



# Wirral Cycling Group

## *Risk Assessment: Group Rides*

Document Reference: **WCG Group Rides Risk Assessment V1.0**

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# Introduction

Firstly, thank you for taking the time to read this document.

It goes without saying that looking out for one another is very important and is central to the ethos of the Group. Some of the things contained in this document are actions that we already take or things that you would most probably consider to be just common sense. But there may be other things that you have never considered.

A Risk Assessment is an important step in protecting both our members and the group as a whole. Every time we ride our bikes we are exposing ourselves to some element of risk and a Risk Assessment focuses our minds on those risks and thereby helps to reduce them.

Although we have produced this Risk Assessment to manage and reduce many of the potential risks, we do not expect the group to eliminate all risks; but we do aim to protect people as far as is reasonably practicable.

A number of the risks in this risk assessment are managed through ride planning, including weather assessments, by the Ride Leaders. Some risks are managed through controls exercised by the Ride Leader. But the majority of the risks are managed by actions that should be taken by individual riders, who should recognise that they have a duty of care to themselves and to others in the group. Whilst most WCG group rides will have a Ride Leader, the emphasis for safety is necessarily on the individual riders.

This assessment is specific to group rides with WCG. It assumes that all riders have the skills to ride their bicycles safely and the capabilities to complete the ride as advertised on the website. This assessment does not cover the fundamentals of riding a bicycle, how to maintain a bicycle in a roadworthy and safe condition, instruction in the highway code, or instructions in the use of cycle equipment such as pedal cleats or gears. WCG members and guest riders are expected to be experienced and capable riders.

# What is a Risk Assessment?

A risk assessment is an attempt to identify the potential hazards that we could face on a group ride, assess the likelihood of them occurring and then list the measures that we need to take to reduce the severity and/or the likelihood of the resulting risk.

A **HAZARD** is something with the potential to cause harm      The **LIKELIHOOD** is the probability of coming into contact with that hazard

This Risk Assessment uses a HIGH, MEDIUM, LOW indicator method. It's a careful examination of what things in our group rides could be a hazard and could cause harm to people and an assessment of the probability of such events occurring on one of our rides.

<b>Severity of the Hazard</b>	<b>Low = 1</b> No or minor injury	<b>Medium = 2</b> Injury requiring outpatient treatment	<b>High = 3</b> Hospitalisation or fatality
<b>Likelihood of the Hazard Occurring</b>	<b>Low = 1</b> Seldom likely to happen Less than one in a hundred rides	<b>Medium = 2</b> Reasonably likely to happen	<b>High = 3</b> Extremely likely to happen. More than one in ten rides

Multiplying the score assigned to the Severity of the hazard by the score assigned to the Likelihood of it occurring gives a Risk Score.

<b>1 or 2 = Low</b> Risk is controlled by most riders and leaders following the guidelines	<b>3 or 4 = Medium</b> Risk is controlled by all riders and leaders following all the guidelines	<b>6 or 9 = High</b> <b>Do not start the ride!</b> Further actions are required to reduce the risk to medium or low
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We then identify measures that we can take to reduce the risk score. Those are the control measures to be implemented by all riders on a group ride.

# Control Measures:

Hazard	Uncontrolled Risk			Mitigation Measures	Person Responsible	Risk after Control Measures		
	Severity	Likelihood	= Risk			Severity	Likelihood	= Risk
<b>A: Faulty Equipment</b> The riders' cycles or equipment may not be of the standard required for the ride	3	2	6	Cycles must be roadworthy. Each rider should inspect their own cycle prior to each ride, paying particular attention to brakes, frame, steering, pedals / cleats, wheels and tyres.	Rider	3	1	3
				Each rider should carry tools and spares appropriate to their bike.	Rider			
				If a rider or Ride Leader has concerns about the condition of a rider's bike before the ride commences they may consider carrying out a bike assessment and may refuse to allow the rider to take part in the ride.	Ride Leader			
<b>B: Hazards on Route</b> The planned route may be hazardous for group rides, due to such factors as poor surfaces, dangerous junctions, busy narrow roads, etc.	3	2	6	Routes are planned along paved roads and established cycle tracks. If there are any off-road sections those will be explicitly mentioned in the ride description.	Ride Leader	3	1	3
				Routes are planned to avoid busy roads and junctions. If routes have to cross a major road or junction, then the route will aim to use junctions with traffic lights or cycle/pedestrian crossings.	Ride Leader			
				The planned route will minimise the time spent on major roads and will use cycle lanes when available.	Ride Leader			
				The Ride Leader will reconnoitre any new routes to ensure that the proposed route is suitable for a group ride. They will describe any hazards that they feel need to be highlighted to participants in the ride description on the group's website.	Ride Leader			
				Routes are reviewed before the ride in light of the weather forecast, and rides rerouted, delayed, or cancelled if the risk is too high.	Ride Leader			

