intersection as one group after the group has come to a complete stop. If the Ride Leader or some part of the group stops for approaching traffic, following riders should also stop and should not pass the stopped cyclists, nor proceed until the front rider proceeds.

13. When approaching a roundabout, vehicles (or cyclists) in the roundabout have the right of way. Cyclists approaching the roundabout must yield to vehicles or cyclists already in the roundabout.

14. To improve overall group safety, even if you are not leading or sweeping, it is recommended to keep your front light on in flashing mode. The Ride Leader may request you to turn them off.

Enforcement of Compulsory Riding Rules

“The SLBC Board of Directors may suspend or expel a member for repeated violations of the Safe Riding Rules, The Villages® VCDD Recreation Department’s rules of Conduct or

other just cause.” Article IV of the SLBC bylaws.

How to Bike in Traffic

Part 1: Riding in The Villages and surrounding areas

1. Four lane roads: In the Villages four lane roads are too narrow to safely or legally contain a bicycle and a motor vehicle traveling side by side. To discourage drivers from attempting to share the lane, the cyclist usually rides on the right half of the right lane to facilitate visibility for overtaking motorists, but should ride far enough left to discourage motorists from trying to squeeze past within the lane. Often this is described as the right tire track.
2. Bypass Lanes: The Bypass lanes in the Villages are too narrow for a vehicle and a cyclist to share at the same time. Motorists will however, try to squeeze through. To discourage motorists from attempting to share the lane, The Ride Sweep will move into the center of the lane. After the Ride Sweep blocks the lane, the rest of the ride group should ride in the middle of the lane until the bypass merges with the travel lane.
3. Multi-modal paths: In the Villages divided sections of multi-modal paths are too narrow to safely contain a bicycle and a golf car traveling side by side. To discourage golf car drivers from attempting to share the lane, cyclists should ride in the middle of the lane.
4. Multi-modal path tunnels: Cyclists are encouraged to avoid multi-modal path tunnels whenever reasonable. However, tunnels may be a safer option for solo riders.
5. Country roads: All two-lane roads must be shared with motor vehicles. Cyclists should ride single file as far to the right as practicable (this does not mean you must ride as far to the right as possible).
6. Lights: Cyclists are strongly encouraged to display a flashing bright red rear light and a flashing front light.
7. Gate Protocol: When approaching an entrance gate ride to the right side-gate (resident gate) unless the attendant tells you differently. Slow and prepare to stop unless the attendant opens the gate for you to pass.

Part 2: Cyclists Rights and Road Position

Here in The Villages, unlike most places, bikes must mix with motorized vehicles. Even our recreation trails are commonly called “Golf cart paths”. The reality is that traffic of all kinds is increasing as this wonderland for retired folks continuously expands in territory and population. At any time of year our streets and trails are filled with seasonal residents and renters. The trick is knowing how to ride in a way that allows a cyclist to co-exist with traffic on the roadways and along the vast system of recreation trails. No cyclist is a match for a 3,000 pound vehicle on the

road or a 1,000 pound golf cart on a recreation trail. Below are a few tips for increasing your safety when cycling.

Assert your Lawful rights. But do so with caution. Bicycles are defined by Florida law Chapter 316.003 as vehicles that have full use of the roadway. As a cyclist, you have all of the same rights and responsibilities as a motorized road user. This means you STOP and YIELD for regulatory signs and lights. Always SIGNAL when turning or changing lanes. Motorists are legally required to give not less than 3 feet when passing you regardless of which lane you are in.

Claim your Road Position. First, if there is a bike lane you must use it (a shoulder or edge of road line is not a bike lane). When there is no bike lane, the law states that a cyclist must ride as far to the right on the roadway as practicable. “Practicable” means as far right as is safe, not as far right as is possible. There’s a difference. Further, you’re allowed to move to the left of the lane to avoid pedestrians, slower moving vehicles, road hazards, and the debris that inevitably find its way onto the right shoulder.

If the road doesn’t have a shoulder, bike lane, or multi-modal lane, ride in the right side of the traffic lane. Be cautious here, you need to give yourself room to maneuver. If you’re riding at the road’s edge, drivers may assume you are yielding to them and think they have room to pass without moving into the other lane. Most lanes in our area measure significantly less than the FDOT standard of 14 feet wide (most are about 11 feet wide). These lanes do not have enough room for a bicycle to operate, the 3 feet required passing space and an automobile.

On roads with a wide shoulder. If you choose to ride on a wide shoulder, ride about 2 feet to the right of the white line. Again, this is assuming the shoulder isn’t littered with debris.

Knowing the rules of the road and following them make driving our roadways predictable and safer for everyone.

Part 3: Doing Your Part

Safely coexisting with all users of our roadways and multi-modal trails is based upon drivers and pedestrians knowing and following the law. Part 1 covered cyclist rights and road position in the traffic lanes and on the shoulders and bike lanes. There are however other things we cyclists can do to keep ourselves safe, like being aware of our surroundings:

Take nothing for granted at intersections. When you approach an intersection with the intention of proceeding straight ahead, and you have the right of way, look carefully to the left, to the right and back to the left. You have no guarantee that another road user will obey a STOP sign, a YIELD sign or a traffic signal. Watch for pedestrians, golf carts and other cyclists too.

Beware of motorists making a right turn. Recently, many of the crashes in our area involving a motor vehicle and a bicycle have been in roundabouts. Some impatient motorists will enter the

roundabout (attempting to pass a group of cyclists) in the inside (left) lane and want to take the first (right) exit. Cyclists call this a “Right Hook”. The vehicle changing lanes within the roundabout is at fault if such a crash occurs. On multi-lane roads and particularly in roundabouts, it is important to claim your lane so that a faster moving vehicle overtaking you doesn’t make a right turn across your path. When you are riding as close to the right as possible, you appear to be giving up your right to the road. Worse yet, that road position makes you less visible to faster moving traffic.

Know and use hand signals when cycling. When turning, follow the same laws that govern motor vehicles. Position yourself in the correct lane well in advance of the turn, signal your intention (100 feet before the turn) and make a predictable turn while controlling your lane. Like any other driver, be on the lookout for pedestrians. Described below are the hand signals identified in Florida State law.

Signal that you’re slowing or stopping by holding your left hand down with palm facing backward. This simple gesture often works to hold traffic back in potentially unsafe situations as well.

Signal a left turn with left arm straight out to the side.

Signal a right turn by holding the left arm out with your elbow bent up at 90 degrees, or (an alternate right turn) with the right arm straight out to the side.

Beware of car doors and parked golf cars. When driving your bike in and around the town squares, ride just a bit farther to the left when passing parked cars. Drivers tend to open their doors after checking for traffic, they may not be looking for cyclists. If you hit a door, your bike will stop immediately, you will not! If you see someone in the driver’s seat, expect the worst, slow and give yourself some distance. Using the STOP hand signal will warn other drivers that something is up. Keep a close watch for pedestrians positioned between parked golf cars. Most golf cars are fairly tall and may be enclosed making pedestrians impossible to see. Pedestrians usually look for traffic, not bikes, and might step into your path.

When you see a driver stopped at a cross street, attempt eye contact. A friendly wave (using ALL of your fingers) can be an attention grabber as well.

