

Ride Leader Guidelines



HIAWATHA BICYCLING CLUB

Our mission is to lead safe, friendly and fun bicycle rides for adults, make and distribute maps of safe bicycle routes, and educate the public about cycling.

www.hiawathabike.org

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We'd like to have your ideas on how to make this booklet more useful or complete. If you have any suggestions, please send a letter or email to:

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Copy ready documents for you to print

- **Tips for safe riding**
- **Day-of-ride checklist**
- **HBC membership application**
- **HBC 1 day \$2 guest membership form**
- **HBC/LAB injury report**
- **HBC event sign-in form**
- **HBC map logo sheet**
- **April through October sunset times**

Go to : www.hiawathabike.org/leader_resources.htm

Why lead a ride?

We wanted to start with some words of inspiration, some explanation of why you'd want to lead a ride. Someone said, "Why *do* we lead rides?" and there was a pause. "Because it's fun." Another pause. Then a wild, careening peloton of ideas burst from nowhere:

- You get to choose the route, the pace, and the food stops. This means that you get to share *your* favorite destinations and routes, ride at *your* preferred pace, and bring a lot of people to *your* favorite eateries.
- You meet new people who share at least one of your interests. This expands your pool of potential riding partners (and friends), particularly folks who like to ride the same way you do.
- You can share your *other* interests, knowledge, or talents with people by leading theme rides. At one time or another, leaders have led railroad history rides, antiquing rides, yard sale rides, kid rides, camping rides, moonlight rides, bakery rides, and rides with a multitude of other themes.
- You can inspire people, motivate them, and get them excited about bicycling. Ride leaders who lead regularly have countless tales of novices who can barely shift gears on their first ride but who blossom into avid cyclists by the end of a season.
- You can exercise your creativity in finding a route, writing the ride description, designing the map or cue sheet, and creating the event.
- You get to contribute something to the community.
- Leading a ride makes you go riding yourself.
- Gives you the opportunity to give back to the bike club.

What's in this booklet?

If you've led rides for a bicycle club in the past, some of the information in this booklet will already be familiar to you. However, we've expanded a great deal on the information passed out to ride leaders in the past. As a result, you'll probably want to look through these guidelines for ideas on how to make your rides even safer or more fun, and as a refresher on the basics of ride leading.

If you *haven't* led rides before, this booklet will give you a good introduction to how you go about leading a safe, enjoyable ride. You'll find information on how to select a route; what to do before, during, and after the ride; how to handle problems and accidents; and how to make a ride more fun. At the end, you'll also find tips on safe cycling.

Don't be daunted! We don't expect you to read the entire booklet cover to cover and memorize it as if for a test. More likely, you'll want to use it as a reference for detailed information on specific topics.

See the checklist at the back: We included a day-of-ride checklist at the back, which gives a quick summary of the items you may want to bring to a ride and what to do before and during the ride.

Not all guidelines apply to every ride: These guidelines are written for all HBC rides, but the focus is on the most common types of rides — social rides at a slow or moderate pace with regular rest stops. You may need to adapt the guidelines to fit your ride, especially if you lead faster rides with few or no stops.

Ride Leader Policies:

As a Leader the HBC bylaws require that in order to keep a leaders skills fresh and intact, each ride leader is required to adhere to the following:

Leader Qualifications:

- To be an HBC ride leader you must have attended a two-hour training session, with a qualified ride leader, reviewing the information in this manual
- Have co-led two rides with an experienced HBC ride leader
- Have produced a map for one of the two rides and submitted it to the HBC mapmaster.

As A Ride Leader:

- To retain your ride leader status you must have led or co-led three rides etc. in the club's operating year (November 1 – October 31)
- Attend the Ride Leader Refresher Course scheduled each spring or schedule a one-on-one meeting with the Ride Leader Chair to review current updates.

Qualifications to train a new ride leaders:

- You must meet all the above requirements and have been a ride leader for one year
- You must have successfully led at least five (5) rides
- Have the capability to demonstrate ways to make a map for a ride

Qualified rides: *A participating ride is one that is scheduled in the newsletter or on HBC e-groups and follows HBC leader guidelines and has at least one participant besides the ride leader.*

- HBC encourages our leaders to lead both published rides and E-rides.
- All E-group rides must be posted on HBC E-groups by 8:00 A.M. on the day of the ride.
- E-rides may run at the same time as a published ride if **ANY-ONE** of the following factors is different from the published ride:
 - Location of ride start
 - Distance of ride
 - Ride type
- Two ride leaders may claim credit for the ride if there is a third person on the ride.

Night ride guidelines:

- A night ride is an official HBC ride in which any portion is to occur after sunset or before sunrise.
- A front and rear ride leader is recommended on all night rides
- Night rides are allowed any time of the year and special attention to safety should be followed
- Night rides categorized as either a **Slow** or **Medium** ride and shall operate at a leisurely pace of no more than 12 mph. Ride leader(s) are responsible for insuring that the riders stay together
- The maximum allowable distance shall be 25 miles
- Each bicycle shall be required to have an operating headlight and taillight that can be seen for a minimum of 500 feet and riders should wear clothing visible to traffic
- Only one route is allowed and shall be mapless to keep the group together
- Two or more leaders are recommended for safety and should regroup often - rest stops are optional.

Winter ride guidelines:

- Leader(s) must cancel if weather is too dangerous to ride
- Mountain bikes are highly recommended
- Try to ride on trails when roads are bad and keep off busy roads
- Be alert for signs of hypothermia.

If you've never led a ride before

If you've ridden on a lot of club rides, you already know how much fun and what is needed to know to lead a ride of your own. Not everything about leading rides is intuitively obvious, though. Thankfully, there are several resources available for learning more about becoming a ride leader. This booklet is intended to give you a good introduction.

What kind of ride do you want to lead?

Before you can select a route or make any of the other preparations necessary for a successful ride, you need to decide what kind of ride you want to lead. Here are some issues to consider:

- Decide who you want to ride with — the racers who never stops; a parent with children, who stops for everything; or the average riders, who slow down when riding up hills and stop for a great view or a snack.
- Decide on a pace, and be sure it matches the folks you want to ride with. Also, be sure the pace you choose is one that you can *very* comfortably maintain for the duration of the ride. Know your ability, if you drop back into the pack to check on one of your riders, make sure you are able to catch up to the front of the group again to advise on specific, upcoming directions.
- Decide on a distance. As with the pace, tailor the distance to the people you want to ride with. Only a small fraction of the club's members can comfortably ride 60 miles in a day (or believe they can), and fewer still can ride 80 or 100 miles.
- Think about what time the ride should start. If it's an after-work ride, keep in mind that some riders won't be able to make a start much earlier than 6 p.m. Consider, too, that a Saturday ride starting at 10 a.m. tends to draw a larger crowd than a ride starting earlier.
- Be sure you're not conflicting with anything that could make your ride unpleasant. For example, riding in downtown Minneapolis or St Paul during rush hour or riding to the airport terminal is not a good idea. Also try to check on any special events such as street fairs, church picnics and the like.
- Consider the season, particularly with respect to the probable weather. Most folks don't think of riding in cold rain or snow as being all that much fun.
- Consider the amount of daylight available (see chart in back) to insure all riders return safely before sunset.

