

## Why Lead A Ride?

- Riding is fun but leading offers special benefits:
  - You choose the route, pace, and food stops.
  - You share your favorite destinations and routes.
  - You ride at your preferred pace.
  - You can share your other interests, knowledge, or talents by leading themed rides, e.g.:
    - ❖ Photography
    - ❖ Gardening
    - ❖ Yard sales
    - ❖ Kid's rides
    - ❖ Camping rides
    - ❖ Moonlight rides
    - ❖ Bakery and Ice Cream rides
  - Inspire, motivate, and excite people about bicycling. Riders who lead regularly can help convert novices into avid cyclists by the end of the season.
  - Leading encourages you to ride more.
  - Ride leaders develop a broader circle of friends.

## What's In This Presentation?

- Guidelines for ideas on how to make your rides even safer or more fun
- Refresh your knowledge about the basics of ride leading.
- You'll find information on:
  - ❖ How to select a route
  - ❖ What to do before, during, and after the ride
  - ❖ How to handle problems and accidents
  - ❖ A checklist summarizing what to bring and do before and during the ride.
  - ❖ Some ideas to make a ride more fun.
- These guidelines apply for all MHBC rides, but the focus is on the most common rides – social rides at a moderate pace with regular rest stops. You may adapt the guidelines to your level's style.

## If You've Never Led A Ride

- Prospective ride leaders should review [this document](#) and plan to co-lead at least two rides with one of our experienced leaders.
- After co-leading two rides, notify a board member that you have co-led two rides, identify the ride leaders of those rides and confirm that you have read this document.
- You will then be given a personal Ride Leader Link to post your own rides on our calendar.

## What Kind Of Ride Do You Want To Lead?

Before you select a route or make other preparations you need to decide:

- Ride category – The club categories range from D to A, Road or Gravel. Details are on the MHBC website [here](#). These categories are important because they reflect pace and typical range but beyond that, they reflect culture.
  - ❖ PACE. Faster groups (B and above) tend not to stop or regroup very often.
  - ❖ C+ groups tend to stop, regroup, and offer a more social element.
  - ❖ The slower groups (C and below) tend to be even more social, going slowly up hills regrouping at key intersections, and perhaps stopping at the top for a view.
- Remember – once you pick a ride category that will dictate a range of paces and distances that the group will expect.
- You should be specific in the ride description you post on the MHBC ride calendar.
- A pace within the range of the category (typically within a 2 mph range). Be clear about your expectations. (Maybe today is the day you hope to break a speed record or take it easy and treat it as a recovery ride.) Be realistic about the pace you pick. Make sure it's one that you, the leader, can comfortably maintain.
- Group pace is never the same as solo riding.
- Remember, if you push yourself to a faster-than-comfortable pace, you'll be riding at the upper edge of your abilities and may have trouble keeping up with the rest of your group. Riding above your pace also raises the risk of injury to yourself and others. Factor in the distance and terrain. The hillier the ride, the slower the pace, and the harder it is to ride a long distance.
- Plan a distance within the range of the category. As with the pace, tailor the distance to the category of the ride and to what you are in the mood for.
- Think about what time the ride should start. If it's an after-work ride keep in mind that most folks won't be able to make a start earlier than 6 pm but also factor in sunset and temperature.
- Consider too that a Saturday ride starting at 9 or 10 am tends to draw a larger crowd than a ride starting earlier or much later. Weather can be another factor in ride start times. On very hot days it's best to head out early. On cold days, wait for temperatures to rise. Study the hourly forecast closely.
- Be sure you are not conflicting with anything that could make your ride unpleasant such as riding through a crowded town during an event

## Selecting A Route

### General Considerations

- Always make sure you are familiar with the route you pick. Ideally, you should pre-ride or pre-drive it so you know about the turns, road conditions, construction and can plan food and restroom stops.
- If you have been on the route but not recently, you may want to go over it again to ensure that nothing has changed significantly, especially after winter months when many roads take a beating and there's lots of paving.
- If you're using a route you've never ridden or that you're designing on your own, it's even more important that you travel it beforehand, preferably on a bike. Many of us have painful memories of the hills on a route that the ride leader chose while driving.
- Choose a starting point that is convenient, meaning that it's easy to find and has ample parking and ideally, nearby restrooms.
- Consider food, water, and restroom breaks for your route. Most rides break at the midway point. If you don't know where to make a rest stop, look at the ride description that a leader posted previously or ask a leader or rider who's done the ride previously.

