

## Oxted CC Risk Assessment. Updated 14<sup>th</sup> March 2019.

Cycling is a wonderful sport but of course there are risks, even without traffic. Our rules are designed to minimise that risk and we constantly review our safety advice.

ALL Oxted CC members are required to have 3rd Party insurance with either British Cycling or Cycling UK.

### **BEFORE YOU LEAVE HOME - fitness to ride and equipment:**

**Risk 1: Fitness to ride.** Risk HIGH. If you have ANY doubts about your health or suitability for exertion, see your GP. If you feel unwell on a ride, stop and tell others around you. If you are taking essential medication, let other riders know and/or use wrist or neck tags. Use a heart rate monitor and study your data regularly.

**Risk 2: Visibility.** Risk HIGH. Being hit by a car could be catastrophic. Do not wear black or dark clothing on a road ride. Even on a sunny day, in shadows, you are invisible. Use flashing lights in all conditions, they are cheaper than a pair of sunglasses.

**Risk 3: Head injuries.** Risk HIGH. Cycling crash helmets are compulsory on all Oxted CC rides. Make sure you fit your crash helmet correctly. If it gets damaged, replace it.

**Risk 4: Safe bike.** Risk HIGH. Check your bike thoroughly and frequently. Check the brake pads and rims. If your bike is dropped or crashed, check it carefully or have it inspected by an expert. Sometimes slow punctures appear overnight, check your tyre pressures before you ride. Tri bars may be fitted but not to be used during group riding.

**Risk 5: Clothing essentials:** Risk MED. Gloves or mitts matter, the slowest tumble onto gravel can cause injury. Eye protection is essential, an insect or grit in your eye could cause a crash. Carry a rain jacket, not black, even if rain isn't forecast; if you're stranded, you'll be warmer with a rain jacket. If in doubt, wear too much, you can always take it off.

**Risk 6: Punctures and mechanical problems.** Risk LOW. Carry spare inner tubes, tyre levers, a pump or inflator. Practice changing a tube at home. Carry a multi-tool with chain fixer and learn how it works.

**Risk 7: Insufficient food and drink.** Risk LOW. Eat well before you ride. Always carry a drink and snack. Also carry some cash.

**Risk 8: Not knowing First Aid.** Risk MED. Not knowing the essentials of First Aid affects the group around you. Attend courses when you can. Study the NHS First Aid pages online. Carry at least one large injury patch. Know how to administer CPR.

**Risk 9: Emergency contact.** Risk LOW. It is possible to get lost on a ride or have a mechanical problem so don't forget your phone. Ensure you have the ride leader's number and he/she has yours. Note the club number 07970 507 657. Ensure you have an 'ICE' number (In Case of Emergency) on your phone.

**Risk 10: Adverse weather.** Risk MED. Check the weather before you leave home and dress accordingly. In winter, expect worse roads, fit tougher tyres and mudguards. If it's icy, stick to main roads that have been salted or better, don't ride, go to the gym.

## ON THE RIDE - GROUP DISCIPLINE & TRAFFIC

**Risk 11: Group discipline.** Risk MED. Ride Leaders following and promoting the club Safety Policies are to be appointed before a ride to choose a suitable route and maintain group discipline. Ride Leaders are required to speak up immediately on any safety issues before eg unsuitable clothing, poorly maintained bike etc and on the ride, eg failure to 'single up' when required or abusing motorists in any way.

**Risk 12: Traffic.** Risk HIGH. On hearing traffic from behind, riders at the back of the group call 'CAR BACK' which is the signal for the group to move promptly into single file to help cars pass. Be sure all cars have passed before resuming 'two abreast' and never ride more than two abreast. Beware electric cars, which are almost silent. On busy roads, always ride in single file. On narrow roads, the rider at the front of a group, on seeing a car shouts 'CAR UP'. But also be aware that in built up areas, shouting cyclists are a nuisance.

**Risk 13: Disputes with drivers.** Risk MED. Most car drivers are considerate, avoid arguments with the few who aren't. Do not shout or make rude gestures. Take care if passing traffic on the inside. Be polite, good relationships with motorists matter. Know the Highway Code but don't quote it at motorists. Fitting a rear facing camera can help in disputes.

