

**rule 1** **Basic Rule of Right-of-Way**  
Respect motorists' right-of-way. Stealing right-of-way (e.g., running a 4-way stop sign when a motorist arrived first) will give the motorist a negative impression of all bicyclists.

### Traffic Signals

Should a traffic signal change from green to yellow, a group's lead rider should alert all other riders and come to a stop (if there is time to do so safely). Only if riders cannot safely stop should they proceed through the yellow light. The lead rider(s) should wait for others in the group to catch up once the light turns green again.

Note: Lead riders should also apply this principal in other traffic conditions which may result in the group splitting up (e.g., small gaps in oncoming traffic when a group is turning left).

### Stop Signs and Stop Lights

**rule 3** Lead riders should stop at all stop signs and red lights—always respecting the right-of-way of others—stopping in the right-most lane in the direction of the route (unless the route turns left). Riders may then bunch-up and take control of the lane, allowing the group to proceed through the intersection as rapidly as possible (the proper technique being to accelerate up to speed, or even cross the intersection before clipping into the other pedal). After the

intersection, the group should move into a line to the right as appropriate. Generally, it's better not to pass motorists on the right.

Lead riders should consider the following:

- Is it possible that a motorist could turn right across the path of the cyclists?
- Will passing be easy (bike lane or paved shoulder) or difficult (narrow lane) for motorists downstream of the signal?

A lead rider who does pass on the right should not overtake the lead car in a stopped queue. Although stopped motorists preparing to turn right are supposed to signal and be positioned as far right as practical, some neglect to do this. At a stop sign or light, only pass a single motorist on the left if he or she is preparing to make a right turn. Never lean on stopped motor vehicles.

**rule 4** **Position Change**  
Before changing lanes or position within a paceline, remember to always look behind for traffic (bicycle or motor vehicle).

**Group Communication**  
When possible, alert other riders of potentially dangerous conditions (e.g., dogs, potholes, approaching cars, etc.). Riders should signal stops and turns, either verbally or by hand. Hand signals should be used to signal a rider's (or the group's) movements to motorists.

**rule 5** Never say "Clear" to other riders approaching an intersection. Each rider must make his or her own decision and learn not to be dependent on the judgment of others, as it may be faulty or conditions may suddenly change.

### Two Abreast vs. Single File

By Florida law, bicyclists may ride two abreast unless impeding traffic. State law is difficult to interpret, and left to the law officer's discretion as to what impeding traffic means. It is also unclear as to whether a rider may pass two riders abreast, although logic would dictate that this practice is legal.

Do not ride more than two abreast for any extended period of time. While on a two lane road, if continual oncoming traffic prevents motorists from easily passing, ride in single file or consider splitting the pack into smaller groups. Be aware that unsafe passing by motorists can happen frequently when riding single file.

Depending on the lane width, ride far enough from the right edge of the road to be visible, to have adequate maneuvering space, to avoid surface hazards, and to discourage overtaking motorists from attempting unsafe passes.

**rule 7** **Riding to the Right**  
With exceptions (e.g., to make a left turn or to avoid hazards), Florida law requires bicyclists to ride to the right when going slower than other traffic. However, bicyclists are allowed to move farther into the lane (take command of the lane) if the lane is too narrow to safely share with a motor vehicle.

**rule 8** **Crashes and Other On-Road Problems**  
If a crash or mechanical problem occurs the group should stop, move off the road (unless someone needs to direct traffic around a fallen rider), and assess the situation to determine the appropriate course of action.

**rule 9** **Leaving Start and Rest Areas**  
When starting or leaving rest stops, the lead riders should maintain an easy pace until everyone is underway and has had time to catch up.

### Pace Lines

Riding in a pace line is only for the experienced, but can be easy to learn. When riding in a pace line, adhere to the following rules:

- rule 10**
- Avoid overlapping your front wheel with the rear wheel of the rider in front of you. Any sudden direction or speed change may result in the wheels touching AND YOU WILL GO DOWN.
  - Be alert! No matter how good a group is, there will be surprises.
  - Avoid using your brakes to slow yourself in a pace line; especially if you are near the front. Control your speed by "soft-pedaling."

Less experienced riders can initially keep to the rear of the line to give themselves time to observe the process. When they join the regular pace line flow they should keep about a half bike length between their front wheels and the riders ahead and decrease the distance as experience and confidence increase.

- The lead rider takes a short turn in the front, moves to the left side (after checking behind) and drifts back to the back of the pack.

New riders may be intimidated about maintaining the pace at the front; they should be expected to take a shorter pull and drop back as soon as it is safe to do so.

- Do not ride on clip-on bars while closely following other riders.

**rule 11** **The Golden Rule**  
Always keep your cool. Even if motorists (or other cyclists) wrong you, remain courteous.

### TIP: Traffic Signals

Many traffic signals are operated by detection systems embedded in the roadway (unless the road has been resurfaced or recently constructed/reconstructed, rectangular- or round-shaped pavement cuts may be visible). Many of these devices are capable of detecting bicycles, but not all. In the absence of a motor vehicle, place as many bicycles on these devices as possible to trigger the light to turn. If a motorist approaches from behind, but is not on the visible detectors, move forward and politely motion the motorist forward over the detection device.



**Club rides** should be enjoyable and safe for all participants. Each of us should be role models for other roadway users, most importantly children using bikes.

The respect we earn from motorists is dependent, over the long term, upon our actions as bicyclists. The bicyclist who runs a red light or stop sign in view of motorists performs a disservice to every one of us.

The following 11 rules are designed to improve the safety, enjoyment and public perception of Club rides. Everyone must be aware that if laws continue to be broken, local ordinances may be passed restricting our rights as bicyclists to use the roadways.

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# what you need to know about GROUP RIDING



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