



# Remote area riding: Instructions for leaders and riders

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# About this document

Pedal Power ACT offers its members a range of social rides, from short excursions around (sub)urban Canberra, through mountain bike treks along the Centenary Trail, to multi-day tours elsewhere in Australia and overseas. A few of these rides are in remote areas where access to services and support is limited or non-existent.

This document provides instruction on riding in remote areas including the roles and responsibilities of ride leaders and riders when participating in such rides.

This document is to be followed for all Pedal Power ACT rides in remote areas.

# About remote riding

Riding in remote areas really is no different from riding anywhere else except that the ride is remote from services and facilities. In these situations, adverse environmental factors, encounters with animals, riding incidents, bike problems and the like, are of much greater significance. Consequently, greater attention must be paid to managing the risks involved in riding in these areas. This, in turn, imposes greater emphasis on the planning, conduct and management of such rides.

## What is a remote area?

For our purposes, a remote area is a location, in Australia or overseas, with at least two of the following characteristics:

- mobile phone reception is intermittent or non-existent
- access by emergency services is limited or response will take at least one hour
- access to food and water additional to that carried by riders is limited or non-existent either en route or within reasonable cycling distance off route, and
- the nearest town or facilities when mid-route is at least a two hour ride away.

In addition, the terrain may be rugged and the track rough, though bitumen roads are also found in remote areas.

## What types of rides go into remote areas?

Like all Pedal Power ACT ACT social rides, rides in remote areas may be:

- tours or multi-day rides, with or without support vehicles and personnel. Nights may be spent in camps, in towns or a combination of both, or
- day or part-day excursions.

A remote area ride might be along a known and well documented trail, eg the Goldfields Trail, or be on tracks and trails with little documentation, or poor or no signage.

A tour is considered to be in a remote area if at least 30% of the route meets the remote area characteristics given above.

## What types of bikes are used on remote area rides?

Rides in remote areas typically require a mountain bike or a gravel bike, though other types of bikes may be appropriate for a particular ride, eg touring bikes for remote area rides on bitumen and gravel.

An important part of planning and promoting a remote area ride is to make clear to potential participants the type of bike required.

## What risks are associated with riding in remote areas?

The risks associated with riding in remote areas are essentially those associated with riding a bike anywhere. What distinguishes risk in remote area rides is the severity of the consequences should some incident occur. For example, a rider with a broken arm or leg can be relatively quickly transferred to a hospital in suburban Canberra. But in a remote area, it may take many hours or even days for medical assistance to reach the rider, with more time to get to a hospital. Significant medical complications can occur during the waiting period.

Countering this increased risk must be thorough planning, a high level of discipline amongst the riders and an excellent appreciation by everyone of the consequences of the risks involved in remote area riding.

Therefore, each ride in a remote area should have its own risk management plan, based on that used for standard Pedal Power ACT social rides.

## Who can lead a ride in a remote area?

Remote area rides can only be led by a Pedal Power ACT accredited remote area ride leader. This accreditation is supplementary to the standard Pedal Power ACT social ride leader and tour leader accreditations. See Remote ride leader accreditation on page 7.

## Who can participate in a remote area ride?

Remote area rides are open to all Pedal Power ACT members whom the ride leader assesses are capable of successfully participating in a particular ride.

Normally, children (people under the age of 18) should not participate in a remote area ride. However, if they are allowed to participate they must be accompanied by a parent or other appropriate adult, who will accept the conditions of participation on behalf of the child.

Non-members may be allowed on remote rides on a case-by-case basis and at the discretion of the ride leader. They should be advised to have their own insurance and be encouraged to join Pedal Power ACT.

## How do you plan a remote area ride?

Planning a remote area ride takes longer, is more involved and detailed, and is more complex than planning a ride in a non-remote area. The more remote the area the greater the extent and importance of planning.

To prepare, analyse maps, web sites and books; talk with people who have done the ride or know the area. Check the terrain and the route profile. Look for route maps, eg HEMA maps, Roof Top Maps, state agency map series such as [NSW topographic series](#), and GPS files.

Where the ride transits public land, consult with the managing authority, eg national parks and/or forestry agencies. These agencies will generally be able to advise on suitable routes and maps (and often sell such maps).

Perhaps ask a few riders who will be on the ride to join you in the planning process.

**Ideally, take a reconnaissance ride over the whole or significant sections of the proposed route to familiarise yourself with the route, assess its suitability, identify potential troublesome sections and generally get a feel for how the group will manage. At the least, become as familiar with the route as you can through whatever resources you can access.**

As best you can, produce a .gpx/.tcx/.fit file of the route if you can't find one.

Once you have collected the information produce a ride plan to share with the riders. See Remote area ride plan checklist on page 9.