Earn respect, obey the law and ride big. Motorists are much more likely to treat cyclists with respect if they earn it with patience, courtesy and lawful cycling. On the other hand, when you ride erratically (roll through stop signs and traffic lights), drivers can’t be blamed for becoming frustrated. It is also important to ride big (be highly visible when cycling on the roadways). Always wear a vividly painted, certified helmet and bright clothing. The circular motion of brightly colored shoes or socks are helpful in catching the eyes of motorists. Finally, use front and rear lights for both day and night rides. Combined, these simple tips will provide contrast to your surroundings.

Harassment. Every experienced cyclist has stories about close passes and bad behavior of all kinds. If you are harassed or threatened by a motorist, do whatever it takes to safely survive the situation. The best reaction is to show no reaction. Continue your ride. Any reaction by you may exacerbate an already tense situation. However, if harassment is serious or repeated, report the vehicle description and license number to police (911). One suggestion is to have a high-definition movie camera facing forward and rearward on your bike.

The formula for roadway safety:

Knowledge + Predictability + Courtesy = Safer Sharing of our Roadways

SLBC E-Bike Policy

The Sumter Landing Bicycle Club welcomes those with electric bikes (E-bikes) to join our regularly scheduled group rides. However, we do have a few stipulations. There are basically two types of E-bikes: pedal assist and throttle controlled, along with three classifications.

Class 1 electric bicycle shall mean an electric bicycle equipped with a motor that provides assistance only when the rider is pedaling, and that ceases to provide assistance when the bicycle reaches the speed of 20 miles per hour.

Class 2 electric bicycle shall mean an electric bicycle equipped with a motor and throttle that may be used exclusively to propel the bicycle and that is not capable of providing assistance when the bicycle reaches the speed of 20 miles per hour. Operation of any e-bike in a "Throttle Only" mode is not permitted on a club ride.

Class 3 electric bicycle shall mean an electric bicycle equipped with a motor that provides assistance only when the rider is pedaling, and that ceases to provide assistance when the bicycle reaches the speed of 28 miles per hour.

All cyclists should choose to ride in groups of similar and familiar experience and expertise. Please remember, Ride Leaders have the discretion to ask you to leave if you are not riding within the advertised pace.

Cycling Etiquette and Ethics

All cyclists are expected to adhere to standards which respect other cyclists, motorists, golf cart operators, runners, and pedestrians in the communities where we ride. Examples of cyclist etiquette are:

- Follow the Ride Leader's instructions.
- Ride within the advertised pace.
- Stay with the group. A rider may leave the group at any time before the end of the ride but they need to inform the sweep of their plan.

- If a rider chooses to leave the ride, they must leave from the back of the group and drop back 100-200 yards before leaving. On the boulevards, the separation is required if the ride is going left and the dropping rider is going right. We do not want cyclists in both lanes at the same time (the motorists get irritated and do not know what lane to use).
- For insurance purposes, a cyclist who willfully leaves the ride before the ride end is no longer on the ride and therefore not insured.
- Use hand and voice signals to alert other cyclists of hazards or directions. This includes passing commands from the front or the rear.
- Pass only on the left and call out "On your left" when passing.
- When being passed, ride single file and get into the proper road position.
- Use your mirror to watch for cyclists behind you, particularly the sweep.
- Do not discharge bodily fluids when a cyclist is behind. Move behind the sweep if you must discharge.
- Avoid confrontation with motorists, other cyclists, or pedestrians.
- Choose a ride pace which is suitable for your fitness level.
- Respect the Ride Leader's or Ride Starter's advice on which ride to join.
- Do not engage in physical abuse or malicious actions toward any person while on a club ride or at any club event.
- Do not engage in the use of foul language, verbal abuse, or obscene gestures while on a club ride or at any club event.
- Do not engage in any unlawful activity while on a club ride or attending a club event.
- Do not engage in the use, sale, possession, or distribution of illegal substances while on a club ride or at any club event.
- Do not engage in any behavior that may be defined as sexual harassment under EEOC guidelines while on a club ride or at any club event.
- Do not engage in any conduct which is hostile, threatening, abusive, harassing or discriminatory toward others while on a club ride or at a club event.

Where and How We Ride

All Sumter Landing Bicycle Club rides are conducted on public roadways, multi-modal paths, and a few private golf cart access ways. Some of the public roadways are busy state roads. Others are quiet country roads. Some roads have shoulders or cycling lanes, others do not.

Rides inside The Villages are on the boulevards, residential streets, and multi-modal paths. C-social pace rides are sometimes on cycling paths/walking trails. C, B, and A pace rides should not ride on the bicycle paths/walking trails due to the risk of a crash with walkers, dog walkers, roller bladers, and novice casual cyclists.

Group rides inside the tunnels on the multi-modal path are discouraged, but sometimes necessary.

When riding on the boulevards, cyclists should position themselves in the right vehicle tire track. This encourages motorists to go around you and not try to share the lane with you.

When riding inside the residential areas, where a dedicated multi-use lane is present (i.e., a “golf cart lane”), ride in the center of the lane. This encourages golf carts to go around you and not try to share the lane with you. Do not ride close to the white line. Contractors with trailers and motorists frequently use all the travel lane and will occasionally cross the white line.

When riding on the multi-modal trails, ride in the center of your lane. This encourages golf carts to go around you and not try to share the lane with you. Do not try to pull over onto the grass to let any impatient cart pass. The grass could be soft and you may crash.

All club rides are in groups, based upon ride pace and ride distance. Each group has 10 cyclists maximum, consisting of a Ride Leader, a Ride Sweep, and 8 riders in between. Per the compulsory Riding Rules, if more than 10 cyclists want to join the ride, a second (or third) sub group can be formed. Each sub group must have a Ride Leader and Ride Sweep. The primary Ride Leader has the sole discretion whether to accept a third ride group. Each ride group should be separated by a separation of 40-50 yards. A separation of 40-50 yards allows the motorists to pull in between ride groups instead of trying to pass multiple groups at once.

Section 2 Information for Riders

Preparing for Your First Club Ride

The primary goal of the Sumter Landing Bicycle Club (SLBC) is to provide cycling opportunities to our club members. We accomplish this through regularly scheduled group rides out of select locations within The Villages as well as special destination rides to a wide variety of interesting/exciting places. Cycling is an inherently risky undertaking, but we have put in place a set of requirements and expectations that are designed to reduce the risk and enhance the enjoyment of group riding. Below you will find important information about what is needed and expected of club members (and guest riders!) when cycling with the SLBC.

What to bring

- Your bicycle needs to be in good working order. Tires should be properly inflated.
- Helmets are required.
- Mirrors are highly recommended for your first ride and required for subsequent rides.
- Guest riders will need to sign two liability waivers at the ride start. You can preview the SLBC and The Villages® liability waivers on the club website before signing. Guest riders may ride one time without charge. However, if you wish to ride again, insurance regulations require that you join the club. If you have already joined the club prior to your first ride, you do not need to sign the waiver at the ride start - you signed the waivers electronically during the club application process.
- Water bottle(s) or a Camelbak for hydration. Two bottles are recommended during the summer months (June-August).
- A sports bar or similar for the ride break.
- A spare tube to fit your bicycle (just in case of a puncture).
- An air pump or CO2 inflator.