Daytime ride end policy

- Sunset times shall be listed for the main riding season on our web page at www.hiawathabike.org and on the chart in the back of this booklet.
- All day rides submitted *must* be calculated to insure that the slowest rider in the ride category can be finished by sunset. This gives everyone approximately 15 to 20 minutes of twilight for flat tires or other minor emergencies.
- Add another 15 minutes to the total ride time for every break you plan on the route.
- Please try to calculate your ride mileage correctly so you don't leave anyone stranded after dark.

HBC ride categories

RIDE TYPE	TYPICAL AVERAGE SPEED	REPAIRS	LEADER RIDES
Fast	More than 14 mph	Riders help other riders	Anywhere
Medium	10 to 14 mph	Riders help other riders	At the rear
Slow	Less than 10 mph	Riders help other riders	At the rear

- To have an official HBC ride there must be one participant besides the ride leader.
- Your ride descriptions in the schedule should be more specific. Please specify where you will ride, the average speed you like to travel at, if the ride is mapless, rest stops, and provide additional information that will help a rider choose a ride that matches their abilities.
- In the schedule please describe your rides as Hilly, Rolling, or Flat to help provide a better picture of what your ride will be like. (See page 8)
- If all or part of your ride takes place after dark specify that a front headlight and rear flashing red light is required. Additional reflectors on both the bike and rider are encouraged. (see page 2).

Selecting a route

It's easy, right? You just draw lines on a map and make a bunch of copies. Close, but there are one or two things you should consider first.

General considerations

- Regardless of the means you use to choose a route, you must pre-ride or pre-drive it the week before so you know everything you need to about road conditions, mileage, water, lunch and restroom stops. If you are using two routes you must pre-ride or pre-drive both.
- If you've been on the route but not recently, riding the route the week before helps to ensure that nothing has changed significantly — no long detours over gravel roads, for example.
- If you're using a route that you've never ridden or that you're designing on your own, it's even more important that you travel it before the ride, preferably on a bicycle and at the same time of day as the ride will be held. Many of us have painful memories of the hills on a route that the ride leader chose from behind the wheel of a car.
- Choose a starting point that people can find easily and that has ample parking. If possible, the starting point should also have nearby restrooms and drinking water.
- Consider food, water, and restroom breaks. Everyone needs to eat and drink, and some bladders are weaker than others. If you're planning to stop for a lunch break, there's a psychological advantage to stopping after the midpoint rather than before. The riders who are feeling a bit tired can take solace in the knowledge that you're over half way.
- Use city trails wisely. These trails aren't built for speed, (most have a maximum speed of 10 mph.) and they *certainly* aren't built for crowds. On most trails in the city, there is already too much traffic without you and a slew of other cyclists adding to the hubbub, and a dangerous portion of the traffic is a child on a tricycles and people wearing headphones. Trails in the country, on the other hand, are often spectacularly beautiful and nearly deserted.
- Wherever you go, remember to respect private property, and ride only in places where bicycles are welcome.

Using an existing route

The best choice for a route is often one that you've ridden and enjoyed. Ride Leaders who authored these rides rarely mind if someone repeats one of their rides, but as a common courtesy you should ask for permission so you won't have to worry about plagiarism. Find a wide selection of routes on the club's web site at: www.hiawathabike.org/maps_on_the_web_2.htm. Also, ask the Ride Team leader about maps the club has archived. Feel free to add your own variations; just because you're borrowing someone else's route doesn't mean that you can't give it your own touch.

Choosing a published route

Your neighborhood bike shop, bookstore, or map stores very likely carries several books of bike routes in the Midwest, as well as individual cycling maps for specific areas. You may also find a variety of HBC maps on HBC's web page at www.hiawathabike.org. If you photocopy a copyrighted map, scratch a note somewhere on the map that indicates the source and author so riders who like the route or the map know which book or map to look for. You may also want to include the total distance and a brief description of the terrain, for example, "hilly" or "flat."

Designing your own route

If you decide to design your own route, here are a few suggestions. These suggestions apply most of all to slow rides with inexperienced riders. If you're leading faster rides, with more experienced riders, adjust accordingly.

- Safety is the deciding factor for all route-related decisions. If you can't find a safe way to get somewhere, don't go there. Keep in mind that riding with a group is *much* different from riding by yourself, and rarely is it easier.
- Avoid intersections that are too close to a hill or a curve if the opposing traffic isn't required to stop. You want your riders to have an ample view of oncoming traffic and vice versa.
- Avoid streets that are too narrow for cars to pass unless you'll only be traveling there for a short distance. For example, some streets with medians only have enough room for one lane of traffic in each direction. Some streets with traffic diverters only have enough room for one lane of traffic, period.
- Avoid crossing busy streets except at controlled intersections (those with stop signs or stoplights).
- Avoid heavily traveled, multi-lane roads whenever possible. If you find yourself with no good alternatives, at least try to avoid making left turns. Planning your route in a clockwise direction will help to avoid left turns. Even with the best of riders, getting a group safely across two lanes of traffic so they can make the turn is a dicey proposition. With inexperienced riders, it can only get worse.
- In general, avoid taking a group on sidewalks. On occasion, a short stretch of sidewalk is clearly the safest, best way to get from point A to point B. However, if we're to be taken seriously as operators of vehicles, we can't be spending a lot of time riding on the sidewalk.
- Unless you're leading a mountain-bike ride, avoid difficult riding surfaces whenever possible, for example, rough or rutted roads, cobblestones, bridges with metal decks, railroad tracks, dirt, gravel, grass, stairs, and so on. However, don't miss out on a stunning overlook or a ride along the water just because the path is a short stretch of gravel. Simply suggest that people walk if they'd rather.
- Try to avoid surprises. Suppose, for example, that you choose a route on which there's a steep uphill just after a turn. If you don't remember to warn riders in advance, they'll all be so distracted trying to get into the correct gear that they won't watch out for one another or for traffic. With an inexperienced group, some riders will simply stop, with no thought to whether anyone might be behind them.

Note: If you can't circumvent a problem that may stymie your riders, try to warn everyone during the ride, possibly at a stop immediately before you get to that location.

- Study maps in search of promising back roads. However, be sure you pre-ride these roads before the day of the ride, so you don't run into a washed-out bridge or 20 miles of rough gravel.
- Explore. The best way to find spectacular views, pedestrian over and underpasses, wooden bridges, unusual houses, beautiful gardens, or anything else that won't show up on a map is by leisurely wandering around.
- If you know a ride leader who has led rides in the area where you want to go, call and ask for suggestions on roads to use or avoid, good places for mid-ride snacks, scenic overlooks, mean dogs, and other relevant details

Making maps

When you submit a ride description for publication in the *Spoke n Wheel*; events@hiawathabike.org you'll indicate whether you'll be providing riders with a map or cue sheet or doing a mapless ride. In general, giving riders a map or cue sheet is required unless the route is advertised as mapless. In all likelihood, *someone* on your ride has never been on some or all of the route you've chosen and could easily get lost if separated from the group. Even if you lead a ride over the same route week after week, you should have a map or cue sheet for riders who have never been on your ride before.