Remember that your planning is intended to produce a safe and enjoyable ride for everyone.

## Is there a minimum number of people who should be on a remote area ride?

Accidents happen, despite the best planning. So for safety there should be a minimum of four riders on a remote area ride. This allows one rider to stay with an injured rider (preferably a rider with some first aid experience) while the other two can ride out for help, if this is the only way to get help (satellites down, PLB not working etc).

## What about semi-remote area rides? Are there such rides?

We might define a semi-remote area ride as one that has one of the characteristics of a remote area ride and many of the risks.

When leading a semi-remote area ride Pedal Power ACT recommends that the ride leader generally adopts the requirements for a remote area ride, suitably modified to reflect the nature of the proposed ride. For example, arranging an emergency advisor is strongly recommended along with detailed planning. But the list of mandatory and optional equipment need not be as comprehensive.

As always, it is essential to create and manage a ride to ensure the safety of all riders.

# Roles and responsibilities

Before embarking on, or planning, a ride in a remote area both the ride leader and participating riders should carefully consider the risks associated with the ride along with the benefits and fun it will provide.

## Ride leader role and responsibilities

As a ride leader on a remote area ride your role is to plan, manage and conduct the ride in a safe and convivial manner.

Your responsibilities are:

- Consider the risks associated with your proposed ride by developing a risk management plan. See Pedal Power ACT's standard social rides risk management plan as a basis.
- Before finalising the ride, contact the public land management agency, eg national parks agency, to make sure you can access any public land you will ride over at the time and place you intend to ride, eg the area may be closed for a feral animal control program or hazard reduction burn. Provide them with details of your ride: start/finish dates/places, leader contact, emergency contact.
- Plan the ride in as much detail as necessary to make it as safe and enjoyable as possible.
- If practical, take a reconnaissance ride over the route or significant sections if you are not familiar with the terrain or condition of the route.
- Arrange/collect .gpx/.tcx/.fit files, paper maps and other documentation on the route. Ensure that at least one other rider has the GPS file(s) loaded on their GPS device as a backup. Note that paper maps are increasingly hard to get and are being withdrawn by Geoscience Australia.
- Arrange for riders to provide you with an emergency contact to be included in the ride plan.
- Document the ride in a ride plan for sharing with the riders. See Remote ride plan checklist on page 9. This may be supplemented by more detailed notes, eg intersections, progressive distances, turn directions, landmarks such as road and river intersections, accommodation arrangements, support requirements, logistics for travel.
- Revise the minimum equipment list as appropriate for the ride. See Remote area ride equipment list on page 10.
- Circulate all documentation to riders in good time before the ride.
- Arrange an emergency advisor to contact emergency services if the ride is delayed. See Emergency advisor procedures on page 12.
- Ensure that all riders have the skills, competence and fitness to undertake the ride. Exclude from the ride anyone you consider:
  - is not able to safely do the ride, or

- is/will be significantly slower than the other riders, or
- has an inappropriate or unsafe bike, or
- lacks the mandatory equipment.

These exclusions are about ensuring the safety of all the riders. If in doubt, leave them out!

- Ensure that all riders sign the Pedal Power ACT sign on sheet and the conditions of participation in a remote area ride (page 14).
- At agreed times/locations during the ride and at the end of the ride, contact the emergency advisor and update them on the status of the ride.
- Manage and conduct the ride in accordance with Pedal Power ACT's normal ride management regime, eg keep the riders in one group, control wayward riders, exercise discretion in unusual or difficult circumstances. If appropriate, check-in/check-out at a ranger station before entering public land.

## Rider responsibilities

As a rider on a remote area ride (and the ride leader is a rider in this context) your role is enjoy the ride and assist in making the ride enjoyable and safe for all riders.

Your responsibilities are:

- Accept the terms and conditions related to riding in a remote area. See Conditions of participation in a remote area ride on page 14.
- Obey all decisions of the ride leader, including changes to the ride plan.
- Carry at least the equipment listed in the remote area ride equipment list (page 10) plus any other items nominated by the ride leader.
- Prepare for unforeseen circumstances, eg changes in the weather, delays, injury, illness.
- Notify the ride leader before the ride if you have any health problems that may become an issue on the ride. Agree with the ride leader how these will be managed.
- Give a family member or other person a copy of the ride plan. Tell them to contact the emergency advisor if they have any concerns about your safety once the ride begins.
- Notify the ride leader if, on the ride, you are injured, feel ill, tired or are in any other way unable to continue to ride, eg you have heatstroke, hyperthermia or dehydration.
- Keep an eye on other riders while on the ride to ensure they are not ill, falling behind or are not coping in some way, and advise the ride leader accordingly.
- Render assistance to other riders as requested by the ride leader or another rider.
- Walk the track rather than risk an accident or injury.

