

Appalachian Mountain Club, Connecticut Chapter Bicycling Committee, Ride Leader Guidelines Revised April 2019

Welcome (and Thanks)

Thank you for becoming a bicycling leader for the Connecticut Chapter of the Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC). Leading is an enjoyable and rewarding way of contributing to our chapter. Remember, you are the first contact many people have with our organization. You can make the difference by providing a fun and safe experience for your participants. Take the time to educate your participants (even if they have heard it before) about the AMC and safe bicycling.

When you lead a ride, you have the opportunity to do a ride that meets your needs because you are selecting a ride that is convenient for you, at a time that fits your schedule, and at a pace that is comfortable for you.

Please review these guidelines from time to time to refresh your memory. Newer leaders, as well as those with longer standing, sometimes forget what has become commonplace to many.

Common sense is perhaps the most important attribute of a leader.

Requirements For Becoming A Bicycle Day Ride Leader

To qualify as a day bicycling leader in the Connecticut Chapter you must:

1. Be 18 years of age or older and an active member of the AMC Connecticut Chapter.
 2. Participate in group bicycling rides, so you know the expectations for such rides.
 3. Complete the AMC Bicycling Committee leadership training course AND co-lead an AMC bicycling ride with an approved AMC bicycling leader.
- If you are an approved leader for another organized bicycling club or group, contact the Bicycling Committee chair to discuss your past experience and training. With the chair's permission, you can qualify to be an AMC leader by reading this leadership guide AND co-leading an AMC bicycling ride with an approved AMC bicycling leader.

Other important information:

- It is recommended that bicycling leaders participate in the Connecticut chapter leadership training, which is offered as both a one-day session, and a weekend event. While this training does not cover leading a bicycle ride, it does discuss the following related topics: Accident Scene Management, Trip Planning and Management, Risk Management and Leader Liability, Leave No Trace principles, AMC Policy and Forms, Volunteer Resources and Leadership Opportunities.
- Leaders should read and follow the [Appalachian Mountain Club Leadership Requirements and Guidelines](#)
- Complete AMC volunteer resources may be found at the Connecticut Chapter's [Activity Leader Central](#) and AMC's [Volunteer Resources Page](#)
- While First Aid and CPR courses are not required, it is strongly recommended for all leaders. Courses offered through the AMC, Red Cross, SOLO, etc. are acceptable.
- After you are approved as a leader, you must make sure you are registered with the AMC Member Center, so the ride coordinators can add you as a ride leader. Website: <http://activities.outdoors.org/admin/login/index.cfm/action/main>

Requirements For Becoming A Multi-Day Trip Leader

To qualify as a multi-day bicycling leader in the Connecticut Chapter you must:

1. Be a qualified day-ride bicycling trip leader in the Connecticut chapter.
 2. Co-lead at least one multi-day bicycling trip with an experienced, qualified Connecticut Chapter multi-day trip bicycling leader.
- If the leader collects fees to pay for lodging, food, etc., the leader must comply with the Connecticut Chapter's [Activity Financial Policy](#) and complete an [Activity Accounting Worksheet](#).

Planning the Ride

1. Leading a ride begins with deciding which route to use. The website CT Bike Routes has hundreds of routes available at www.ctbikeroutes.org. There are other sources of cue sheets including other bicycle clubs, routes you have previously ridden that are not on CT Bike Routes, books, and websites.
2. If you are designing a new route, first check with CT Bike Routes to see if there is a similar route available. Otherwise, seek advice from experienced leaders. Designing a new route is a complex undertaking. It is a challenge to create a route with a suitable distance that is safe, scenic, and does not have an excess of hills to climb, or too much traffic to endure.
3. Recruitment of a co-leader (or sweep) leaves you with better control and greater flexibility if you cannot lead the ride as planned. A co-leader also affords you shared responsibility with the group. This is also a good training method for new leaders. If you cannot arrange a co-leader in advance, you can ask at the ride start if someone wants to take out a group that is faster or slower, or if someone wants to sweep the ride, i.e., they will be the last person in the group and will let you know if anyone drops out or cannot maintain the advertised pace.

