

BEST PRACTICE GUIDE

# RIDING SAFELY IN A GROUP



# Be Alert

# Be Predictable

# Be Courteous

Helping cyclists and drivers to share the road safely is something that everybody wants.

That's why WestCycle and the Government of Western Australia (Road Trauma Trust Account) have got together to produce a series of easy-to-read 'Best Practice' guides.

This particular guide is aimed at people who **ride in groups**. It's to help make group riding safer and more enjoyable for everyone.

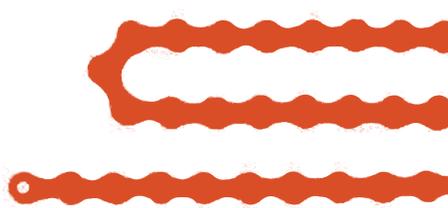
Many groups have their own set of riding standards, and this guide is not designed to replace them. It is, however, about defining best practice for groups to adopt or modify to suit their individual needs.

Whether you ride with a few mates, with a club, or from a café, use this guide to get the best out of your group rides.

There are two more guides. One for people riding on their own and another for people who drive.

Together, these guides show how we can help to make our paths, roads and communities safer places for all.

# THE GROUP



## Group size

- It is recommended groups contain no more than 30 riders.
- Consider splitting riders of similar levels/abilities into smaller groups to ensure everyone has a safe and enjoyable ride.

## Group structure

- Groups should ride no more than two abreast.
- Keep approximately 1m – 1.5m from the rear wheel of the rider in front.
- Do not overlap wheels, and keep your handlebars parallel to avoid 'half-wheeling'.

## Group roles

### Ride Leader

- Always nominate a Ride Leader at the start of a ride. As well as setting things like the route and average speed, the Ride Leader will be responsible for ensuring other riders obey the road rules and the group's standards.

### Front Riders

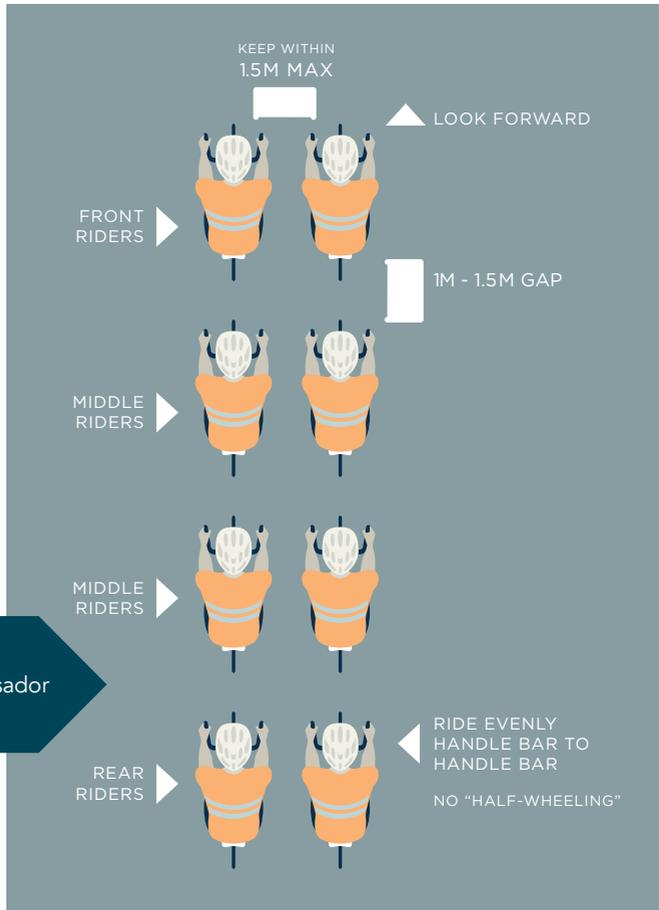
- The two riders at the front control the group's speed and make initial calls and signals about potential hazards or changes in travel conditions.
- Front riders should always scan 100m ahead, so calls and signals can be made in time for the entire group to react.
- Front rider decisions need to be made based on the size of the group. For example, if the whole group cannot pass through an intersection, the front riders should stop the group.