### Using an existing route

- The best choice for a route is often one that you've enjoyed riding. Feel free to add your own variations to existing routes. Our [RideWithGPS](#) club account route library has many routes with a wealth of tried-and-true routes for every riding ability.

### Designing your own route

- If you decide to design your route, here are a few suggestions that apply mostly to slow rides with inexperienced riders. If you're leading faster more experienced riders, adjust accordingly.
- Safety is the deciding factor for all route decisions. If you can't find a safe way to travel to a specific location on a bike, don't. Keep in mind that riding with a group is much different from riding by yourself and rarely easier.
- Avoid intersections that are too close to a hill or a curve if the opposing traffic isn't required to stop. You want your riders to have an ample view of oncoming traffic and vice versa.
- Avoid streets that are too narrow for cars to pass unless you'll only be traveling there for a short distance.

For example, some streets with medians only have enough room for one lane of traffic in each direction. Some streets with traffic dividers only have enough room for one lane of traffic, period.

- Avoid crossing busy streets except at controlled intersections (with stop signs or traffic lights).
- Avoid heavily traveled, multi-lane roads wherever possible. If you find yourself with no good alternatives, try to avoid making left turns. Even with the best of riders, getting a group safely across two lanes of traffic so they can turn is dicey. With inexperienced riders, it's even harder.
- In general, avoid riding on sidewalks. We are required by law to stay on roads and in many localities, we are required by law to ride only single file.
- Unless you're leading a mountain bike or gravel/dirt event, avoid uneven or difficult riding surfaces, for example, rough or rutted roads, cobblestones, bridges with metal decks, railroad tracks, dirt, gravel, grass, and stairs.
- Try to avoid surprises. Suppose for example that you choose a route on which there's a steep uphill just after a turn. If you don't remember to warn riders, they'll be so distracted trying to get into the correct gear that they won't watch out for one another or for vehicular traffic. With an inexperienced group, some riders will simply stop, with no thought to whether anyone might be behind them.
- Note: If you can't circumvent a problem that may stymie your riders, try to warn everyone, for example at a stop immediately beforehand.
- Study maps in search of promising back roads. However, be sure you ride these roads beforehand so you don't run into a washed-out bridge or 20 miles of rough gravel.
- Explore. The best way to find spectacular views, pedestrian over and underpasses, wooden bridges, unusual houses, beautiful gardens, or anything else that won't show up on a map is by scouting out the route in person.
- If you don't know a ride leader who has led rides in the area where you want to go, ask for suggestions on roads to use or avoid, good places for mid-ride snacks, scenic overlooks, mean dogs and other relevant details.

## **RideWithGPS Route Library**

- MHBC has purchased a RideWithGPS club account that offers our club members and ride leaders premium features that you usually have to pay for.
- MHBC maintains a [RideWithGPS Route Library](#) where all club routes are stored. As a ride leader you can create your own routes using the advanced route planning features, or search the hundreds of MHBC routes that are stored in the MHBC route library.
- All rides posted on the MHBC ride Calendar must contain the link to a route from the MHBC RideWithGPS route library so members can access the advanced features like turn by turn voice navigation on their mobile device.
- Other riders with bike computers can load the RWGPS routes onto their devices and for riders who prefer paper cue sheets, they can be printed from the RWGPS site.
- Any MHBC member can enroll in the MHBC's RWGPS account for free by following the instructions on the Member INFO page of our website. Once you are a ride leader you will be given Route Manager authorization which will allow you to store new routes into the MHBC's Route library.
- Looking for a route?...Sort the routes by name, starting location, or mileage. Some of the routes are tagged with levels. You can also use filters to find routes by distance, elevation, etc.. When you find what you are looking for, click view and then copy that link into your ride description for the ride you post on the ride calendar.

