

2021 Cambridge Tour de Grand Rider Safety Handbook

Dear Cycling Enthusiast,

Welcome to the 24th annual Cambridge Tour de Grand, one of the Province of Ontario's premier recreational cycling events. The organizing committee has worked hard to ensure an enjoyable and safe day of cycling for riders of all ages and abilities.

You can play a part in making this cycling event, *Cycling Safe* for all participants. The information in this Rider Safety Handbook has been compiled from some of the best cycling experts in Canada and the USA . Take the time to review the Handbook, and when you are riding, follow the riding rules and etiquette.

The Cambridge Tour de Grand has over 3,000 cyclists on the roads and trails in and around Cambridge so it is important in group rides of this size, that you do your part to get all the riders back safely, with only good memories of their day on their bikes.

We are pleased that you have chosen to ride with us on the second Sunday in June and we will do all we can to make your experience enjoyable and worthwhile. Welcome again to the 2021 Cambridge Tour de Grand Bicycle Ride being held from June 1st to June 30th, 2021.

Cambridge Tour de Grand Organizing Committee.

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A. Hydration and Eating

Waiting until you are thirsty to drink or waiting until you are hungry to eat are common mistakes. Following the rule “drink before you are thirsty and eat before you are hungry” will serve you well.

Feeling that you need to drink is an early indicator of dehydration. On the other hand, hyponatremia can result from excessive fluid intake. To maintain proper hydration all riders should carry at least two water bottles and remember to drink at regular intervals. Also, avoid taking any non-steroidal and anti-inflammatory drugs.

B. Sun Exposure

Whether it is sunny or cloudy, a rider’s skin will be exposed to the sun all day. We recommend the use of sunscreen with a high SPF – 30 or above – on all exposed skin in order to reduce sunburn.

C. Smog and/or Extreme Heat Days

Many regions of Canada are experiencing more frequent, more severe and /or longer extreme heat events, sometimes called “heat waves”. While it is important to enjoy the outdoors during Canadian summers, it is also essential to keep in mind that periods of

extreme heat and humidex events may cause serious health effects. It is important to take extra precautions.

Cycling in high temperatures puts stress on the body's cooling system. When the heat is combined with other stresses such as hard physical activity, loss of fluids, fatigue or some medical conditions, it may lead to heat related illness, disability, and possibly even death.

Tips for Preventing Heat-Related Illness

- Bring lots to drink
- Avoid drinks that are high in sugar or caffeine as they increase the amount of water lost by the body
- Dress in light-coloured, and loose-fitting clothing that allows for the evaporation of sweat
- If you take medication consult your doctor or pharmacist about any side effects during extreme heat
- Make use of shaded areas when possible, and take frequent breaks each hour

Symptoms from Heat to Watch Out For (seek medical attention)

- Heat rash – small red raised blisters; skin feels itchy or prickly
- Heat Cramps – muscle pain or muscle spasms; most common in arms, legs, back and stomach
- Heat Exhaustion – pale, flushed face and neck; heavy sweating, fatigue, shortness of breath, headache, dizziness or fainting, nausea, vomiting, rapid heartbeat and breathing
- Heat Stroke – hot dry skin, no sweating, erratic behaviour, reduced mental alertness, weakness, dilated pupils, loss of consciousness

D. Thumbs Up, Thumbs Down

Our support vehicle drivers often give several quick beeps of their horn as they approach riders along the route. When this happens simply gesture: Thumbs Up = "I'm OK and don't need assistance", Thumbs Down = "Please stop. I need assistance".

E. Severe Weather Conditions

The most common severe weather condition involves heavy rainfall, lightning, and /or strong winds. These conditions may force you to seek temporary shelter in a commercial or municipal building, or on the porch or outbuilding of a private residence. Don't be shy about asking a home owner for shelter. If shelter is not near during a lightning storm, crouch or lie down away from trees and keep at least 15 feet away from other people, bikes, including your own bike or metal objects.

F. Illness Preparedness Plan

Illness can spread rapidly on a bike tour with a large number of people. Here are some health safety DO's & DON'TS to help you stay healthy.