Hazard	Uncontrolled Risk			Mitigation Measures	Person Responsible	Risk after Control Measures		
	Severity	x	Likelihood = Risk			Severity	x	Likelihood = Risk
<b>C: Riders' Abilities</b>  Riders may not be fit enough to complete the planned route	2	2	4	The distance, speed and terrain of each ride will be clearly stated on the website.	Ride Leader	2	1	2
				Each rider must familiarise themselves with the distance, pace and severity of the planned ride, and be confident that they are able to complete the ride.	Rider			
				Any guest / new rider must introduce themselves to the ride leader who will discuss the suitability of the ride, ride safety and the need to follow the ride leader's guidance.	Rider			
				Whenever possible routes will be planned to pass near to railway stations or other transport hubs, so that riders have the option to leave the ride and make their own way home.	Ride Leader			
				On Newcomers' rides the total number of newcomers will be limited to eight including the ride leader and backmarker.	Ride Leader			
<b>D: Medical Conditions</b>  e.g. Asthma, epilepsy, severe allergy, heart condition etc.	3	2	6	Riders with a known medical condition are to ensure that they are fit to participate in the ride, carry any necessary medication, and ensure that an accompanying rider has sufficient knowledge of the condition to ensure their safety in the event of an incident. Riders should inform the Ride Leader of any medical condition if they think it is necessary.	Rider	2	1	2
<b>E: Fatigue</b>  From tiredness or through lack of food or drink).	2	2	4	Riders are responsible for ensuring that they carry enough food, drink or energy gels for the duration of the ride.	Rider	2	1	2
				The ride leader will plan appropriate café and refreshment stops and identify them in the ride description and at the pre-ride briefing.	Ride Leader			
				If during a group ride, a rider becomes (or observes someone else becoming) significantly fatigued or unwell, they must inform the ride leader immediately. It is dangerous for a rider that is seriously fatigued to continue the ride. They must stay and recover or end their ride.	Rider			

Hazard	Uncontrolled Risk			Mitigation Measures	Person Responsible	Risk after Control Measures		
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<b>F: Adverse Weather</b>  Collisions, falls and fatigue are more likely to occur in adverse weather.	2	3	6	Routes are reviewed before the ride in light of the latest weather forecast, and rides will be rerouted, delayed or cancelled if the forecast is for ice or snow, thunderstorms, strong winds or heavy rain.	Ride Leader	2	1	2
				Riders should assess weather conditions, dress and prepare accordingly. A waterproof jacket or gilet should be carried when needed. Riders to use sun-shield if required.	Rider			
				Riders should consider wearing suitable eye protection to protect against branches, insects, rain, sunlight and mud.	Rider			
				All riders are requested to fit mudguards when it is likely that conditions will be poor; e.g. during the winter months.	Rider			
				Riders to increase the space between themselves in windy conditions.	Rider			
				If poor visibility is expected or the ride is likely to continue after dusk, riders should wear bright clothing and use cycle lights.	Rider			
<b>G: Mechanical Problem</b>  Punctures, broken spokes, chain jams, etc. which force the rider to stop and could mean that the rider has to make their own way home.	2	3	6	Should the group need to stop because of a mechanical issue such as a puncture, then the ride leader will find a safe place off the road where the group can wait for the problem to be resolved.	Ride Leader	1	3	3
				The ride leader will assess the problem and decide whether to hold up the ride while the issue is resolved or leave the affected rider with helpers and details of the route to the next stop.	Ride Leader			
				If the problem cannot be resolved, the ride leader should not leave a rider stranded alone unless it is safe to do so. The ride leader will ensure that the rider is able to get home safely or get their cycle repaired. They will assign someone to accompany the stranded rider if necessary.	Ride Leader			