What to Expect

- Before your first group ride, please review the Compulsory Club Safety Rules and the section on Riding in Traffic in this Handbook.

- For your first group ride, **arrive at least 15 minutes early** and ask a club member to point out the Ride Starter.
- See the Ride Starter to sign the waivers if you have not yet joined the club.
- The Ride Starter or a designated club member will ask a few questions about your experience and capabilities and make a recommendation on which group to join for your first ride. We recommend that you join a ride group that is one level slower than what you usually ride. This is very important if you have not been on the bike for several weeks if you are coming from a cold weather climate. The Ride starter will introduce you to the Ride Leader of the group which best fits your experience, fitness, and capabilities which will result in a favorable first ride experience. If you are concerned about the ride distance or ride duration, ask the Ride Leader.
- The Ride Leader will answer questions and offer any needed clarification on our club safe riding practices.
- All rides have a mid-ride break for a bathroom stop and a quick snack. Some of these stops are at public parks, so it is recommended that you bring your snack with you.
- C-social and C pace rides will have periodic water stops. If you are riding a B pace or A pace ride, it is expected that you can “pull a bottle” while you are pedaling. If you are not able to do this, please let the Ride Leader know before you depart the ride start.
- While enjoying the ride, follow the rules for your safety and the safety of others in the group. Observe and learn from the experienced members of your ride group.
- Take advantage of any social gatherings after the ride. It’s as much about the friends we make as the exercise.

Ride Levels

The Sumter Landing Bicycle Club currently has four ride levels: C-Social, C Pace, B Pace, and A Pace. Ride pace is defined as the typical rolling pace, with no hills and no wind. Obviously, hills and wind will affect ride pace both higher and lower.

Our riders come from clubs all over the country and there is no uniform standard for ride classification. The nomenclature of a particular pace using only alpha characters followed by a plus or minus can give rise to confusion. As a result, the SLBC has adopted an alpha classification with a pace range. On any given day, within a pace range, there may be multiple rides available to choose. The ride starter will announce the Ride Leader, planned ride pace, ride destination and distance at the ride start.

The ride levels are:

C-Social- Ride pace: Under 16 mph, lowest is 10 mph, typical is 12-14mph, Ride distance: 16-20 miles. This is a no drop ride and mostly inside the Villages.

C Pace- Ride pace: 14-16 mph, Ride distance: 25-35 miles. This is a no drop ride.

B Pace-Ride Pace: 16-20 mph, ride distance: 32-45 miles. This is a no drop ride.

A Pace- Ride Pace: 20 mph and higher, Ride distance 45-55 miles. You can be dropped on this ride.

Rider Responsibilities

- Wear a helmet at all times when on the bike (includes riding in the parking lot).
- Have suitable hydration for the ride.
- Have and use a rear facing mirror.
- Have a flashing rear tail light. 100 lumens minimum suggested.
- Have a flashing front light. 200 lumens minimum suggested.
- Pass hand and voice signals back and forward using outdoor (loud) voices.
- Ride single file.
- Ride in the proper section of the road or multi-modal lane.
- Never pass another rider on the right, only on the left.
- Ride behind the Ride Leader, single file, in a straight line.
- Make sure your bike is in good mechanical condition: shifting, brakes and tires.
- When passing a slower ride group, leave 3 feet clearance and call out "on your left."
- When being passed by a faster group, always "single up" to give the faster group room to safely pass. Don't hog the lane.
- Never pull up next to a car at a stop light, always behind the last vehicle in line.
- When climbing, stay to the right and pass only 2 riders wide.
- Do not use "CLEAR" command.
- If you have to leave the ride FOR ANY REASON, you must inform the Ride Sweep and leave from the rear of the ride.
- No use of aerobars on a club ride.
- No audio equipment (except hearing aids) is permitted.
- Follow the etiquette and ethics guidelines.

Cycling to and from the Ride Start Location

Riders are encouraged to cycle to the ride starts when feasible. However, a solo rider may be more at risk than in a group. If a club member is involved in a crash while riding to or from a club ride, the cyclist involved needs to complete an Incident Report. The Incident Report form can be found under "Rider Info" on the club website home page.

Riding in a Group-The Basics

Riding in a group may be new to some cyclists. The reason we do it is that a group is more visible than a lone cyclist. This is especially true when riding on the boulevards and in the roundabouts. Multiple cyclists means multiple flashing lights and multiple witnesses should a mishap occur.

Riding in a group offers other advantages such as protection from the wind. Group rides are typically faster especially if the leader rotates off the front and a fresh rider takes the lead. The disadvantage of group riding v. solo riding is that the likelihood of a crash is increased. As a result, each rider must be focused and vigilant. A moment of inattentiveness may lead to a crash.

So, if you have never ridden in a group, here are some basics:

Always ride behind the rider in front of you. Never overlap your front wheel with the rear wheel of the rider in front of you. If the rider in front of you suddenly moves right or left and the wheels touch, the rider in back will go down.

Set a reasonable gap to the rider in front of you. For some skilled riders, half a bike wheel is a reasonable gap. For other riders, a full bike length is a reasonable gap. The rider in the back decides what is reasonable.

Do not stare at your front wheel and the rear wheel of the rider in front of you. If you do this, you will miss seeing things happening up ahead of you.

Set the gap between riders by looking at the back or butt of the rider in front of you. Takes a bit of practice, but with your eyes focused looking ahead, you are much better at seeing the big picture.

Keep your hands on the brake hoods at all times. Do not ride with your hands on top of the handlebars.

Avoid braking when possible. This has a ripple effect on the rest of the riders behind you. Sitting up will catch more wind and slow you down. Keep a steady pedaling cadence to maintain the pace. Don't speed up and then slow down.

Learn to "soft pedal". Soft pedaling is a technique to keep from speeding up by keeping the cranks turning but not putting a lot of pressure on them.

Glance up ahead of the rider in front of you. This allows you to potentially see hazards and be prepared for them before you have to take evasive action.

Keep focused on the ride. Minimize chatter with other riders or looking around at scenery.

Listen for the sound of the cassette of the rider in front of you. If you can hear it freewheeling (clacking), that is a signal that the rider is slowing down. Some cassettes are noisier than others.

When riding on roads that have a narrow shoulder or no shoulder or may have debris in the shoulder, increase the gap to the rider in front of you.

Riding in a Group-Merging and “Taking the Lane”

When the ride is in progress, there are some unique situations that are not covered by simple hand voice signals. Three events occur regularly:

Golf Cart Lane Merge

Throughout the Villages there are multiple locations where the golf cart lane merges with the traffic lane. All of these are marked with road signage and the cart lanes are painted to direct the carts into the traffic lane. The road signage is to alert the motorists that the carts will be merging and to let them in. Since we cycle in the cart lanes, we must also merge into the traffic lane.

However, many motorists, who are also golfers, do not seem to recognize that the cyclists must also merge and may not give way. The Ride Leader and Ride Sweep control the merging process. Riders **MUST NOT** make the merge until they hear the sweep call **“Take the Lane”**. Riders should then do three things as follows: 1. Pass up the command with a loud voice. 2. Check their mirror to make sure it is safe to move. 3. Take the lane.

Left turn from a multi-lane road

Within the Villages, there are times when the group will be making a left turn on a multi-lane road. This will typically occur on the boulevards, at traffic lights, and at golf cart merges where there is an intersecting street following the merge.

