

Ottawa Women's Cycling Club (OWCC)

CLUB INFORMATION AND RIDER GUIDELINES 2024

A Message from Vicki Thomas and Jennifer Stephenson

Welcome to the 2024 Ottawa Women's Cycling Club season!

Thank you in advance for reading this guide. There is a lot of important information that all club members need to know so that everyone understands how rides will be run and what your responsibilities are as a participant. Everyone has a role to play in helping to ensure that all club members have safe and enjoyable riding experiences throughout the season.

Please contact us with your questions, concerns, and suggestions. We want to make sure you're getting what you want and need from the OWCC.

Happy cycling!

Vicki and Jennifer
OWCC Club Directors

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All members must read this guide before attending any club rides/events

PART I: CLUB INFORMATION

About the Ottawa Women's Cycling Club (OWCC)

The OWCC is a not-for-profit incorporated club operated by Vicki Thomas and Jennifer Stephenson.

This club is a passion project borne out of our desire to support women cyclists in the National Capital region.

The club is run by members on a volunteer basis i.e. no one stands to benefit or gain professionally and/or financially from its operations. The team's financial statements are available on request.

Note that, since the OWCC is a not-for-profit incorporated club, women who join it are still able to be members of other clubs/teams. For example, the OWCC co-owners are also members of the The Cyclery team (Vicki) and 9 to 5 Cycling, The Gravel Gang and the Ottawa Bicycle Club (Jennifer).

Mission Statement

The purpose of the Ottawa Women's Cycling Club is to bring women together for rides and events, to train and even race together, even if you are affiliated with another club/team.

The OWCC is an inclusive cycling club.

We welcome all women or people who identify as women to join. We cover a broad range of ages, skills, abilities, experience, and interests. We offer support to people with visible and invisible disabilities.

Please note, the OWCC has access to coaches and riders experienced with people with disabilities and is happy to support the community. However, the club does not currently offer para or adapted cycling programs.

We know that there has been an increase in cycling participation, especially by women. Many of these women are looking for a starting point. If that starting point is not the right fit, potential lifelong cyclists may be turned away from this beautiful sport and way of life, really.

We also know that long time women cyclists often don't fit in with traditional cycling clubs. We propose to provide a club for these cycling warriors, to ride together, mentor the next generation and seek out new adventures.

Membership

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As a not-for-profit incorporated club affiliated with the Ontario Cycling (OC), all OWCC members are required to have:

- an OC membership (either a Community, Challenge, or Compete membership and,
- pay the OWCC club fee.

Note that the OWCC club fee pays for insurance with the OC and covers the incidental costs of running a club.

Participation in club rides and events is limited to women who have purchased an OC membership and paid the club membership fee.

Please note that Quebec residents need to purchase an OC membership to join the OWCC.

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PART II: OWCC RIDE GUIDELINES

Let's Ride – But First Please Read these OWCC Ride Guidelines

The health and safety of our members on rides and during stops is our top priority.

As such, it is mandatory that you read and follow our "Ride Guidelines" in addition to the OWCC Risk Management Plan and understand our health and safety protocols.

Please remember that **only club members can join rides and events**. This policy must be strictly adhered to so that the club's insurance is valid, and members in leadership roles are protected in the event of an accident/incident.

The OWCC does not endorse rides that start or end at locations that sell or serve alcohol. The OWCC does not tolerate tailgating or the consumption of alcohol post-ride in parking lots or other stopping locations. This policy must be strictly adhered to by all OWCC members.

How Do I Find Out About Club Rides?

All club rides are posted in the Cycle Club App.

GENERAL GROUP RIDE GUIDELINES

Please note that these are group rides not *group races*.

If the ride is too slow for you, please tell the Ride Leader you are leaving the ride. Upon leaving the ride, you are responsible for getting yourself home.

- Before joining a ride, please review the route and know the stops.
- Please ensure your bike is in full working order.
- Tri bars, triathlon bikes, clip-on tri bars are not permitted.
- Hybrid bikes are not permitted.
- E-bikes are not permitted.
- Please have the appropriate bike for the ride. Gravel or cyclo-cross bike for gravel rides. Road bike or gravel/cyclo-cross bike with appropriate tires and gearing for road rides.
- Please carry your own pump, tubes, tire levers, CO2 cannisters (if needed), and multi-tool.
- All riders must be able to change flat tires.
- Please bring your cell phone, credit card/debit card, and mask with you on every ride. You never know when you'll need assistance.