The Ride Description

1. All AMC rides must be approved by the Bicycling Committee and posted to the AMC website to be considered an official AMC ride. E-mail the ride description to the Ride Coordinators at newride@ct-amc.org. Allow 24 to 48 hours for the ride to be posted to the website. Be sure to review your ride on the website after it is posted, and contact the ride coordinators in case there are any errors or omissions.
2. The general policy is to provide riders with complete information in the ride description. If you wish riders to register in advance, indicate that in the notice and omit the starting time. Keep in mind that many people decide at the last-minute which ride they wish to do, so an RSVP will tend to cut attendance in half as compared to a ride that does not require registration.
3. Please follow the AMC style for your ride write up. This will speed posting of your ride (and make it easier on the ride coordinators!), who are volunteers as well. If you leave out information, it will likely cause a delay in the publication of your ride.
 - The first item is the day of the week, and the month and date, along with the ride name and the name of the starting town (if the town is not obvious from the ride name).
 - Within parentheses, there are a series of ride codes. The first code is the style of ride (SO, RC, ADV, or TR).
 - The second code is the terrain (FL, RL, or HL), which is often a combination code (RL/HL is the most popular one). Be honest! Don't say that a ride is rolling when it is really hilly because you may attract riders who are unable to handle the terrain, and will not be happy with you as a leader for misleading them.
 - The third code is if the ride has a cue sheet (CUE), whether the leader is supplying it or asking people to print their own. Some rides may also include a map (MAP).
 - The fourth and fifth codes are rarely used: RG for Regrouping and SW for sweep, as these are typical components of most rides.
 - The last fact in the parentheses is the AVERAGE speed of the entire ride. Unless there are multiple leaders, the pace range should be no more than a 2 mph range. For example, telling people that the

pace range is 11 to 15 mph is misleading, as it is impossible for one leader to stretch this range of pace on a ride. Either the person expecting the 11 mph is going to get dropped or the person expecting the 15 mph pace is going to be bored and frustrated.

- Outside the parentheses indicate the distance of the ride in miles.
- Start your description by listing the meeting time and the starting time with the meeting time being 15 minutes before the time you plan to roll out of the parking lot. If you just provide one time, riders are likely to arrive at that time.
- After the meet and start times, list the meeting location (with an address, if known).
- Then provide basic information about where the ride is going, including if there is a snack or lunch stop where people buy food and water, or at least fill their water bottles. If there are no places for supplies, be sure to state that in the description by saying “No stores.”
- Finally, end your description with the directions to the starting location, unless it is an obvious place, such as a commuter parking lot (CPL) that is directly off the highway.
- If you are using a ride from CT Bike Routes, copy that information from the website and paste it into your description. Please don’t write, “See CT Bike Routes for information.” Also include a direct link to the cue sheet from CT Bike Routes and a direct link to the map. You can include these links by going to the cue sheet and map and copying the links from the website.
- Indicate if you are providing cue sheets, or if riders should print them.
- Include your name and your preferred contact method: home phone, cell phone, and/or email. Only one form of contact is required.

Sample ride write up (You do not need to duplicate the appearance of rides on the website. That formatting takes place automatically):

Day of Week, Month and Date, Name of Ride, (RC, RL, Cue, 13-14 mph), 25 miles, Meet at 10 a.m. to ride at 10:15 a.m. from I-95 Exit 56 CPL in Branford. Scenic tour of the shoreline in Branford and Stony Creek with lunch along the water in Stony Creek. Bring or buy. Leader will provide cue sheets. RL Name (203) 123-4567 or yourname@yahoo.com.

