



Pedal Power ACT

Social Ride Leader Handbook

March 2020 edition

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Introduction

About this handbook

This handbook provides guidance on how to conduct social rides on behalf of Pedal Power ACT. It also sets out some of the need-to-know information related to social rides, like handling incidents that unfortunately may occur during a social ride.

For those wanting to lead social rides, the handbook also indicates how to become an accredited social ride leader for day rides. Accreditation for tours and events is beyond the scope of this manual and enquiries about this form of accreditation should be directed to the Tours Committee (tours@pedalpower.org.au).

While the focus of this handbook is on social rides on roads and cycle paths around Canberra, it is also generally applicable to off-road rides. For a detailed exposition of the philosophy and practice of mountain-biking, riders, especially leaders, may care to consult *The simple art of social mountain biking* (available at <https://www.dropbox.com/s/azyjaib60jnedp6/Simple%20art%20of%20social%20mountain%20biking%201ed.pdf?dl=0>).

A publication titled *Cycling and Mountain Biking: Australian Adventure Activity Good Practice Guide* from the Outdoor Council of Australia provides much useful information about responsibly managing and leading a cycling activity, whether road-based or off-road. It can be downloaded from <https://australianaas.org.au>, along with related risk management framework documents, the *Australian Adventure Activity Standard* and the *Core Australian Adventure Activity Good Practice Guide*.

What is a social ride?

A social ride is a ride in and around Canberra organised and conducted, free of charge, by a Pedal Power ACT volunteer. A range of rides, to suit a range of rider capabilities, are offered. Distances vary from 15km to over 100km. Cycling speeds and terrain, vary as well enabling every rider (and ride leader) to find a ride they can expect to enjoy. Social rides can occur weekly, monthly or occasionally.

Some social rides are open to non-members but most are for members only or for particular types of riders, eg women. Ride restrictions are noted on the rides calendar. Many of the member-only rides are quite popular and are often at, or near capacity. However, most ride leaders do encourage non-members to contact them to discuss trying out a ride, and if the ride leader is satisfied with the non-member's capability for the ride in prospect, they are likely to be invited to join, provided there is capacity for new riders.

Social ride leaders and coordinators

Most of Pedal Power ACT's social rides are overseen by both social ride leaders and ride coordinators. While ride leaders are the ones who conduct individual rides, ride coordinators look after the rides as an ongoing program of rides. They schedule ride leaders, send out emails to regular riders to describe coming rides, collect ride statistics and handle issues arising in their ride programs. For example, they may create a new program of rides when the number of would-be participants suggests that the existing program cannot meet the needs of all riders, consistent with safety or the capabilities or interests of riders.

This handbook does not address the roles and responsibilities of ride coordinators, only ride leaders.

Route masters and accredited social ride leaders

Pedal Power ACT requires that its social rides be led by an accredited social ride leader (see below for details of the accreditation process). However, an individual ride may be led by a non-accredited ride leader—called a *route master*—provided that person is a financial member of Pedal Power ACT and an accredited ride leader has agreed to exercise general supervision of the non-accredited leader during the ride. The accredited social ride leader is ultimately responsible for the ride and for appropriately responding to eventualities on the ride.

Leaderless rides are not Pedal Power ACT rides

If on the day of a scheduled ride no accredited ride leader is available, the ride must be cancelled. Riders may, however, still choose to undertake the ride or do another ride, but this will not be an official Pedal Power ACT ride; it will be a private ride. This is important as it assists in managing Pedal Power ACT's risks and maintains the integrity of the social ride program.

Social ride names and grades

The names of most regular social rides reflect the day of the week on which the ride occurs and/or the nature of the ride, eg Thursday Riders, Wanderers 23.

In addition, all Pedal Power ACT social rides are graded according to the grading system given at <https://www.pedalpower.org.au/rides/choosing-a-ride/>. The ride leader's description of a ride should thus be worded to accurately reflect the grading of the ride. (Rides are graded according to their distance, pace, hilliness, terrain and rider skill.)

Conducting a social ride

What it takes to be a social ride leader

Roles and responsibilities of a social ride leader

As a social ride leader your responsibilities encompass all things required to organise and manage a social ride as indicated below.