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- If you're unsure about your ability to ride the posted ride distance or pace, please choose a ride that you know you can complete. We want your riding experience to be as enjoyable as possible – and struggling to keep up is not fun.
- Not everyone wants to ride in the rain. We get this. In the event of rain, cold, or unpleasant weather, please check the Cycle Club App and OWCC Facebook page for ride updates. Your Ride Leader will post if the ride is canceled.
 - You can still ride if the ride is canceled – just do not expect the Ride Leader to attend and guide you on the ride.
- Group maximums may be reduced on a ride-by-ride basis. For example, it may be desirable to limit ride size to less than 10 on hilly rides or remote rides. The ride leader will indicate the specific size limits.
 - To manage ride size – you must confirm your attendance to the ride on the Cycle Club App. If you do not confirm your attendance, you cannot do the ride.
- Please bring enough food and drink for yourself. These are uncertain times, and we cannot rely on stores or cafés for fuel and hydration. Bring more than you need.
 - For gravel rides, please know there likely will be nowhere to refuel. Bring more than you think you need.
- All riders must wear a helmet.

Communicating During the Ride

Safety is our number one priority, so please follow these communication recommendations when you are riding with us:

- Do not wear headphones or make phone calls while riding. If you need to make a call or send a text message, please do so during the ride stop.
- At all times, respect and pay attention to your Ride Leader.
- Please communicate verbally and with hand signals to:
 - Point out road hazards with your hand/finger.
 - Indicate when you are turning or changing lanes (use your hand/arm to signal the direction and say “turning”, “slowing” etc. And please remember to shoulder check (very important) before changing position.
 - You are responsible for paying attention to the Ride Leader and her communication signals.
- We stop for all Stop signs, red lights, and yellow lights.
- We want to keep the group together so, if you're losing the wheel or notice someone is struggling, speak up and tell the group to slow down and regroup.
- Safety and fun are the priority for all rides.

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Riding Formations

Our basic ride formation is “tight and to the right”.

All riders and groups must remember we are sharing the road and bike paths with other vehicles, cyclists, and people. Please be aware of your surroundings at all times.

- Ride two abreast in a double paceline. If the road surface changes or the group is on a busy road, the Ride Leader will direct people to ride in a single paceline.
- We want to make it as safe as possible for vehicles to pass us.
- For your reference “tight and to the right” is described as:

By ‘tight’ we mean that the cyclists are to be 2-3ft apart laterally at the shoulders, and 2-3ft apart front to back (wheel to wheel). The group’s primary goal 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

Please read the descriptions and guidelines for the following two typical rotations/pacelines:

a) Social Paceline: Our standard rotation

- Two abreast formation where everybody is 2-3ft 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 (ie 1- 2 minutes, it’s 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.

REMEMBER...

When you are on the front of the group, you are controlling the pace.

Please respect the pace guidelines for your group.

If you don’t know them – ask your Ride Leader.

b) Rotating Paceline (Echelon)

This rotation is different from the Social Paceline in one fundamental way: the act of rotating is constant so there are no static moments.

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- 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 rider's 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:

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. 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's best to call out to the rider ahead that you are not pulling through to avoid their hesitation.
4. It's 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.
5. 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. In the event that for some unusual reason we are forced to travel on an excessively busy road, we will ride single file to get past the congested section.

Descending in a Group

Please follow these guidelines for safe descending:

1. The group should move into a single file formation.

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2. Riders should move 1 to 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 as you need more road surface to manage the effects of wind gusts, etc.
3. Riders should open up gaps of at least 4 metres between each rider front to back.
4. The fastest riders should descend first to reduce the amount of passing to a minimum.
5. All passing must happen on the left. Never pass on the right.

Emergency Stops

a) Controlled

- If approached by an emergency vehicle (fire truck, ambulance, or police) with lights and siren activated, we must pull over and stop. This is mandatory and required by the Highway Traffic Act.
- When you see flashing lights or hear a siren, shout out to your group and pull over and stop. Do not panic - this is a controlled stop.

b) Emergency

Knowing how to stop quickly in a group is very important. Let's presume your group is riding 2 abreast:

1. The Ride Leader calls out to the group
 - "EMERGENCY STOP, GROUP STOPPING NOW"
 - "RIGHT LINE STOP FIRST"
 - "LEFT LINE PASS AND STOP"
2. 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.
3. The left line completely passes the right line and once safely clear, it 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.