DO List

- Do wash your hands often using antibacterial soap
- Do use hand-sanitizing liquid, versus not washing hands
- Do clean your water bottle mouthpiece before drinking
- Do eat whole & pared fruit served from food-safe gloves
- Do keep hydrated by drinking water regularly
- Do comply with hygiene signage wherever posted
- Do report any unsafe hygienic practices you observe
- Do report any symptom of illness immediately

DON'T List

- Don't eat while wearing bicycle gloves
- Don't replace hand washing with hand-sanitizing liquid
- Don't hand wade in the food containers ie cookies
- Don't share fruit or other personal consumables
- Don't assume you are not sick if you have symptoms

G. Safety Requirements & Recommendations

The following will help make your Tour de Grand Bicycle Ride safer and more enjoyable.

Rider Requirements

- An approved helmet is required to be worn
- Ride single file, on busier roads, with traffic flow, as far to the right as safe
- Verbalize your intentions to other cyclists, especially when passing “on your left”
- Pass other cyclists only on the left side, never on the right side
- Never ride over the centre or yellow line, even if trying to pass
- Inform other riders of potential road hazards
- If you have to stop, go to the right side of the road, and if possible, onto the shoulder. At the same time in a loud voice state “stopping” and signal with your left hand down with the palm of your hand facing backward. Do NOT stop on the road as riders coming up behind may run into to you.
- As support vehicles pass Thumbs Up or Thumbs Down
- Adult supervision is required for riders age 16 or younger
- Cyclists must obey all traffic laws and obey all traffic signs and signage posted on the Tour.
- The Cambridge Tour de Grand is not a race. We really don’t care how fast you can ride or how quickly you finish your route.

Rider Recommendations

- Pace yourself. Have fun! You have most of the day to travel your route
- A multi-gear bicycle is recommended
- A bike mirror is recommended and a bike bell is mandatory
- You should be in good shape and capable of riding the distance and elevations on the route that you have chosen
- Carry your cell phone with you. It makes it easy to call for assistance

- **Have a health insurance card with you at all times, one that notes all important medical information and an emergency contact**
- **Wear sunscreen on all exposed skin to avoid sunburn**
- **Use common sense and courtesy with all road traffic**

H. Group Ride Safety and Etiquette

Each year of the Cambridge Tour de Grand, we have had to complete one or more incident reports relating to an injury to a cyclist. Most of the injuries have been minor but occasionally there have been more serious injuries. The goal of the Cambridge Tour de Grand is to go “incident report free”. To achieve that goal we are providing some riding rules and etiquette which if followed will make your ride safer, more enjoyable, stress free and allow you to have nothing but good memories of your day at the Tour de Grand.

1. Changes in starting procedures at the Tour.

Given the large numbers of riders for each route, and to emphasize that the Cambridge Tour de Grand is not a race, we will be having riders leave in small groups of 50, every 5 to 10 minutes with faster riders starting first. The first groups will be Serious Riders, then Serious Recreational Riders and finally Just Out for a Ride Riders. The plan is that with faster riders out first, the need to pass slower riders will be minimized. Riders will have to place themselves in the correct group. We intend to have information on your route map and on signage at the start area as to the average speed you should be able to maintain to be in a particular group.

2. Route Changes.

For the longer routes, 60, 72, 100 & 160 km, the route will go south to St. George using Branchton Road rather than Cheese Factory Road. Branchton Road is flatter, wider with paved shoulders, fewer stop signs and has good sight lines for cyclists and drivers.

Riders on the 60 & 72 km routes, returning to Duncan McIntosh Arena, will ride through Churchill Park. Be careful on the pathway where there is two-way bicycle traffic from the 10, 15 & 25 km routes.

New in 2017 are the 50 & 76 km gravel and trail routes for bicycles with tires >32 mm

3. Railway Tracks

Riders are reminded to be wary of crossing railway tracks which can be slippery and bumpy. There are railway tracks on all routes except the 10 and 15 km routes.