Prior to the ride

- Develop criteria for participating in your ride and determine the equipment needed for your ride in accordance with our ride grading system.
- Prepare a notice for your ride for the website and ride calendar and email it to calendar@pedalpower.org.au.
- Prepare a cue sheet and/or map for your ride, if such detail is appropriate.

On the day of the ride

- Determine whether the ride is to proceed and whether all riders should participate (for guidance, see *At the start of your social ride* below).
- Ensure that the sign on sheet is completed by all participating riders.
- Brief riders at the start of your ride.
- Manage experienced, weaker and/or inexperienced riders during your ride, by assigning grouping riders, tail end riders, shepherding riders, mentors etc.
- Manage all incidents and emergencies that may happen on your ride.

After the ride

- Forward the completed rider sign on sheets and, if applicable, incident report(s) to the ride coordinator and Pedal Power ACT office.

Skills and qualities of a social ride leader

To be a social ride leader you must be a financial member of Pedal Power ACT and be accredited to lead social rides, subject to the limited conditional exceptions mentioned in the previous section. On top of this, you must be an avid, confident bike rider and possess:

- strong communication skills
- a calming and competent demeanour during the ride
- a patient and positive attitude
- empathy towards participants of differing personality types, ages, races, religions, backgrounds and beliefs
- an ability to manage the social ride logistics
- basic first aid capabilities.

Getting your social ride endorsed

If you wish to establish a new social ride, either one-off or a regular activity, contact the Social Rides Committee (rides@pedalpower.org.au). Committee members will take you through the process of having your proposed ride formally endorsed as a Pedal Power ACT ride.

Planning your social ride

There are no restrictions on the type of social ride you may conduct, as long as you and your group follow road rules and Pedal Power ACT guidelines. Rides can thus take different shapes and forms, including a jaunt to a café, a half-day social ride, a day long (fast or even slow) ride or rides at night.

We recommend you run a ride that you will enjoy, that you go to a destination you like, via a route suitable to you and at your pace. That is only fair, for you are doing Pedal Power ACT members a service by running the ride. Do not be too concerned about finding a 'new' ride. Although new ideas are most welcome, there are only so many places to go. For a regular Pedal Power ACT ride, it's important that you ensure that the route and conduct of the ride is in line with the advertised length and difficulty and other specifications of the ride.

If you need inspiration for a ride, a good starting point is the Pedal Power ACT rides calendar on the website. It will give you a feeling for what others are doing.

Deciding the route for your social ride

Probably the best way to plan your ride is to use one of the many online tools like [Google Maps](#), [Map My Ride](#) or [Ride with GPS](#). Many of these tools allow you to produce a .gpx file of your route which you can load into your smartphone or other GPS-enabled device. You can also share the files and online maps with the riders.

If you have mapped out a completely new ride, we recommend that you ride (or at least drive) it yourself beforehand. When doing so, take note of:

- any particularly difficult areas or hazards, eg the location of a kerb ramp or underpass
- the location of suitable stopping (and regrouping) spots, water, food and toilets
- the distance (overall and to focus points, such as cafés or water points)
- the length of time the ride will take, including stops.

Bear in mind that the easier your ride, the more likely it will attract inexperienced and less skilled riders.

Also note that, in general, large groups of riders can be difficult to manoeuvre through town and district centres. When deciding your route, try to approach these areas via bike paths or quiet back streets.

For off-road rides, it is essential that you check whether you are legally permitted to ride the route you have set your mind on, especially in national parks and over private land. Get permission if necessary.

You can make your social ride more comfortable and enjoyable for the riders if you:

- have a clear destination or halfway stop, eg for coffee or a view. Consult www.DecafSucks.com to find the good coffee and avoid the bad. If you anticipate having more than half a dozen riders in the group, it's a good idea to phone the café a few days in advance to check whether it can handle the number of anticipated riders and can take a booking. Confirm the numbers on the day of the ride
- include one or two opportunities for toilet breaks during or at the start/end of the ride. The <https://toiletmap.gov.au/> website can help you locate public toilets
- consider where riders might obtain a water refill, particularly on longer rides or during hot weather
- have regard to the temperature and other weather conditions and hours of daylight expected on your ride. If necessary, cancel the ride rather than risk the weather. Curtail the length of the ride if riders are not suitably clothed to avoid exposure or overheating, or to avoid being caught out after dusk unless all riders are equipped with adequate front and rear lights.

