

**Jersey Shore Touring Society
Rider Guidelines
Revision 1.0
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Jersey Shore Touring Society Rider Guidelines

Version History

VERSION NUMBER	REVISION DATE	EDITOR	SUMMARY OF CHANGE
0.1	3/5/2008	Laury Wills	Initial Draft
0.2	3/11/2008	Laury Wills	Added section for rider to rider communication
0.3	3/22/2008	Laury Wills	Clarified a few items based on feedback from Ed.
1.0	5/9/2008	Robert Leitner	Minor formatting

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1.0 Guidelines for All Riders

Jersey Shore Touring Society (JSTS) wants to make our rides safe and enjoyable for everyone. The following guidelines should be observed by all riders on all JSTS rides.

1.1 Before the Ride

- Be considerate of your fellow riders by arriving 10 – 15 minutes early and be ready to ride at the scheduled start time. Ready to ride means your bike is operating correctly and your tires are pumped up. If you aren't familiar with how to tune-up your bike, take it to one of the many fine shops in the area and let them make sure it is ready to roll.
- If you are not sure which group best suits your riding ability, call the ride leader ahead of time to talk about it. If you are still unsure, try a ride one category level below what you think you can do for your first time out and judge from there.
- Make sure your bike is equipped with the appropriate tools and supplies such as a spare tube, patch kit, pump and water bottle.

1.2 Helmets

- You must wear a helmet on all JSTS club rides. This is an insurance necessity. Unexpected things happen no matter how experienced and careful you are. Helmets reduce head injuries by 80% or more. With the wide variety of lightweight helmets available, there is no reason to ride without one. Expensive, you say? Pay whatever you think your brains are worth.

1.3 New Cyclists

If you are new to cycling, some important things to remember are:

- Don't push yourself too hard at first
- Don't wait too long until your next ride
- If you ride three times a week, your butt will be sore for about two weeks. After that, it won't hurt any more (and yes, you will still be able to feel it)
- Buy a bike that fits you from one of the many local bike shops. A bike that does not fit you properly will continue to cause pain even after your butt is “broken in.”
- Invest in good cycling clothes with padding. Cotton underwear and jean shorts will rub your skin raw.
- You can never drink enough water on a ride. Drink before you're thirsty, and eat before you're hungry
- Subscribe to a good cycling magazine (like [Bicycling](#)) to learn about the sport.
- If you have questions, ask your fellow cyclists! We were all beginners once ourselves.
- HAVE FUN!!!

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2.0 Road Biking Guidelines

2.1 Traffic Laws

- Riders on JSTS club rides are required to obey all New Jersey traffic laws. Your bicycle is legally considered a vehicle. You are subject to the same traffic laws as the drivers of motorized vehicles. NJ Department of Transportation bicycling regulations are available the DOT website, <http://www.nj.gov/transportation/commuter/bike/regulations.shtm>

2.2 Attention and Predictability

- Pay attention to the road, traffic and other riders. Anticipate what is going to happen. Be prepared for the unexpected
- Predictability is the foundation of safe riding. Be sure that others know what you intend to do. In order for people to stay out of your way, they need to know where you are going. Learn the conventions so that you know what to expect of other riders.

2.3 Signals

- Signals help the people in the back of the pack avoid potholes and obstacles that they generally can't see it until it's too late.
- Pointing with your hand is generally enough to warn the other riders. Call out if it is something particularly nasty. Use something short and easy to understand. Following are a few of the standard call used by JSTS riders:
 - HOLE – pothole
 - TRACKS - Railroad tracks
 - GLASS - Broken glass in the road
 - CAR RIGHT (or LEFT) - A car is coming from that direction
 - CAR BACK (or CAR UP) - A car is coming from the rear (or front)
 - ON YOUR LEFT (or if unavoidable RIGHT)- I am close at your side or intend to pass on your left (or right)
 - SLOWING – Riders in front are slowing
- Some riders will call out "CLEAR" to indicate that an intersection is free of cross traffic. Be wary of this signal as it is not always reliable. Do not depend on it. Check to make sure that the traffic is clear before you cross. If you feel compelled to use this signal, do so only when the traffic is clear for a distance. If the visibility is limited (because of a curve or hill) it is best to not give any signal. Let the other riders check for themselves