Some hints:

- When crossing tracks, hold onto your handlebars with both hands;
- Go across the tracks at a slower speed;
- Be sure and cross the tracks with your front wheel at right angles to the tracks.
- Clyde Road railway tracks. Some routes will cross the sharply angled railway tracks on Clyde Road. In order to cross the tracks at right angles, it will be necessary for you, prior to reaching the tracks and once there is no vehicle traffic behind you, to move out into the centre of the lane and approach the tracks at right angles. As soon as you are across the tracks, move back to the right side of the road.
- Blenheim Road railway tracks. Riders on the 25 km route will go down a short hill and cross the slightly angled tracks at the bottom of the hill. Slow down before reaching the tracks and once there is no vehicle traffic behind you, move out a bit into the lane so that you can cross the tracks at right angles.

4. Be Predictable

This may be the most important point (even for solo riding) and it involves every aspect of riding from changing positions in a group to following the traffic rules. Smooth predictable riding isn't just a matter of style ... here the word survival comes to mind! If unpredictability is the only predictable part of your riding style, you are a hazard to yourself and everyone who has the misfortune to ride with you. Have you ever been on a ride where the group stops at an intersection and people scatter all over the lane? Some going through on the wrong side of the road and others turning left from the right side? Some running the stop sign and others doing it right? It's confusing and irritating to vehicle drivers as they approach a situation where cyclists are going in all different directions or just blowing through stops. Part of being predictable is riding within the rules of the road as a vehicle. Groups should maintain integrity when approaching intersections. That means staying in the correct lane, stopping all together, and starting together as traffic allows. If we demand the right to ride on the road, then we must be willing to ride responsibly ... especially as a group.

5. Ride in a Straight Line

It is important to be able to ride in a straight line and not veer from side to side while pedalling. If you are veering from side to side with each pedal stroke, you are forcing anyone riding beside you either towards the curb or towards the left of the lane and possibly even into oncoming traffic. Being able to stay in a straight line is also important when turning your head to look backwards. It is important to train yourself, when turning your head, to keep the bicycle pointed in a straight line. To be aware of what is happening behind you, a bike mirror is by far the best piece of equipment to have.

6. Single File

Stay single file on busy roads with traffic from both directions and no more than two riders side by side on quieter roads. Also, you need to stay as far to the right as possible. NEVER cross over into the oncoming lane when passing and never pass a rider on the right side. Always call out your intentions as you pass a rider On your left.

7. Moving Over and Cars

Firstly, when riding in groups, you should never cross over the centre line into the oncoming lane.

Secondly get into single file and as far right as possible when you see a vehicle approaching from the rear or you hear someone call `car back` from behind. Do not take this as an opportunity to pass. Wait until the car or cars have passed before making any sort of passing manoeuvre.

We all know that bicycles are vehicles and are entitled to ride on roads. This does not mean that a cyclist or group of cyclists can simply take over a lane, making it near impossible for a vehicle to pass safely. Many cyclists, over age 16, drive motor vehicles, so when you are riding, think of how you would feel if you were in your car behind a pack of cyclists who were displaying a total lack of respect for your right to be on the road as well. Yes you have the right to ride on the road, but be smart about it. Slower vehicles, and that would include bicycles, are required to stay right and give way to faster traffic when safe and practical. When a motorist has waited until he could pass safely, a wave goes a long way to create a bicycle friendly community.

Be courteous to others. We all need to share the road with trucks, cars, motorcycles, walkers, joggers, horses and other cyclists. We have all been involved with car drivers

who think that they own the road. Don't give them the satisfaction of seeing you lose your cool. Instead, report them to the police. Take down their license plate, the description of the driver, and the time and what happened.

8. Don't Overlap Wheels

This habit will get you in real trouble. This is a good way to test your ability to do cartwheels if you don't adhere to this rule. Some people do it from lack of concentration, others may not just know any better, but sooner or later they'll crash. There is no recovery from a front wheel deflection. All it takes is for the person in front to move sideways a few inches and if someone is overlapping his wheel, that someone will go down along with practically everyone who is behind him. Many times the person in front can recover, but not the people behind.

9. Be Steady

This includes speed and line. If the person behind you fails to adhere to #8 above, you will contribute to a crash if you move around all over the road. When everyone is working for the group, maintain a steady speed as you go to the front. Ever notice how easy it is to ride behind some folks? If you take note of their riding style you'll notice they don't yo-yo around in the pack. They are rock steady. When they take the lead, they don't accelerate. If they are strong enough to accelerate the group, they do it after the previous leader has rejoined the rear of the group and then only gradually so as to not string out the pack. When they are leading, they ride a straight line and their speed will be constant with the conditions. Sometimes steady doesn't just mean speed. It means steady pressure on the pedals ... uphill or downhill, headwind or tailwind. When they are following, they don't make sudden moves or they know how to control their spacing by using their body position instead of using the brakes. Sudden braking will set off general alarms from everyone in the rear and make you very unpopular.

