

The safety of our cyclists is the number one priority at Pedal for a Purpose. We expect hundreds of participants—all with different experience and skill levels—to make their way around three routes. To help ensure that everyone has a great ride and arrives safely at the finish line, we want to emphasize a proactive approach to safety.

Safety isn't just about wearing your helmet and knowing the rules of the road. Those are very important measures, but cycling safety encompasses a wide variety of topics including bike maintenance, group riding skills, cycling etiquette, and much more. To be best prepared for the event, participants should be familiar with the three E's of cycling safety: **Experience** (Training), **Education**, and **Equipment**. For those of you who may be new to the sport, or not as experienced in group riding, we suggest reviewing the information provided to ensure you have a fun, safe experience during the Pedal for a Purpose.



Before we get further into the three E's, it's important to understand that we are to adhere to the Good Neighbor Policy during the Pedal for a Purpose. We will be riding on the usually quiet, rural streets in NW Harris and Waller counties, and will be interacting with the local residents of these areas. To ensure our safety, as well as theirs, we ask the following from all of our riders:

Good Neighbor Policy

- Obey law enforcement personnel, ride officials, volunteers, residents, and vehicle drivers.
- Don't litter.
- Obey all state and local traffic laws.
- Support the local communities.
- Respect private property.
- Use restroom facilities only.
- Curb inappropriate language and profanity.

Ride safely and have fun because there's nothing like crossing the finish line and celebrating with your fellow riders, family, and friends!



Cyclists need to have basic bike-handling skills and safety knowledge in order to keep themselves and others around them safe, especially while participating in group cycling activities, like a bike ride. Our focus is to provide a high quality, safe and fun bicycling experience.

Helpful Tips

On each of the three P4P routes, our active route support team works to make the ride safe. Here are a few additional suggestions to help keep everyone safe on the ride:

- **SAG vehicles and Ride Marshals** will stop for you if you are safely off the road, off your bike, and waving your bike helmet in the air
- **Ride Marshals** are a special team of cyclists who provide support on the rides, offering minor mechanical help along the route and monitoring cycling safety and etiquette
- **Rest Stop Etiquette:** All cyclists who enter a rest area must pull over, dismount, and move completely away from the road and rest-stop entrance; on exiting, move beyond the rest area and proceed with caution on the right side of the road before merging with faster cyclists
- **Passing:** Call out "Passing on your left!" and allow time for the cyclist being overtaken to move to the right, then pass safely; passing others and being passed occurs continuously during the ride, so you will hear this a lot!
- **Mechanical Problems:** Safely remove yourself from the roadway at the earliest opportunity and assess the problem. If assistance is needed, SAG and Ride Marshals are on patrol to help; stand off your bike and wave your helmet in the air.

Know the Lingo

Group cycling has its own form of communication. The presence of road hazards, directions, and need-to-know information is relayed through the pack of riders by gestures and words. Remember to pass all communication on to the cyclist behind you in the group. Speak loudly and clearly. The following are the most common terms you may hear in group-sponsored rides:

- **"On your left"** – This means a rider is approaching your left side; move to the right (as able) to allow room for the other rider to pass
- **"Car back"** – This means a car is approaching from the rear. All riders make an effort to move to the right to allow the car to pass (in most states, the law requires cyclists to ride no more than two abreast, ensuring easier and safer passing of cyclists by automobile traffic)
- **"Gravel"/"Pothole"/"Sand"/"Tracks"** – Each of these messages is to alert the riders behind you of hazardous road conditions, relayed not only by words but also by the gesture of pointing to the hazard well in advance
- **"Slowing"** – The cyclist in front of you is slowing down, so use caution and prepare to stop (the common hand signal for this is to display the palm of their hand toward riders behind them to indicate slowing and stopping)
- **"Stopping"** – This indicates that a rider ahead is stopping; when at a stop, do not forget to unclip from your pedals

Group communication between teams and between individual riders is vitally important to ensuring the safety of all riders. Therefore, headphones, cell phones, radios, or similar devices are NOT permitted while riding.

Special Situations

Many cyclists find that situations occur in which quick thinking and heightened bike-handling skills are required. Here are some suggestions for managing potential obstacles:

- **Cars Can Be Scary:** Drivers do not know your skill level, and will often not leave room when they pass; call out "car back" if you are in a group at the time, then move to the far right in a single file—"Be Predictable"
- **Beware of Animals:** If an animal displays aggression while riding, try to keep to one side of the animal; the right course of action depends on the situation – you may want to slow down to calm an excited animal, speed up to outrun the animal, make loud noises to perturb the animal, or attempt to distract it with a water bottle or other material on your person; if in a group, always let others know of your intentions and do not perform any action which may endanger the group
- **Pedestrians and Animals Have the Right-of-Way:** If a jogger/runner is overtaking you and/or your group, or if any pedestrian or animal is attempting to cross the street ahead of you, signal to the group that someone is being overtaken, then move to allow room for safe passing/crossing

The Basics of Riding in a Group

Group riding takes practice. Riding with other cyclists all around you may cause you to feel trapped. Relax. It is most important to create your own safety zone. This may vary depending on the speed and ability level of the people you are with, so be flexible. Let others know of your anxiety – they may also be new at this.