The Ride Leader and Ride Sweep control the merging process. Riders **MUST NOT** make the merge until they hear the sweep call **“Take the Lane”**. Riders should then do three things as follows: 1. Pass up the command with a loud voice. 2. Check their mirror to make sure it is safe to move. 3. Take the lane. Occasionally, you may be required to take two lanes. Take the first one when instructed. Take the second lane only after you hear the sweep call **“Take the Second Lane”** or **“Take the Next Lane”**.

Transitioning from a left turn at a roundabout

The Ride Leader is responsible for positioning the ride group into the left lane when entering the roundabout for a left turn. When exiting the roundabout, the Ride Sweep is responsible for moving the group into the right travel lane. Riders should follow the Ride Leader through the roundabout, and **MUST NOT** make the merge into the right travel lane until they hear the sweep call **“Take the Lane”**. Riders should then do three things as follows: 1. Pass up the command with a loud voice. 2. Check their mirror to make sure it is safe to move. 3. Take the lane.

Safety Awareness

There are three areas in The Village that require heightened vigilance and communication among riders. They are the roundabouts, the Bypass lanes, and the golf cart lanes with stop lights.

Roundabouts

When entering a roundabout, remember that vehicles in the roundabout have the right of way and you must yield to them. Approaching the roundabout, everyone in the ride group should anticipate that a vehicle will be in the roundabout, be looking ahead to the left, and be prepared to stop. Not all riders in the ride group have the same angle of visibility and verbal warnings need to be made. **IF A VEHICLE STOPS IN THE ROUNDABOUT AND WAVES YOU THROUGH-STOP.** The first rider who stops at the roundabout should wave the vehicle through as they have the right of way. The drivers are trying to be nice, but are putting themselves at risk for a rear end collision.

When entering a roundabout and going straight through, riders should be aware of vehicles coming along side of them on their left. It is not uncommon for motorists to take a right turn from the left lane in front of the cyclists. Verbal warnings (“Car in the left lane”) should be communicated anytime a vehicle enters the roundabout on the left side of the ride group.

The roundabouts at Buena Vista northbound and El Camino Real eastbound, Meggison northbound and Morse northbound, and Meggison northbound and Buena Vista northbound are all frequent trouble spots. Impatient motorists will pass a group of cyclists on the left lane and then take the right turn in front of them.

By Pass Lanes

In general, you want to be in the bypass lane. The problem arises when motorists want to beat the cyclists into the lane versus going through the adjacent roundabout. The Ride Leader and Ride Sweep use techniques to discourage this behavior by motorists. However, if you are riding in a group that rotates the leader, you may find that you are the leader. Develop the habit of using your mirror to look for vehicles coming from behind. The Ride Sweep will attempt to block the bypass lane from motorists, but if the group is spread out, the sweep may not be successful.

Golf Cart Lanes with Stoplights (and no merge)

There are two of these in the Villages. They are both on Morse Boulevard. The trouble spot is at Morse southbound and San Marino. Traffic stopped at the light will frequently want to make a right turn. However, the motorist will not signal the turn until the last minute when they see cyclists or carts coming down the lane. Be alert for these vehicles and issue a verbal warning ("Car turning").

Crossing Major Highways

There are four major highways surrounding the Villages that cyclists may need to cross from time to time. They are: US441, US27, US301, and FL44. These are four or six lane highways. It is recommended to cross these where there is a traffic control device (a traffic light), however, this is not always possible.

When there is no traffic control device and you have to cross these highways, it is important to cross only where there is a median that separates opposing travel lanes. When crossing these highways, the following procedure is recommended.

1. Approach the highway with caution.
2. When it is safe to do so, cross one side of the highway first and stop in the median. Be careful because the median usually has a left turn lane coming from the opposite traffic direction. Not all riders have to cross into the median at the same time.
3. Stop in the median in the area which is closest to the right. Do not spread across the full opening in the median. This allows left turning traffic from the opposite direction (traffic coming from your right) to go around you and execute their left turn.
4. When it is safe to do so, cross the second side of the highway.
5. The ride group shall wait until all riders are across and the sweep calls "**All Here**" before proceeding on the route.

Several of the club rides travel eastbound to Leesburg on FL44. The rides exit left from FL44 at Whitney Road. Taking the lane on FL 44 is not recommended due to the speed of the vehicular traffic. Instead, the ride should take a RIGHT on Whitney Road, travel down a hundred yards or so, make a U-turn and then proceed to cross FL44 as identified above.

When Problems Arise

Problems are a fact of life. They are everywhere and a bicycle ride is no exception. The problems fall into two categories, Ride Problems and People Problems.

Ride Problems which require a response

This type of problem is minor in nature and occurs frequently. The ride does not stop but action is required.

Ride Split

A ride split occurs when a significant space opens up between two riders within a ride group. There are several reasons that cause this split. They are:

- The group has to yield at a roundabout but not every rider gets through at once.
- There is a traffic light and some riders do not make the light before it changes.
- Some cyclists struggle on hills.
- Some cyclists struggle in the wind.

Regardless of the reason, when this space opens in front of you, you must call out **“Split!”** loud enough so the rider on the other side of the split can hear you. That rider needs to pass that command forward so the leader can hear it and slow the ride pace.

Ride Gap

When the ride is large enough so that two or more sub-groups are needed, many times the sub-group leaders do not know the ride route. They are simply playing “follow the leader”. If the space between the ride sub-groups becomes so large that visual contact is lost, the sweep in the lead group calls **“Gap!”**. This command must be relayed forward so the Ride Leader hears it and slows the ride until the gap is closed.

Several ride groups use Ride with GPS (RWGPS) on the ride. All the groups have at least one person with the route and there is no need to call “Gap!” when visual contact with the following sub-group is lost.

Emergency Vehicles Protocol

A full stop of the ride group is not recommended as an abrupt stop by some riders and not others may result in a crash and riders falling into the roadway. On the boulevards, when a ride group is being overtaken by an emergency vehicle, the group should move to the far right of the travel lane, slow down to about 10 mph, and allow the emergency vehicle(s) to pass. If a motor vehicle stops in front of the ride group, the ride group must stop and not proceed until the motor vehicle has moved.

Ride problems which cause the ride to stop

A puncture, a dropped water bottle, a dropped chain, a medical issue are all problems that require the ride to stop. Should one of these problems happen, riders should immediately call out “Mechanical” or “Medical” and pass the command up the line so that the Ride Leader hears it and can stop the ride.

When the ride is stopped, everyone in the ride group needs to **get off the road surface and onto the grass shoulder**. This applies to dedicated golf cart lanes also. When everyone is off

the road, then the mechanical or medical problem can be addressed, and the appropriate action taken.

A telephone call is not a reason to stop the ride. If a rider has a personal telephone call, he/she should move to the back of the group, inform the sweep that they are stopping and pull off the road. This rider is no longer part of the ride group.

If the ride must stop and the ride is delayed while roadside repairs are made, riders in the subgroup where the stoppage occurs must stop until the repair occurs. Riders in other subgroups may not need to stop if the subgroup Ride Leader has the route directions. The decision to have subgroups stop or not is the responsibility of the primary Ride Leader. It makes no sense to have 16-24 people on the roadside while a puncture is repaired when one group of 8-10 riders is more than enough to handle most any roadside repair.

