



EBC
Everglades Bicycle Club

Group Training Rides RIDE GUIDE

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There is no question that riding a bike is among the most enjoyable, rewarding and healthiest of activities. It is not without risk, however – and while it is impossible to guarantee safety in all circumstances, it is important that we all follow certain guidelines to reduce that risk as much as possible.

EBC follows Florida bicycle laws, though many other local cycling groups might not. Your Ride Leaders will always do their best to ensure that the group stays safe, but the obligation to ride safely and follow all laws belongs to each and every individual cyclist. In addition to Florida bicycle laws, we have prepared these EBC RULES OF THE ROAD specifically for our Saturday morning group training rides. These RULES were created with the aim of maximizing safety, awareness, and fitness – in that order.

Starting January 2022, these RULES will be strictly enforced, and each member and participant is expected to follow them. The RULES may be amended from time to time based on feedback and circumstances.

If you have any questions, comments or concerns, please speak with your Ride Leaders or contact the EBC Board at admin@evergladesbc.com.

The Basics for Participating in an EBC Group Training Ride:

- You must have a current EBC MEMBERSHIP. One free ride is allowed for cyclists who want to try out the Club but subsequent rides will require you to become a member.
- Members are covered on rides under the Club's group limited liability insurance policy. A copy of the policy will be provided at the request of a member.
- Members are required to electronically sign the Club's Ride Waiver upon joining. This can be done electronically and it is important that you read it before joining EBC. By riding with EBC, you agree to waive any and all claims for any damage or injury against EBC, caused in connection with a bike ride. Cycling is dangerous and the responsibility to remain safe while doing so is strictly yours. Non-Members are allowed one free ride with EBC before joining and must sign a Ride Waiver before the ride.
- You will not be allowed to ride with any EBC group if you are not wearing a bicycle helmet and carrying bicycle bottles filled with water and/or an electrolyte beverage.
- You are responsible for knowing what speed and distance you are capable of maintaining and joining the pace group which matches your capabilities. You will be dropped from the ride if you knowingly choose a pace group you cannot keep up with.
- It is highly recommended that you carry ID, your health insurance card, a cellphone, cash, a spare tube and tools.

EBC RULES OF THE ROAD

1. Your Full Attention is Mandatory. That includes no “chatting” during the group ride. It also includes no listening devices like earbuds or headsets, except for medically-necessary hearing aids. One earbud is allowed if connected to a device providing audible route directions. Audio devices like blue-tooth speakers are not permitted. Please note: When you talk during a ride or are listening to music, you are *distracted*. Period. In addition, you are overriding important instructions delivered by the Ride Leaders to the group. Distractions lead to chaotic behavior, movements and potential crashes.

2. Follow the Directions delivered by your Ride Leaders. They will call out route directions, intersection protocols, road hazards, and other important instructions to keep the group safe and headed in the right direction. Everyone in the group *must follow* the Ride Leaders’ calls. Do not second guess the calls and create chaos. It is extremely vital that you “echo” the calls so everyone in the group hears the information.

There are usually two Ride Leaders per pace group: the Lead and the Sweep. The Lead sets the course and the pace and will break off the front to allow for paceline “pulls” by others in the group. The Sweep rides in the back of the group to ensure the group stays intact & follows ride rules, and signals when there is a mechanical or medical issue.

Whistles. The Sweep may use a whistle in these instances:

➤ Short Double Tweet: to let the Leader know that the group is back together, no gaps, after a hard-stop, round-about-turns, or turns in general so the pace can resume. It is expected that after the Sweep whistles, all cyclists in the group must **echo “All In”** to ensure the Leader has heard and acknowledges the call.

➤ Long Multiple Tweets: to let the group and Leader know that there is a “mechanical” or “medical” issue so the group slows, stops, and pulls completely off the road to assist or wait for the issue to be resolved. Each cyclist in the group is expected to **echo** what the Sweep calls out.