### Middle Riders

- Middle riders should only relay the calls and signals made by the front and rear riders. No new calls should be made by middle riders.

### Rear Riders

- The two rear riders should continually scan behind them and advise of other vehicles approaching or passing. They should also make the call when it is safe to change lanes.
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Everyone is a Ride Ambassador

It is not just the Ride Leader's responsibility to draw attention to poor riding in the group. Everyone in the group needs to be a ride ambassador and be comfortable and confident in pulling someone up if they are riding inappropriately.



# MANAGEMENT AND OPERATION OF THE GROUP



## Pre-ride briefing

- For every ride, the Ride Leader should outline the ride route, including potential hazards, plus the group's expected average speed.
- It should also remind riders they must obey road rules and group standards.

## Rolling through

- Every group has their own particular techniques for rotating their front riders. As long as this is consistent to the group, is predictable, obeys the road rules and keeps everyone safe, you should continue to use the technique.

## Single file

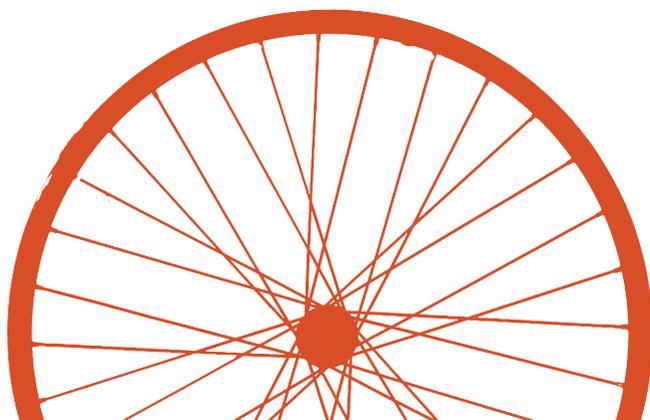
- Occasionally, it may be appropriate to change from riding two abreast to single file:
  - When the road narrows.
  - When going uphill.
  - If traffic is building up.
  - When passing another rider or group of riders.

## Look forward

- Chatting with other riders is fine, but don't look at them to talk.

## Ride consistently

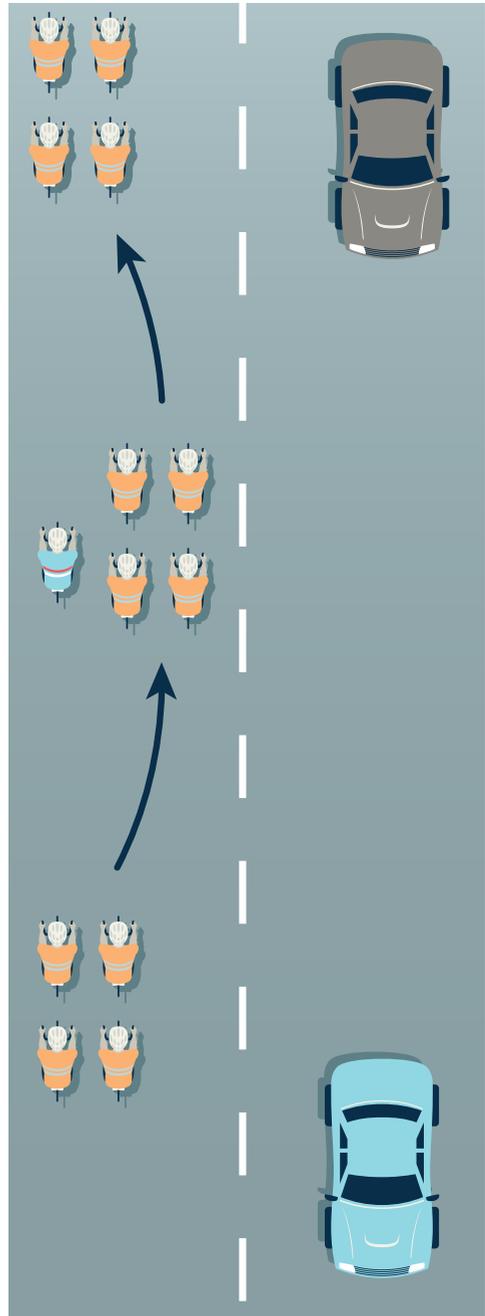
- Avoid speeding up and slowing down for no reason – and don't freewheel if you are at the front of the group.