People Problems

People problems are those that are caused by behavior of cyclists on the ride that are detrimental to the ride and the enjoyment of the ride by all. These problems will not stop the ride, but the Ride Leader needs to respond to them to get the behavior corrected. The problems are identified here and the corrective actions are in the Section 3, Information for Ride Leader.

The Hijacker

From time to time, the ride pace can get a little spirited. If the group is well matched in capability, the increase in pace is exhilarating and exciting. No one struggles and everyone has a pleasant experience. However, when one rider has the itch to “kick it up a notch” and lifts the pace or goes “off the front”, the result is that the ride synergy is destroyed and several riders may begin to struggle.

There are at least 3 reasons why a hijack happens.

1. A rider joins the group, and their cycling capability is far above the average for the group. Every rider pedals at a pace that is their comfort zone. Some riders naturally pedal at 19 mph without overly exerting themselves. For others, their natural pace is 22 mph and for still others, their natural pace may be 17 mph. The rider with the greater natural pace can become the hijacker without even realizing it.
2. A new rider, or guest is in the ride group. They may be a stronger rider than the rest of the group, or better on the hills. This new person wants to show that they can “fit in” and sometimes this is manifested by picking up the pace or jumping off the front.

3. On any given day, any rider may be feeling exceptionally strong. The natural response is to let the adrenaline flow and accelerate the pace. Once again, the hijacker may not be aware of the impact that this performance has on the group.

The Jackrabbit

The jackrabbit is a cyclist who is the lead rider and accelerates quickly from a turn, a stop light, or out of a roundabout. This “going full gas” stretches out the ride group and in turn each rider must exert more effort to catch back on. The Ride Sweep is the last rider and often will need to sprint to get back to the group. This is a common problem in groups where the riders rotate and everyone leads for some part of the ride. However, even in groups where the Ride Leader stays on the front an inexperienced Ride Leader can be a Jackrabbit.

The Talker

The talker is the cyclist who wants to carry on a long conversation while riding. It is ok to have a short conversation amongst riders, but when the talking is constant, it distracts your brain from its primary purpose, keeping you safe. Think of it as “distracted cycling.”

It is bad enough that the talker is distracting your brain. They are also a safety hazard because they have to ride along side you so that you can hear and respond. The risk of touching wheels or handlebars increases when this happens. The talker is now out in the road and becomes a hazard for motorists. If a crash ensues, everyone behind the talker has the risk of being taken down because the escape route has been blocked.

If you find yourself being the subject of “The Talker”, it’s pretty hard to escape. You can ignore them. You can ask the Talker to continue the conversation at the ride break or after the ride. You can simply tell the person that you need to concentrate on riding. When all else fails, let the Ride Leader know about it.

If you are The Talker, please recognize that your behavior increases the ride risks for everyone. If you want to talk while engaging in a sporting activity, look for an activity where the pace of the activity is slow and a moment of inattention will not result in serious injury.

The Gawker

The “gawker” is a cyclist who is a “looky loo” or a “rubber necker”. They are always looking around while cycling. The sky, the trees, the birds, the alligators, are all areas of interest. Their eyes and brain are not focused on the task of cycling. As a result, they become a safety hazard to themselves and others.

If you find yourself behind a Gawker, give them plenty of room. Don't follow closely. Let the Ride Leader know about it. If you are a Gawker, try to recognize and correct this behavior. If you want to gawk, you are better off not riding in a group environment.

Section 3 Information for Ride Leaders

Overview-Why Lead Rides?

The simple answer is someone has to do it. However, leading rides can be a positive experience and also fun for all involved. All Ride Leaders are expected to set a good example by riding safely and remembering that their behavior can make the ride a pleasant or unpleasant experience for members and guest riders. Ride experience, understanding Ride Leader responsibilities, getting advice and guidance from experienced Ride Leaders, and following the guidelines in this Handbook, will help Ride Leaders to effectively fulfill their duties.

Many bicycle clubs do not have Ride Leaders. Everyone gathers for a group ride. There is usually a mass start and everyone takes off. Some riders group up along the route while others complete the route by riding alone. If this is how you like to ride, then The Sumter Landing Bicycle Club may not be a good fit for you.

The Sumter Landing Bicycle Club has adopted the ride protocol of a Ride Leader and a Ride Sweep for three basic reasons.

1. There is safety in numbers. Within a community of over 100,000 seniors, there are always a few distracted drivers. A larger group is easily recognizable, and the senior motorists can take the necessary precautions to keep us from harm.
2. The ride protocol is designed to teach you how to safely cycle within The Villages and the surrounding countryside. Every location has unique behavior between motorists and cyclists. The Villages is no different. The cycling protocol here has been developed and refined to deal with the many challenges that face cyclists within a senior community.
3. Riders learn from the leaders and sweeps. Many of our members are, or were, newbies who started to bicycle for fitness after they retired. All the techniques that the experienced rider knows are unknowns to the novice riders. A leader or sweep has the ability to share their knowledge of cycling.

Effective February 15, 2022: Recertification or Certification as a Ride Leader

There are two paths to Certification.

1. If you are regularly leading rides, attend a Leader-Sweep Training Session to become recertified.

2. If you are not regularly leading rides, attend a Leader-Sweep Training Session and when you are ready, request the Ride Director, Safety Director, or League Cycling Instructors, to accompany you on a ride you lead and evaluate your performance. With a satisfactory sign off, your name will be placed on the list of certified Ride Leaders.

Recertification as a Ride Leader

To maintain your certification as a Ride Leader, you will need to complete the Leader-Sweep Training every three years.

Ride Leader Responsibilities

Before the Ride

The Ride Leader selects the route and pace which is appropriate for the ride group. The leader selects the break point and water stop points if the ride group is not capable of “pulling a bottle” while cycling. Water stop points should be about every 5-8 miles depending on weather conditions and intensity of the ride.

The Ride Leader may develop his/her own ride route or may select one from the club Ride with GPS (RWGPS) Library. Many Ride Leaders communicate the ride route to their ride group the day before the ride.

Ride Leaders who prefer to use RWGPS routes are encouraged to download them from the club library, electronically share them with the riders and ask riders to install them on a GPS capable cyclo-computer or a smart phone. The concept of having multiple riders with the ride route available greatly simplifies the Ride Leader’s task and reduces stress.

Developing or Selecting the Ride Route

When developing the route or selecting one from the RWGPS Library, Ride Leaders must consider several factors. Factors to consider are: cycling maturity (skill level) of the expected riders, ride distance, ride speed, weather conditions, and traffic conditions on the expected route.

When developing the route, the Ride Leader should seek to minimize left turns and select roads that are suitable for the ride group experience. Certain roads such as FL44, US301, CR42 may not be suitable for all ride groups. Exposure time on busy roads with no shoulder such as CR42 and CR475 should be minimized.

Traffic volume on many roads and intersections varies throughout the year. An intersection on a route that was developed during the summer months may become particularly difficult to negotiate during the high season.

Roundabouts within the Villages present many challenges to motorists and cyclists. In particular, entering a roundabout to execute a left turn, where there is a parallel Bypass Lane is not recommended. Currently, there are 8 of these in the Villages.