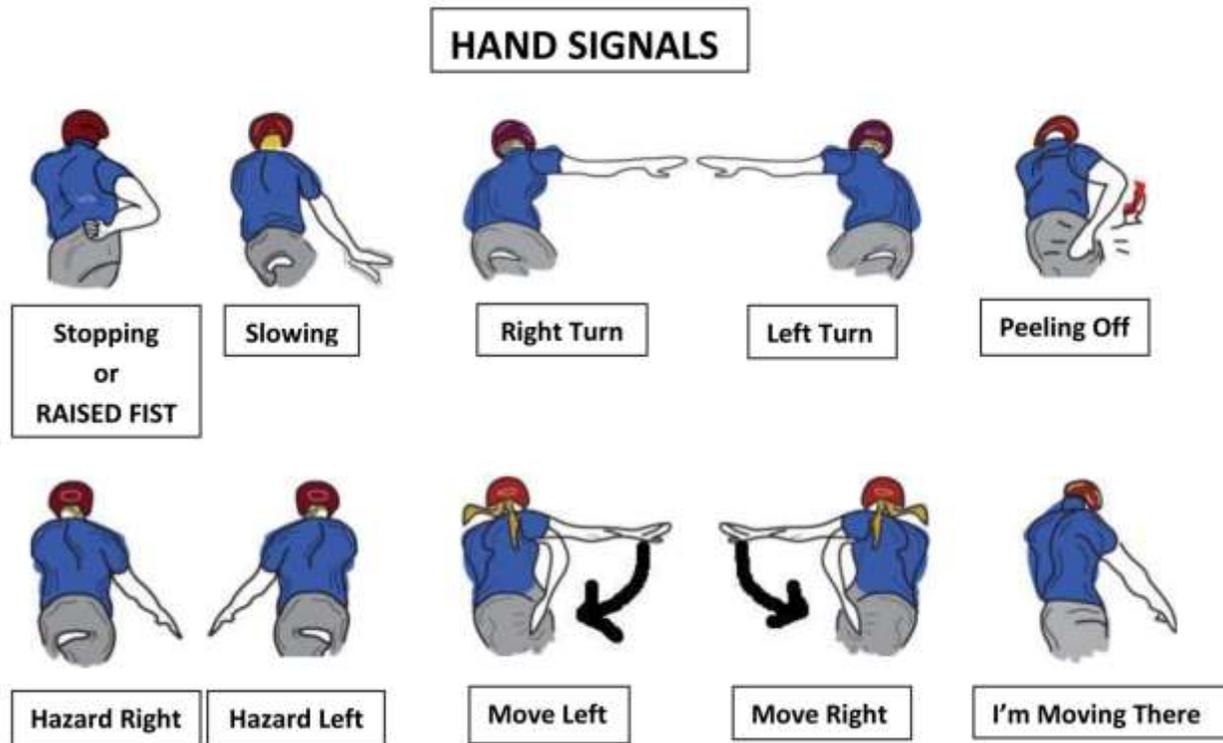
3. Communicate. A group that communicates constantly and cohesively is a safe group. There are two ways to communicate on a ride: Verbally and Physically.

Verbal communication on a ride is called **“echoing”** for a reason: everyone in the group repeats the calls given by the Ride Leader either from front-to-back or back-to-front depending on which Ride Leader is giving the direction, the Leader or the Sweep. The calls given by the forward-facing Leader cannot be heard by those farther behind and the calls given by the Sweep are often not heard forward due to traffic noise, wind, and the size of the group. Therefore, it is imperative that EACH CYCLIST “echo” the calls when dispatched.

ECHOING is the key communication method for informing each member on group rides.

Physical communication during a group ride is called “**signaling**” and is often a secondary method of communication. When used **in tandem with echoing**, signaling is extremely effective in getting cyclists’ attention.

SIGNALING should be practiced only by cyclists who feel comfortable releasing one hand from the handlebars.



4. Paceline Protocols. EBC Saturday group training rides are “paceline” rides. Pacelines can be *single* pacelines (single file in layman’s terms) or *double* pacelines (side-by-side in layman’s terms) depending on the road conditions and evaluation by the Ride Leaders. There is never more than a double paceline permitted on EBC rides or by Florida bicycle laws.

Double Paceline Formation requires group Ride Leaders to break off the front at mutually agreed-to intervals in banana peel fashion, each taking a lane outside the paceline and slowing to allow the group to move forward, at speed, with a new set of Ride Leaders until they reach the rear of the group where they will once again join the paceline.

