

Road Riding Guidelines |

Policies & Procedures

Last Updated: April 17, 2025

Pre-requisites

1. JCC Membership and Ontario Cycling Membership (OC) (Community or higher) or membership in an OC affiliated club.
2. Road bike, Gravel Bike, or Pedal-assist e-bike.
3. Bike must be in good repair.
4. Helmets are mandatory. Cycling Gloves and Sunglasses are recommended.
5. Water and food sufficient for the ride.
6. Mobile Phone and ID.
7. Clothing appropriate for the weather.
8. Tools and materials and capability to repair a flat. JCC has maintenance videos on their YouTube Channel.

Required Knowledge and Ability

1. Basic Riding Skills and the ability to ride at 20 km/h for 1.5 to 2.5 hours.
2. Basic understanding of Group Riding Techniques (see section on Formation Riding below).
3. Riding Double, Single (Tight to the right), pacelines.
4. Familiarity with JCC Club Policies as outlined on jaffari.cc website including Risk Management.

How JCC Rides Work

1. Register on InstaTeam mobile app and choose the appropriate speed group (red, blue, orange). On the app you will see the strava route URL which you can download to your head unit via Strava.

2. Arrive on time and prepared. Pump your bike the night before.
3. Most Rides start from one of five locations:
 - a. Richmond Green High School, Richmond Hill
 - b. Whitchurch-Highlands Public School, Stouffville
 - c. Port Credit Go Station Parking Lot P1, Mississauga
 - d. King Christian School, 19740 Bathurst St, East Gwillimbury ON L9N 0N5
 - e. Walnut Grove Public School, 10 Pinestaff Rd, Brampton ON
4. On-site rides (as per InstaTeam schedule) will be cancelled, if necessary due to lack of riders or Ride Leaders or weather 1.5 hours before the start time and off-site (special) rides will be cancelled by 11pm the evening before the ride via the InstaTeam app or WhatsApp group.

Ride Cancellation

1. Rain at the ride start time.
2. Forecast of 70% POP or more, rain or lightning at the time of the ride.
3. Winds of 50 kph or more, at the time of the ride.
4. Fewer than two riders registered for a ride, including a Ride Leader.
5. No appropriate Ride Leader available.

Formation Riding

Group Riding Techniques:

- The basic ride formation is “Tight and to the Right”.
- Our goal as a disciplined and well-organized club is to share the enjoyment of the road with our club members, as well as the public. We understand we must share the road with motorized vehicles and to reduce the potential conflict between these two groups we travel at off peak hours; and we only frequent the least travelled roads possible, always.
- To further protect ourselves, we travel two abreast or in a double paceline. This is an internationally recognized cycling formation used by professionals and amateurs around the world. The main objective of the double paceline is to reduce the length of the line of cyclists to allow vehicles to pass with greater ease and increased safety. It encourages drivers to make full lane changes when passing which provides a safer gap between the passing vehicle and the cyclists. Aggressive drivers will attempt the dangerous pass between the center line and the group, “known as threading the needle”.

- At JCC, we have implemented a compromised position we call “Tight and to the Right”. The idea is to take a traditional two abreast formation and position it as far right as is safely possible. Our goal is to accommodate the approaching driver with a clear view forward so that they make a clean and safe pass as soon as possible.
- For us to accomplish this, we as a Club, are required to ride in a formation that is ‘tight’ and well disciplined. By ‘tight’ we mean that the cyclists are to be 2-3 feet apart laterally at the shoulders, and 2-3 feet apart front to back or wheel to wheel. The primary goal of the group is to maintain the cohesion of this formation. It is the individual discipline of each rider to hold their position in a smooth predictable manner and not create gaps or overlaps which jeopardize the ride quality.

How We Rotate:

- We use two methods to rotate cyclists within a basic “Tight and to the Right” formation; one we refer to as a “Social Paceline” and the other as a “Rotating Paceline”. The Ride Leader will call out the appropriate formation for the needs of the group but any cyclists within the group can call out a suggestion.

Social Paceline:

- This is our standard rotation used while warming up or just cruising along; in the Social Paceline we start from the premise of the two abreast formations where everybody is 2-3 feet apart laterally and fore/aft. The two leading cyclists are breaking the wind and setting the pace. The lead cyclist on the right, after a reasonable period of time (e.g. 1- 2 minutes but flexible) asks the cyclist on their left to “Cover Me”. That means the leading left cyclist will gently ride forward and fade right to shelter the right side of the group. In turn the left side of the group will gently advance forward to the front of the group beside the right line. Those two riders will now lead the group for whatever time they feel comfortable with, again it’s negotiable. All passes are to be done smoothly and gently and make sure that your rear wheel is clear before you fade right.
- A very important point to rotating a group: While you are in front of the group, the group is at your mercy; anything you do, good or bad, will affect the entire group. If your pass is smooth and steady, then the group will remain smooth and steady. If you accelerate aggressively it will start to shatter the group and create gaps and confusion. If you half wheel the lead rider beside you it will offset the whole group or create gaps. We all have a responsibility to the riders behind us to move in a smooth and predictable way and watch the road surface ahead.