- Rainey Trail Eastbound to Buena Vista Northbound
- Old Mill Run Westbound to Buena Vista Southbound
- Stillwater Trail Westbound to Buena Vista Southbound
- Hillsborough Trail Westbound to Buena Vista Southbound
- Hendry Drive Southbound to Buena Vista Northbound
- Lake Sumter Landing Eastbound to Morse Northbound
- Morse Blvd Northbound to Warm Springs Ave Southbound
- Dray Drive Southbound to Morse Blvd Southbound

Entering the roundabout at these locations requires you to remain in the left lane. The bypass lane will merge from the right on your blind side and leave the cyclist exposed until it is safe to merge into the right lane.

The roundabout at the intersection of Warm Springs Ave Northbound and Morse Boulevard Northbound is particularly troublesome. This roundabout is the only one in the Villages with a Bypass lane on both sides. As a cyclist, you always want to be IN the Bypass lane and not in the roundabout with the Bypass coming up on your right or blind side. Ride Leaders are encouraged to consider alternate routes to cycle from the Villages south of FL44 to those north of FL44.

The roundabout at the intersection of El Camino Real at Buena Vista is especially difficult to negotiate when heading northbound on Buena Vista to Mulberry and points north. Over half of this northbound traffic will turn right (eastbound) onto El Camino Real at the roundabout. Cyclists in the right travel lane are at risk of impatient motorists passing in the left travel lane and then taking an illegal right turn (a right turn from the left travel lane) cutting in front of the cyclists. If the route must go through this intersection, all riders need to be ready to call out **“cars passing on the left!”** to alert others in the ride group.

At the Ride Start

Ride Leaders should check in with the Ride Starter and inform the starter of your ride, the ride pace, ride distance, and destination.

Screening New Riders

Before the ride departs, the Ride Leader must be confident that riders in the group can cycle the complete ride at the advertised pace. First time riders or guests are encouraged to join a ride group that is one level slower than the ride pace they usually ride. Riders or guests who are

visiting from climates where cycling stops when the weather cools are particularly vulnerable to choosing the incorrect ride group.

We want first time riders and guests to have a positive ride experience. If they struggle on a ride because they are placed in the wrong ride group, we have done them a disservice. To ensure that everyone has a positive ride experience, Ride Leaders need to ask for more information. Following are a few suggested questions to ask. Ride Leaders need only ask one or two questions and not every question is suitable or needed for every ride group.

- Have you cycled in a group?
- Have you cycled on the road?
- Would you be comfortable cycling on the boulevards?
- Are you comfortable riding on major roadways with a shoulder?
- What distance do you normally ride and when was the last time you rode outdoors?
- What speed do you normally ride?
- This ride has hills, are you okay with that?
- Can you drink while you are pedaling? (Important/expected for A and B rides)
- Please understand that you may be dropped on this ride (A rides only)

If the answer to any of these questions make you uncomfortable, you have every right to not allow the rider on your ride or direct him/her to the next lower ride group. Remember, YOU have the final decision. Just because a rider says he/she is a B+ rider in their club, may not translate to your expectations of his/her performance. Encourage them to drop down one ride level for this first ride to ensure a positive ride experience for everyone.

At the Ride Start-Before You Depart

The Ride Leader communicates the ride route, distance, and pace at the ride start to riders and the sweep, highlighting any potential roads or turns which may require heightened safety awareness.

The Ride Leader should go over the ride route in some detail so that riders know the major roads and turns etc.

The Ride Leader communicates the water stop points if appropriate and the break location.

The Ride Leader communicates the signal for Taking the Lane with the sweep. This signal can be pointing to the ground on the side where the lane change is to occur or pointing to the sky. It should NOT BE pointing right or left in the manner of a right or left turn.

The Ride Leader counts the number of total riders who will be on the route. Ride groups are limited to 10 riders total including the Leader and Sweep. If there are more than 10 riders, additional groups need to be formed.

Each ride group shall have a Certified Leader and Certified Sweep. The primary Ride Leader is responsible for selecting the Leaders and Sweeps. An effective technique to secure Leaders and Sweeps is to select someone whom the Leader knows is another certified leader or certified sweep and just ask them to serve. This is much more effective than asking for volunteers. Leaders or Sweeps that have downloaded the RWGPS route are preferred.

On the Ride

The Ride Leader(s) uses hand and voice signals for hazards, turns, slowing, and stopping.

The Ride Leader(s) avoid jackrabbit starts and acknowledges the **“All Here”** or **“All Through”** command from the Sweep with a raised hand before ramping up the ride pace.

The Ride Leader(s) slow the ride pace when the command **“Split!”** is passed up from the Sweep. The Ride Leader does not resume the ride pace until **“All Here”** is passed up from the sweep.

The Ride Leader(s) maintain the advertised ride pace.

The Ride Leader(s) maintain a 40-50 yard separation between ride groups or sub groups.

The Ride Leader keeps Hijackers in control.

Taking the Left Lane and Merging

To successfully execute this maneuver, the Ride Leader must plan ahead. The steps in this process are:

1. Know where the lane change must occur. A quarter mile is a good rule of thumb, but conditions vary greatly due to traffic volume. A lane change taken too early irritates the motorists. One taken too late puts riders at increased risk. Ride pace also determines when you change lanes.
2. Look in your mirror to survey how much traffic is coming up on your left from the rear and look for an opening. If the first opening is far back, slow the ride pace to get the traffic to flow by faster. You do not want to run out of runway. If there is a large opening

before a long line of traffic, you may want to execute the lane change early to secure your position on the road. With a large opening, the line of cars behind will have plenty of time to move into the right lane that you will vacate.

3. Signal the sweep that you want to **“Take the Lane.”**
4. Watch in your mirror for the sweep to move into the left lane and block the traffic.
5. When the sweep announces, **“Take the Lane!”** (and you hear it), move into the left lane. You must hear the sweep first. Riders behind you should not call **“Take the Lane!”** until it is called by the sweep.

Transitioning from a left turn at a roundabout

The Ride Leader is responsible for positioning the ride group into the left lane when entering the roundabout for a left turn. When exiting the roundabout, the Ride Sweep is responsible for moving the group into the right travel lane. Riders should follow the Ride Leader through the roundabout, and **MUST NOT** make the merge into the right travel lane until they hear the sweep call **“Take the Lane”**. Riders should then do three things as follows: 1. Pass up the command with a loud voice. 2. Check their mirror to make sure it is safe to move. 3. Take the lane.

Cycling in the Bypass Lane

When entering the Bypass Lane, the Ride Sweep will often move to the left to signal the motorists behind that we do not want them to try to share the lane with the cyclists as there isn't enough space to accommodate everyone at the same time. If the Sweep is able to do this, he will call out **“Take the Lane”** and the Ride Leader can move a little to the left as well.

Sometimes, the sweep is not able to move left early enough. The Ride Leader should be looking in the mirror for approaching vehicles and the sweep. If it is safe to do so, the Ride Leader should move to the left when entering the Bypass Lane to also signal to the motorists that we do not want them sharing the Bypass Lane.