**Risk 14: Busy roads.** Risk MED. Our Ride Leaders endeavour to find quiet routes, with mostly left turns. But they cannot know it all, if you know an area better, please speak up.

**Risk 15: Staying in a group.** Risk LOW. Car drivers treat groups with more respect than solo riders, so stay with your group. If you are having difficulty keeping up with the group, let people know. If someone is falling behind, help them by going back but tell others first. The ride leader cannot be everywhere.

**Risk 16: Junctions.** Risk HIGH. Be very careful at junctions, look and look again. Be patient with traffic. Only call out 'CLEAR' for others if you are absolutely sure all traffic has passed BUT if you hear 'CLEAR' from someone else, double check again, in all directions! When you are slowing or stopping, shout what you are doing for others behind you.

**Risk 17: Not hearing traffic.** Risk HIGH. Never ride with headphones.

**Risk 18: No sudden moves!** Risk MED. Think before you brake, is there anyone right behind you? Think before you turn, use clear signals, look back, in both directions. And don't stop just after turning; what if a car comes flying around that corner?

**Risk 19: Group size.** Risk LOW. The ride leader will determine the group size. Less than ten is preferred, larger groups should leave a gap to assist overtaking traffic.

## ON THE ROAD - OTHER RIDERS & RISKS

**Risk 20: Collisions with other riders.** Risk MED. Don't overlap your front wheel with the rear wheel of the bike in front. If you cannot see ahead, keep a gap in case the rider in front suddenly brakes. Be careful uphill: if the rider in front gets out of the saddle, they will slow momentarily and you could clip their wheel.

**Risk 21: Bad road surface.** Risk MED. Point out potholes to the rider behind you and/or shout 'HOLE' loud and clear. Shout if you see gravel, oil or bad surfaces. Wet roads can be slippery and when turning on a suspect surface, try to keep your bike upright. Use 'compact hand signals'.

**Risk 22: Horses.** Risk MED. Alert horse riders by calling 'BIKE' as you approach. Horses and their riders are easily panicked by bikes suddenly appearing, unless they have some warning.

**Risk 23: Passing obstructions.** Risk MED. Use hand signals and/or shout that you are moving to avoid obstructions, runners and pedestrians.

**Risk 24: Choose a safe place to stop.** Risk MED. Don't stop 'just around the corner' or just over the brow of a hill, get right off the road, leave motorists clear sight lines.

### **ON THE ROAD - BIKE HANDLING**

**Risk 25: Going fast downhill.** Risk HIGH. Crashing at speed will result in injuries. Don't race or chase other riders downhill. Look well ahead, particularly at the road surface. You have more control if 'down on the drops' of your handlebars, not 'on the tops'.

**Risk 26: Cornering.** Risk MED. Learn to corner safely. Don't take chances cornering, drop your speed before the corner, not during the corner. Watch out for gravel, oil, leaves or ice and warn others. If you've entered a corner too fast, shifting your body weight and keep the bike more upright, just keep it smooth.

### **DEALING WITH ACCIDENTS**

**Risk 27: Don't make things worse!** Risk HIGH. 1) At any accident think first about oncoming traffic! Appoint people to warn traffic. 2) DO NOT move the faller, unless absolutely necessary, reassure and give them time to overcome the shock. 3) Administer first aid, injuries always seem worse at this point. 4) Use bandages/patches, there is less trauma for the rider if they don't look at their injuries. 5) If in any doubt, call an ambulance. 6) If vehicles are involved, take the registration numbers and call the police. 7) INSIST on a breath test and an eyesight test. (you'd be amazed at the number of drivers who forget their glasses/contact lenses). 8) INSIST that the driver's phone is checked IMMEDIATELY for recent calls and texts. 9) Take photos of the crash scene.

**Risk 28: Being so worried about risks that you don't cycle.** Risk LOW. NOT cycling can cause a very unappealing body shape, furred up arteries, bad skin and a lack of energy for life generally. Fit people are better looking and achieve more in life and at work!

We are affiliated to British Cycling and endeavour to conform to British Cycling Best Practice Guidelines. We also endeavour to apply the British Cycling Equality Policy and Code of Conduct. We are also affiliated to Cycling UK, Surrey Cycle Racing League, Cycling Time Trials and South Eastern Road Race League.