## Posting A Ride on the Ride Calendar

- Only Ride leaders can post a ride on the MHBC Ride Calendar.
- Each Ride Leader has been given a personal Ride Leader Link that is tied to their name. This link allows the Ride Leader to post/edit/delete any ride that they post. You are in complete control of your ride!
- All members will sign up for the ride electronically using either the mobile ride calendar app on their phone (highly recommended) or the website's ride calendar.
- Each Ride Leader will be able to view each rider's cell phone, emergency phone, and email via the mobile ride calendar app. All Ride Leaders should carry their mobile phone so they have access to this information on case it's need in an emergency.
- More information of how to post a ride can be found here: [Ride Leader Posting](#)
- More information on installing the mobile ride calendar app can be found here: [Mobile Calendar App](#)
- As a courtesy to all riders, try not to change the key details of your ride (e.g. start time, pace, location, terrain) after you post it. If you do make a change, you need to notify the riders that signed up for your ride as they will NOT get any automatic notifications.
- As the ride date approaches, keep track of who's signed up to determine if you have enough ride leaders to carry through with the ride, if you have too many riders and may want to break into groups.
- In your ride description, include any cautions, quirks or special requirements. Some examples include:
  - ❖ If the ride begins or ends after dark, note that riders should bring headlights and taillights (Be conservative. If there's a chance you won't finish riding until after dark include that in your description.)
  - ❖ Steep hills, if the ride is significantly hillier, warn people in the ride description.
  - ❖ Construction or other unusual road conditions
- If you're planning to stop for an extended period mid-ride, mention this in the ride description.
- If you're taking a route that's shy of amenities such as food/water stops and restrooms, caution people so they can plan accordingly.
- If you're leading a ride that starts in a remote location, encourage carpooling.
- Request that riders arrive at the start at least 15 minutes beforehand to ensure you start riding at the advertised time.
- Important! If you want to include any non-cycling activities, either make them clearly part of the ride or optional at the end of the ride. Riders must be able to conclude the ride without being forced to choose between participating in the extra activities and waiting for the ride to resume. This applies to all non-cycling activities, but it especially applies to anything hazardous, including activities that involve alcohol (winery and brewery stops) and activities that require special training or skills (hiking, swimming, kayaking, and so on).

## MHBC's No-Discrimination Policy

- All MHBC rides are open to everyone able and willing to participate safely and cooperatively. In your ride description, you can specify whom a ride is primarily intended for, but you can't specify who the ride isn't for.
- This no-discrimination policy does not prevent a leader from asking a rider to leave because the rider's abilities don't match what's required, issues with equipment, or inappropriate actions on that or previous rides.

## Fielding Inquiries from Prospective Riders

- When posting a ride, your phone number and email are made available so riders can contact you with questions. A common question is whether their abilities are suited for your ride. How you answer depends on the difficulty of the ride and your preferences as a ride leader.
- A parent who wants to bring a child may contact you. The club doesn't forbid children on rides, but a parent must sign the liability waiver for anyone under age 18.
- In addition, unless you're just riding around the SUNY parking lot or the bike trail, be cautious about encouraging parents to bring children. Parents don't always have a realistic perception of how far or fast their children can ride or how safely they can ride in a group. The ride leader makes the final decision about whether to allow a child to ride.



## What to bring to the ride

- Arrive at the start at least 15 minutes early with:
- Your bike and helmet. **Helmuts are a requirement to ride.**
- A bike computer or cellphone bearing a ride app with the route loaded on it is recommended. Ride Leaders must have their cell phone in case of emergency.
- Copies of the cue sheet if you've advertised that you'd provide one.
- Food and full water bottles.
- Basic tools: a pump, extra tube, Count the riders so you can ensure you don't lose anyone along the way. Recount frequently.
- You may refuse to allow a child on the ride if you believe the child's participation would be unsafe or disruptive.
- Don't let anyone ride without a helmet. The club requires all riders to wear helmets on all rides. If someone arrives without a helmet, you can ask if any other riders have a spare or suggest trying the nearest bike shop; many bike shops rent helmets.
- Important! If someone refuses to sign in for the ride or insists on riding without a helmet, make it clear to other riders that the uncooperative rider is not part of the group. Our MHBC insurance requires members signup for the ride and use a helmet.
- Count the riders so you can ensure you don't lose anyone along the way. Recount frequently.