Passing Another Cycling Group

When approaching another slower ride group, the Ride Leader of the passing ride group shall call out **“On Your Left”** as the ride group approaches the Ride Sweep of the slower ride group. The Ride Leader of the passing ride group should also call out the number of riders in the group and how many groups are passing if there is more than one group. When the Ride Leader of the passing ride group comes up to the Ride Leader of the slower ride group, the passing Ride Leader should again call out the number of riders in the group and how many groups are passing if there is one than one group.

No Passing Areas

Passing another ride group should not be attempted while in a roundabout or while in a bypass lane.

At the End of the Ride

In general, the ride should end at the ride start. Occasionally, the ride will end at a coffee shop or similar. If the ride is NOT going to end at the ride start, this needs to be announced before the ride departs.

The Ride Leader should return to the ride start location. If this is not possible, the Ride Leader should appoint a substitute to return to the ride start. This is especially important when there are guest riders in the ride group who may not know their way around.

Problems on the Ride

Ride Problems That Slow the Ride Progress

Typical problems which slow progress are Splits and Gaps. A split is an opening within the ride group. A Gap is an unusual opening between ride groups.

A split usually occurs due to a stop of some of the riders at a light or at a roundabout. A split can also be the result of a cyclist struggling due to hills, wind, or the ride pace is too fast. Anyone in the ride group can announce “**Split!**” The remedial action for a split is to simply slow the ride down until the opening is closed and the sweep announces, “**All Here!**”

A Gap occurs when a whole group is detained by a stop at a light or a roundabout or a mechanical problem. The Sweep is responsible for announcing “Gap”. On rides where the follow-on groups do not know the ride route, the lead group must slow down. On rides where groups are using RWGPS, the usual protocol is for all groups to operate independently and no action is taken for “Gaps!”

Emergency Vehicles Protocol

A full stop of the ride group is not recommended as an abrupt stop by some riders and not others may result in a crash and riders falling into the roadway. On the boulevards, when a ride group is being overtaken by an emergency vehicle, the group should move to the far right of the travel lane, slow down to about 10 mph, and allow the emergency vehicle(s) to pass. If a motor vehicle stops in front of the ride group, the ride group must stop and not proceed until the motor vehicle has moved.

Ride problems which cause the ride to stop

The Ride Leader shall stop the ride when a “**Mechanical!**” or “**Medical!**” command is heard.

When the ride is stopped, the Ride Leader shall request everyone in the ride group to get off the road surface and onto the grass shoulder. This applies to dedicated golf cart lanes also. When everyone is off the road, then the mechanical or medical problem can be addressed, and the appropriate action taken.

If the ride must stop and the ride is delayed while roadside repairs are made, riders in the subgroup where the stoppage occurs must stop until the repair occurs. The primary Ride Leader has the decision on whether to require follow on ride groups to stop or not. On rides where groups are using RWGPS, the usual protocol is for all groups to operate independently and only the group with the mechanical problem stops.

Crash Protocol

A crash is not an accident. It did not happen by accident. Unless it was an act of God (like a tree limb falling on you), it happened because someone (pet owner, motorist, cyclist, or pedestrian) was not paying attention or was not following the rules. Crashes happen more often than we like, but they do happen.

In the event of a crash, the Ride Leader's responsibility is to:

- Don't put yourself in danger.
- Take precautions so that the remaining cyclists on the ride are safe.
- Call 911 if warranted. Have another rider on the phone with the exact location or geographic coordinates of the crash. Hint: ask Siri "What is my location?" It is recommended to practice asking Siri before you are called upon to do it in a real crash situation.
- Document (date/time/place)/photograph the scene.
- Position one cyclist about 100 feet before the crash site to warn approaching motorists to slow down.
- Appoint one person to interact with Law Enforcement.
- To the extent of your training, check the victims and provide first aid to injured cyclists until assistance arrives. Do not go beyond the training you have received.
- Do NOT move an injured cyclist even if they are lying in the road. Moving an injured cyclist may cause severe damage to the neck or back. This is especially true if the cyclist has lost consciousness. Keep the cyclist down until medical personnel arrive.
- Contact the injured rider's Emergency Contact person if necessary.

- Submit an Incident Report within 24 hours. Incident Report (electronic form) is located under “rides” on the SLBC home page.

People Problems-Remedial Actions

The Hijacker

There are a few remedies to stop the hijack once it is in progress. Berating the offender is not one of them. Here are some suggestions that work, some better than others.

1. Let the hijacker go. This is really hard to do and the responsibility falls on the rider behind the hijacker. If you are this rider and you chase the hijacker, now you are part of the hijack. If you are the third person in line, it is now your responsibility to let the first two riders go and do not try to chase them down. This “let the hijacker go” technique works extremely well when the hijacker is far off the front and the group makes a turn. Pretty soon the hijacker will recognize what happened.
2. Call “Split”. Sometimes this works, sometimes not. If the hijacker can hear or is using their mirror, the result is that the hijack will stop. If there is no reaction, use remedy #1.
3. If the line rotates and the Ride Leader is in the middle of the pack, the leader can simply call out to “back off the pace”. This works well when the pace is slowly ratcheting up. If the leader lets the hijacker get off the front, this technique will not work at all.
4. If the Ride Leader is strong enough, he can chase down the hijacker and have a short conversation while riding and this usually brings the desired result.
5. When all else fails, hand out demerits for repeat offenses. Not kidding. Bestowing verbal demerits at the end of the ride works remarkably well when done with a bit of humor and is very effective on repeat offenders. Repeat offenders view completing a ride with zero demerits (for any reason) as an achievement.
6. Compliment the repeat offender when they do not hijack a ride. Positive reinforcement, when you can give it, is very powerful.
7. Do a short “wrap up” at the ride end to review notable TGR/TGW (things gone right/things gone wrong). Ride etiquette and ride safety are the primary topics.

Can you stamp out hijacking? Probably not. However, as a Ride Leader, you get what you accept.

The Jackrabbit

If you have a jackrabbit in the ride group, the simplest solution is to simply point out the behavior at the ride break or after the ride. In most situations, the jackrabbit may not recognize that this behavior is troublesome.

The Talker

If The Talker" is riding side by side and is not interested in riding single file, you have two choices. Inform them that they need to focus on the ride due to safety concerns. If this does not work, ask them to ride behind the sweep or leave the ride.

The Gawker

If there is a Gawker in the group, you have two choices. Inform them that they need to focus on the ride due to safety concerns. If this does not work, ask them to ride behind the sweep or leave the ride.

The Struggling Cyclist

Ask the cyclist what is going on and listen to what the cyclist says. Potential causes for the behavior are:

- Just a bad day
- Dehydration
- Bicycle in poor repair
- Not enough nutrition for the ride
- Riding in the wrong group-intensity too high
- Medical issue.

Have someone in the ride group shepherd the cyclist home. This could be the sweep or someone else appointed by the Ride Leader.

The Uncooperative Cyclist

If a cyclist does not follow the Ride Leader or Ride Sweep request to correct or cease behavior that violates the club ride protocol, advise that he/she may be asked to leave the ride. Should said cyclist become verbally or physically abusive, advise him/her that they are no longer part of the ride. Post ride, inform the Ride Director and Club President with the appropriate details.