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2.4 Miscellaneous Safety Guidelines

- Cross railroad tracks at a 90° angle.
- Watch for car doors opening when passing parked cars. Try to ride at least a door's length away from parked cars.
- Don't assume car signaling is always valid.
- Ride defensively around cars, in the same way you would drive defensively. In both situations you are anticipating possible problems so as to avoid them.

2.5 Riding with a Group

2.5.1 Ride Smoothly

- Remember that the safety of a group of riders depends on the actions of each rider. Riders must ride smoothly and predictably to avoid collisions. Another advantage to riding smoothly is that you save energy and feel fresher at the end of the ride.
- Keep in mind that someone is probably very close behind you. Don't brake hard unless you absolutely must and then call out to warn other riders.
- Glance over your shoulder before you move out of your line.
- When you are out on your own, you can do anything you like. The dynamics of the pack are more complicated. A pack of experienced cyclists who ride together often moves like a unit. It only takes one rider to disrupt the flow.

2.5.2 Be Courteous at Intersections

- Sometimes the whole group can't make it through an intersection without getting split up. The cyclists who make it through in the first wave should try to slow up a bit to let the second wave catch up before picking up the pace.
- Give your fellow cyclists a break so they don't feel like they have to take risks to avoid getting dropped by the people who got through the intersection first.

2.5.3 Stay Right

- When riding, stay to the right of the road unless you are passing.
- This will allow other cyclists to pass on your left without going into the lane of oncoming traffic.
- Staying to the right is particularly important on hills where the pack tends to break up. Too often, riders will climb near the center line forcing faster riders to ride in the lane of oncoming traffic in order to pass. If you are getting passed on the hills, move over to give some room. Stay out of the lane of oncoming traffic. Cars travel fast and can appear suddenly.
- Try not to pass on the right. If you must, give an "ON YOUR RIGHT" signal.

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2.5.4 Communicate with Ride Leaders

- Always notify the leader if you are going to leave a group ride
- Communicate with the ride leader if someone needs to stop for a mechanical problem, bathroom break, snack, etc.
- Leaders are not responsible for cyclists who ride ahead of the group
- Any cyclist who is riding in an irresponsible manner will be asked to leave the group.
- If you are a new rider to a specific group please let it be known to the group and ride at the rear of the group until a comfort level has been reached within the group.
- If you encounter a flat or any other mechanical problem on a ride make sure to inform other members of your group by calling out “MECHANICAL”.

2.5.5 Communicate with Each Other

- Every rider has an obligation to politely advise another rider if they are being unsafe. It’s not just up to the leader to ensure everyone in the group is riding safely!

2.6 Ride Categories

In addition to all the guidelines stated in this document, the following are special considerations for riders in each category/pace.

2.5.1 A/B Rides

A/B pace riders are for experienced cyclists with good bike handling skills who are comfortable riding in a paceline. The average speed on B rides is 15 – 17mph over rolling terrain. The average speed on A rides is 18+ mph over rolling terrain.

- When leading a ride or pulling, understand that you are responsible for the riders behind you. This means that you dictate the speed at which the group will ride. Never speed up or slow down quickly as this can have an adverse effect on the group. Always keep your speed consistent. Look at your cycle computer before taking the pull and maintain the same speed. It is human nature to want to speed up. Once you’ve done your time, “pull off”! Signal to the riders behind that you are pulling off and let them take over. Pulls can be as short as 5 seconds, or longer depending on conditioning. Just remember to never stay longer than you are able. Others will gladly take over. Any pull is better than no pull.
- Hold your line! Although riders should not overlap wheels it is inevitable that this will happen. If you swerve and touch wheels, the rider behind will go down. Try to ride in a straight line. If obstacles or road hazards appear, announce to the group or yell “HOLE”, “GLASS” and move to avoid accordingly.
- Always use hand signals and call out when making turns.

