

RAHA

C Y C L I N G

GUIDELINES, CALLS AND ETIQUETTE

Please read before you ride!

Waiver - All cyclists who participate in rides coordinated by Raha Cycling do so at their own risk and hereby waive any claim, right of claim, cause of any action which they or others might have arising out of loss of life or injury, damage or loss of any description whatsoever which they or others may suffer or sustain in the course or consequent upon them or others' participation in the ride.

All cyclists acknowledge that participating in such an event is a potentially hazardous activity and assume all risks associated with participating in Raha Cycling coordinated events, including but not limited to falls, contact with other participants, the effects of weather, traffic and the conditions of the road / trail or other course, all such risks being known and appreciated by participants.

This waiver, release and discharge shall be and operate separately in favour of all persons involved with or otherwise engaged in promoting or staging the ride and the servants, agents, representatives and officers of any of them.

All participants attest that they are physically fit and medically able to complete part or the entirety of the ride without jeopardising their own (or others) health or life and consent to receive medical treatment that may be advisable in the event of illness or injuries suffered by themselves or others during the ride.

Before coming out for your first ride with Raha Cycling, we ask that you familiarise yourself with the following information. When you join us for a ride you are agreeing to abide by the club's **Code of Conduct*** (see end of document).

Cycling, like all sports, has its dangers, but these can be reduced by a number of factors and by being part of a peloton (bunch) of cyclists you have taken the first step to improving your safety and visibility on the road. This also brings certain responsibilities to look after yourself and others to make sure that everyone returns home safely. Take responsibility for your actions and the decisions you make.

1. Getting organised to ride

a) Helmet – No helmet is natural selection in action. Helmets are compulsory for all Raha rides - no helmet no ride.

b) Gloves – Give you better control whilst riding and some padding in a fall.

c) Headphones – They have no place in a group ride and are generally very dangerous to use in any road cycling (traffic) situation. Save your music for the stationary trainer.

d) Bike – Must fit properly and be well maintained with good tyres and brakes (pads, cables and adjusted correctly) as a minimum. Get a proper bike fitting done and get your set-up sorted. A poorly maintained bike will fail more regularly and therefore hold up the peloton and spoil your ride. It may even end up causing you injury. Go to a reliable mechanic to service your bike and ask for a safety check. Service your bike regularly (two to four times per year)

e) Glasses – Personal choice, but offer protection from flying hazards. Make sure the arms are on the

outside of your helmet straps so that they can dislodge in a fall.

f) Visibility – Be visible and wear light-coloured clothing. Have good lights front (white) and rear (red), and turn them on!

g) Fatigue – Concentration levels are reduced and bike handling ability is compromised if you are fatigued. Leave more room between riders when you feel tired. If you're having trouble ask for a pace to be slowed by calling "steady".

h) Alcohol – shouldn't need to be said but the same rules apply as driving a car. If you've had a night on the booze, your perception and bike handling skills will be compromised.

i) Triathlon bikes - for safety reasons, triathlon bikes and tri-bars are not allowed on Raha rides.

j) Raha kit - we require all riders to wear our official kit, which can be purchased at Yas Cycles in Al Zeina, Abu Dhabi. Jerseys, bibshorts and socks are available.

2. Check before you ride (best done the night before a morning ride)

a) Check your tyre pressure. Make sure your tyres are properly pumped up before every ride. This will help you avoid unnecessary pinch flats.

b) Make sure your lights are charged and working. As well as making good sense, you are required by law to have working front (white) and rear (red) lights during hours of darkness.

c) Check your tyre changing/emergency gear. Every cyclist should carry (and know how to use) tyre changing gear. As a minimum, you will need a spare tube, tyre levers and a handpump or CO2 cylinder and dispenser. You should also carry up-to-date ICE (In Case of Emergency) contact info (such as on a OneLife ID band,), your medical card, Emirates ID, charged phone and cash to get a cab home if needed.

d) Fill up your bidon/s (cycling-specific bottles). It's a good idea to carry at least one bidon (with either water or electrolyte) for any ride. For rides of two hours or longer, you'll likely need two bottles or more.

3. Joining the peloton – Group expectations

When you turn up for a ride, introduce yourself and ask for the designated Ride Captain (RC). All rides start from Mugg and Bean at Etihad Plaza and have an RC appointed before the group departs. **The Ride Captain is in charge of the ride.** He/she will direct the group, call for a split if necessary, answer any questions re the route/pace and generally help everyone to stay safe and enjoy the ride.