Choosing between maps and cue sheets is primarily a matter of personal preference. With a map, riders who somehow miss a turn can find their way back to the route (or back to the starting point), assuming they haven't ridden off the map. On the other hand, the details of a map are more difficult to grasp while you're moving. It's easier to glance at a cue sheet and see that the next turn is a left onto *Valley View Road*. With a cue sheet, you can also describe quirks of the route that won't be obvious from a map ("at the pedestrian crosswalk, turn right onto the wooden footbridge"). Ideally, you'd provide both and let people choose for themselves, but that's a lot of extra work.

Making a map

The first considerations a leader should have are what to put on the map. Here is a list of items to consider:

- Highlighted route.
- Name of ride.
- Start and finish indicators.
- Mileage and scale.
- North indicator and facing up on map.
- Towns you are going through.
- Major crossroads and highways.
- Rest stop locations, include mileage to rest stop from ride start
- Directional arrows.
- Lakes and rivers.
- Points of interest.
- Leaders name.
- Your cell-phone number if you will be carrying one.
- Inset maps of difficult areas with numerous turns.
- HBC logo.
- www.hiawathabike.org

The best way to make a map is to use one of the new map-making computer programs that are available on the market today. They do an excellent job. Some good examples are:

- DeLorme Street Atlas USA versions (many HBC leaders use these programs).
- Precision Mapping 2.0.
- Microsoft Streets 98 or newer.

Another simple way to make a map of your route is to get a map of the area, photocopy the relevant portion, mark your route on the copy, and then photocopy the marked copy. If you choose this method, here are a few suggestions:

- Try not to run the route right up to the edge of the map. If your photocopied map includes some of the neighborhood outside the route, riders are less likely to ride off the map if they happen to miss a turn.
- The route you choose may not always fit perfectly on an 8 by 11.5 sheet of paper. Use the zoom in and out feature on a copy machine to get the route to fit.
- Highlight the route with a medium felt tip pen. Road names will not show through when you make photocopies so it is important to legibly write in the names of the roads used.
- Include directional arrows, so riders know which direction they're supposed to be riding. This is even more important if the route crosses itself at some point, as city rides sometimes will.

Another easy way to make a map is to trace an existing map. This will not look as complicated and cluttered as a photocopied map.

- By tracing you only have the important things listed on the map.
- You still have a map that is to scale.
- You can still make it fit the page by photocopy zoom control.
- It is a good idea to add a few extra road names to keep people from running off the map or going too far on any road.
- The fine print on a photocopied map will be hard to read so print the names of the roads you will be traveling on next to it on the map.

Making a cue sheet

A cue sheet is a set of written instructions on how to follow a route. In its simplest form, a cue sheet includes the distance from one place to the next ("1.8 miles" or "2 blocks"), where the next place is ("Madrona Avenue"), what you do when you get there ("turn left") and maybe the total distance up to that point in the ride. Following is a short (fictional) example.

Distance	Total	Direction	Notes
			Starting point —parking lot at Magnuson Park
0	0	L	Onto Baker Avenue
0.1	0.1	R	Onto 15th Avenue
0.3	0.4	Warning!	Big pothole at 103rd Street
1.6	2.0	L	Onto Madrona Way (bottom of the hill). Heavy traffic. Ride single file.
0.3	2.3	R	At the pedestrian crosswalk, cross the wooden pedestrian bridge. Ride slowly and yield to pedestrians.
0.1	2.4	L	At the far end of the wooden bridge
0.2	2.6	L	At the next intersection (no street sign)
0.4	3.0	Stop	Carkeek Park. Rest stop, restrooms, water fountains.

Here are some suggestions on what to include on a cue sheet. If the route is long or circuitous, not everything suggested here will fit:

- **The starting point:** Six months from now, when you look at this cue sheet again, you'll want a reminder of where the ride started, so you don't have to decipher it from the details. To make it

easier for your riders to use the cue sheet later, you may want to include directions to the starting point from some known location.

- **Clear instructions:** Be sure there's no mistaking what you've instructed riders to do. For example, at a five-way intersection, there may be two left turns. Make it clear whether folks should make a hard left or a soft left.
- **Mileage:** Include the distance between landmarks and the total distance as of each landmark. If you forgot to note a distance as you were pre-riding the route, you can always estimate from a map.
- **The important things in life:** Include mileage to restrooms, water fountains, regrouping points, rest stops, and so on. You also might want to include bike shops close to the route and, for long trips in the country, places where riders can get refreshments.
- **Road hazards:** Point out blind curves, dangerous intersections, narrow roads, and similar potential problems. Make recommendations for safe riding as appropriate ("ride single-file").
- **Points of interest:** Mention scenic overlooks, eagles' nests, noteworthy art or architecture, a bakery where you can get a really good brownie, the place where your mom and dad first met.
- **Frequent landmarks:** If you travel a long distance on the same road, include landmarks every few miles or so, just so folks know they're still heading in the right direction. Tired riders who don't have a bike computer will have a tough time telling the difference between 15 miles and 20 miles.
- **Readily visible landmarks:** Wherever possible, use big, obvious landmarks, especially when it's a long distance between landmarks. You don't want riders to spend miles wondering whether they've already passed the mailbox that looks like a little barn.
- **Unchanging landmarks:** If you plan to use the same cue sheet again some day, try to use landmarks that are unlikely to change. For example, don't tell riders to turn left at the big white house, or someone is sure to repaint it pink. Likewise, watch out when specifying business names, a number of stoplights or stop signs, and alterable natural features. "Left at the third light" has a new meaning if the city adds another light, and big trees can be cut down.

Here are some suggestions on how to make a cue sheet:

- **Make the text big:** If you're using a computer to produce the cue sheet, so you're able to change the size of the font, make the text **BIG**. Folks will be reading your cue sheet at 15 or 20 miles an hour. Don't make it hard for them. 14-point type is a good size. This sentence is in 10-point type, and that's too small for a cue sheet.
- **Make the important stuff stand out:** Again, if you're using a computer to produce the cue sheet, you can change the font to **bold**, *italics*, or **both** to make it stand out better. Just don't overdo it, or nothing will stand out.
- **Use standard abbreviations:** Instead of spelling everything out, use "L" (left), "R" (right), and "S" (straight) to indicate directions. Some folks also use "BL" and "BR" (bear left and bear right), but that's a bit obscure.
- **Lay out the cue sheet for easy folding:** Divide the cue sheet in half or in quarters, label the parts, and try to avoid putting instructions on the folds, for example:

1				3			
Distance	Total	Direction	Notes	Distance	Total	Direction	Notes
			Starting point —parking lot at View Park	0.7	3.7	R	Onto the Burke-Gilman Trail. <i>Ride single file.</i>
0	0	L	Onto Baker Street	1.1	4.8	Warning! <i>Blind curve</i>	
0.1	0.1	R	Onto Penny Lane	1.2	6.0	L	Onto 42nd Street
0.3	0.4	Warning!	<i>Big pothole at 103rd Street</i>	0.4	6.4	Stop	Onto Purple Avenue
1.6	2.0	L	Onto Ventura Highway (bottom of the hill). <i>Heavy traffic. Ride single file.</i>				
2				4			
Distance	Total	Direction	Notes	Distance	Total	Direction	Notes
0.3	2.3	R	At the pedestrian crosswalk, cross the wooden bridge. <i>Ride slowly and yield to pedestrians.</i>	0.6	7.0	L	Onto Peyton Place
0.1	2.4	L	At the far end of the wooden bridge	0.3	7.3	R	Onto Broadway
0.2	2.6	L	At the next intersection (no street sign)	1.8	9.1	S	Wait at the top of the hill
0.4	3.0	Stop	Carkeek Park. <i>Rest stop, restrooms, water fountains.</i>	1.5	10.6	L	Into the Lakeview Park parking lot. <i>Swimming.</i>

Including the “Tips for safe riding”

It’s a good idea to copy the “Tips for safe riding,” at the end of this booklet, onto the back of your map or cue sheet. The list of tips is short, simple, and a good reminder for riders who haven’t ridden a bicycle since they got out of grade school.