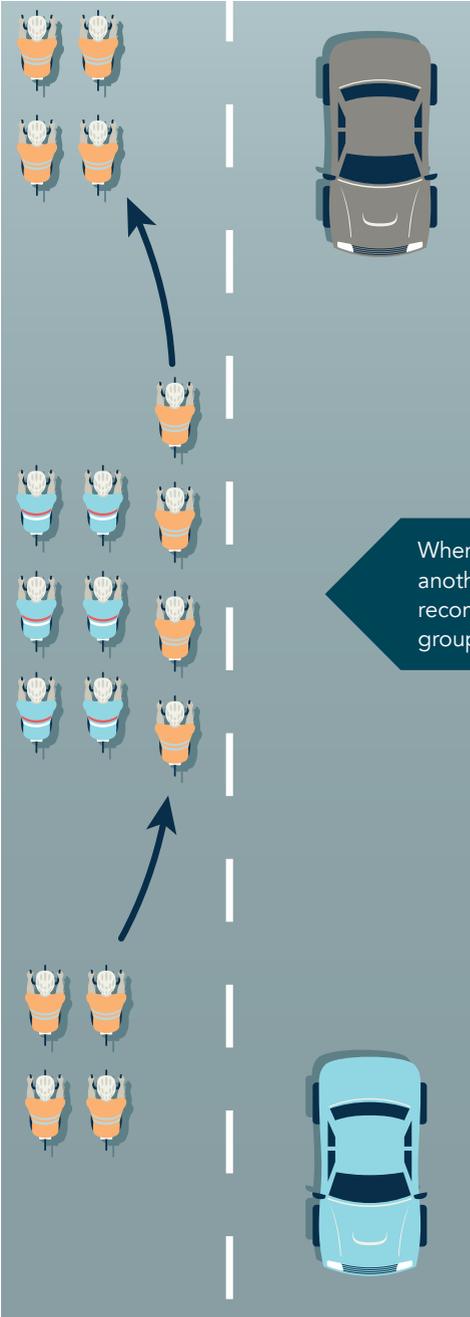


## Passing

- Only pass other riders or vehicles on the right.
- If you are slowing down, move to the left when it's safe to do so.
- Groups riding two abreast are allowed to pass, or be passed by, another rider when it is safe.
- If you are passing another rider or group, ring your bell or call out.
- If you can't leave enough space, slow down until it is safe to pass.
- Make sure you are well clear before moving back in.

Groups riding two abreast are allowed to pass, or be passed by, another person riding a bike when it is safe.





When a group is passing another group, it is recommended the faster group passes in single file.

## Braking and slowing

- Brake smoothly to avoid sudden stops. Give people plenty of notice that you are slowing down by calling or signaling.

## Accelerating

- Accelerate smoothly and gradually away from lights, intersections and corners; this prevents large gaps being formed.

## Cornering

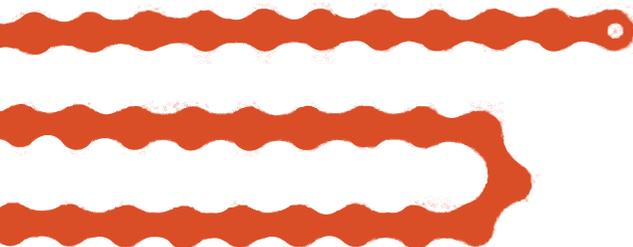
- Hold your line through corners to give other riders plenty of space. Avoid braking through corners, and slow down gradually instead.

## Punctures and mechanical issues

- Let riders around you know if you have a puncture or mechanical failure. The Ride Leader decides whether the group continues to ride, asks all riders to wait in a safe place or leave a couple of riders behind to help.
- Always carry out repairs in a safe place.

## Incidents and crashes

- If there is an incident or crash, all riders must stop in a safe place and give assistance as needed.
- The Ride Leader determines the best course of action, which may include:
  - First aid.
  - Calling emergency services.
  - Reporting the incident.
  - Debriefing the group.
- It is recommended that at least one rider should have current first aid training and all riders have riding insurance cover.