Before The Ride

1. Submit a ride description to the Ride Coordinator at Ride Coordinators at newride@ct-amc.org, preferably a week in advance. Rides may be submitted no later than 48 hours before the ride.
2. Print a copy of the [AMC Liability Release Agreement](#), which may be downloaded from the AMC website.
3. If time allows, scout the route to check for any changes, such detours, construction, closed shoulders, severely broken pavement, etc. You might want your co-leader to help with this. Also check that the parking area is available, and has not been taken over by a special event.
4. If you are providing cue sheets, make enough copies of the cue sheet and/or map to pass out to participants at the beginning of the ride. About 15 copies should be more than enough for most rides.
5. Prepare ride essentials, including a pump, spare tube, and patch kit. Make sure the glue in your patch kit is good. If you opened it more than six months ago, the glue is probably dried up.
6. Check to make sure your bike is in good working condition.
7. Unless the write-up has a specified a cancellation procedure (or it is pouring rain), the ride leader, co-leader, or your representative **MUST** show up at the prescribed meeting place.
8. If for some reason you cannot lead the ride and have not found a substitute leader, contact the Bicycling Committee Chair as soon as possible. A substitute may be found.
9. If the weather conditions make riding unsafe, cancel the ride. If canceling the ride before the day of the ride or earlier, contact the Ride Coordinators to indicate the cancellation on the AMC website. Do not feel obligated to show up if the weather is uncertain. Riders should exercise common sense and contact you if they are unsure if the ride will take place.

The Day Of The Ride

1. Prepare yourself, your bike, and your car, bringing all necessary equipment, food, water, ride cue sheets and/or maps (if you are providing them), and a Liability Release Agreement with a clipboard and pen.
2. Arrive at the ride location 15 minutes before the meeting time. Following the ride, you should be the last to leave to ensure that all participants have arrived back safely.
3. You are responsible, within practical limits, for the welfare of the entire group. After making a mental check of each biker's preparedness, privately approach anyone not suited for the ride and ask that they not participate. A diplomatic approach to this is to ask the person how much riding they have done that year, and at what pace, and comment that other riders on the ride have been riding regularly, and are ready to complete the route at the stated pace.
4. Have participants read the ACKNOWLEDGMENT AND ASSUMPTION OF RISKS & RELEASE AGREEMENT FOR AMC VOLUNTEER-LED ACTIVITIES and sign on the appropriate line of that agreement (copies attached).
5. Count the participants and check this number with the signatures on the Liability Release Agreement. Share this information with your co-leader and, if one has been assigned, your sweep. Bring the Liability Release Agreement (LRA) with you. The LRA should be printed on both sides of the paper and should not be altered in any way.
6. If you feel comfortable with providing your cell phone to riders, give them that information.
7. If the group is 15 riders or more, consider appointing a second leader.
8. Check to make sure riders have at least one water bottle or are wearing a hydration pack.
9. If you see any riders without a helmet, inform them they cannot participate, as helmets are required.
10. Leaders must comply with the AMC policy on "Participants and Activity Management," which reads: "Leaders may not exclude persons from an Activity on the basis of race, religion, color, national and ethnic origin, gender, sexual preference, marital status, age (except minors), or physical disability that can be reasonably accommodated on the proposed Activity. Accommodations for participants with disabilities may be made to the level that they do not increase risk to the group."
11. Leaders should be aware of the AMC policy on minors participating in events, which reads as follows: "Leaders may opt to allow a minor to attend an activity in the absence of their legal guardian assuming that another responsible adult whom the child knows prior to the outing is willing to accompany and supervise the child participant while in the field. Any minor attending one these outings (regardless of the presence of their parent or guardian) must have their parent or legal guardian sign AMC's Acknowledgement of Risks, Assumption of Risks, and Release Agreement for AMC Volunteer-Led Activities (Release Agreement) prior to their participation."