## **Make a Pre-ride Announcement, Especially About Safety**

- Here's a long list of topics to try and cover in a pre-ride talk. Keep in mind though, that if you talk too long, people will stop listening. Particularly for slower and less experienced riders, these points bear repeating. Experienced and repeat riders don't need as long a pre-ride talk. Use your judgment.
- Note: The items on this list also appear on the "Ride leaders' Day-of-ride checklist," in the appendix of this booklet.
- Introduction: Introduce yourself and have other riders introduce themselves to the group. Identify your sweeps, co-leaders, and other helpers. If the ride will be breaking into two or more groups, explain who will be leading each group and whether the paces, regrouping, and rest stop will differ.
- Welcome New Riders: Encourage regular riders to check in with newcomers during the ride.
- In a group that rides together regularly, a new rider, shy or not, may not feel welcome if the regulars spend the entire ride talking among themselves.
- Ensure when every rider signed up they included their cell phone and emergency contact phone in case there is a need to use it during the ride. Some examples: if a rider misses a turn and is lost, or gets a flat, you can contact them. In case of accident or medical emergency you may need to contact their emergency contact phone.
- Also ensure everyone has the Rider Leader's cellphone number and that each of them has a charged, working cellphone with the ringer and vibrate mode enabled.
- Sign-ins, maps/cue sheets: Ask if everyone has signed in and has either a hard copy of the route or the digital file on a smartphone or bike computer.
- Pace and Regrouping: Announce the pace and explain what it means. Indicate whether the ride will stick together, regroup at the top of hills, at major intersections, or in other situations.
- The Route: Briefly describe the route, including food and rest stops, difficult hills, unusual or dangerous conditions, weather issues, regrouping points, and tricky turns.
- Safety: Remind riders that each person is responsible for his or her own safety and for helping each other. You might emphasize that just because the rider ahead of you made it through an intersection doesn't mean you can too. -Vary your safety announcement to fit the experience of the riders and specific circumstances.
- Traffic Regulations: Remind riders that a bicycle is a vehicle and that bicycle riders are therefore expected to obey traffic regulations, including riding single file.
- Courtesy: Ask riders to be courteous. Drivers impressed with our courtesy will be more inclined to treat us with respect.
- Riders Health: Remind each rider to be aware of their own health before, during and after the ride. If a rider isn't feeling well beforehand, he/she should not do the ride.

- Group Riding Techniques: If there are new or inexperienced riders, review group riding techniques including:

1. Riding Single File In Traffic: Make it clear that riders are not to block traffic by riding two or more abreast. This is now the law in some localities.

2. Riding on Trails: Remind riders to stay on the right half of the trail and to be considerate of other trail users.

3. Hand Signals: Remind riders to use hand signals for turning or stopping and pointing out road hazards.

4. Voice Signals: Give riders a quick overview of voice signals: "Car up/back/left/right," "On your left" to indicate that you're passing another rider or pedestrian, "Glass/pothole, etc." to indicate road hazards (combined with hand signals as appropriate).

Emphasize that "Car back" means a car is coming from behind so riders should ride single file as far as possible to the side of the road.

Discourage riders from calling out "Clear" at intersections to indicate that no cars are coming. "Clear" is subjective and temporary so each rider should look for him/herself.

5. Other Cyclists: Remind riders to watch out for one another. On a group ride, they're much more likely to have an accident with one another than they are with a car.

6. Traffic Lights and Stop Signs: Caution riders not to run stop lights or stop signs out of fear of being left behind.

- Special equipment: Remind riders about any special equipment that's required for the ride (for example, lights or lunches).
- Keep the Leader Informed: Ask riders to pass the word if someone leaves or breaks down and to notify you if they're planning to leave the ride before the end. In all cases, require them to inform you of their completion of the ride.
- After Ride Refreshments: If you're going somewhere after the ride for a meal or a snack, invite others if you wish.
- Questions: Ask if there are questions or other comments on the route.