Submitting a ride

You can submit your ride in three different ways:

- By completing and returning the ride submission form that our scheduler will e-mail to you at the beginning of every month.
- By calling or e-mailing our ride scheduler. You can find contact information for our ride scheduler at www.hiawathabike.org or in the *Spoke n Wheel*, our monthly newsletter.
- You may also submit rides anytime on HBC e-groups. E-group rides, however, will not be printed in our published schedule, but will be sent to all HBC members who participate in HBC e-groups. If you’re not now on HBC e-groups please contact the HBC membership team leader to join HBC e-groups. You can reach our membership team leader by going to www.hiawathabike.org and clicking on the “Contact Us” link.

Your ride submission **must** contain the following information, whether you submit a published ride or an e-ride:

- Day of the ride
- Date of the ride
- Departure time of the ride
- Rating of the ride – Fast, Medium or Slow (optional, the average speed you plan to ride)
- Distance of the ride in miles. If you give a range, the range should not differ by more than five miles, for example, 25 – 30 miles, but **not** 25 – 40 miles **nor** 15+ miles.
- Terrain classification: Hilly, Rolling or Flat
- The name of your ride
- The start point of your ride
- A description of the start point of the ride, including complete directions on how to get there. You must state the street address and the name of the city of your ride departure point.
- Your name as ride leader
- Your telephone number. You may also include your e-mail address, but you still must include your telephone number.

Rides that do not comply fully and completely with HBC's required ride information will *not* be included in our published HBC ride schedule nor displayed on our web page, so be sure to include all the required information in your ride description.

In your ride description, remember to include any cautions, quirks, or special requirements for your ride. Don't identify anything as "required" unless you intend to enforce the requirement; instead, make "requests" or "recommendations." Here are some examples of items worth including:

- If you're planning a lunch stop, indicate whether people should bring a lunch or bring money for lunch.
- If you're climbing hills all day in Wisconsin, *warn* people in the ride description so you don't get riders who aren't up to it.
- If you're planning to spend three hours at an antique fair in the middle of a 15-mile ride, mention this so potential riders know that the ride isn't just a quick loop.
- If you're taking a route that's shy of amenities like restaurants and restrooms, caution people so they can bring their own food and toilet paper.
- If you're leading a ride that starts in a remote location, try to encourage carpooling. For example, you might specify a carpooling place and time and then either arrange for someone to drive by that location or pass by your-self on the way to the starting point.

Important! If you want to include any non-cycling activities as part of the ride, make these activities optional. Riders must be able to choose between participating in extra activities and waiting for the ride to resume.

This applies to all non-cycling activities, but it especially applies to anything hazardous or activities that require special training or skills (rock climbing, kayaking, and so on).

Hiawatha's no-discrimination policy

All HBC rides are open to everyone who is able and willing to participate safely and cooperatively. In your ride description, you can specify who a ride is primarily intended for, but you can't specify whom the ride *isn't* for. For example, you can specify that your ride is a Norwegians ride, but you can't specify that it's a Norwegians-*only* ride or that it's a no-Swedes ride.

This no-discrimination policy does not prevent you from asking a rider to leave a ride based on the rider's abilities, equipment, or actions on that ride or previous rides.

Commercial activities

HBC's rides are non-commercial, so you can't try to sell anything on your ride.

Non-HBC events

The activities schedule in the *Spoke n wheel* doesn't include rides that are sponsored by other organizations.

For insurance purposes, HBC has a policy that prohibits leading rides and events jointly with other bicycling organizations.

Fielding phone calls from prospective riders

When you submit a ride please include your phone number and e-mail address so riders can call or e-mail you with questions before the ride. Typically, callers will want to know whether they can handle your ride. How you answer this question depends on the difficulty of the ride.

If the ride is difficult; "*Fast*" and/or hilly, you'll obviously want to be clear with callers about the distance, the speed, the number and size of hills, and so on.

If the ride is less strenuous, “*Medium*” or “*Slow*”, you have more discretion. For a slow, short, social ride, you may want to encourage anyone who isn’t wheezing into the phone to come along. After all, everyone needs to start somewhere. If you take this approach, you must be prepared to wait patiently at the top of every hill for the sightseers. Your reward is the chance to meet delightful people who don’t happen to be great cyclists and to make occasional riders into better, stronger, more enthusiastic cyclists.

If you’re not prepared to wait for everyone who needs to be waited for, by all means make that clear to callers. Convincing folks that they can handle your ride and then leaving them in the dust is a great way to discourage them from ever joining an HBC ride again (and a pretty good way to make them drop their membership).

From time to time, you may get a phone call from a parent who wants to bring one or more children along. The club doesn’t forbid children on rides, but a parent must sign the liability waiver for anyone under age 18 and the parent must ride with this minor. In addition, unless you’re just riding around a parking lot, be cautious about encouraging parents to bring children along on a ride. Parents don’t always have a realistic perception of how far or how fast their children are able to ride, or how safely the children are able to ride in a group.

Before the ride

If you need to cancel a ride: If you have to cancel a ride, you **MUST** show up at the starting point or have someone else (An HBC club member) go and announce that the ride has been canceled, unless it’s obvious from the weather conditions that the ride is canceled (e.g. heavy snow or lightning). Bear in mind that the weather conditions can vary greatly over the metro area and if it is raining like cats and dogs where you are, it may be sunny at the ride start location. ***You, as a ride leader have total control over the outcome of your ride and have the right and responsibility to cancel a ride if weather conditions warrant it. But not by e-groups!***

If you can’t lead a ride: If, for some reason, you can’t lead a ride yourself, you **MUST** find a replacement. The ride scheduler may be able to help you find someone.

If you advertised the ride in the *Spoke n Wheel* as including a map or cue sheet, be sure your replacement has them.

Remember to bring everything

The items on this list also appear on the “Day-of-ride checklist,” at the back of this booklet.