Your responsibility in a pack includes:

- Be aware of others around you
- Communicate well in advance; use gestures in combination with verbal commands
- Ride with your head up; look down the road—not at the person in front of you
- Maintain control and speed of your bike, even going downhill
- Know your limits! – crashes can occur when inexperienced riders do not have bike-handling skills to make quick decisions in a pack
- Safety starts with you; group mentality is not always safe
- Expect to stop at all red lights and stop signs – **it is the law** – each cyclist is responsible for verifying that the intersection is clear
- Adjust your safety zone to fit the conditions of the road, weather, and traffic; always plan an escape route
- Never overlap your wheels with another cyclist
- Do not use aerobars in a group
- Be aware of how weather will affect your bike; riding in wet conditions requires slower speeds and greater breaking distances
- Be respectful of other riders; help others when needed

Tips for Riding in Wet Conditions

Cornering

- Make turns slowly and consistently (no jerky movements)
- Keep your weight on the outside pedal in the 6 o'clock position
- If you need to brake in a turn, apply the brakes slowly

Braking

- Remember: water on the rims will lubricate your brake system, making it hard to stop
- Apply the brakes lightly to clean off the rims before you need to stop
- Allow a greater distance for stopping

Hazards

- Bridges, metal grates, painted lines, manhole covers, and crosswalks can be very slick
- Avoid puddles – they may conceal deep potholes
- Remember that, during the first few minutes of rain, oil seeps from the roadway, making it very slick – ride accordingly

Protect Yourself

- Visibility can be limited during a storm – wear bright clothing
- Keep your eyes free of debris with yellow or clear lenses in your glasses
- Wear waterproof clothing that is breathable, with layers underneath

Important reminder! Always carry the following items:

- Identification
- Emergency contact information
- Insurance card
- Any important health information
- NOTE: The use of headphones, cell phones, radios, or similar devices while riding is NOT permitted

What traffic laws apply to cyclists? What traffic laws do not?

Generally, bikes are entitled to all rights and obligated to all duties of the road that apply to a motor vehicle. Unless a specific statutory right or duty is altered by Texas Transportation Code Chapter 551, or a right or duty applicable to a driver cannot by its nature apply to a person operating a bicycle, the same laws that apply to an operator of motor vehicle apply to a person operating a bicycle.

A person operating a bicycle shall ride only on or astride a permanent and regular seat attached to the bicycle.

A person may not use a bicycle to carry more persons than the bicycle is designed or equipped to carry.

A person operating a bicycle may not carry any object that prevents the operator from keeping a least one hand on the handlebars.

Riding with the direction of vehicular traffic, cyclists should ride as far to the right of the road or shoulder as is safely possible. If the shoulder is maintained, then cyclists should be inside the shoulder [right of the white line]. If no shoulder, then try to ride within 18 inches of the white line or curb.

Every bike must be equipped with a brake capable of making a braked wheel skid on dry, level, clean pavement.

A person may not operate a bicycle at nighttime unless the bicycle is equipped with a white lamp on the front of the bicycle that emits a white light visible from a distance of at least 500 feet in front of the bicycle, as well as a red reflector which is visible from a distance of 300 feet from the rear of the bicycle, or a red lamp visible from a distance of 500 feet from the rear of the bicycle.

When is it allowable for a cyclist to "take the lane," and when is it not?

A person operating a bicycle on a roadway who is moving slower than the other traffic on the roadway shall ride as near as practicable to the right curb or edge of the roadway. Under the following conditions bicyclists may take the full lane of travel:

- The person is passing another vehicle moving in the same direction
- The person is preparing to turn left at an intersection or onto a private road or driveway
- When there are unsafe conditions on the roadway, including fixed or moving objects, parked or moving vehicles, pedestrians, animals, or surface hazards that prevents the person from safely riding next to the curb or edge of the roadway
- The lane is of substandard width (less than 14 feet in width and not having a designated bicycle lane adjacent to that lane) making it unsafe for a bicycle and a motor vehicle to safely travel side by side

Note: When on a one-way street you can ride to the far left instead of the far right.

Additionally, persons operating bicycles on a roadway may ride two abreast. Persons riding two abreast on a laned roadway shall ride in a single lane. Persons riding two abreast may not impede the normal and reasonable flow of traffic on the roadway. Also note, you can't make passage of traffic "unreasonably inconvenient."

<http://www.biketexas.org/en/infrastructure/texas-bicycle-laws>

Cyclists have all the rights and are subject to all of the duties and regulations applicable to drivers of motor vehicles. By obeying the laws and riding predictably, you make it easier for everyone to share the road. Following these guidelines will reduce your risk of collision or fines, and help to show that bikes have a positive presence on Texas' streets.