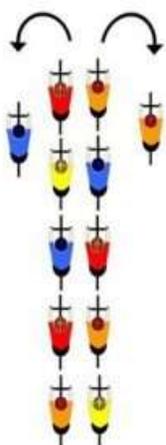
The peeling off the front gives every cyclist in the group an opportunity to share the work of “pulling” the group even if it’s for a short distance before once again “drafting” behind other cyclists in the back.

The same protocols apply to Single Paceline Formations.

Ride Leaders determine whether to ride in double or single pacelines depending on the conditions of the road and will call out & hand signal changes to the paceline during the ride. When changing from a Double to a Single paceline, cyclists must be careful and considerate to allow riders on the inside line (left side) to merge with the outside line (right side)

Paceline Etiquette:

Everyone is expected to take a turn on the front, especially in windy conditions when Ride Leaders' energy can be zapped quickly. The minimum "pull" time is 30 seconds. The maximum "pull" time is 5 minutes. If you cannot maintain 15 mph in the 14-16 mph group or 18 mph in the 17-19 mph group for this period of time, please notify the Ride Leader who will ask you to stay in the back of the group with the Sweep for the entire ride.



Ready to Peel-Off the Front? First communicate your desire to leave the front with your side-by-side partner. Both of you will peel-off TOGETHER. Next, scan for oncoming traffic behind you. If clear, tap your behind signaling to the next-in-line that you're about to peel-off. Each of you move to your respective "outside" lanes, reduce your speed by 2 mph until the rear of the group approaches, and re-join your pacelines just ahead of the Sweep.

Keep the Pace. When Ride Leaders peel off the front, the tendency for the set of ride leaders is to increase speed. It's a weird tendency but something you need to pay attention to. Do not increase speed but rather maintain the speed. Look at your computer to check yourself and make sure you are handlebar to handlebar with your side-by-side partner.

5. Be Predictable. Accidents between cyclists happen when attention wanders, pacelines get sloppy, and protocols are not followed. The key to avoiding this from happening is to always **STAY ALERT & BE PREDICTABLE**. Boneheaded, sudden moves will cause panic in the cyclists near you and will create a ripple effect in the group... a sure recipe for unnecessary chaos and a potential crash.

6. Maintain Even & Consistent Speed. A 14-16 mph Pace Group should strive to maintain a consistent speed of 15 mph. A 17-19 mph Pace Group should maintain a consistent speed of 18 mph. You get the picture: Aim for the middle of the range. Headwinds and tailwinds will factor into this but that's why there IS a range!

7. Acceleration/Deceleration. One of the worst habits you can form is accelerating then *coasting*. Coasting (when you stop pedaling and rely on momentum to continue to move you forward) is actually an energy-zapper. Every time you re-start pedaling you're expending more energy than if you simply continued pedaling at a slower cadence. Continuation of pedaling at a slower cadence to reduce speed is known as "soft pedaling". Slower cadence is achieved by down-shifting and relieving pedal resistance. You will often hear Ride Leaders call for soft-pedaling to allow riders to catch up to the group.

Constant acceleration/deceleration in a group causes what's called a "yo-yo", "slinky toy", or "rubber-banding" effect. This effect also happens when ride leaders quickly accelerate from a dead-stop particularly when the light turns green at intersections or when the group stops at stop signs. While the ride leaders reach pace group speed quickly, the rest of the group is still clipping in and having to sprint to catch the front. That's a no-no. The resulting gaps can be filled by cars trying to leap-frog the group creating a very precarious and dangerous situation for both the cyclists and the drivers.

Rule of thumb: Ride leaders should slowly accelerate from a dead-stop and hold speed to 10 mph and increase 2 mph every 10 seconds until the desired speed is reached.

8. Braking. Sudden braking in a group can result in chaotic ripple-effect movement and bike-on-bike crashes. There is no need to slam on the brakes unless you are about to crash into someone or something and that usually only happens when you are not paying attention or are distracted. "Slowing" can be achieved by "soft pedaling" and "feathering" your brake levers. Feathering your brake levers involves softly and rapidly pumping the levers until your speed is reduced to the desired level.

9. Shifting / Cadence. Did you know you have gears & shifters on your bike? Maybe that's why your bike was so expensive? If you have electronic shifters that's all the more reason to use them to justify all the extra moola you forked over to your local bike shop!