Rotating Paceline

- This rotation is different from the Social Paceline in one fundamental way: The act of rotating is constant; there are no static moments. When the left lead rider moves smoothly and gradually forward and clears the right line of riders, he/she then gently fades to the right. The transitioning lead rider must be careful not to touch wheels with the passed riders by checking under their arm for the rider's wheel. The right rider can assist by calling out 'clear' when the passing cyclist is safely ahead. As soon as that first rotation is complete the next one begins as if all the cyclists in the group are part of the same chain. In the Rotating Paceline all the cyclists should be moving through the rotation at the same speed.
- Here are some important points to remember when executing the Rotating Paceline properly:
 - Do not attack or surge off the front when it is your turn to pull; you are supposed to go slightly faster than the receding line. Surging or attacking will cause gaps and jerk the speed of the line around. Pull smoothly and gently to the front and be there to shelter the riders behind you, not gap them.
 - Do not leave gaps within the line when you are in the back of the rotation. All riders need to focus on maintaining the same gaps all the way around the rotation.
 - Riders wishing to miss a rotation can do so by sitting a bike length back of the group and allowing the group to rotate through. It is best to call out to the rider ahead that you are not pulling through to avoid their hesitation.
 - It is also helpful for the last rider on the advancing side to call out to the last rider to remind the last receding rider that they need to transition next. Gaps often happen when the last rider misses the transition.
 - The rotation can go from left to right or vice versa. Experienced cyclists will tailor the rotation so that the advancing line is sheltered from a crosswind. We generally opt for the left to the right rotation because the HTA specifies passing on the left.
- Single File Paceline:
 - We make every effort to ride on the quietest roads at the quietest times. At times when we are traveling on an excessively busy road, we will ride single file to get past the congested section. We also will ride long descents single file. Otherwise, all our group rides are two abreast.
- Echelons:
 - This is a formation where the cyclists are spread diagonally across the road to gain shelter from a crosswind.
 - This formation is unacceptable for group riding in our community as it completely blocks the lane and is counter to our "Tight and to the Right" strategy where the driver is to be given a view up the left side of the lane.

Hot Spots

Every group ride must have a degree of compromise. One person's "hammerfest" is another person's recovery ride. We try to accommodate everyone's wishes by offering as many different groups as possible. We also offer different opportunities along the route for some hard efforts. Almost all our routes involve sections where the option exists for the riders to break from the group and go as fast as they wish. We call these the "Hot Spots". All long climbs are automatically Hot Spots and as such the groups often break formation and regroup at the pre-designated spots at the top. We ask you to stay to the right and not scatter across the hill when the group breaks apart. Slower riders stay right and make room for the faster riders to get by without forcing them too far out. We still want to stay "Tight and to the Right".

We also offer Hot Spots on flatter terrain; Ride Leaders will inform the group of the Hot Spot locations before and during each ride. There are three common denominators to a Hot Spot:

1. A very quiet section of road.
2. No traffic lights or stop signs.
3. A safe regrouping location at the end of the section.

Some rules about Hot Spots:

- Going hard is optional, not compulsory; those that choose to cruise can rest assured that the group will wait for them at the regrouping point.
- All riders should wait for the slower riders at the regrouping spot. Soft pedaling down the road causes confusion for the late arrivers who may think the group is leaving them behind. If you feel the need to keep moving, ride back toward the late arrivers and then return with them.
- All our regrouping spots offer plenty of space to pull over safely; never regroup in a manner that would obstruct traffic in any way.

Descending:

In some of our routes, we have several descents that can generate high speeds of more than 55-60km/h; on those descents we recommend the group take the following actions:

- The group should move into a single file formation.
- Riders should move 1-2 metres from the right edge of the road; it is not safe to ride close to the edge of the road at high speeds due to wind gusts.
- Riders should open gaps of at least two metres, or more, between each rider front to back.
- The fastest riders should go down first to minimize passing.

- Always pass on the left; never pass on the right.