Advertising your social ride

Advertising typically consists of adding a ride to the rides calendar on the Pedal Power ACT website and having it included in the rides calendar in *Canberra Cyclist*. Regular rides are normally also advertised through emails sent out by the ride coordinator.

If you are conducting a one-off social ride, make use of the following Pedal Power ACT advertising opportunities:

- add an entry in the website rides calendar
- circulate an email to members through ride coordinators
- email the Communications Manager to request an item in Pedal Power ACT's fortnightly *NewsWheel* newsletter.

You may also have social media contacts, but in any event put the ride on the calendar so that it is clear that it is a Pedal Power ACT ride.

When advertising your ride, be sure to include in the ride description the place, time and date of meeting for the ride, the planned route, café stop(s), its grading, notable hazards, types of bike suited to the ride, requirements specific to your ride such as extra water or lights and ride leader contact details.

Managing your social ride

What to bring on your social ride

Make sure to bring on your social ride:

- your bike and helmet
- a pump, a tool kit and spares
- water, and perhaps a snack/food
- a mobile phone

- a copy of your cue sheet and/or map (if appropriate)
- a copy of the Pedal Power ACT ride sign on sheet (see below) and a couple of pens. For the popular rides, the sign on sheets are often pre-populated with names and contact details
- at least one copy of the Pedal Power ACT incident report form
- first aid materials.

At the start of your social ride

Arrive early

You must attend the start of your social ride at the advertised location and time. It's a good idea to arrive early so that you can welcome the riders, particularly new riders in the group. Make sure to pass around the sign on sheet and check that all riders sign it. If for some reason you are unavailable to be present at the start of or during the ride, arrange for another accredited ride leader to replace you. Otherwise the ride will need to be cancelled or participants advised the ride is no longer Pedal Power ACT endorsed.

Confirm that the ride should proceed

Before commencing the ride, decide whether the ride should proceed and whether all riders should be accepted onto the ride, on the basis of any new or changed information since the ride was advertised.

You should also consider whether the ride should continue on the planned route or whether an amended route is appropriate. For example, consider the impact on the proposed ride and on riders of:

- rapidly changing weather conditions
- previously unknown road works making riding unsafe
- whether there are too many riders and too few experienced riders to help manage the group
- each rider's ability to complete the advertised ride safely, including whether the bike is suitable for the terrain to be traversed and whether it appears to be mechanically sound
- any rider's potential negative impact on the wellbeing of other riders, including any concerns about a rider's health on the day or injury during the ride. Take into account the first aid training of yourself or others and any current protocols issued by Pedal Power ACT, for example, regarding community health emergencies.

Give a pre-ride briefing

Next, hold a pre-ride briefing in which you advise the riders of the route and its characteristics. The following list is a guide to the types of things to cover but you may need to adapt it to fit your needs.

- Welcome riders, especially new riders, and introduce yourself.
- Advise details of the route, terrain and road surfaces, mentioning:
 - known or possible hazards along the way, eg cars, potholes, road works, etc.
 - how long you think the ride will take
 - points for regrouping, toilet stops and breaks, noting that these stops will often be driven by the needs of riders.

- Advise on road rules and etiquette:
 - bike path rules: keep left, stop off the path, give way to pedestrians and watch out for oncoming bicycles
 - road rules: obey the traffic rules, keep left, stop at red lights and stop signs, use cycle lanes, take care in traffic, especially in negotiating roundabouts
 - group etiquette and signals; call out when slowing and stopping, point out hazards to following riders, signal when turning.
- Ask participants whether:
 - any of them plan on leaving the ride before the finish
 - there are non-members of Pedal Power ACT present. Make sure to tell them that Pedal Power ACT public liability insurance covers financial members only.
- Designate a tail-end person or persons if all riders are unlikely to remain in clear view of the ride leader. If available, give the tail-ender a copy of the route map, otherwise ensure they know the route.
- Give other pertinent advice.
- Do a head-count of riders.
- Advise if the ride is to be divided up, eg if there are too many riders to ensure the safety of the group, or if there are options in the ride, eg an optional segment in the ride.
- Get riders to introduce themselves. This is especially important if there are new riders.
- Double-check whether everyone has signed the ride sign on sheet and collect it.
- Identify any qualified first aiders, doctors or nurses accompanying the ride in the event of an emergency.
- Ensure everyone is aware of the person who has nominated as the tail-ender and advise if the 'corner' or 'sign post' system is being used.