Show up at least **30** minutes before ride departure time with the necessary stuff:

- Your bike and helmet.
- Plenty of copies of the map or cue sheet if you advertised that you’d provide one.
- Two copies of the HBC signup sheet.
- Six copies of HBC’s membership forms
- One copy of the HBC/LAB Incident Report.
- One copy of HBC’s one-day \$2 membership forms.
- A couple of pens.
- Food and full water bottles or other hydration system.
- Basic tools: a pump, extra tube, patch kit, multi tool and tire levers.
- A rudimentary first aid kit. See “What to carry in a first-aid kit” under “Handling injuries,” later in this booklet.

- A bike lock. If you bring a cable lock, you can lock several bikes together.
- A bike computer to monitor your pace.
- A cellular phone, if you have one.
- An extra helmet, if you have one.
- Rags, WetWipes®, or something of the sort for cleaning up after a road side repair.
- Toilet paper or tissues, if you're planning to be away from basic amenities like toilets for very long.

Get signatures, check on helmets, and get a count

- Every rider must check-in on the Event Sign-in Form. Before you leave announce that all non-HBC riders must fill out and sign the guest release form for insurance purposes. On a large ride, you can't know whether everyone has checked in, but try to make a good-faith effort.
- **Important!** Members must have their child waivers signed in advance. Non-member parents, grandparents, adult sibling or legal guardians must sign the liability waiver for any rider under 18 years old at the ride check-in. (*A legal guardian would be someone appointed as such by the court--or awarded custody by a court order or named as such by a designated custody agreement signed by a parent of the child. In the case of an adult sibling, he or she must be 21 years of age or older.*) In any event the parent or another adult through out the ride must accompany the child closely.
- If you have doubts about whether the child will be able to safely complete the ride without holding up the group, you should discuss it with the parent. You may refuse to allow a child on the ride if you believe the child's participation would be unsafe or disruptive. Minors cannot ride unaccompanied.
- Don't let anyone ride without a helmet. HBC requires all riders to wear helmets on all rides. If someone arrives without a helmet, you can borrow him or her one of yours or ask if any of the other riders has a spare to loan.
- **Bottom line is: No helmet = No ride**

Important! If someone refuses to sign the liability waiver or insists on riding without a helmet, make it clear to other riders that the uncooperative rider is not a part of the group. Thankfully, this problem rarely occurs.

- Count the riders in your group so you can determine if you have everyone at regrouping points and when leaving rest stops.

Make a pre-ride announcement

Here's a pretty long list of topics to try to cover in a short pre-ride announcement. If you chatter on for too long, people will stop listening, so try not to turn it into a lecture. However, particularly for slow rides that attract a lot of beginners, these are topics that bear repeating time and again. It doesn't hurt to offer a few reminders to fast, experienced riders, either.

Note: The items on this list also appear on the "Day-of-ride checklist," at the back of this booklet

- **Introduction:** Introduce yourself, your co-partner(s) and those participating on the ride. If the ride will be breaking into two groups, explain who will be leading each group.
- **Welcome to new riders:** Ask if there is any riders who have never been on an HBC ride and, if so, welcome them to the group. In addition, encourage the regular riders to check in with the newcomers during the ride and ensure that they're doing all right. In a group that rides together

regularly, a new rider, shy or not, may not feel welcome if the regulars spend the entire ride talking among themselves.

- **Waivers, maps/cue sheets:** Ask if all non-members have signed the liability waiver and if everyone has received the map or cue sheet.
- **Pace:** Announce the pace and classification and explain what it means.
- **Stick-togetherness:** Indicate whether the ride will stick together, regroup at the top of hills, or regroup at a specified point.
- **The route:** Briefly describe the ride, including food and rest stops, difficult hills, unusual or dangerous conditions, the first regrouping point, and hazards and tricky turns before that point.
- **Safety:** Talk about safe riding techniques and mention any special conditions that may apply to your ride. Remind riders that each person is responsible for his or her own safety. They may have heard it all before, so say it some amusing or vivid way that they can't forget. Emphasize that riding in large packs is not a good idea. Mention that just because the rider ahead of you made it through an intersection without being run over doesn't mean you can too.

You can't teach safe cycling in the three minutes you have before people stop listening, so vary your safety announcement to fit the hazards of the ride. If you lead rides regularly, rotate topics from time to time. Point out the safety tips that you copied onto the back of your map or cue sheet, or that you provided on a separate sheet.

- **Traffic regulations:** Remind riders that a bicycle is a vehicle and bicycle riders are, therefore, expected to obey traffic regulations.
- **Rider Etiquette:** Ask riders to be courteous. Drivers who are impressed with the courtesy of a group of cyclists will be more inclined to treat other cyclists with respect.
- **Group riding techniques:** For the benefit of new riders, mention group riding techniques, including:
 - **Riding single-file in traffic:** Make it clear that riders are *not* to block traffic by riding two or more abreast.
 - **Use the center lane at intersections** unless making a right or left hand turn.
 - **Hand signals:** Remind riders to use hand signals for turning or stopping. It's also a good idea to point out road hazards.
 - **Voice signals:** Give riders a quick overview of voice signals: "Car up/back/left/right," "On your left" to indicate that you're passing another rider or a pedestrian, "Glass/pothole/etc." to indicate road hazards (combined with hand signals as appropriate). Emphasize that "Car back" means a car is coming from behind, so riders should start riding single file.
 - **Discourage riders from calling out "Clear"** at intersections to indicate that no cars are coming. "Clear" is a subjective and temporary condition, so riders should always look for themselves.
 - **Other cyclists:** Remind riders to watch out for one another. On a group ride, they're much more likely to have an accident with one another than they are with a car.
 - **Stoplights and stop signs:** Caution riders not to run stop lights or stop signs out of fear of being left behind.
 - **Riding on trails:** If you'll be riding on trails, remind riders to stay on the right half of the trail and to be considerate of other trail users.
- **Special equipment:** Remind riders about any special equipment that's required for the ride (for example, lights, locks, snacks or energy bars).
- **Keep the leader informed:** Ask riders to pass the word if someone leaves or breaks down, and to notify you if they're planning to leave the ride before the end.

- **First-aid kit, first aid training, or cellular phone:** Ask if anyone has a first-aid kit, first aid training, or a cellular phone.
- **After-ride refreshments:** If you're going somewhere after the ride for a meal or a snack, tell everyone where you're going now. You probably won't get a chance after the ride because everyone will scatter to the four winds.
- **Questions?** Ask if there are questions.

Leading the ride

Every ride is different, so it's impossible to anticipate everything you might encounter on a ride. Here's a quick list of some items to attend to.

Note: Not all of these items may apply to all types of rides.

- **Set a good example:** Ride safely, be kind to strangers, pet dogs, kiss babies, and remember that you represent the Hiawatha Bicycling Club.
- **Courtesy:** Anticipate situations where your group may inconvenience others. For example, when you stop to regroup, be sure your riders aren't blocking the road or the sidewalk. When you re-enter the roadway, wait until there's a break in traffic, so drivers aren't forced to slow down for your group.

If you're taking the group on a trail, especially a busy, in-city trail, ask everyone to stay on the right half of the trail, regardless of how wide the trail is. This may mean that everyone must ride single-file, which will make socializing more difficult. However, having to shout to one another is better by far than forcing other trail users off the trail and leaving them with an indelible bad impression of group rides and riders.