## Leading The Ride

- When you re-enter the roadway, wait for a break in traffic so drivers aren't forced to slow down for your group.
- If you are taking the group on a trail, ask everyone to stay on the right half, regardless of the trail width. This may mean that everyone must ride a single file which will make socializing more difficult.
- Unsafe Riders: Unsafe riders endanger themselves and everyone around them.
- They ruin the experience for others and give cyclists a bad reputation overall. If you're uncomfortable with a rider's actions, quietly and politely explain your concern. If the situation doesn't improve, ask the rider to leave.
- New Riders: Check in with each one of the new riders periodically to ensure they're getting along all right and that they feel welcome.
- Pace: Ride at or near the front to lead the way and set the pace at the advertised speed or work with other experienced riders to do so.
- Your responsibility is to lead the ride you've advertised and to keep track of the people who are doing the same.
- Too Fast and Too Slow: At the first regrouping point, if some riders are too fast or too slow, consider splitting up. You can also ask slow riders if they'd prefer to break off and return to the starting point. If they choose to leave the group, try to ensure that they can find their way back.
- If faster riders do not agree to respect the targeted pace, suggest they form their group and ride ahead without regrouping with the main group. The ride leader should inform this group that he/she no longer has responsibility for them – they are on their own. If they wish to designate a leader from their fast group, that leader assumes responsibility for navigation, safety, confirming safe completion of the ride, reporting accidents, etc. The ride leader should keep track of who is riding with whom and ensure that no one is riding alone.
- Lost Riders: Do your best to keep track of all riders. Assess how the riders at the back are doing and adjust the ride as appropriate. Try not to leave anyone behind. However, you're not obligated to go back and look for anyone. If a rider or group of riders disappears, they probably either took a wrong turn or decided to go faster than the targeted pace and leave the group. Call them and try to coordinate where to meet if they want to rejoin the group.
- If you are unable to reconnect, check at the end of the ride to make sure they returned safely. If you are part of a group that is lost, try to reconnect with the others. You may want to have someone ride at the back as a “Sweep” to encourage and keep track of slower riders. For more information, see “The benefits of having a sweep.”
- Regroup Frequency: How often you stop to count heads and make sure everyone is fine depending on a plethora of factors.

- If you have some slower riders who are consistently falling behind but you don't want to ask them to leave or if you're leading an in-city ride which you turn frequently, you'll need to regroup frequently. If you're riding on one road for 20 miles with self-sufficient, fast, and experienced riders, you may not need to regroup at all. Base your decision on the comfort of the slowest riders, not on that of the fastest. Consider regrouping after major climbs.
- Traffic Lights, Stop Signs, and Crosswalks: Stop for red lights, stop signs and pedestrian crosswalks. Not stopping endangers your riders, opens you to liability in the event of an accident, and gives onlookers the impression that cyclists are scofflaws. Don't stop too close to the intersection to wait for the group to catch up. Drivers have enough to cope with at intersections without having to worry about a gaggle of cyclists.
- At a stop sign or stop light, join the line of cars in the rear. Don't pass cars on the right and make your way up to the intersection. The cars will just have to pass you again after the intersection and this angers some drivers.
- Unforeseen Problems: If you run into unforeseen problems (new construction, bad weather, unusually heavy traffic, a closed bakery), be creative. Change the route, take shelter, and choose a different rest stop.
- Consider safety above all else and ask for suggestions from your riders. They may know the area better than you. However, you're in charge so don't let yourself be railroaded into something you think is unwise.
- Mid-Ride Announcements: At each regrouping point, announce the next regrouping point. Re-emphasize safety, especially related to upcoming conditions. For example, if you need to move into the left lane to turn, remind riders to look before they change lanes.
- If there's a steep uphill climb immediately after a turn, try to warn the riders. If you're getting onto a trail, remind riders to stay on the right half and to be considerate of other trail users.
- Food/Water and Restroom Stops: Whenever you top with your group, encourage your riders to be considerate of the non-riders around you. If you inconvenience someone, apologize, and do your best to rectify the situation. When it's time to start riding again, announce your departure enough in advance that everyone has time to prepare. In addition, be alert for riders who have wandered off or are in the restroom.
- Messes: Wherever you stop, make sure you and your riders clean up. Don't make your mark on the world with banana peels, energy bar wrappers, and dead inner tubes.
- Helpers: Ask for volunteers to fix flat tires, pump air into tires, give shifting lessons, or serve as "Corner people," riders who wait at Messes: Wherever you stop, make sure you and your riders clean up. Don't make your mark on the world with banana peels, energy bar wrappers, and dead inner tubes.