# Remote ride leader accreditation

Accreditation is awarded by the Pedal Power ACT Rides Committee.

## How do I become accredited as a remote area ride leader?

You can become an accredited remote area ride leader by following these steps:

1. Contact the Pedal Power ACT office or the Rides Committee and inform them of your interest in becoming accredited. They will tell you when the next accreditation course/session will be held and provide your details to the Rides Committee.
2. Attend the accreditation course. (Depending on demand, this may be replaced by a one-on-one session with a trainer.)
3. Attend a Rides Committee meeting or its nominee(s) and answer their questions.

By exception, the Rides Committee may award remote area ride leader accreditation based on an applicant's experience in leading such rides.

## Accreditation criteria

In assessing you, the Rides Committee will be looking for evidence that you:

- are a financial member of Pedal Power ACT
- are currently accredited as a social ride leader or tour leader
- ideally have a current first aid certificate or other relevant medical qualification
- have previously successfully lead or assisted in planning and leading rides in remote areas
- have strong leadership skills
- know about risk and risk management in remote areas
- have strong organisational skills
- are a strong, competent bike rider, and
- are good at managing people.

If you expect to lead remote area rides that include children (people under 18 years of age) you must also have a Working with Vulnerable People card, issued by the ACT Government.

Accreditation may be given by the Rides Committee based on previous experience.

## How long does accreditation last?

Your accreditation will be valid for four years.

## What about re-accréditation?

If you want to be re-accrédited as a remote area ride leader, approach the Rides Committee and ask them for re-accréditation.

Re-accréditation will be automatic if:

- you have lead at least one remote area ride in the last two years of your accreditation
- you have retained your social ride leader/tour leader accreditation and your first aid certificate, and
- the Rides Committee agrees that your accreditation should continue.

## Cancelling accreditation

In exceptional circumstances, the Rides Committee may cancel your accreditation if it is reasonably satisfied that you are no longer competent to lead remote area rides.

## But I'm already an accredited tour leader. Do I need more accreditation?

Yes. If you are an accredited tour leader and want to lead a tour in a remote area, you will have to gain accreditation as a remote area leader as well.

## Remote area ride plan checklist

There is no specific format for a remote areas ride plan. However, plans should cover at least the following points:

- ride name
- ride leader details
- ride date(s)/time
- start/finish location
- registration arrangements, if any
- names and contact details of riders and their emergency contacts
- route details, eg distance, riding time, .gpx/.tcx /.fit files, terrain, route profile, availability of services along the route, nature of the track/trail/road, cue sheet
- ride logistics, eg support, accommodation, meals, rest breaks, food and water availability
- risk management arrangements, including alternative routes, opt-out points and mechanisms for dealing with accidents and other incidents
- emergency advice arrangements, including the timeframe for contacting emergency services. See Emergency advisor procedure on page [12](#)
- expected or likely weather conditions, bushfire danger, flood potential, fire bans etc. As remote area rides in the ACT region are likely to be in higher altitude environments, detailed up to date weather forecasts must be used, preferably those provided by the Bureau of Meteorology (Weatherzone is also a reliable source)
- mandatory items to bring, in addition to those on the Remote area ride equipment list (page [10](#))
- costs and cost sharing arrangements, if any
- conditions of participation additional to those in the conditions of participation (page [14](#))
- other relevant information, eg maps, web sites.

# Remote area ride equipment list

If you ride in a remote area there is a minimum of equipment you **must** have, as either the ride leader or a rider.

Additional mandatory equipment may be nominated by the ride leader as they consider appropriate to the ride.

If you don't have the mandatory equipment you should not be participating in the ride and the ride leader may exclude you.

The items nominated should be carried by riders, not stored in any accompanying vehicle as getting them from a vehicle may take too long, or be impractical.

## For the ride leader

As a ride leader you **must** carry, or arrange for another rider to carry, the following equipment to be used on behalf of the group:

- a comprehensive first aid kit
- an PLB (personal locator beacon)
- a satellite phone, with phone charger or battery pack if the ride is over several days, and
- a copy of the ride plan plus any supplementary information you have accumulated.

Consider also carrying a quality and powerful UHF radio in areas where there is a network of roads that are frequented by management vehicles. The managing agency will often designate a channel for communication. Radios can also scan for any receivable transmissions and hold that channel once one is received.

You must also carry the items nominated for each rider.