You are part of a larger entity when riding in a peloton and you need to adjust your riding and thinking accordingly. Your actions are no longer independent and must be considered as to their impact on the bunch. A peloton is not as simple as an individual and so you must approach intersections, lights, hazards, traffic congestion etc accordingly.

a) Which ride? See our Strava page for more information.

Ride routes and distances are as advertised (on Strava) based on average terminal speed, which means the average speed of the group at the end of the ride – NOT rolling speed, i.e. a ride advertised as a 'Steady ride' will do route and finish with a 32kph average speed. The group will be rolling on some sections at 36+kph.

If you're coming along for the first time, we always recommend joining the 'Steady' group or one that you should not find too challenging to stay with. You can then concentrate on learning how we roll rather than worrying about hanging on. You can always join a more challenging ride next time.

Group sizes are dictated by the number of riders who turn up on the day. Ideally you should click 'going' on the Strava page so that we can arrange suitable and sufficient support vehicles. A late split is sometimes necessary when people join the group just after the start and the RC is not aware of the group size. The RC will monitor the group numbers continuously and if necessary arrange a split.

Group ride versus training ride – The advertised pace of the ride should be adhered to unless agreed by everyone in the group on the day to alter it. If you're not wearing a number on your back then you're not racing. Don't set out to 'smash' a ride, just because you feel strong on the day. There are no prizes for bringing yourself or someone else down. It's not cool.

All rides which have a support vehicle will require all riders to contribute AED 20.00/- (collected by the RC or a designate). This pays for fuel and the driver's time. Please ensure you contribute.

b) How we roll

Configuration

Pairs – We ride in pairs, which means keeping your handlebar aligned with the person's next to you. Any more than two abreast means the middle person is unable to avoid obstacles. When you sit half a wheel or so ahead of your partner, it's called 'half-wheeling' which is not only poor form and annoying as it causes surging in the group with riders constantly trying to align with the wheel in front, but is also quite dangerous as the rider in front may swerve unexpectedly e.g. to avoid an obstacle, and will clip your front wheel if it is overlapping. Never ride up the middle of the group.

Echelons - When the wind comes from the side, the group forms an echelon in the direction of the wind. Cycling directly behind a rider in a crosswind does NOT provide any benefit! Desperately trying to hang behind that wheel is not always the best option. When riding in an echelon you want to keep things smooth and together. You should NEVER take a big long pull on the front. The RC will determine if an echelon is necessary and instruct the front two riders to move to one side of the lane such that the bunch can echelon diagonally behind them. When rotating off the rider on the sheltered side needs to ensure that he/she allows sufficient space for the peloton to pass.

Turns/rotation – Unless otherwise stated our groups roll off in twos. When rotating, the two riders in front will agree a point to change and the rider on the front left-side rider will indicate the change. The two riders will accelerate slightly and then move to the sides of the peloton. The riders rotating off will then decrease speed to allow the peloton to pass between them. It's helpful to let those rotating back to know when they've reached the 'last wheel' position so they can catch on. Rotations should all be accomplished smoothly, without surging and in a timely fashion. Don't be a hog on the front of the pack. Give everyone a turn and share the load.

No gaps but leave space – Gaps (more than a metre) reduce the drafting benefit, disrupt the pairings, encourage riders to pull in on you and make negotiating intersections when signals are changing much more hazardous than a group acting as a single entity. Conversely it's not a race so keep back 30+cm from the wheel ahead and stay offset. Align your front wheel with the quick release of the wheel in front as a guide. Try and stay one side or other of the bike in front rather than moving back and forth.

Sprint sections – Some rides have a section or two with a short sprint. Learn where these are and don't turn the whole ride into a series of random sprints. Wait at the designated regroup point. Don't push on and drop the slower riders.

Bike Handling

Smooth movements – Be cool. Be predictable and smooth in the bunch. Signal your intentions to fellow riders and don't make unexpected changes of speed or direction.

Brake smoothly and call "stopping" or "slowing" first if necessary. If you have to brake heavily, try and leave the maximum room for those following you to react and stop.

Be aware that if you stand up out of the saddle (when going up a rise) your bike can seemingly 'lurch' behind you. Make sure you are well clear of the rider behind in this case. When leading off from a standstill, e.g. a red light, ease the speed up slowly so that the bunch can stay together.

Riders at the back should call 'on' to indicate when the peloton has regrouped and is ready to gradually increase the speed. Always keep pedalling when on the front of the group, especially when going downhill, so that the rest of the bunch are not forced to sit on their brakes.

Look forward – Don't look back, down or sideways. Things happen fast and a moment's lack of

attention can be all it takes. Calls for lane changes should come from the back of the group. If you're at the front, make it clear when a call is needed.

