



THE MISSOULA BICYCLE CLUB

February

Dear Ride Leaders,

Thank you for volunteering to lead one or more rides this year.

I am forwarding a few things for your information and recordkeeping. Enclosed are the guidelines for ride leaders, club membership forms, and a ride participation list.

Please read over the guidelines. They contain hints for leading safe, successful, and well attended rides. Remember to give the newsletter editor information about your ride so it gets posted in the newsletter.

Because nonmembers often will show up at rides, the club membership form is a handy way of encouraging these folks to join the club.

The ride participation list, although not required, is very helpful in a number of ways:

1. it lets the leader know exactly how many riders he should keep track of;
2. we can send nonmembers a complimentary copy of the newsletter if we have their address and thereby encourage new memberships; and
3. gain a better understanding of the rides our membership prefers.

Please return list to the ride coordinator.

Remember that each ride leader is responsible for carrying a first aid and tool kit. If you don't have your own, please checkout the club's kit with the equipment manager.

Thanks again for volunteering and enjoy your rides.

Sincerely,

Vice-president and ride coordinator

MISSOULA BICYCLE CLUB

RIDE LEADER GUIDELINES

These guidelines have been approved by the club membership as suggestions, things to think about, and recommended club policy for all MBC ride leaders. They are not mandates, nor do all of them apply to every ride. However, by establishing standards for club rides and using good leadership techniques, our rides will be safer, more enjoyable, and attractive to new members.

BEFORE THE RIDE

Current MBC membership is a prerequisite for leading an MBC ride. As limited options exist in the Missoula area for day-length rides on pavement, it is useful to find a focus for each ride. Possibilities include:

cafe/restaurants	overnights, camping or other lodging
swimming	conditioning or race training
hot springs	scenic area visits
progressive dinners	musical events
picnics	seasonal attractions

These are only a few of the standards, use your imagination! Mountain bikes have recently opened up vast new possibilities for rides. Avoid prohibited or controversial areas for these rides and specify if they are suitable for fat tire bikes only.

SCHEDULING A RIDE

The club vice president is the ride coordinator, responsible for compiling a schedule of pre-TOSRV rides beginning about mid-March. After TOSRV, rides can be scheduled through the vice president or directly with the newsletter editor. Newsletter deadline is the 20th of every month.

Provide at least this information for every ride; name, date, time, destination, meeting place, ride length, leaders name and number, and general information.

The secretary shall list this same information in the "Around Missoula" column of the Missoulian within the week immediately before the ride. They need at least 72 hours notice, delivered in writing to the appropriate "in box".

Remember: once a ride is scheduled and publicized, the leader and Missoula Bicycle Club have accepted the responsibility to conduct it properly and insure that a leader be at the appointed place, on time, to conduct the ride. If for any reason the leader is unable to be there, he or she must locate a substitute.

It is best if the ride leader has traveled the entire route and be familiar with it. This should be done within a week before the actual ride to insure that current road conditions, traffic, signs, etc. are known.

If a campground or cafe is involved, make sure it will be open! Notify them a few days ahead that a group is coming; when, and how many. It is best to follow up on this by calling as the ride leaves, or soon after.

Arriver early yourself, but allow a 5-10 minute margin for late comers before departure.

Greet and introduce yourself to new riders and ones you don't know. Introduce new riders to others. SMILE, be pleasant; a leader can set a tone and break the ice.

Pass around a ride participant list, getting everyone's name, address and whether or not they are a MBC member. Try to have a newsletter or ride schedule with a club membership form and suggest that nonmembers might care to join.

Just after the official beginning time, present a SHORT verbal ride orientation consisting of: destination, route, any special hazards, and all attractions. There are several ways to do this all requiring some advance preparation:

- verbal description is OK for short simple rides; be clear and concise.
- provide maps for each rider. Duplicate appropriate sections of Forest Service maps (Lolo National Forest Visitor Map covers most of the local area) or county highway maps from the Chamber of Commerce. Highlight the route on them after duplicating.
- leader hand-draws a simple route map and duplicates;
- leader writes a simple verbal description of the route and duplicates.

Whatever is done, it is most important that each rider know where the ride is going, any preplanned stops, and the general route.

ON THE ROAD

Often the first few miles of a ride are the most complex, being on city streets leaving town. Consider asking another rider ahead of time to ride "point" on a prearranged route out of town. This allows you, the leader, to wait a few minutes for late arrivals and also lets riders leave on time without hanging around. Any group has an inertia, and requires someone (the leader) to get things moving.

It is best for the leader to ride at the rear of a group, especially for the first few miles. This allows assessment of any uncertain riders, observation of riding speeds, and encouragement or help as needed.

Mechanical problems often crop up here, also. New riders or those on rides longer than they've previously done look to the leader for support; such a rider will be easily discouraged by getting lost or left behind.

Later, if it suits your riding style, move up through the group and socialize. However, the leader on each club ride should maintain an awareness of where group riders are, especially if an individual drops well behind the group. At the ride's beginning, ask if anyone plans to leave early and remind riders to let someone know if they leave the ride. People often leave near a ride's end when participants begin to drop off upon returning to town. The ride leader should maintain an awareness of all riders throughout the ride to insure that someone doesn't inadvertently get lost or left behind due to a bike or body breakdown.

EXPLANATION

A basic assumption on easy and moderate club rides is that everyone is self-sufficient. However, a ride leader is well served to be equipped with:

- basic first aid materials;
- simple bicycle tools, especially those needed to repair flat tires;
- your bike and equipment in good shape so you will have time to help others if they need it.

A MBC-owned tool and spare parts kit is available for scheduled rides from the equipment manager. Make mental note of who else has tools, first aid materials, spares, and where they are in the group.

ROAD SAFETY

Two purposes of the Missoula Bicycle Club are to promote safety, and group riding. These goals are especially important in view of the 1983 state legislation giving bicycles legal status, rights, and responsibilities as vehicles on the public roadways of Montana. Vital factors of club rides reflecting our public image and safe riding include:

- Riding single file in the presence of other traffic. It is legal to ride two abreast only when on a striped road shoulder wide enough to do so without impeding overtaking traffic.
- Riding as near as it is safe to the right edge of the road, accounting for debris or obstructions along the road edge. Exceptions are when preparing to make a left turn; when it is unsafe for overtaking vehicles to pass a bicyclist due to narrow lane width; when the bicyclist is traveling at the same speed as other traffic.
- Getting at least 6 feet off the road when stopped, especially as a group.
- Obeying all applicable traffic laws and traffic control signals.

When riding in groups, bicyclists are a highly visible presence on the road and have the greatest need in the public's eye to obey traffic rules and ride as responsible members of the motor vehicle-bicycle-pedestrian traffic mix.

Riding in a group entails responsibilities toward other bicyclists. Give other riders room; signal stops and turns; sound off when passing and warn following riders of road hazards ahead.

Ride leaders can be most effective in road safety by setting personal examples and with gentle reminders to others.

AT THE RIDE'S END

Choose and announce prior to departure a ride return point, thus establishing an "end" of the ride and your responsibility as a ride leader. Use a mental checkoff list or the participant list at the finish point to account for all riders. Count heads as the ride starts and do so again several times during the ride; this may be most appropriate with an extra large group or with novice riders. The ride leader should be aware of where all riders are during the ride. You are remiss if someone disappears and you don't know where or why.

REMEMBER: ORGANIZING AND LEADING A CLUB RIDE IS INTERESTING AND REWARDING. THE RIDE LEADER ALWAYS LEARNS MORE THAN ANYONE ELSE, AND USUALLY HAS MORE FUN.