Check helmets

Before you start, satisfy yourself that each rider is wearing a bicycle helmet, securely fitted and fastened. Otherwise, they must not begin the ride. Don't hesitate to speak to and assist riders if their helmets appear to be incorrectly fitted or fastened.

Only helmets of the type approved by the Road Transport Authority (ACT) comply with the road rules. Approved helmets are those that meet Australian Standard 2063:1996 *Pedal Cycle Helmets* or Snell Standard 1995 *Bicycle Helmet*. You can make riders aware of this requirement.

The road rules **except** from the obligation to wear an approved helmet **only** a member of a religious group who is wearing a headdress customarily worn by members of that group, **if** wearing the headdress would make it impractical to wear a bicycle helmet.

Getting your ride underway

At this point, you are ready to get under way. Aim to be on the road soon after the advertised starting time. In the first few kilometres, assess the requirements of new riders subtly and perhaps assign someone to keep an eye on stragglers. It is often advisable to start off a little more slowly than later, so that riders can warm up.

As a ride leader on an official Pedal Power ACT activity, you represent our organisation. You are required to ride in a safe and courteous manner and also adhere to our code of conduct (see below).

Monitor the progress of your ride

During the ride, review your progress. Consider the issues mentioned in *Confirm that the ride should proceed* above and change the ride as necessary. Also, monitor the riders to determine whether anyone should be asked to discontinue their participation.

Manage incidents during your social ride

An incident is any occurrence when someone is injured or another thing occurs that may have repercussions for Pedal Power ACT, you as the ride leader, riders or others including pedestrians and motorists. If an incident does occur during your social ride, follow the advice and directions in *Handling Incidents* below.

At the end of your social ride

At the end of your social ride, if appropriate, counsel any riders who rode at a significantly different speed from the average. A significantly faster rider might be advised to consider joining a more challenging ride next time. Conversely, a rider who struggled to keep up might be advised to join an easier ride.

After your social ride

After your social ride, forward the completed rider sign on sheet and, if applicable, an incident report, to the ride coordinator and to the Pedal Power ACT office (by hand or as a scanned document attached to an email) at events@pedalpower.org.au.

Social ride leader resources

Social ride *Release* and sign on sheet

Pedal Power ACT requires all participants in social rides to sign on using the **Social ride *Release* and sign on sheet**.

This is an essential risk mitigation tool for ride leaders, riders in the group and Pedal Power ACT. Completing the ride sign on sheet gives us essential information: we know who is on the ride; we can contact someone if a rider is injured on the ride and we can contact riders if it is necessary to follow up any incidents that occur on the ride. The *Release* part of the sign on sheet is a limited release from contract and civil wrongs (torts) law in favour of Pedal Power ACT and its representatives. The *Release* cannot override the law to the extent that it gives rights of action to individual riders but it does emphasise to riders that they are responsible for riding safely in their own interest and the interests of others.

If a rider refuses to accept the *Release* incorporated in the sign on sheet, advise them that they cannot ride with the group. Should they argue, ask them to contact the Pedal Power ACT office.

You can download the Social ride *Release* and sign on sheet at <https://www.pedalpower.org.au/rides/our-ride-leaders/>.

Insurance

As an accredited social ride leader, you are covered by Pedal Power ACT's volunteer insurance policy. As a Pedal Power ACT member, you are covered by Pedal Power ACT's member insurance for accident and public liability.

Details of Pedal Power ACT's insurance arrangements are available at <https://www.pedalpower.org.au/membership/insurance/>.

Handling incidents

If an incident occurs during a social ride you are leading, assess whether it requires attention and the filing of an incident report. Some minor incidents, such as minor scrapes or bruises, can be handled on the spot and most likely do not warrant an incident report.

More serious incidents, eg a serious injury to a rider, significant damage to property and/or an incident involving a third party like a motorist or pedestrian—require a written report. Give priority to first aid, including summoning an ambulance (call '000') if a rider is incapacitated or the extent of the injury is uncertain. Ask for police to also attend in circumstances of emergency, particularly in incidents involving significant injury to a rider or third parties or when traffic flow is affected. Obtain witness details when first aid and summoning help have been attended to.