- **Helpers:** Ask for volunteers to fix flat tires, pump air into tires, give shifting lessons, or serve as “Corner people,” riders who wait at turns to make sure everyone makes it through the turn correctly.
- A group of cyclists, each one properly lit with a headlight and taillight, is more visible after dark than an individual rider.
- **Injures and Other Problems:** If one of your riders is injured, follow the guidelines under “Handling injuries.” For information on handling other problems, see “Handling other problems.”
- **Have a Good Time Yourself:** Some rides are a joy to lead while others are unadulterated drudgery. If you aren't having a good time yourself, think about what you could do differently right away or next time. Moreover, if you aren't having fun, some or all your riders probably aren't either. Be bold and ask them how you could make the ride more enjoyable.

## Leading from the Front or Back of the Group

- You don't necessarily need to lead a ride from the front of the group. If everyone knows the route, you may be able to serve your riders as well by leading from the back. Some ride leaders make their way back and forth between the front and the back of the group, checking to see that everyone is doing alright. Other ride leaders choose to spend the entire ride at the back. This ensures that they'll eventually come upon anyone who has stopped for any reason.
- If you choose not to lead from the front, consider:
- If it's a stick-together ride, remind everyone what the pace is and ask them to maintain it.
- If you want riders to stop in a particular location, be sure everyone knows where.
- Remind riders to follow the route carefully and stop if they have any doubts.

## The Benefits of a Sweep

- If you lead from the front, you may want to have someone ride sweep, a helper who stays at the back of the group. On most rides, the chief advantage of having a sweep is that the leader knows when everyone has arrived at the regrouping point (assuming no one in the middle of the group missed a turn). However, if you have unusually slow riders, mechanical problems, or an accident, a good sweep can serve as a cheerleader, mechanic, or co-navigator.
- If you're leading a short, slow ride, which will attract a disproportionate number of inexperienced riders, having any sweep is better than having no sweep. Ideally, though you should try to find someone who can change a tire and who will slow down and encourage the riders who are having a tough time on the hills.

## After the Ride

- **Contact any rider who was injured or lost.**
- Thank riders for coming and make sure they feel OK.
- If things didn't seem to go smoothly, ask for comments and suggestions.
- If it's a new route, ask for feedback.
- Did they like the route?
- What could you have done differently?

## Handling Injuries

### Severe Accidents

- **Important!** If a rider suffers an accident and lands on his or her head, neck, or shoulders, you must consider the possibility of a neck or back injury. Never take the rider's helmet off. If the neck is injured, moving it can lacerate the spine and cause paralysis. Until proven otherwise, assume that such an injury is possible and call 911 immediately.
- If the person is conscious: Ask if the person has neck or back pain, weakness, or loss of limb function or sensation. If so, you should suspect spinal cord injury and have the person stay very still.
- If the person is unconscious: You have no way to know what injury the person may have suffered so, do not move an unconscious person.
- If an unconscious person regains consciousness before help arrives keep the person as still and quiet as possible. You may need to be firm. Someone who is in shock or suffering a concussion isn't the best judge of what to do now. **Be sympathetic but firm.**
- If someone may have suffered a neck or back injury, you should rarely move the person. You could cause irreparable damage to the spinal cord, possibly resulting in permanent paralysis.
- If the injured person is in a roadway, divert or stop traffic rather than move the person and wait for help.
- In the rare case where you must move the injured rider, get help from as many people as possible. Make every effort to maintain the current position of the person's back and neck. Do not try to straighten someone out.
- Teamwork is critical.
- When you're on a road and an accident occurs, teamwork is critical. One person should take charge of the injured rider.
  1. Stay calm: You're no help to others if you are frantic. Pause, take a deep breath, and survey the situation before you act.
  2. Divert or stop traffic: If the injured rider is in the roadway have other riders divert or stop traffic until you can determine if the person has suffered a possible neck or back injury. Get all other riders and their bicycles off the road.