- **Unsafe riders:** Unsafe riders endanger everyone around them, ruin the experience for others on the ride, and give cyclists a bad image. If you're uncomfortable with a rider's actions, quietly and politely explain your concern. If the situation doesn't improve, ask the rider to leave the group.
- **Pace:** You, as the leader are responsible for setting the minimum pace the ride will maintain. You cannot and should not try to control the pace of the front of the pack unless you are leading a mapless or night ride. Make sure your riders know that, if they get ahead, they're on their own. Your responsibility is to lead the ride you've advertised and to keep track of the people who are doing the same.
- **The slow and the lost:** You can't always keep track of all riders on "M" (Medium) and "S" (Slow) rides, but do the best you can. Assess how the riders at the back of the group are doing, and try to adjust the ride as appropriate. Try not to leave anyone behind or lose them.
- **Too-fast and too-slow riders:** At the first regrouping point, if some riders are clearly too fast or too slow for the group, consider splitting into more than one group. You can ask the fast riders if they'd prefer to take off on their own, leaving you with the slower group. If you have someone who is clearly over their head and not riding at the minimum pace, try suggesting they head back to allow you to support the rest of the group.
- **Mid-ride announcements:** At each regrouping point, announce the next regrouping point. Re-emphasize safety, especially related to upcoming conditions. For example, if you'll need to move into the left lane to make a turn, remind riders to *look* before they change lanes. If there's a steep uphill immediately after a turn, try to warn riders in advance. If you're getting onto a trail, remind riders to stay on the right half of the trail and to be considerate of other trail users.
- **Stoplights, stop signs, and crosswalks:** Stop for red lights, stop signs, and pedestrian crosswalks. Not stopping endangers your riders, opens you to liability in the event of an accident, and gives onlookers the impression that cyclists are a bunch of scofflaws.

Don't stop too close to the intersection to wait for the group to catch up. Drivers have enough to cope with at intersections without having to worry about a gaggle of cyclists.

At a stop sign or stoplight, join the line of cars and allow room for right turning cars. Don't pass cars on the right and make your way up to the intersection. The cars will just have to pass you again after the intersection, and this *really* makes some drivers angry.

- **Unforeseen problems:** If you run into unforeseen problems (new construction, bad weather, unusually heavy traffic, a closed bakery), be creative. Change the route, take shelter, ford a stream, or choose a different rest stop. Consider safety above all else, and don't be afraid to ask for suggestions from your riders. They may know the area better than you do. However, you're in charge, so don't let yourself be railroaded into something that you think is unwise.
- **Restaurant and restroom stops:** Whenever you stop somewhere with your group, encourage your riders to be considerate of the non-riders around you. Try not to leave folks with the impression that cyclists are a bunch of ill-mannered ne'er-do-wells. If you happen to inconvenience someone, apologize profusely and do your best to rectify the situation immediately.

When it's time to start riding again, announce your departure enough in advance that everyone has time to stash their extra cookies, get their helmets and gloves on, and untangle their bikes from all of the other bikes leaning against the same tree. In addition, be alert for riders who have wandered off or are in the restroom.

- **Messes:** Wherever you stop, make sure you and your riders clean up after yourselves. Don't make your mark on the world with banana peels, energy bar wrappers, and dead inner tubes.
- **Good will:** Smile, wave, and call out thanks whenever anyone (especially a driver) is even unintentionally helpful to your group.
- **New riders:** Check in with each of the new riders periodically to ensure that they're getting along all right and that they feel welcome.
- **Riding after dark:** If you're riding after dark, slow down and keep the group together. A group of cyclists, each one properly lit with a headlight and taillight, is much more visible after dark than an individual rider. (See night ride guidelines on page 21 of this booklet).
- **Injuries and other problems:** If one of your riders is injured, follow the guidelines under "Handling injuries," later in this booklet. For information on handling a variety of other problems, see "Handling other problems," also later in this booklet.
- **Have a good time yourself:** Some rides are a joy to lead, while others are unadulterated drudgery. If you aren't having a good time yourself, think about what you could do differently next time. Moreover, if you're not having fun, some or all of your riders probably are not either. Be bold and ask *them* how you could make the ride more enjoyable.

Leading from the front or the back of the group

You, as a leader, are not required to lead from any specific area on a ride. If at all possible, lead from the rear, you will be able to better serve your riders by leading from the back or near the back. Some ride leaders spend the entire ride making their way back and forth between the front and the back of the group, checking to see that everyone is doing all right. Other ride leaders choose to spend the entire ride at or near the back of the group. This ensures that they'll eventually come upon anyone who has stopped for any reason.

If you choose not to lead from the front, here are a couple of things to watch out for:

- If it's a stick-together ride, remind everyone what the pace is and ask them to maintain that pace.
- If you want riders to stop at a particular location, be sure everyone knows where that location is.
- Remind riders to watch the map or cue sheet carefully and stop if they have any doubts about which direction they should be going.

After the ride

Immediately after the ride, it is suggested you:

- Check to make sure that everyone has returned safely.

- Thank riders for coming along.
- Ask for comments or suggestions. Did riders enjoy the ride? Did they like the route? Is there anything you could have done differently?
- When you get home, you should call any rider who was injured or lost during the ride. If you get home too late in the evening to call, be sure you call the next day.
- Mail your sign-up sheet and any memberships to the address on the cover of this booklet. You can also e-mail your trip reports to our statistician listed in the *Spoke n Wheel*.

Using the information on the sign-up sheet: The information on the HBC sign-up sheet is confidential. If a rider calls you to ask for the phone number of someone else on the ride, *do not* give out that information. Instead, take the name and number of the person making the inquiry, call the other rider, and pass on the inquirer's name and number.

Handling injuries

Who to notify in the event of an accident:

- 1. Call 911: Important!** If you determine that the person has a possible neck or back injury, continue to divert or hold up traffic until help arrives. *Do not move the person.*
- 2. If** an injured rider is taken to the hospital unconscious, try to get an emergency contact phone number and call that number immediately and calmly explain what happened. If you cannot find one call our membership chair listed in the *Spoke n Wheel* or at www.hiawathabike.org for an emergency contact phone number. If the rider is conscious, he or she can decide who to contact and when.
- 3. HBC** provides a LAB Incident Report that you should download from the clubs website www.hiawathabike.org. You should fill out the Incident Report form and mail it to the HBC Post Office address on the front of the form even if the incident didn't require a trip to the hospital.

Bruce Beck is our HBC insurance liaison for the club:

If the accident involves a fatality or serious bodily injuries then it should be called in to American Specialties immediately at 1-800-566-7941 This line is open 24/7.

Send the accident report to Bruce:

His fax line is also open 24/7 at 651-770-9033.

or

Email him the accident reports at: bruce_beck@comcast.net.

Questions, his office number is 651-770-2400 and home number is 651-770-5463

Important! If a rider has an accident and lands on his or her head, neck or shoulders, you **must** consider the possibility of a neck or back injury.