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- When following another rider, do not overlap wheels. If you are following an experienced rider, try to stay at least 6 inches behind their wheel. If you are following a less experienced rider, stay further back.
- Never break hard to slow in a pace line. Feather your front brake and keep pedaling so you don't throw the riders behind you into a panic. Feathering will slow you down without causing a chain reaction. Keep spinning.
- When climbing, shift to the next higher gear before standing to compensate for the slower cadence and to maintain pedal pressure. This will keep you from interfering with the rider behind you.
- Never let gaps form in the pace line. If you can not maintain the pace, inform the rider behind that you are pulling off and do so. Let them fill the gap. If you need to sit out a couple rotations in the pace line, let the riders dropping back know so that they can fill the gap in front of you.
- Remember to use special caution later in the ride. As you tire, your concentration and attentiveness may be affected.

2.5.2 C Rides

This pace is designed for the average rider looking to increase distance and speed while sharpening their cycling skills. The average speed on C rides will be 12 – 15 mph over flat terrain. At this pace and distance riders will experience a little more physical stress than on beginner rides. With that in mind, it becomes even more important for riders to be comfortable and confident with their cycling skills. C riders will learn to ride in a more organized group setting with occasional pace line riding.

2.5.1 D Rides

This pace is designed for those new to cycling who are more concerned with learning to ride safely than with mileage or speed. The average speed for D rides will be 9-12 mph over flat terrain. The following cycling tips will help you to become a rider that other cyclists would feel comfortable around. Learning proper riding technique should be your number one goal at this level.

- Always check the condition of your bike before setting out on a ride. Nothing is more frustrating than having to make adjustments or repairs during a ride due to a bike inspection not being performed ahead of time. Always check tire pressure, brakes and make sure that your bike shifts properly.
- Be sure to always wear a helmet.
- Always ride single file. This will show motorists that you are in control and the group will be more visible to motorists.
- Make sure to obey all traffic laws as if you were operating a motor vehicle. Callout/signal when making a turn, slowing down or stopping. Never assume that you are seen by motorists, be aware of your surroundings.

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- Practice riding a straight line whenever possible. Use the white line in a parking lot to help with this exercise. Riding to either side no more than 6 inches from the center of the line is considered to be a straight line. Always brake easy. Do not slam on your brakes which will usually surprise the riders behind you possibly causing a “pile up”.
- Call out all obstructions or obstacles you may encounter on a ride for your fellow cyclists who may be following behind you (hole, glass, car up, grate, etc.). In addition let those riding behind you know of any cars up front that may turn in front of you by calling out “CAR UP” and also for joggers “RUNNER UP”. If trailing at the back of the group, be sure to let those in front know of approaching cars by calling out “CAR BACK” so no one is caught by surprise when being passed. **Communication is a key when learning to ride in a group.**
- If you encounter a flat or any other mechanical problem on a ride make sure to inform other members of your group by calling out “MECHANICAL”.

These are just a few tips that will help D riders become more consistent, confident and skilled. Also keep in mind that individuals may from time to time offer tips or point out situations that may arise during this learning process. This is not to embarrass or degrade but to help you become a more seasoned rider.

2.7 Sharing the Road with Cars

Nearly all the roads on JSTS club rides carry auto traffic as well as bicycles. We are adamant about our right to ride these roads but we have an obligation to ride in a manner than keeps conflicts to a minimum. The vast majority of the drivers are considerate of bikers. Try to avoid clashes with the drivers who are not as considerate.

2.7.1 Communicate Effectively

- Cyclists should always use standard hand signals. You will be safer if motorists know what you intend to do.
- Signal like you mean it. Some rider's signals are so anemic that they could go unnoticed. All riders in a pack should signal. One or two people in a pack of twenty or so is not very convincing to drivers. It can lead to confusion
- Avoid shouting at motorists. It doesn't help.