Hands – Keep both hands on the bar with at least one finger hooked under the bar to avoid being dislodged when hitting unexpected hazards (bumps, holes). Never take both hands off the bar when in the bunch. You might think you look like Eddy Merckx but it can make the people around you very nervous (and we don't like that).

Drinking – When you need to take a drink, do it when conditions are predictable. Signal to those behind you that you are drinking, (and that you do not have both hands on the bars) by sticking your bidon out to the side. If you're not confident replacing a bidon whilst riding, wait until stopped to take a drink.

Don't stop where it is dangerous to do so. Fix flat tyres etc in a safe place. Be prepared to remind others who may be preoccupied with the events at hand to notice the danger they are in.

Traffic Rules

Follow the traffic rules and resist the urge to engage if a road-rage incident arises. It's not worth it and any engagement usually just fuels the anti-cyclist sentiment.

One lane – We share the road and expect drivers to have patience and respect us. We can reciprocate by using a single lane on multi-lane roads, not blocking the road, not making groups too big, leaving enough space between bunches and going in single file where necessary on two-way roads / narrow sections.

Red lights – We stop at red lights. If approaching an orange light, the front pair will call either 'rolling' or 'stopping' based on whether they believe the peloton can safely stop / continue before the light turns red. When we stop, we are still a bunch, we stay in our pairs, stop behind the traffic and do not filter through between cars/up the side to get to the lights.

Roundabouts – We give way to traffic at roundabouts as per the traffic laws. If approaching a roundabout, the front pair will call either 'rolling' or 'slowing / stopping' based on whether they believe the peloton can safely stop / continue. It is important that the pace is adjusted when negotiating the roundabout such that the bunch stays together – it should slow briefly to enable a regrouping before increasing again.

c. Making calls

Call out/point out – Sitting in a bunch means the view forward is often blocked by the riders ahead. The front riders will point/call out hazards and everyone behind is relying on you and the riders ahead to make them aware of obstacles, be they holes in the road, pedestrians/joggers, slower cyclists, parked cars, oncoming traffic, metal plates, glass, grates, debris, animals etc. If the obstacle is dangerous enough then shout it out as well as pointing it out.

It is up to the riders at the back of the peloton to determine when it's clear to change lanes and call this out as well. If you are 'last wheel' remember this is your responsibility so that the riders at the front are not straining to see behind when time to change lanes. The call should be 'clear... over' if clear to change. If a car is approaching / overtaking the call is 'car back'. Make sure you pass the calls up and down the bunch as well.

Calls primarily from the front:

- **'car up'** – beware of slow/parked vehicle ahead. The peloton will need to check if clear to go around.
- **'rider/runner up'** – beware of a cyclist or pedestrian ahead. Also used to alert the cyclist/pedestrian to the group's approach (particularly relevant for the Al Wathba and Al Hudayriat Island tracks).
- **'stopping/slowng'** – the peloton must prepare to stop.
- **'rolling'** – the peloton will keep moving or start moving off.

Calls primarily from the rear:

- **'steady'** – slows the pace momentarily to close gaps and allow riders in difficulty to get back on the bunch.
- **'on'** – indicates all riders are back in the bunch and the pace can gradually increase until normal pace is resumed.
- **'car back'** – a vehicle is overtaking the peloton. Hold your line and be aware of cars approaching from behind.
- **'clear'** – the road/lane is clear to enter.
- **'wait'** – the road/lane is not clear to enter. Wait until 'clear... over' is heard before attempting to change lanes.
- **'out'** – the peloton can momentarily move into the next lane to bypass an obstacle, e.g. parked car, tyre debris.
- **'over'** – the peloton is clear to change lanes.

Lastly...

All these things should and will become second nature to you after riding with Raha Cycling for a while. Being a transient membership there's always a significant number of new faces in the bunch so it's up to all of us to lead by example rather than follow by accident.

None of this happens without a dedicated committee and supportive members. Rides and events don't just happen so if you can organise a ride or help out in any way then please let a committee member know as help is always very much appreciated.

Keep in mind...

1. It's not a race.
2. It's a hobby not a livelihood.
3. We have day jobs we have to go to after the ride which are harder with a broken collarbone or smashed wrist.
4. We have family and friends who love us. Get home safe!

*** CODE OF CONDUCT**

We ride safely and obey traffic rules.

We always wear a helmet and use lights in the dark.

When we wear the jersey, we are "Raha Cycling".

We are courteous to other road users and avoid confrontation.

When we ride in a group we look out for each other.

We take our turn on the front and communicate as appropriate.

We maintain our bikes and carry our own spares.

We all get involved in the Club.

#don'tbeadick