10. Announce Hazards

When you are in the lead, you are responsible for the safety of everyone behind you. You will not be popular if people behind you keep bouncing off of potholes, running over rocks, or reacting to unsafe traffic situations that you fail to point out. You need to be very vocal when approaching intersections, slowing, stopping or turning and all actions should be smooth and deliberate. Riders in the pack should relay these warnings to the rear. When you are following announce oncoming traffic from the rear and in this case others should relay this info toward the front.

11. Signal

Signalling lets everyone (vehicles and riders) know your intentions ... remember #4? This makes you predictable. Also, it is a good idea to make eye contact with oncoming traffic at intersections. Signal a left turn with your left arm and a right turn either with your right arm or your left arm bent at 90 degrees at the elbow with right hand pointing up. In a big group combine this with a loud vocal warning of your intentions.

12. Don't Fixate

If you are staring at something (ie., the wheel in front of you), eventually you will hit it. Learn to be comfortable looking around or through the riders ahead of you. This will allow you to see things that are developing in front of the group.

13. Stay Off Aero Bars

No not chocolate. Bicycle aero bars are much too unstable to be used in a group ride. Use aero bars for what they are meant for ... solo fast riding.

14. Change Positions Correctly

A common beginner mistake is to stop pedaling just before pulling off the front. This creates an accordion effect toward the rear. Keep a steady pressure on the pedals until you have cleared the front. After pulling off, soft pedal and let the group pull through. As the last riders are passing through, begin to apply more pressure to smoothly take your position at the rear.

15. Relax

Relaxed riding will allow you to be smooth and responsive. If you see someone who is riding a straight line and is very steady, they are relaxed on their bike. Being relaxed not only saves energy, it makes bike handling much more effective. Riding in close contact with other riders may result in contact. If you have tense arms and get bumped from the side, the shock will go directly to the front wheel and you will swerve, possibly lose control, and possibly cause a massive pile up. If you are relaxed, it's much easier to absorb the bump without losing control.

I. Handling Incidents on Group Rides

- Stay calm
- Try to identify the cause of the injury (road hazard, collision, mechanical failure, exhaustion etc.) and then act to minimize the danger of further injury

- Ensure that traffic is stopped or redirected to prevent further injury
- Don't move the injured person. Ask the injured person for his or her permission to help. Note that if the injured person is or becomes unconscious this permission is deemed to have been given.
- Sending for help is often a judgment call but if there is any doubt call 911.
- Administer first aid to the extent of your ability
- Even if the injured person insists there is nothing wrong, look for signs of confusion or disorientation. They may have sustained a head injury
- While waiting for help to arrive get the injured person's personal information (name, address, emergency contact, telephone) and medical history and write it down. Make sure a copy of this information finds its way onto the ambulance
- Comfort the injured person
- Event staff should be informed of any incident that takes place. If 911 is called, event staff must be informed.

J. First Aid

For minor first aid assistance, the rider or other person should be escorted or directed to the designated First Aid Station (St. John Ambulance station directly in front of Arena.)

K. Lost Children

- In the event that a child is noted as missing, report to event staff immediately.
- Provide as much information as possible, such as name, height/weight, age, last known place, gender, what they are wearing, do they speak English
- Event staff will initiate a search
- If the child is not found after all reasonable actions have been taken, police will be contacted

Make this Document Better

If you have constructive comments and other ideas on what should be included in this Rider Safety Handbook, please send them to info@cambridgetourdegrand.com

Credits

This handbook was prepared by using the excellent materials prepared by the Oakville Cycling Club, the Bon Ton Roulet Rider Handbook, Patty Woodworth of Action Wheels Bike Shop.

We hope all the cyclists who enjoy riding in the Cambridge Tour de Grand will find the Handbook helpful and will allow them to become safer cyclists. Safe cycling!