



## Worthing Excelsior CC Your Guide to Safe & Enjoyable Group Riding

### Welcome to the Club! Our Shared Commitment

On behalf of the entire club, welcome to Worthing Excelsior CC! Our club is founded on a shared passion for cycling and an unwavering commitment to fostering a safe, enjoyable, and inclusive community for riders of all abilities. This guide outlines the essential standards and on-road etiquette that are a condition of membership. Adhering to these principles is our collective agreement, ensuring that every ride is a positive and supportive experience for everyone. This shared commitment begins with the individual responsibility each of us has to arrive fully prepared for the ride ahead.

### Your Pre-Ride Safety Checklist: Be Prepared, Be Safe

The foundation of every successful and safe group ride is personal preparation. Before you even clip in, taking responsibility for your own equipment and readiness is the first and most critical step in looking after yourself and, by extension, your fellow club members. Please ensure you can tick every box on this checklist before joining a club ride.

- **Yourself**
  - Honestly assess your fitness for the ride's advertised pace and distance. Do not join a ride if you are feeling unwell.
- **Your Bike**
  - Confirm your bicycle is in a safe, roadworthy condition.
  - Conduct a pre-ride check, paying close attention to your brakes.
  - Ensure your tires are properly inflated and in good condition.
- **Your Gear**
  - A helmet is **mandatory** on all club rides.
  - Use appropriate front and rear lights in low light or poor visibility.
  - Wear clothing suitable for the forecast weather conditions.
- **Your Essentials**
  - Carry tools for a puncture: a spare inner tube, tyre levers, and a pump or CO2 inflator.
  - Bring a basic multi-tool for minor adjustments.
  - We advise you to bring your mobile phone, personal ID, and emergency contact (ICE) details with you.
  - Carry sufficient food and drink to last the duration of the ride.

## The Golden Rules of the Group Ride: Riding as One

Riding with the club is a fantastic way to improve your skills and fitness, but it is fundamentally a social event, not a race. Operating as a cohesive unit requires specific skills and a commitment to a core set of rules designed to keep everyone safe and ensure the ride is enjoyable for all participants.

1. **Obey the Law** The Highway Code applies at all times. Your safety and the safety of everyone around you depend on your commitment to being a lawful and responsible road user.
2. **Ride Predictably** Maintain a steady, consistent pace. Avoid sudden braking or sharp accelerations, which create a dangerous 'concertina effect.' Always keep your hands on the handlebars and ready to brake; riding with 'no hands' or on triathlon/aero bars within the group is strictly prohibited for safety reasons.
3. **Maintain Safe Formation** We ride a maximum of two abreast in close, parallel lines. It is critical to ride directly behind the wheel in front of you. Critically, you must **never overlap your front wheel with the rear wheel of the rider ahead**. A sudden sideways movement from the rider in front could clip your wheel and cause a serious crash.
4. **Communicate Constantly** Every rider is a vital link in the chain of communication. You are responsible for verbally passing calls and using hand signals from the front of the group to the back, and vice-versa.
5. **Look After Each Other** We ride together and support each other. This means we do not leave anyone behind, we regroup at the top of every climb, and we stop to assist any rider who has a puncture or mechanical issue.

### Essential Communication: Your On-Road Language

Your voice and your hands are your most important safety tools in a group ride. Clear, consistent, and loud communication is every single rider's responsibility. Learning and using this shared language is essential for navigating the road safely as a single, coordinated unit.

#### Key Calls & Signals

- **"Car Back" / "Car Front"** A vehicle is approaching from the rear or front. Maintain your position and be prepared to single out if necessary.
- **"Hole" / "Gravel"** Warns of a pothole, loose debris, or other hazard on the road surface. This is accompanied by pointing down at the hazard or, for gravel, making a flat, shaking hand motion over the road.
- **"Easy" / "Slowing"** A signal to slow the pace smoothly. This is used when approaching a junction, a hazard, or if there is an issue in the group.
- **"Stopping"** The group is coming to a halt. Prepare to stop safely and raise a hand in the air if you are able.
- **"Puncture" / "Mechanical"** A rider has a problem and needs to stop. Call this out and raise a hand to signal you are slowing and pulling over.
- **"On the Left"** Warns of an obstruction on the nearside, such as a parked car or pedestrian.

- **"Clear"** An advisory call at a junction indicating the road appears clear *from the caller's perspective*. **Crucially, you are still responsible for your own safety and must check for yourself before proceeding.**
- **"Ease up"** A rider has been dropped. The front riders must slow the pace significantly (soft pedal) until the group has reformed.
- **"All ON"** Passed up to the front, this confirms that dropped riders have rejoined the group and the normal pace can be resumed.

Using these calls and signals effectively allows the group to handle specific on-road scenarios smoothly and safely.

### **Navigating Key Scenarios: Putting it All into Practice**

- **Climbing** The group must always regroup at the top of any significant climb. Stronger riders are encouraged to circle back down to pace and support others, ensuring no one is left behind.
- **Singling Out** On narrow or busy roads, the inside front rider accelerates slightly, allowing the outside rider to tuck in smoothly behind them. This must be a fluid movement without any braking.
- **Junctions & Roundabouts** While the call "Clear" is helpful, you must never follow a wheel blindly into a junction. Every single rider must individually verify that it is safe for them to proceed before pulling out.
- **Taking a Turn on the Front** The front two riders set the group's pace. You must keep pedalling smoothly, as freewheeling forces everyone behind you to brake. When your turn is over, communicate with your partner and pull off smoothly to let the next pair come through.

Mastering these on-bike skills is an essential part of our shared responsibility, which extends beyond the group to how we represent our club to the public.

### **Be a Great Club Ambassador**

As a member of Worthing Excelsior, particularly when wearing club kit, you are a primary ambassador for our community. Your conduct on the road reflects on every one of us and shapes the public's perception of our club and of cyclists in general. Upholding our shared values is a responsibility we all carry with pride.

To be a great club ambassador, please always remember to:

- Conduct yourself in a considerate, lawful, and appropriate manner.
- Respect the rights of fellow riders, other road users, and the general public.
- Do not argue with motorists, even when you believe they are in the wrong.

Thank you for your commitment to these standards. We look forward to sharing many safe, enjoyable, and memorable miles with you.

**Enjoy the Ride!**