Incidents of another nature that might occur, such as accusations of discrimination, should be reported to the Pedal Power ACT office.

Completed incident reports should be forwarded to the Pedal Power ACT office (by hand or as a scanned document attached to an email), which in turn will notify our insurer.

In the case of an incident resulting in a serious injury or death, you must immediately contact the Pedal Power ACT office as there may be additional reporting requirements under the ACT's Work Health and Safety Act.

The incident form can be downloaded at <https://www.pedalpower.org.au/rides/our-ride-leaders/>.

Social ride leader code of conduct

All ride leaders, accredited or not, are required to comply with the following code of conduct.

1. Set your standards of behaviour through clear instructions and personal example when dealing with junctions, potholes and other hazards, vehicles, passing traffic, narrow roads, dangerous descents, passing horses, and obeying traffic signals. Remember that pedestrians and horses always have right of way.
2. Ride in a safe, lawful and responsible manner that sets an example to other riders and road users.
3. Make sure the riders at the front clearly relay indications of hazards to riders who are following. If in doubt stop the group to ask for cooperation.
4. Speak individually to riders who do not conform to good riding practice.
5. As far as possible, ensure the safety and wellbeing of all riders.
6. When leading a large group, consider appointing an experienced rider to ride at the rear of the group or ask one of the faster riders to lead so that you can stay at the back to ensure nobody becomes lost or left behind.
7. If the riders form into different speed groups, ensure that each group knows where the ride is going.
8. Run the ride as close to the advertised average speed as far as practicable.
9. Delegate tasks to others as required, eg searching for a straggler, assisting another rider.
10. If a rider suggests that they may leave the ride, or that the ride should carry on without them, check that the rider is not separating because they feel they are holding back the group or are unwelcome or unwell. Consider that you may be able to change the ride to suit their abilities, or you can ask an experienced participant to assist that rider.
11. If a rider intends to leave the ride, ensure that they have adequate knowledge and resources to get home.
12. If finishing at a location other than the start, check that all riders can find their way back to the start and, if not, give directions provided these are understood, or arrange for another rider to go with them if you cannot go yourself.
13. Attend to incidents during the ride and assist with obtaining appropriate help (in so far as practicable).

Social ride leader accreditation

If you wish to organise or conduct a Pedal Power ACT social ride, you must be accredited by Pedal Power ACT. Follow these steps to receive accreditation:

1. Be/become a financial member of Pedal Power.
2. Advise your ride coordinator or another accredited ride leader that you would like to be accredited.
3. Arrange with your ride coordinator to lead two 'practice' rides under the guidance of an accredited ride leader.* Read and understand the information in this handbook, especially the sections on the ride leader code of conduct, running rides and handling incidents.
4. Read and understand the Pedal Power ACT accident insurance cover.
5. Plan and lead the practice rides.
6. When you are ready, ask to lead an accreditation ride (third ride).
7. On your accreditation ride you will be assessed by two accredited ride leaders. They will advise you of the outcome.
8. If the assessors recommend you become accredited you will be added to Pedal Power's list of accredited ride leaders. If they recommend against your accreditation, they will discuss with you the reasons that you were not recommended. Accreditation lasts for three years.

**This requirement can be waived for a candidate ride leader who has previously led numerous cycle rides and is a highly experienced rider, but they must still undertake an assessment ride where they plan a route and lead a ride.*

Reassessment of social ride leaders

Ride leaders are accredited by Pedal Power ACT for a three-year term. After that time, they are reassessed, and, if found satisfactory, accredited for another term. To be found satisfactory, you must:

1. Have been successfully leading rides; at least two over the previous year.
2. Lead a social ride and be re-assessed.
3. Make sure that you are still familiar with the information in this handbook, especially the sections on the ride leader code of conduct, running rides and handling incidents.
4. Make sure that you are still familiar with the Pedal Power ACT accident insurance cover.

Accredited ride leaders

A list of accredited ride leaders, showing the types of rides they are accredited to lead and the period for which their accreditation is current, is on the Pedal Power ACT website—see <https://www.pedalpower.org.au/rides/our-ride-leaders/>.