Ride Overview and Introductions

1. When people have their bicycles ready, gather riders to provide them with an overview of the ride.
2. Welcome people and introduce yourself (and the co-leader or sweep if you have one).
3. Provide a BRIEF overview of the route, pointing out any important information, such as tricky turns, rough roads, etc.
4. State the expected average pace of the ride and your plans for regrouping. Ask if there are riders who plan to ride a different pace. Let me know if they go ahead, they are not your responsibility. For those who plan to ride slower than the stated pace, tell them they are expected to follow the cue sheet, and that you cannot slow down the entire ride to accommodate them.
5. Tell riders that if they plan to leave the group, such as turning back because the route is too difficult, to please let someone know.
6. Ask if any participants have a medical issue, such as diabetes or an allergy that requires an EpiPen, and to please let you know privately.
7. Ask if anyone is new to the AMC, is new to club riding, and/or is doing their first ride of the year.
8. If you do not have a co-leader or sweep, ask if someone would like to sweep. Reassure them that the sweep's job is to let you know that they are the last rider, and they are not obligated to repair a flat or fix any other mechanical problem.

9. Review safety rules and remind cyclists that they have to share the roads with motorists.
 - a. Remind cyclists that they have to obey traffic laws, including stopping at traffic lights and stop signs.
 - b. Inform them they can ride double file on quiet roads, but if someone yells “Car back,” they should quickly drop to single file to allow the car to pass.
 - c. Yell “Car up” if a car is coming from the opposite direction.
 - d. Yell “Runner up” if someone is running or walking along your side of the road.
 - e. Cyclists should point out road problems, such as broken pavement, a branch, a rock or a dead animal, and calling out that information accordingly.
 - f. Use hand signals for left and right turns, sticking out their left and right arms as needed.
 - g. When possible, signal slowing and stopping with their left arm pointing down (this may not be possible on a steep downhill) and call out “Slowing” or “Stopping.”
 - h. Remind riders NEVER to pass on the right.
 - i. When stopping to regroup, tell riders to stay close to the shoulder (and off the road if possible) for safety reasons and to allow traffic to flow smoothly.
10. Have riders introduce themselves by stating their name and hometown, etc.

During the Ride

1. Keep to the stated pace! Do not allow faster riders to push you to ride faster or to pull the ride. If necessary, regroup to allow the faster riders to get out of sight.
2. Obey traffic rules, including stopping at traffic lights and stop signs.
3. Regroup occasionally to give people time to catch their breath, drink water, adjust clothing, and eat. Wait for slower riders and give them time to rest also. Regrouping is particularly important if the group has been separated by a traffic light.
4. Encourage riders to care for themselves by adding or removing clothing to prevent overheating or chilling, and to drink plenty of water – especially in cooler weather. A grumpy rider may just need energy food and hydration. Watch out for riders who “bonk”, i.e., act confused or tired because they have not been eating or drinking.
5. When turns are particularly confusing and/or numerous, keep riders in sight. You may do a brief regrouping, just to make sure you see the last rider.
6. Count riders throughout the ride, especially at confusing turns, regroups, lunch, and at the end.
7. If an injury occurs, treat it as best you can. Do not move a rider with an obvious injury, unless the risk from traffic is greater than the risk of moving them. If the injury requires additional help or rescue, call 911.

After The Ride

1. As leader, you should be the last to leave the parking area. Make sure that all riders have returned.
2. If riders have split off from the group to return early, you need to make some arrangement so you are informed that they have completed the ride and left. They may give their license plate number or leave a note on your vehicle, etc.
3. Return the signed Liability Release Agreement forms to the AMC. Forms may be mailed to 10 City Square, Boston, Mass. 02108 (address is at bottom of form). If you are mailing the agreement, you do not need to send it after each ride. You can send them in batches. The exception would be if there was an injury that required completion of a Volunteer Accident/Incident Report form. Forms can also be scanned and emailed to amcwaiver@outdoors.org, or faxed to (617) 523-0722.
4. Take the time to do a self-evaluation of your ride. What went well? What did not? What will you do differently next time?
5. Plan and submit another ride!
6. Any accident that requires outside agencies (police, hospital, media, etc.) must be reported to the Bicycling Chair, Chapter Chair and the Leadership Training and Risk Management Manager (address at bottom of form), as soon as possible. Complete the [Volunteer Accident/Incident Report](#) form. Minor injuries that can be solved with a first aid kit need not be reported.