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<b>H: Losing Contact with a rider</b>  A rider may lose contact because of illness, fatigue, an accident or a mechanical issue or just taking a wrong turn. They may then be lost or unable get home or to a safe location by themselves	2	3	6	Ride leaders will appoint a back-marker for each group at the start of the ride whose role is to ride at the back of the group and ensure that no riders lose contact with the group.	Ride Leader	2	1	2
				Riders should communicate to the riders in front and on up to the ride leader if a rider is being dropped or has stopped.	Rider			
				Ride leaders should wait at every junction, long descent or hilltop until the whole group has arrived and is ready to move off again. To ensure nobody has been dropped, the ride leader must always do a headcount when regrouping.	Ride Leader			
				Ride leaders must ensure that they and other members of the group have stopped in a safe position, off the road while waiting for slower riders to catch up with the group	Ride Leader			
				Riders must be prepared to take care of themselves should they become separated from the group. They are encouraged to carry tyre levers, a spare inner tube, a pump or CO <sup>2</sup> inflator, appropriate maps or a GPS route planning device, a mobile phone and money/cash card.	Rider			
<b>I: Falls from the Cycle</b>  Impact with the ground due to falling from the cycle could cause injury to the rider	2	3	6	Routes are planned to avoid known hazardous paths and roads. Routes are reviewed before the ride in light of the weather forecast, and rides will be rerouted, delayed, or cancelled if the risk is considered too high.	Ride Leader	2	2	4
				All riders must pay close attention to the road surface and the immediate environment. The capabilities of each rider will vary and so each rider needs to consider the conditions and take actions such as slowing down or dismounting.	Rider			
				Riders shall communicate hazards (e.g. potholes, gravel, bollards, barriers, etc.) to other members of the group.	Rider			
				Riders should only ride at a speed at which they are competent and confident, particularly on descents.	Rider			

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<b>J: Collision with other riders in the group</b>  A collision could cause injury to the riders involved	2	3	6	Riders should leave a gap of at least 2 ft to the rider in front and should never ride so that their front wheel overlaps with the rear wheel of the rider in front.	Rider	2	2	4
				Riders should not pass on the inside (left) of another rider.	Rider			
				Riders should warn other riders with hand signals and/or shouted warnings when stopping or slowing.	Rider			
<b>K: Collision with a motor vehicle</b>  A collision could cause injury to the rider or the occupants of the motor vehicle	3	2	6	Routes are planned to avoid known hazardous roads, busy roundabouts and narrow, busy roads.	Ride Leader	3	1	3
				All riders must follow the Highway Code at all times including obeying traffic signals and signs.	Rider			
				All riders should continually assess traffic conditions and take appropriate actions such as stopping and walking, or using a cycle/pedestrian crossing to cross a major road.	Rider			
				When there are a large number of riders on a ride they should be split into smaller groups with no more than eight riders in each group. When travelling on roads there should be a gap of at least 50 metres between groups.	Ride Leader			
				On narrow winding lanes to give vehicles more opportunity to pass safely, the ride leader may request that each group should split into two smaller units of four riders leaving a gap of 25 metres between the two.	Ride Leader			
				On narrow roads riders should use verbal warnings to let others know of approaching vehicles in front (Car Down) or from behind (Car Up).	Rider			
				Although riders would normally ride two abreast, the group should adopt single file on roads that are too narrow to allow a vehicle to pass when riders are two-abreast.	Rider			