- ***If the person is conscious:*** Ask if the person has neck or back pain, weakness, or loss of limb function or sensation. If so, you should suspect spinal cord injury and have the person stay very still until help arrives.
- ***If the person is unconscious:*** You have no way to know what injury the person may have suffered, so ***do not move an unconscious person.***
- ***If an unconscious person regains consciousness before help arrives:*** Keep the person as still and quiet as possible. You may need to be firm. Someone who is in shock or suffering a concussion isn't the best judge of what to do at the moment. Be sympathetic but firm.

If someone may have a neck or back injury, you should *never move the person*. You could cause irreparable damage to the spinal cord, possibly resulting in *permanent paralysis*.

What to do if one of your riders has an accident and is injured

- **Stay calm:** You're no help to others if you're frantic. Pause, take a deep breath, and survey the situation before you act.
- **Divert or stop traffic:** If the injured rider is in the roadway, have other riders divert or stop traffic until you can determine if the person has a possible neck or back injury. Get all other riders and their bicycles off the road.

Important! If you determine that the person has a possible neck or back injury, continue to divert or hold up traffic until help arrives. **Do not move the person. Call 911**

- **Determine if the person is injured seriously enough to require medical attention:** The injured rider should get medical attention if he or she:
 - Is bleeding heavily.
 - Has a head injury and lost consciousness even briefly.
 - Can't remember what happened.
 - Has obvious pain when moving an injured limb.
 - Has trouble opening his or her jaw.
- **If you don't know much about first aid yourself,** ask if anyone in your group does.
- **If the person has no obvious injuries,** you still should pay careful attention to determine if the person is confused or disoriented, which could also indicate a head injury.
- **If necessary, send someone for help:** If there is *any* question about whether professional medical attention is necessary, **call 911 immediately**. If no one has a cellular phone and you need to send someone to call, make sure the person who is going has change for a pay phone and can accurately describe where you are. If possible, send two riders: one to direct the ambulance to your location (if necessary), and another who can return to the group when 911 has been reached, so you and the others know that help is on the way.

Important! If you have an emergency and you aren't near a phone, remember that bus and cab drivers, utility crews, and construction crews all have radios that they can use to call for help. In addition, many drivers now carry cellular phones.

- **Care for and reassure the injured rider until help arrives:** Be as helpful as possible given the situation and the available materials. In particular, keep the person as warm and dry as possible. Regardless of the rider's condition, act calmly, speak in reassuring tones, and be sure that everyone around you does the same. Ask everyone who isn't helping to stand well back, so the injured rider isn't looking up into a mob of worried or horrified faces. Also, caution the others not to discuss the rider's injuries; no one who is injured wants to hear the words "Wow! Look at all that *blood!*"
- **Make sure the person's contact information and helmet get into the ambulance:** If an injured rider is taken away in an ambulance, be sure the rider's contact information and **helmet** go along. Someone at the hospital will probably want to examine the helmet to determine the likelihood of head injuries.
- **What to do with the injured rider's bike and gear:** If you need to leave the rider's bike where it is, lock it up and take all of the removable gear with you (bike bags, headlights, and so on). You

may be able to leave the bike at a nearby fire station or bike shop, or at the home of one of the local residents. Return for the bike as soon as possible (preferably before nightfall), and let the injured rider know that you have it.

Important! Be sure *you* know the rider's name and contact information, so you can call later to check on his or her condition, send a get-well card, return the rider's bike, and file an Incident Report with the HBC officials at the HBC mailbox noted on the cover of this booklet.

Other concerns in the event of a severe accident

In addition to taking care of the injured rider, you need to be concerned about the other riders and contacting witnesses.

- ***Continuing the ride:*** In some cases, you may need to continue the ride before the injured rider has recovered enough to start riding again or before the ambulance has arrived. For example, if it's evening and you're running out of daylight, you'll need to get the other riders back to the starting point.
- ***You shouldn't leave the injured rider alone*** even if he or she is clearly all right. If the other riders can find their way back to the starting point, you and someone who knows first aid should stay with the injured rider. Otherwise, you should ask for volunteers to stay, again including someone who knows first aid.
- ***Witnesses:*** Try to obtain the names, phone numbers and addresses of any credible witnesses that may have seen what happened.

Road rash

If one of your riders falls and leaves some skin on the pavement, the person should clean the wound thoroughly, apply some antiseptic cream or ointment, and cover it with clean gauze. If there isn't a nearby source of clean water, using water from water bottles is better than not cleaning the wound at all. If the edges of a deep cut won't fit back together or if the wound is in a place where motion will prevent it from healing, the rider should get medical attention as soon as possible. For open cuts or abrasions, the rider should seek medical care if he or she hasn't had a tetanus immunization in the last five years.

Hypothermia

If you're riding in cold or wet weather, keep an eye on all of your riders to ensure that no one is suffering from hypothermia. Mild hypothermia is characterized by shivering, and can be treated by getting the person out of the cold and into dry clothes. If there's nowhere to get out of the cold, try sharing body heat. More severe cases are characterized by confusion and lack of coordination; in this case you need to get the person to medical care as soon as possible.

Heat exhaustion and heat stroke

Heat exhaustion and heat stroke can be caused by riding in hot weather or by dressing inappropriately when riding in cooler weather. As a cyclist, you need to dress so you can dissipate heat and perspiration. In addition, you need to drink plenty of fluids, so you don't become dehydrated.

- ***Heat exhaustion*** is characterized by pale, clammy skin, profuse perspiration, and extreme tiredness and/or weakness. The person may have a headache and may vomit. With heat exhaustion, the person's body temperature is approximately normal.

The treatment for heat exhaustion is rest. If the person is alert, offer oral fluids, preferably water or sports drinks. Don't give the person coffee, tea, or alcoholic beverages.

- **Heat stroke** is far more dangerous. The body's temperature control system has stopped working, so the person doesn't sweat anymore. Body temperature may rise so far that brain damage may result.

The symptoms of heat stroke include hot, red skin; no perspiration; extremely high body temperature; dizziness; nausea; headache; rapid pulse; and confusion, disorientation, or unconsciousness.

Get the person out of the heat immediately, and cool his or her body quickly. Soak the person in cool but not cold water, or pour water over the body. Stop and observe the person for 10 minutes, then cool some more if the person's body temperature is still above 102°.

If the person is alert, offer oral fluids, preferably water or sports drinks. Don't give the person coffee, tea, or alcoholic beverages.

If heat stroke develops, the rider will need medical care, possibly including intravenous fluids.

What to carry in a first-aid kit

HBC suggests you carry a first-aid kit for the occasional minor injury; here are some suggestions on what to include:

- Large gauze squares for cleaning road rash or as protection from further harm.
- A roll of gauze for covering larger areas of rash.
- Non-adherent sterile pads.
- Antiseptic cream or ointment.
- A roll of tape to secure bandages.
- Band-Aids® for small cuts and blisters.
- Second Skin for open blisters.
- A triangular bandage.
- Latex or rubber gloves.
- Zinc oxide ointment.
- Bug spray.
- Space blanket to keep shock victims warm.

Note: If you have first-aid training, you may want to add other items to your first-aid kit, for example, Epinephrine®, which is good for severe asthma, as well as for bee stings or any other anaphylactic reaction. This depends on your level of knowledge and your willingness to carry the extra weight.