2.7.2 Riding Double

- Riding two abreast is fine when the traffic is light and can be seen well in advance.

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- Sooner or later, a car will overtake the pack and the riders should be prepared to single up to allow the traffic to pass. The rider on the left should drop behind the rider on the right. The line of riders on the right will have to spread out to allow room for the riders moving in. This means the riders in the front must speed up and the riders in the rear slow up.

2.7.3 Stay in Your Lane

- Stay out of the lane of the oncoming traffic at all times. Cars approach too fast for safety and drivers do not expect a rider in their lane. Avoid riding three abreast for this reason, and that it is unlawful according to the DOT regulations. It also places the rider on the left too close to the oncoming traffic.
- Stay out of the right hand turn lane when you are at an intersection waiting for the traffic to clear or the light to change so you can proceed straight ahead. This allows traffic to turn right while the pack is waiting for an opening.

2.7.4 Making a Left Turn

- Left turns are one of the more dangerous maneuvers for a bike in traffic and should be done with care, following the rules of the road. Remember, the car behind is anxious to get around and may be tempted to pass.
- Begin the turn well in advance. Signal the turn and when the traffic behind is clear, move to the left hand side of the lane.
- Do not pull in front of a car expecting it to slow down for you.
- Stay to the left of the lane as you approach the intersection and turn left when the oncoming traffic is clear. Before turning, glance over your left shoulder as a car may decide to pass you on the left as you turn.

2.7.5 Passing Cars

- Think twice any time you are tempted to pass a moving car on the left or right. If a car is going slow enough to pass, it is probably going to do something other than go straight. It may turn into you as you pass. Be sure that you know what it will do before you pass.
- Riding to the front of a line of cars at a stop light and or stop sign should be avoided. Ever notice how many people don't bother to signal? Cars can turn into you just as you start to pass.
- Another thing about passing cars at an intersection: those cars probably just passed you. Now they will have to re-pass you once you are through the intersection. A cyclist at the front can also slow up cars going through the intersection when the light turns green. Their patience may wear a bit thin in heavy traffic.

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2.7.6 Stopping

- Every once in a while, the pack needs to pull over while someone adjusts a brake or visits nature. Move to the side of the road and out of the lane of traffic. There is no excuse for causing congestion when we are not even riding. This seems obvious, but a surprising number of people camp out in the lane of traffic when the pack comes to a stop.

2.8 Pedestrians

- Don't surprise pedestrians. When overtaking them (or other cyclists) call out "ON YOUR LEFT" (or RIGHT) well in advance. Be a polite as possible so that you don't sound like you are forcing them off the road. Let them know where you intend to go and then be ready for them to jump in front of you; sometimes they will. If the lead rider spots a pedestrian approaching the group on the same side of the road, they should call out "WALKER UP" so that the entire group is aware of the hazard. The group should move out from the right side of the road to allow the pedestrian room to get by.

3.0 Mountain Biking Guidelines

JSTS mountain bike rides strive for positive interactions with fellow trail users and careful stewardship of the places we ride.

- Be pleasant and courteous to others along the trail.
- Mountain bikers must yield to pedestrians and horses.
- Make the first move. Speak up or ring your bell at first sighting! Try not to startle people or livestock! When approaching oncoming livestock on narrow trails, speak, slow down and move off the trail to the downhill side. When passing livestock from behind, speak out and ask for instructions. Let both livestock and riders know you are a friendly human.
- Ride in small groups and in single file when passing.
- Ride in control and pass others slowly.
- Respect private property and route closures. Leave gates as you find them. If we abuse a privilege, we'll lose it.
- Tread lightly and leave no trace by packing out litter and avoiding muddy trails. Stay off the vegetation and on designated routes. Try not to skid.
- Help teach new riders proper trail etiquette. Lead by example. Try not to disturb wildlife. Remember that all mountain bicyclists will be judged by your actions.