Shifting in residential areas of South Florida is as useful as shifting in the Colorado Rockies because we have a lot of stop signs and street lights to obey. When slowing or stopping, downshift to an easier gear so when you re-start you are not struggling to push down the pedals. Starting back up in a high gear is an energy-zapper and will upset your balance as you clip back into your pedals.

Most bike computers have a cadence function. There is a reason for monitoring cadence. Maintaining a consistent cadence will control your energy output and your cycling will be smoother and more predictable to others.

What is cadence? **Cadence** is the number of revolutions, or pedal strokes, per minute. Climbing or cycling in a high resistance gear can cause slower cadence or fewer pedal strokes and slower pedaling. Some amateur cyclists think cycling with a lot of pedal resistance is good and that it will build muscle like increasing weights on a leg press at the gym. Well, it might, but it will also zap your energy quickly and leave you struggling on longer rides. Solution: drop to a lower gear to maintain the same cadence on the hills as when you're riding the flats. You may go slower but you will be cycling correctly and more enjoyably.

Ideal cadence in a group ride? 75-85 revolutions/minute (RPMs).

10. Hold Your Line. Riding in Pacelines requires riding in straight lines: Your front wheel is aligned with the rear wheel of the bicycle in front of you. This may be harder in practice than it sounds. Our natural tendency is to look beyond what's right in front of us and that means you may drift out of line to see what's ahead. While a brief "drift" is okay, be sure to get back in line as quickly and safely as possible because the cyclist in back of you is following your rear wheel and your lead.

Holding Your Line is especially important when turning. Suggestion: visually draw an even curve in your lane on the road and follow it. Same applies for roundabouts. Wide turns could possibly put you in oncoming traffic or someone's shrubs. Cutting the curve short will disrupt the paceline flow.

11. Maintain Proper Ride Distance. When in a paceline, your front wheel should be no further than one bike-length away from the rear wheel in front of you and certainly no less than a half a bike-length. After all, this isn't the Tour de France!

At all costs, AVOID WHEEL OVERLAP! Once your front wheel touches the rear wheel of the bike in front of you, you are guaranteed to go down. Even the slightest touch will cause you to lose control of your steering ability. The cyclist in front of you may also experience some loss of control but can usually stay upright because the rear wheel does not affect steering. If you find yourself in a situation where your front wheel is overlapping a rear wheel but not touching, immediately feather your brakes to slow down and fall back into position. Please, no jerky or sudden movements to scare the cyclist in back of you.

12. Passing. When leaving the paceline, make sure you are on the *left side* of the paceline. **NEVER pass on the right side!** Before you move out of line, scan behind you to make sure another cyclist is not approaching from behind. Exit the line and **call "Passing Left"** before making your move forward. Keep calling "Passing Left" as you pass by every cyclist in the group until you are clear of the group. This also applies to any situation where there is a pedestrian, runner, or any other cyclist.

13. Navigating Intersections. Always follow the Ride Leader's instructions unless you feel that doing so would put you in harm's way.

In the State of Florida, bicycles are considered "vehicles" and cyclists must thereby abide by the same traffic laws imposed on drivers, e.g. stopping at stop signs & stop lights. This is no different in EBC. Upon crossing a road following a traffic signal or stop sign, the Ride Leader may call "clear" to indicate the intersection is safe to cross. However, it is up to each cyclist to follow all traffic laws, to be cautious, and to scan the roads for oncoming vehicles before moving through. Calling "clear" may be clear for you but should not be taken as "clear" for everyone in the group.

When riding in a group you should think of yourself as part of an 18-wheeler. All parts move together in harmony, ideally speaking. So, when the group proceeds on a green light, DO NOT STOP. DO NOT SLOW DOWN AND CREATE A GAP. KEEP ROLLING WITHOUT HESITATION. Otherwise, drivers may become confused by your erratic actions and proceed with erratic actions of their own. You must be PREDICTABLE and ride confidently. Of course, there are always exceptions to this rule. So, be alert, be predictable and use your head.

