

GROUP SOCIAL BIKE RIDES - INSTRUX FOR PARTICIPANTS

This 2-page handout was adapted from ride instructions from *Midnight Ridazz of LA*, *San Jose Bike Party*, and *Bicycling Monterey*.



Whether you call your ride a bike party, ride out, bike run, bike mass, or whatever, following the instructions aka rules below helps your ride to be fun, safe, and legal. **Want better bike infrastructure?** Following laws and making your ride a *courteous* mass can help—because when infrastructure decisions come up, decision-makers will feel more positive about people who bike!

Here's a summary of the ride instructions. (Details provided below.)

1. Follow California Bike Laws and Traffic Laws
2. Stop at Red Lights and Stop Signs
3. Proper Lane Usage
4. Ride Straight, Ride Predictably
5. Be Visible
6. Roll Past Conflict
7. Leave No One Behind
8. Leave Nothing Behind
9. Ride Sober
10. Communicate with Fellow Riders—Help Enforce Ride Instrux

You are responsible for your own behavior. Everyone rides at their own risk. **Stay alert to guidance from ride leaders.** If they are communicating, listen—and pass the information back to riders who may not hear them.

1. FOLLOW CALIFORNIA BIKE LAWS AND TRAFFIC LAWS https://www.calbike.org/go_for_a_ride/california_bicycle_laws/#laws

One-page bilingual summary to print and share: <https://bikemonterey.org/wp-content/uploads/Bike-law-summary-Spanish-and-English-1.pdf>

- Following CA laws is about more than avoiding a traffic ticket. It's about preventing local officials from getting complaints from residents. **It's about avoiding giving anyone a reason to shut the rides down.**
- Just like people driving, people biking are to follow CA traffic laws—not limited to laws about signals and signs!
- Give special attention to laws about bike equipment requirements (e.g., helmets for minors, brakes, light, reflectors,), as well as about leaving at least one ear bud out, and about **proper lane usage** (more on that below).
- **Is it okay to ride two abreast?** If you are riding slow enough to impede traffic, ride single file.

2. STOP AT RED LIGHTS AND STOP SIGNS

- The number one complaint against any social ride group or bike party is that some riders run red lights and stop signs. *Do you want people driving to respect that people biking have the right to share the road?* Show respect for drivers and the laws. With a large group, following CA traffic laws makes a strong visible statement that bikes and cars can share the road safely.
- Besides, stopping gives more time to party! Social rides are slow-moving, not a race. Don't rush to beat a yellow light that other riders can't make it through. Instead, stop and make a friend. Say hi to your neighbors, sing in the street.
- An exception: if ever a police officer blocks an intersection and waves us through a red light, follow their directions.

3. PROPER LANE USAGE

- **"Go with the flow" of traffic;** people on bicycles are never to ride against oncoming traffic but are instead to bike the same direction as cars. (This is different than for people walking—pedestrians *are* to walk against traffic.)
- **Ride as far to the right as is practicable, nearly always!** The law says that people who ride bikes must ride as close to the right side of the road as practicable except under the following conditions: when passing, preparing for a left turn, avoiding hazards (e.g., a pothole, uneven pavement, debris in a bike lane), if the lane is too narrow to share, or if approaching a place where a right turn is authorized. ([VEH 21202](#)).
- **Most often, the proper lane to ride in is the right-hand lane.** Our decisions are based on laws about operation on roadways. https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?sectionNum=21212&lawCode=VEH - <https://www.dmv.ca.gov/portal/driver-education-and-safety/special-interest-driver-guides/bicyclists-pedestrians/>
- **Empty parking spots?** It's tempting to swerve into them briefly to get out of heavy traffic. That may seem like a good idea, but it's not. You become invisible to drivers. Stay in the travel lane!

- **Do not ride on the sidewalk** during these group rides. In most cases, sidewalk riding is more dangerous for teens and adults than riding in the street. (CA law leaves sidewalk riding to local jurisdiction. To learn more about sidewalk riding pros and cons, and for sidewalk riding ordinances in Monterey County communities, see <https://bikemonterey.org/biking-on-sidewalks-plus-examples-of-ordinances-from-monterey-county-california.html>.)

4. RIDE STRAIGHT, RIDE PREDICTABLY

- For the safety of others, ride straight and predictably.
- Don't make sudden stops or unexpected accelerations. Don't weave or make sudden turns—that's part of why brakes are a critical matter on group rides (besides, brakes are required by CA law on public streets).
- If you need to move out of the group, announce that by calling out your intention verbally and also using hand signals; then move out slowly. Unless the situation requires otherwise, move to the right.

5. BE VISIBLE

- Along with riding predictably, being seen is one of the best ways to stay safe.
- Beyond reflectors and light required by law, consider decorating your bike or yourself with other high-visibility and reflective items (take care that any decos don't create a safety hazard, e.g., won't get caught in spokes or chain).
- Bright clothing helps—you can't go wrong with screaming yellow!

6. ROLL PAST CONFLICT

- If you see an angry motorist or pedestrian, roll on by. Don't engage in shouting matches or with violent people.
- If another rider in your group stops or otherwise reacts, remind them to "Roll past conflict."

7. RIDE SOBER

- It's illegal to ride a bike under the influence of alcohol, marijuana, etc. Cops can give BUIs just like DUIs.
- Biking under the influence can cause collisions, harming other riders and you.
- Social gatherings don't need alcohol, marijuana, etc. to be fun! Riding a bike gives a natural high!!! Ride sober.

8. LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND

- Prepare your bike before riding. Pump tires and adjust brakes as needed, etc. Bring your own patch kit and spare inner tube. Be sure you or friends have a pump and other basic tools for unexpected urgent maintenance.
- If you didn't come with family or friends, consider exchanging cell phone numbers with a few other riders.
- If someone has a flat tire or other problem, a ride group doesn't usually stop. *But don't leave a stranded rider alone.* If someone has a problem, a couple nearby riders who see them are to stop and see how they can help. Part of the purpose of social rides is making friends, and helping someone out is a great way to make a new friend.

9. LEAVE NOTHING BEHIND

- It's not acceptable to leave a trail of litter. Pack your own trash, or throw it away at a rest stop.
- Remind fellow riders it is not okay to litter. And at rest stops, if you see litter, consider picking it up, so that place is left better than you found it.

10. COMMUNICATE WITH FELLOW RIDERS—HELP ENFORCE THESE RIDE INSTRUCTIONS

- Volunteers who organize rides cannot be the only ones who enforce rules. It's important for everyone to speak up. No one wants to be an authority figure when they're having a good time! And the way to keep rides going and safe is for everyone to share responsibility for following—and communicating—these Ride Instrux.
- Be vocal. "Stay to the right" may be enough to remind a rider they're slipping. *See a knucklehead littering?* Just boo! It's called community watch. It's the bike community self-monitoring, and when everyone participates, it works.
- Of course, communicate—with hand signals or verbally—any road dangers, such as "pothole," "glass," or "door" (car door opening into lane). 🍷🚲 🍷🚲 🍷🚲 🍷🚲 🍷🚲 🍷🚲 🍷🚲 🍷🚲 **Share some bike love!**