3. Determine if the person is injured seriously enough to require medical attention:  
The injured rider should get medical attention if he/she:

- ❖ Is bleeding heavily.
  - ❖ Had a head injury and lost consciousness, even briefly.
  - ❖ Can't remember what happened.
  - ❖ Has obvious pain when moving an injured limb.
  - ❖ Has trouble opening his/her jaw.
  - ❖ If you don't know much about first aid yourself, ask if anyone in your group does.
  - ❖ If the person has suffered no obvious injuries, you should still pay careful attention to determine if the person is confused or disoriented, which could also indicate a head injury.
- Important! If you have an emergency and there is no cellphone coverage, bus and cab drivers, utility crews, and construction crews usually have radios that they can use to call for help. You can also go to a nearby house or store and ask to use a landline.
  - Care for and reassure the injured rider until help arrives: Be as helpful as possible given the situation and the available materials. Keep the person as warm and dry as possible.
  - Regardless of the rider's condition, act calmly, speak in reassuring tones, and be sure that everyone around you does the same. Ask everyone who isn't helping to stand well back, so the injured rider isn't looking up to a mob of worried or horrified faces. Also, caution the others not to discuss the rider's injuries.
  - Communicate with the injured rider until help arrives:
    - ❖ Does your neck or head hurt? (If yes, don't do anything more).
    - ❖ Did you black out?
    - ❖ Do you hurt anywhere?
    - ❖ Do you know what happened?
    - ❖ What day is it?
  - You should note the rider's responses and tell the emergency personnel.

- Ask the rider questions to determine their mental status, to see if it has been altered by the injury. Tell them not to nod their head but to respond in words or with their hands.
- Make sure the person's contact information and helmet get into the ambulance: If an injured rider is taken away in an ambulance, be sure the rider's emergency contact information and helmet go along. Someone at the hospital will probably want to examine the helmet to determine the likelihood of head injuries.
- Important! If an accident or incident occurred on your ride, please notify the MHBC board. Be sure you know the rider's name and contact information, as well as that of their emergency contact, so you can call later to check on his or her condition, send a get-well card, return the rider's bike, and file an accident report with our club's insurance provider. The link to file an accident report with the club's insurance provider can be found here: [Accident/Incident Report](#)

Other concerns in the event of a severe accident:

- In addition to taking care of the injured rider, be concerned about the other riders and the injured rider's bike and gear:
- Continuing the ride: In some cases, you may need to continue the ride before the injured rider has recovered enough to start riding again or before the ambulance has arrived. For example, if it's evening and you're running out of daylight, you'll need to get the other riders back to the starting point.
- You shouldn't leave the injured rider alone unless he or she is clearly all right and has a way to get back to the starting point or back home. If the other riders can find their way back to the starting point, you and someone who knows first aid should stay with the injured rider. Otherwise, you should ask for volunteers to stay behind, including someone who knows first aid.
- What to do with the injured rider's bike and gear: If you need to leave the rider's bike where it is, place it in a secure location and take all of the removable gear with you (computer, bags, lights, etc.) preferably before nightfall and let the rider know that you have it. Alternatively, you may be able to leave the bike at a nearby fire station, bike shop, or house.
- The website membership directory and digital sign-up section of your ride includes an emergency contact name and phone number. Many riders also wear wrist or ankle bands or keep a card in their saddle bag containing contact information. If an injured rider is taken to the hospital unconscious, call the emergency contact immediately and calmly explain what happened. If the rider is conscious, he or she can decide whom to contact and when

## Mechanical Problems

- If someone has mechanical problems, you can:
  - ❖ Check with your riders to see if anyone has the parts and expertise to repair.
  - ❖ If there's a nearby bike shop, car repair or hardware store, you might take the group there on a detour. You could also suggest that the rider go alone and provide instructions on how to rejoin the group later, if possible.
  - ❖ Suggest calling home or calling a taxi or other hired car service.
  - ❖ Send someone back for a car. Some problems are not as severe as they might seem:
    - ❖ - Broken spokes: Generally, if you don't have too far to travel, you can still ride with a broken spoke. If you can, remove the parts of the spoke, otherwise tie or tape the broken parts to adjacent spokes. If breaking the spoke also affected the true of the wheel, you may need to loosen the brakes. Emphasize that the rider should avoid potholes.
    - ❖ Broken Chains: If someone has a chain tool, try to remove the bad link and replace the tire as soon as you can. If the hole is in the sidewall, take extra care because this can cause the tire to fall off the rim; use this trick just long enough to slowly limp home or to a shop and put the chain back together. Because the chain will be shorter, the rider should avoid using the large chain ring (in front) or the large gear (in back).
    - ❖ A hole in the tire: If you have a small hole in a tire, you can keep the inner tube from bulging out by slipping something inside the tire to cover the hole. A dollar bill works, and a section cut from an old tire works better, but it's just temporary.