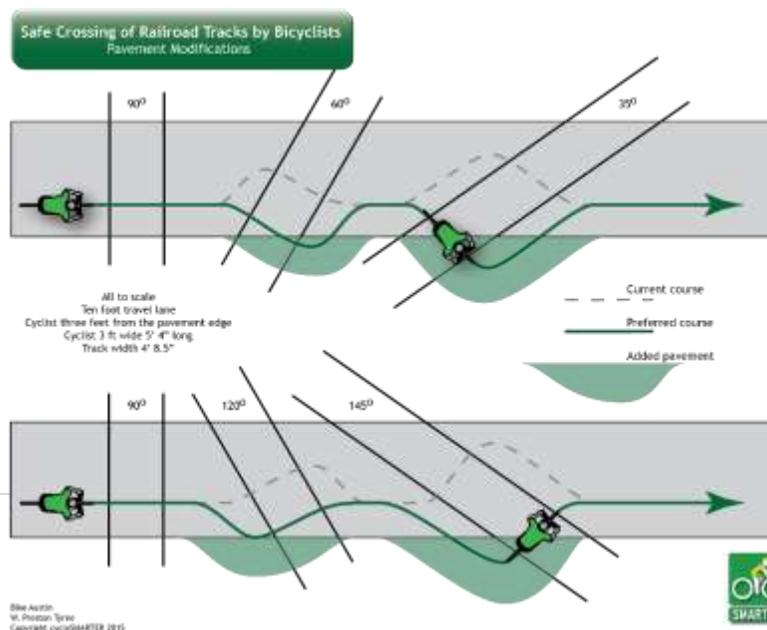
14. No-Drop Rides. Most EBC rides are No-Drop rides, but not always. It depends on the size of each pace group, the number of Ride Leaders available for each group, and the circumstances. These are examples of when the group will stop and the “no-drop” rule applies:

- Mechanical: a simple “mechanical” like a flat tire or a dropped chain. You are expected to know how to fix your own flat and have a spare tube and tools to make the repair. The group will wait for you. If you have a more serious mechanical issue like a broken spoke, you will need to call your loved one to pick you up. The group will not wait.
- Medical: a non-life threatening issue like bonking, cramping. The group will stop and assist with any support possible. However, if the issue persists, you will have to call your loved one to be picked up and the group will continue on. If experiencing serious medical issues like chest pain or shortness of breath, the Ride Leader will call 9-1-1 and wait for EMS to arrive. The rest of the group will continue on.
- Fatigue: can’t keep up with the group. The Ride Sweep will call for the group to soft-pedal until it is determined whether you will be able to continue. If you simply need a short break and hydration and are able to revive, you will rejoin the group. If you will not be able to keep the pace but are otherwise healthy and know the route back, you will be on your own. If you do not know the route back, someone in the group may volunteer to ride with you at a slower pace. If not, you need to call your loved one to pick you up.

As stressed at the beginning of this guide, **you are responsible for knowing your abilities and your limitations. If you choose a group that surpasses either, you are on your own if you can’t keep up.**

15. Avoiding Hazards. Keeping the rubber-side down is sometimes impossible. But, you can minimize the chance of crashes by not doing stupid stuff. Here are some examples.

- Avoid water, leaves, debris, sand, grass, rocks.
- Train tracks must be crossed at a perpendicular angle (90 degrees). It may be necessary to swing wide before taking the tracks head on. Anything less than a 90 degree approach may cause your wheel(s) to fall into the track gap and down you’ll go!



➤ The white or yellow lines on roads become very slippery when wet. Avoid unnecessary movement when riding over them.

➤ Bridge grates are called cheese-graters for a reason: they will shred your skin if you fall on them.

Here's how to stay upright riding over them:

- Put your weight on your handlebars and front wheel
- Move in a straight line avoiding turning your handlebars
- Keep pedaling. Don't stop.

Cheese-grater bridges are draw-bridges which may have textured metal plates on the right side, usually only wide enough for one bicycle. Some plates may even have a rubber coating for better traction. If you're not comfortable crossing the grates, ride the side with the plates. Or, if there is a separate walkway, use that.

The basic protocols in this EBC Ride Guide will hopefully provide you a great foundation for experiencing safe rides if practiced by you and shared with others in the group. We hope you take them seriously and make them part of your "inner-cyclist".