Section 4 Information for Ride Sweeps

Overview

When asked if they want to be a leader or a sweep, most riders will answer: a sweep. There is a perception that the job of the sweep is somehow easier and has less responsibility. After all, how difficult is it to “follow the leader”

The reality is that the sweep has the most difficult job and the most responsibility. The sweep is the eyes and ears at the back, ever alert for threats coming from behind. The sweep makes the decisions for keeping the riders as safe as possible when enroute maneuvers are required.

The sweep has to be a strong rider. When the line stretches out after a roundabout or a turn, the sweep has the most catching up to do. When Ride Leaders and riders do not follow the ride protocol, it is the sweep that sees it all and has to compensate for it.

Effective February 15, 2022: Recertification or Certification as a Ride Sweep

There are two paths Certification.

1. If you regularly sweep rides, attend a Leader-Sweep Training Session to become recertified.
2. If you are not regularly sweeping rides, attend a Leader-Sweep Training Session and when you are ready, request the Ride Director, Safety Director, or League Cycling Instructor to accompany you on a ride you sweep and evaluate your performance. With a satisfactory sign off, your name will be placed on the list of certified Ride Sweeps.

Recertification as a Ride Sweep

To maintain your certification as a Ride Sweep, you will need to complete the Leader-Sweep Training every three years.

Ride Sweep Responsibilities

At the ridestart

The Ride Sweep is responsible for communicating with the Ride Leader to clearly understand the signal for taking the lane.

If the Ride Sweep does not have the ride route before the ride start, the sweep should ask the Ride Leader if there are any areas where turns or road conditions warrant special alertness.

The Ride Sweep is encouraged to bring a whistle, that is easily accessible while riding, to be used in the event that the Ride Sweep is dropped or must exit the ride unexpectedly.

On the Ride

The Ride Sweep cycles a little to the left of the ride group so that the leader can be seen and so that the leader can see the sweep.

The Ride Sweep uses hand and voice signals for hazards, turns, slowing, and stopping.

The Ride Sweep calls out hazards or concerns coming from behind. Typical calls are:

- **“Cars in the left lane”**-When approaching a roundabout to alert riders ahead. Motorists have been known to take right turns in front of the ride group from the left lane.
- **“Cars in the right lane”**-When approaching a stop light with a right turn lane to alert riders ahead to NOT veer into the right lane.
- **“Car back”**-When cars are approaching from the rear on two lane roads.
- **“Passing”**- When cars are approaching from the rear on two lane roads and are starting to pass.
- **“Split”**-When an opening exists within the ride group.
- **“Gap”**- When an unusual separation between two ride groups opens behind the Sweep.
- **“Mechanical”** or **“Medical”**-When there is a problem which requires the ride to stop.
- **“All Here”** or **“All Through”**- When the sweep is back onto the group after negotiating a roundabout, a turn, or after a stop.

The Ride Sweep will slow his/her pace to prevent a slower rider from being dropped from the ride group (does not apply to A pace rides). The sweep will attempt to understand the reason for the slow rider's difficulties and communicate it to the Ride Leader at the earliest opportunity. The Sweep may make a recommendation to the Ride Leader on whether the distressed cyclist should continue the ride or be shepherded back to the ride start or home.

Taking the Lane or Merging Lanes

The sweep controls the procedure for taking the lane. The procedure for taking the lane is as follows:

- The Ride Leader signals the Ride Sweep that a lane change or merge is coming up.
- When a safe opening exists, the Ride Sweep will signal the vehicles behind that he is moving into the left (or right) lane. When the vehicles have seen the signal from the sweep to move, the sweep will move into the lane and block the lane.
- When ALL VEHICLES IN FRONT OF THE SWEEP HAVE PASSED THE LEAD CYCLIST, the sweep will call **“Take the Lane”** or **“Take the Next Lane”**, or **“Take the second lane”** (when moving from a bike lane into the first travel lane).
- Once the riders hear **“Take the Lane”** FROM THE SWEEP, all riders may repeat the command and execute the lane change.

Cycling in the Bypass Lane

When entering the Bypass Lane, the Ride Sweep will often move to the left to signal the motorists behind that we do not want them to try to share the lane with the cyclist as there is not enough space to accommodate everyone at the same time. If the Sweep is able to do this, he will call out **“Take the Lane”** and the Ride Leader can move a little to the left as well.

Passing a Slower Ride Group

When passing a slower ride group, the Ride Sweep of the faster group shall inform the Ride Sweep and the Ride Leader of the slower group that they are the **“Last rider”**. If there is more than one group in the passing ride group, the Ride Sweep of each passing ride group shall inform the Ride Sweep and the Ride Leader of the slower group that they are the **“Last Rider, Group One”** etc.

Directing Motorists Pass the Ride Group

The Ride Sweep shall not provide any direction to following motorists to pass the ride group. Motorists are responsible for their decision to pass or not.

At the end of the ride

The Ride Sweep should return to the ride start location. If this is not possible, the Ride Sweep may appoint a substitute to return to the ride start and notify the Ride Leader at the ride break that he/she will be leaving the ride early.

A brief ride wrap-up between the Leader and Sweep at ride end is encouraged. The Sweep can use this opportunity to share comments about rider and motorist behavior or safety concerns that came about on the ride.

The Ride Sweep may also recommend that changes to the ride route be implemented before the route is scheduled again.

Problems on the Ride

Crash Protocol

Ride Sweeps have responsibility equal to the Ride Leader for implementing the Crash Protocol. In the event of an emergency, if the Ride Leader is unable to implement the Crash Protocol. The Ride Sweep has the authority to do it.

People Problems

The Ride Sweep has a responsibility to inform the Ride Leader when riders are not following the ride protocol or Mandatory Safety Rules. The Ride Leader and Sweep can discuss how to handle the problem rider, but it is the responsibility of the Ride Leader to initiate any disciplinary action if it is required.

Section 5 Appendix

This appendix contains useful information that has been contributed by multiple sources. It is presented here to give novice riders useful information about the sport of bicycling.

SLBC Bike Knowledge and Safety

(https://slbikeclub.org/content.aspx?page_id=22&club_id=639044&module_id=364785)

League of American Bicyclists – Smart Cycling

(<https://www.bikeleague.org/ridesmart>)

Enrichment Academy Catalog

(<https://www.theenrichmentacademy.org/coursecatalog.html>)

The Villages Enrichment Academy occasionally offers bicycle courses. From Safety and Rules of the Road, Basic Maintenance and Repairs and Handling Skills. Visit the catalog to see if the course(s) are available. Go to Sports.

LAB Smart Cycling Quick Book “available at your local bike store”



Section 6 Revision Control

Revision	Description	Date
A	First release	11/15/21
B	Section 1: Merged tips for riding in Villages into How to Bike in Traffic, Updated E-bike Policy. Section 2: added clarified EMS protocol. Section 3: Clarified EMS protocol and added merge after a roundabout protocol.	4/19/22
C	Page 7, item 4, revised to clarify for solo riders. Page 7,item 7 was misnumbered as item 8 in Rev B. Page 10, Revised E-Bike Policy. Page 15, revised C Pace to 14-16 mph to match current practice. Page 15, added paragraph on Riding to the Start and requirement for Incident Report. Page 18, amended paragraph on troublesome roundabouts with new roundabouts on Meggison.	2/6/23
D	Page 15, Ride pace for B ride id changed from 16-19 to 16-20, Ride pace for A ride is changed to 20 and higher	8/10/23