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<b>L: Collision with pedestrians, animals, cyclists, etc.</b>  A collision could cause injury to the rider, pedestrian, cyclist, horse rider or animal.	2	2	4	On shared paths, riders should use warnings and signals to let other riders know when the group is approaching and about to pass pedestrians, animals or other cyclists.	Rider	2	1	2
				When approaching other users, the ride leader will reduce speed and give a warning sound, either a bell or a horn or a shout to warn of the group's presence.	Ride Leader			
				Dog walkers may need extra time to control or distract their animal, so riders must slow and be prepared to stop until they are ready.	Rider			
				On approaching a horse and rider, the ride leader should warn the horse and rider by verbal communication that a human(s) are present and behind. Heed any advice given by the horse rider. Horses can be spooked by passing bikes, so it is essential that the horse hears the human voice before it sees the bikes. Thereafter proceed and pass widely and slowly.	Ride Leader			
<b>M: Covid-19 infection</b>  Infection with Covid-19 could cause harm to the person infected	3	2	6	Riders must not join rides if they display any Covid-19 symptoms, if someone in their household does, or if they are in the extremely vulnerable category.	Rider	3	1	3
				Riders must provide all their own equipment and refreshments if possible and avoid sharing water bottles and food.	Rider			
				Any rider developing symptoms or testing positive after a ride should notify the ride or a committee member, so that other members of the group can be informed.	Rider			

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## **Additional Notes:**

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### **PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT:**

The use of personal protective equipment such as helmets and gloves may reduce injury in the event of a fall or a collision, but do not prevent the incident arising. WCG strongly recommends wearing an approved cycling helmet.

### **FIRST AID:**

Ride leaders are not first aiders, no provision is made for first aid on rides. Wirral Cycling Group offers, periodically, first aid training for interested members.

### **INCIDENTS:**

In the event of a significant incident or significant near miss, the Ride Leader should write a report detailing the circumstances and present this to the Committee. The report should then be considered by the Committee, account taken of any trends in incidents, and any action required agreed and taken. Such action might include issuing guidance or provision of training for group members and/or ride leaders.

Riders are encouraged to raise any issues or concerns with the Ride Leader and just as importantly to talk about things that have gone well.

### **INSURANCE:**

Cycling UK insurance held by Wirral Cycling Group provides third party (public) liability insurance for ride leaders when leading approved group rides. Note that this is only third-party cover for ride leaders; it DOES NOT provide personal injury or bicycle theft/damage cover for ride leaders, and it DOES NOT provide third-party (public) liability insurance for any other riders on group rides.

As individual riders are not covered by the group's insurance, it is recommended that members obtain individual third party (public) liability insurance, e.g. British Cycling Ride membership or Cycling UK insurance. Further, members may wish to take out personal injury insurance, which is not included in the British Cycling or Cycling UK policies.

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# Duties of Care

As a member of the Wirral Cycling Group you have accepted responsibility for the safety of the other members with whom you ride. You owe them a duty of care to ensure that they are not exposed to a foreseeable risk of injury, as far as you reasonably can.

## For example:

- If you are a Committee Member, you should review, implement and communicate the group's guidelines, training requirements, etc.
- If you are a Ride Leader, you have agreed to lead a ride and you must take reasonable measures to see that the ride is as safe as it can be.
- As an individual member of the group you have a duty of care not only to yourself, but to members of the public and to the other people on the ride.

A duty of care requires you to consider the consequences of your acts and omissions and ensure that those acts and/or omissions do not give rise to a foreseeable risk of injury to any other person.

## Summary

Reading this you may be thinking 'this is scary; I am never going out on my bike again'. However, as stated earlier, most of these measures are just common sense and are actions that we all already do. The key word in all of this is **REASONABLE**. Clearly, one is not expected to 'guarantee' the safety of others, merely to act reasonably.

Importantly, please respect the Ride Leaders. Without them, group rides would not be possible. Listen to the briefings, pay attention whilst on the road and feel free to contribute.

Please read and make yourself familiar with the contents of this document. If you have any questions/comments/ideas do not hesitate to contact a member of the committee.

All riders are reminded that they are responsible for their own safety; individuals take part in any group activities at their own risk. We strongly urge all riders to obtain appropriate 3rd party insurance as a minimum.