Final Notes

These guidelines were revised in April 2019 by the AMC Connecticut Chapter Bicycling Committee members. For further questions regarding leadership, contact the Bicycling Committee Chair, the Education Chair, or the Excursions Chair listed under the Connecticut Chapter on the chapter website at www.ct-amc.org.

Appalachian Mountain Club, Connecticut Chapter, Ride Rating System

C, T, S, P where:

C = Category

- LE - Leisurely – easy pace, less than 10 mph, 10-15 miles
- SO - Social – fun group ride, 10-12 mph, 10-50 miles
- RC - Recreational – regular cyclists, 12-15 mph, 30-50 miles
- ADV - Advanced – advanced riders, 15+ mph
- TRN - Training – regular riders, 12-15+ mph
- MTN - Mountain Biking

T = Terrain

- FL - Mostly flat, but will probably have some rolling sections
- RL - Generally rolling but will have some mild hills and flat sections
- HL - Hilly with extended climbing throughout the ride
- MT - Mountainous with long, grueling climbs (rarely used)

S = Style

- SW - Ride is swept. (Someone designated by the leader, stays back with the slowest riders)
- RG - Regrouping occurs several times during the ride
- Cue - A cue sheet of the route is available.
- MP - A map of the route is available

P = Pace - Average MPH of the ride (not including stops), e.g., 10-12 mph

Note: The distance of the ride should be included at the start of the ride description.

AMC Connecticut Chapter, Group Riding Rules and Guidelines

❑ **"Car Back" and "Car Up"**

Call out "*Car Back*" and "*Car Up*." Move to the right and ride single file until all cars pass. Don't assume that after one car goes by there aren't others – you may not hear the second and third cars because of the noise the first one makes.

❑ **Slowing**

When you slow down, put your left hand down with your palm facing back and call out, "*Slowing*."

❑ **Stopping**

If you are going to stop, put your left hand down with your palm facing back and call out, "*Stopping*." If a group of riders stop, make sure everyone is fully off the traveled portion of the road.

❑ **Passing Other Cyclists**

When passing another cyclist, call out "*on your left*" as you approach him or her. **NEVER PASS ON THE RIGHT.**

❑ **Road Debris and Obstacles**

If you see an obstacle in the road, such as glass, a storm sewer grate, a pothole, or sand, point to it to warn cyclists behind you. Additionally, you might want to call out what the obstacle is, such as "*glass*," "*grate*," "*pothole*," or "*sand*."

Tip: Be particularly watchful for glass on bridges, overpasses, and underpasses.

❑ **Crossroads and Stop Signs**

At crossroads and stop signs, **NEVER** call out "*all clear*" for those behind you to run through the intersection. Just because it is clear for you, it may not be clear for others. If you hear someone ahead of you call out "*all clear*," check yourself for your own safety.

❑ **Signaling Turns**

Signal all turns. Extend your left arm and point left for left-hand turns, and extend your right arm and point right for right-hand turns. This helps other cyclists, pedestrians, and people you may not even notice, as well as motorists. (It also helps cyclists gain respect from motorists who may be more likely to think of us as a bona fide user of the road, which of course we are.)

❑ **Always Ride on the Right**

Always, **ALWAYS** ride on the right-hand side of the road. Motorists pulling out of side streets and driveways don't always look to the right if they are turning right. If you're on a bicycle on the left-hand side of the road in this situation, you're a dead duck!

❑ **Traffic Laws**

Obey traffic laws and signs, including stop signs, traffic lights. Cyclists are subject to the same traffic laws as motorists.

❑ **Cars Backed Up Behind**

Do not wave cars backed up behind you past. If they have an accident, you could be held liable. Instead, when you can, pull over and stop to let them by.

❑ **Wear a Helmet**

Always wear a CPSC certified helmet. Helmets are required on all AMC rides.