## For riders

As a rider you **must** carry the following items on all remote area rides:

- bike spares: puncture kit, tube, pump/CO2 canisters, tyre boot (a \$5 note usually works), chain breaker, chain links, spanners, derailleur hanger. All spares may be shared between two or three named riders apart from derailleur hangers, which are unique to each bike. Some chain links are also unique and cannot be readily shared, eg 11 speed links don't fit 12 speed chains.
- a mobile phone programmed with the number of the ride leader, plus charger or battery pack for multi-day rides. These can be used with intermittent phone coverage
- a (basic) first aid kit

- sufficient food and water for the expected duration of the ride or to get you to a supply of food and water along the route. In hot weather ensure you have electrolyte replacement fluid as well
- additional food in case the ride is delayed
- a whistle to attract attention if you get separated from the group
- sufficient and appropriate clothing for the weather expected on the ride
- front and rear lights for your bike if the ride begins within an hour of dawn and/or sunset, and on all tours. Ensure these are fully charged or take spare batteries
- a paper map or GPS file of the route (if you use a GPS device) if one has been provided by the ride leader or created by you from online maps
- a helmet conforming to the relevant Australian Standard
- any medications you are taking that you might need on the ride, or if the ride is delayed
- other items nominated by the ride leader.

In addition, is it **recommended** that you carry these additional items:

- bright clothing so you stand out against the terrain
- a GPS device with an off-line map of the area in which you will be riding along with a .gpx/.tcx/.fit file for the route, if one is available
- personal protection gear: knee pads, elbow pads etc
- sunscreen
- sun glasses
- toilet paper
- personal items
- a camera
- zip ties
- electrolyte replacement fluid/sachets
- an amount of cash for when your EFTPOS/credit/debit card does not work.

For remote area tours, you should also carry:

- chargers for all electronic devices if you expect to be somewhere they can be used during the ride
- additional spares as recommended by the ride leader
- additional personal items like clothing, toiletries and spare glasses
- other items recommended by the ride leader.

# Emergency advisor procedures

Emergency advisors are an essential risk management technique. They increase the ride's safety and constitute an important link with the riders' emergency contacts.

## What is an *emergency advisor*?

An emergency advisor is the person nominated by the ride leader to contact the police and/or other emergency service when the riding group:

- is overdue, or
- has asked for assistance, eg to arrange recovery of a bike following an incident.

They are also responsible for advising the riders' emergency contacts if emergency services are engaged.

## How does the emergency advisor arrangement work?

### **The ride leader:**

1. Prior to departure:
  - provides the emergency advisor with a copy of the ride plan, including the names of all riders and their emergency contacts
  - agrees a schedule to contact the emergency advisor during the ride to provide an update on the group's progress
  - agrees a timeframe for calling emergency services should the group be delayed.
2. While on the ride, as necessary, seeks assistance from the emergency advisor and/or provides a status report at agreed times/locations.
3. Upon completion of the ride, advises the emergency advisor that the ride is over and their assistance is no longer required.

### **The emergency advisor:**

1. Responds to requests for assistance as asked by the ride leader.
2. Contacts the ride leader on the schedule agreed with the ride leader.
3. Attempts to contact the ride leader at the nominated overdue time to determine if the ride leader has simply forgotten to call in.
4. Contacts emergency services if they are unable to get in touch with the ride leader by the nominated overdue time.
5. Advises the emergency contacts of the riders that the group is overdue, if agreed by emergency services.

6. Cooperates with emergency services as appropriate.
7. Responds to queries from riders' emergency contacts.

# Conditions of participation in a remote area ride

Conditions of participation are another risk management technique. They protect the ride leader, the rider and Pedal Power ACT should anything untoward occur during a remote area ride.

To participate in a remote area ride all riders must:

- accept the standard Pedal Power ACT release set out on the social rides sign on sheet, and
- accept the remote area ride conditions of participation set out below.

Additional conditions may be imposed by the ride leader if warranted.

## The conditions

1. I agree to abide by the decisions of the ride leader.
2. I will not go ahead of the group without the explicit approval of the ride leader and will abide by any conditions imposed by the ride leader when doing so.
3. I will advise the ride leader of any difficulties I have while on the ride, eg health concerns, problems with my bike, become tired.
4. I certify that I have the skills, competence and fitness to undertake the ride, that I will be able to keep up with the group and that my bike is suitable for the ride and in good condition.

# Remote area ride leader training course outline

This section is indicative and will be finalised in due course.

The course will:

- be of three hours duration and delivered at night in the Pedal Power ACT office
- offered at least annually or as needed
- generally follow the content of the guidance prepared for the Monday Dirt Riders with greater emphasis on risk management, ride leader responsibilities, and group management and control
- be delivered by experienced ride leaders/trainers.

Alternatively, would-be remote area ride leaders may be given a one-on-one session with a leader/trainer if there is insufficient demand for a formal course.