Communication:

Communication is critical to the success of all group rides; it starts right from the beginning even before the group leaves. The rider needs to communicate with their group or Ride Leader to determine which group and pace of ride they want. On the road, riders need to communicate the ride formation, rotation and pace. Riders at the front need to call out road hazards and traffic situations. Riders at the back need to call out cars approaching from the back. The bottom line is that the quality and safety of the ride is dependent on frequent and clear communications between all the riders. Never assume everyone in the group knows a car is approaching or that the group is turning. Everything that can affect the group needs to be called out.

One final but important point regarding communication: We have Ride Leaders who are there to try to maintain the quality of the ride but the best way to keep us all at our best is when we all communicate best ride practices. So, if you see someone riding inappropriately i.e. overlapping wheels, surging off the front we all should say something. Be polite but make it known that that was not proper. We all own these rides and if someone does something dangerous it's in everyone's best interest to correct it. Don't let bad habits go unaddressed so say something before it's too late; we all have a responsibility to the riders around us. When we are at the front, we are responsible to the riders behind to provide a smooth and steady pull and to point out hazards. When we are at the back, we are responsible to call out cars coming from the back and to maintain the integrity of the group by not allowing gaps; don't wait for the Ride Leader to say something as we all own the ride equally.

Emergency Stops:

When being approached by an emergency vehicle (fire truck, ambulance, or police) with lights and siren activated, we are required under the HTA to pull over our group and stop; it doesn't matter if the emergency vehicle is approaching from the front or behind.

Act fast but act safely and in control: when a siren is heard or lights are seen, immediately shout out to your group to pull over and stop. A siren or lights means stop now but not a panic stop i.e. a controlled and safe stop.

How to stop a group assuming your group is riding 2-abreast; the Ride Leader calls out to the group:

- “EMERGENCY STOP, GROUP STOPPING NOW”
- “RIGHT LINE STOP FIRST”
- “LEFT LINE PASS AND STOP”

The right line applies their brakes to reduce the speed in a controlled manner, eventually pulling over to a complete stop. Once stopped, cyclists must keep as close as possible to the right edge of the road, clear of any intersections.

The left line completely passes the right line and once safely clear, slows in a controlled manner. Once stopped, cyclists must keep as close as possible to the right edge of the road, clear of any intersections.

This can all happen within seconds; there is no need for panic. What is essential is that the decision to perform an “emergency stop” be made quickly, loudly and clearly so that the group has time to perform the stop safely.

Other:

- Ride smooth and steady all the time; no sudden or abrupt movements or over reactions to potholes etc.
- Don’t be that person who surges when it’s their turn to pull or leaves gaps in the rotation and finally, never ever overlap.
- When following a wheel be just slightly offset i.e. 3-4 inches so that if there is a sudden stop you don’t immediately slam into the wheel ahead; the offset gives you an additional few feet to recover.
- When you are at the front of the group, on short descents, pedal to keep the pace up. Remember there are riders drafting behind you who will have to brake if you don’t keep the pace up.
- To keep a group together on rolling terrain use a Social Paceline and then as a group, climb slightly easier but descend harder. The group speed will be more consistent, and the group will more likely remain intact.
- When picking your group be realistic; it’s better to be comfortable in your group than maxed out all the time.
- Group rides are not races; we are there to support each other by taking turns in the wind and only in Hot Spots is it ok to try to drop your friends.
- When you see someone committing a ride foul politely say something; we are all responsible for the quality of our rides.
- If you get a flat, give a loud shout out right away or there is a good chance the pack will ride away without even noticing you; if the group knows they will stop and help you fix it quickly.

- Do not yell obscenities to motorists or get into arguments with the police; it's never productive and will lead to more bad blood and possible retribution. We ask that cyclists not engage in any kind of confrontation with drivers or police officers; this includes hand gestures involving the centre digit. We are working hard to improve the reputation of the JCC and all cyclists in general. If words have to be exchanged, let the group Ride Leader do the talking and feel free to video the exchange if you feel the individual is dangerous. It's important to understand that when you ride with the Club and when you wear our Club jersey, you become an ambassador for both the Club and all cyclists in general. Let's not do anything to fuel the flames of discontent. Nothing meaningful gets resolved on the road.
- Say "On your left" when passing a rider on who is on your right, and pass only on the left.
- Use Hand signals when turning and slowing down, and point out potholes, road kill, or other items.
- Use Verbal signals such as "Car back", "Slowing", "Clear", "Tracks", "Road kill", "Holes", etc.
- Obey the rules of the road. Stop at stop signs and traffic lights.
- Be mindful about spitting. When riding in formation, please avoid. This is also for blowing your nose.

Review and Approval

1. This policy is reviewed annually.
2. This policy was approved by the Jaffari Cycling Club Executive
 - a) This policy went into effect on March 1, 2021

For more information please contact:

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