Getting first-aid training

If you're interested, first-aid training is readily available. Many fire departments and employers offer free CPR training. For information on more extensive training, you can call the your local Red Cross chapter.

Some technical colleges also offer excellent first-aid courses, which are taught by experienced emergency medical technicians.

Handling other problems

Here are some problems that you may encounter on your rides and some suggestions on how to handle them:

Riding in the rain

In a light rain, you can probably keep riding, but you need to be especially careful on downhill, wet leaves, railroad tracks, and metal bridge decks.

In a rain that's heavy enough to affect visibility, you should consider stopping *off the road* until the rain slows. However, standing around somewhere while you're wet and cold is a good way to get hypothermia, so you need to weigh the odds of getting run over against the odds of freezing to death.

In a heavy rain, you're probably best off finding a nice, warm bakery where you can gorge on rolls and chocolate until the weather improves. However, be sure you have the permission of the proprietor, be careful not to inconvenience other customers, and be sure you and your riders all *buy* something. Also, recognize that the weather may not improve before sunset, and that you may have to set off in the rain again.

Avoiding lightning

If you encounter lightning, use the "Flash-To-Bang" method of measuring lightning distance. This is the amount of time that elapses between when you see the flash and when you hear the thunder. For each five-second count, lightning is one mile away, so at 25 seconds the lightning is five miles away. At a count of 15 seconds (three miles) take immediate defensive action:

- Where possible, find shelter in a building or in a fully enclosed metal vehicle such as a car, truck, or van with the windows closed.
- Avoid water.
- Avoid metal objects such as *bicycles*, electric wires, fences, machinery, railroad tracks, tent poles, and so on.
- Don't stop beneath small open-sided rain shelters or isolated trees.
- Avoid hilltops and open spaces.

Important! If you need to take shelter, make every effort to keep your riders calm. You don't want folks crashing into one another in a mad rush to get away from the lightning.

If your hair is standing up, you have a tingling sensation, the count between flash and bang are less than five seconds, or lightning is striking nearby, you should:

- Remove all metal objects.
- Crouch down, and put your feet together and your hands on your knees.
- Avoid direct contact with other people.

Dangerous drivers

If you have trouble with a dangerous driver, get everyone off the road, and wait until the driver goes away. Don't antagonize the driver in any way. In addition, get the vehicle license number and a description of the *driver*, and contact the police. If you can't describe the driver, the owner of the car can simply claim not to have been driving the car at the time of the incident. If someone happens to be carrying a camera, this might be a good time to use it.

Dangerous riders in your group

If you have a careless rider in your group, and the person continues to be troublesome after you've spoken with him or her about being more careful, insist that the rider leave the group. If necessary, stop the group and wait until the rider leaves before you continue.

Mechanical problems

If someone has mechanical problems, you can:

- Check with your riders to see if anyone has the parts and the expertise to make the repair.
- If there's a nearby bike shop, car repair shop, or hardware store, you might take the group on a detour. You could also suggest that the rider goes alone, and provide instructions on how to rejoin the group later, if possible.
- Suggest sending someone back for a car, calling home or calling a taxi.
- Suggest the bus. Many metro area transit buses are now equipped with bicycle racks, as are buses in many of the surrounding areas.

Some problems are not as severe as they might seem:

- *Broken spokes:* Generally, if you don't have too far to travel, you can just ride with a broken spoke. If you can, remove the parts of the spoke, otherwise tie or tape the broken parts to adjacent spokes. If breaking the spoke also affected the true of the wheel, you may also need to loosen the brakes. Emphasize that the rider should avoid potholes as much as possible.
- *Broken chains:* If someone has a chain tool along, you can simply remove the bad link and put the chain back together. Because the chain will then be shorter, the rider should avoid using the large chainring (in front) or the large gear (in back).
- *A hole in a tire:* If you have a small hole in a tire, you can keep the inner tube from bulging out through the hole by slipping something inside the tire to cover the hole. A dollar bill or an energy bar wrapper works fine, and a section cut from an old tire works even better, but it's just a temporary fix. You should replace the tire as soon as you can. If the hole is in the sidewall, take extra care because a sidewall cut can cause the tire to fall off the rim. Use this trick just long enough to *slowly* limp home or to a bike shop.

Making a ride more fun

- Consider choosing a theme. If you live for sweets, lead a ride that takes in several bakeries or candy shops. If you like a certain restaurant, consider leading a dinner ride from there. The possibilities are only limited by your imagination, so be creative.
- Key into special events. For example, ride to a street fair or community festival, to a music festival, to a small-town event, or to some similar gathering. However, if you've never been to the event yourself, you probably should ask around to ensure that the crowds and traffic would not interfere with safe riding.
- Have fun with the ride description. People will be more inclined to show up for a ride whose description captures their imagination.
- Do something out of the ordinary. Ride through back alleys, cross wooden bridges, meander through parks, stop at yard sales and interesting houses, and visit scenic overlooks.
- Wave at *everyone*, talk with kids as you ride past, *stop* and talk with kids who seem unusually excited about what you're doing, and pose for pictures with tourists.
- Take a break at some little out-of-the-way place where the food is especially good and the proprietors grateful to have the extra business.
- Be playful. Attach playing cards to your front fork with clothes pins, and attach streamers to your handlebar ends. Attach a beanie propeller to the top of your helmet. Get a kid's license plate with your name on it, and attach it to the back of your seat. Stop off at the grocery store on your way to the ride, and get a big bag of Tootsie Rolls to share.

- Take pictures and submit them to the *Spoke n Wheel*. Be sure you include a caption that names the ride and the folks in the picture (if you know everyone's name and if the crowd isn't too big). If something interesting happened, you could also write an article for the *Spoke n Wheel*.
- A front and rear ride leader is recommended on all night rides.

Ride Leader Awards

To help encourage more club and ride leader participation the following award have been designed:

Nominations for Ride Leader of the year award

The following criteria is used to nominate a ride leader:

- Has been a ride leader for at least three (3) years
- Has been a recipient of the Star of the North jersey
- Has trained two or more ride leaders
- Has served on the board or been a team leader
- And has gone above and beyond the norm to make new, old and potential club members feel good about being a part of HBC.

Other awards to encourage rides:

- Best – Fast Ride
- Best - Medium Ride
- Best - Slow Ride
- Best – Night Ride
- Best Winter Ride
- Best remake of an old ride
- Best theme ride - that promotes costumes and decorated bikes (parades, toys for tots, etc)
- Best Multi-Day ride
- Ride that attracts the most guests. (Tour D' Amico is not included)

The following team leaders, including the Ride Leader chair, Ride Statistician, Insurance liaison, the Ride Scheduler and last year's Ride Leader of the Year recipient will prepare a list of nominee's for the general HBC membership body to vote on by e-mail through e-groups. These awards will be announced at the spring banquet

Nominations will initially be based on the popularity of the ride in each category.

To Be A Recipient of the “Star of the North” Jersey

This constitutes:

- Leading or co-leading five or more rides
- Riding over 1000 HBC miles or participate in 35 club rides
- Has volunteered at Tour d' Amico or has been a Team Leader in a given year.