# CALLS AND SIGNALS

The following standard calls and signals are the main way of communicating in a group.

CALL	SIGNAL	WHEN TO USE
Rider/Car Back	No signal required.	A rider or car is approaching from behind.
Rider/Car Passing	No signal required.	A rider or car is passing.
Rider/Walker/Car Up	Arm behind back, pointing in the direction that the group should move.	A rider, pedestrian or car is in front of the group. The group should move in the direction indicated.
Single File	Finger pointing upwards.	The group should move to single file due to traffic conditions ahead or a build-up of traffic behind.
Rolling	No signal required.	The group is continuing through lights or intersection without stopping. An assessment is made by the front riders that the entire group can get through the intersection safely. If not, the call 'stopping' should be used.
Slowing	One arm out with palm facing the ground, moving up and down.	Used to tell riders you are slowing down.
Stopping	One arm raised straight above head, hand straight.	Stopping the group, usually at lights or intersections.
Split	No signal required.	The group has split and is no longer in formation (eg: riders have been caught by lights).
All On	No signal required.	The last rider has rejoined the group after a split.
Hole (stick, glass, etc.)	Finger pointing towards ground at the hole, etc.	An obstacle or hazard such as a pothole or glass on the road or path.
Rolling Through	Finger pointing upwards, with a clockwise or anticlockwise circling motion.	The group begins rolling through in the direction indicated.

## Rider/Walker/Car Up

Arm behind back, pointing in the direction that the group should move.



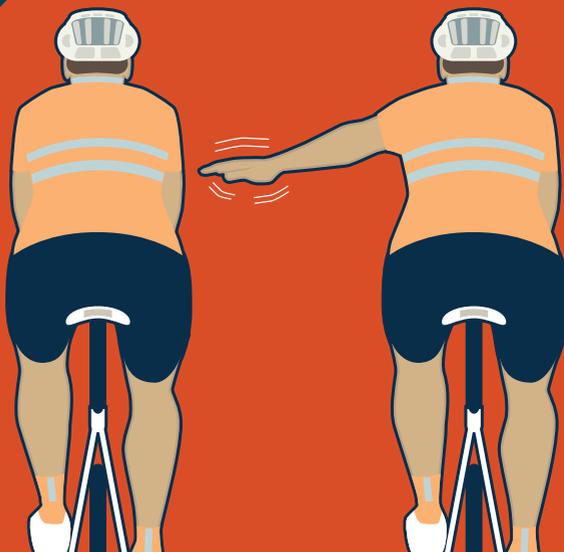
## Single File

Finger pointing upwards.



## Slowing

One arm out with palm facing the ground, moving up and down.



## Stopping

One arm raised straight above head, hand straight.



## Hole

Finger pointing towards ground at the hole, gravel, stick etc.



## Rolling Through

Finger pointing upwards, with a clockwise or anticlockwise circling motion.



# BE ALERT

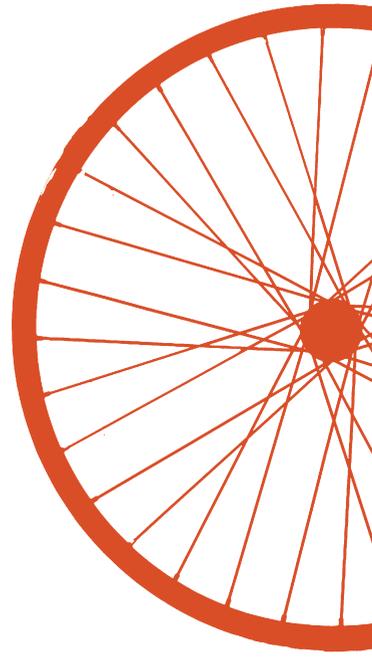
- Ride defensively and anticipate hazards.
- Use your lights at night, in low light and in poor weather conditions.
- Ride bright by wearing light coloured or reflective clothes.
- Never use earphones when riding.
- Don't use tri-bars – save them for time trials.

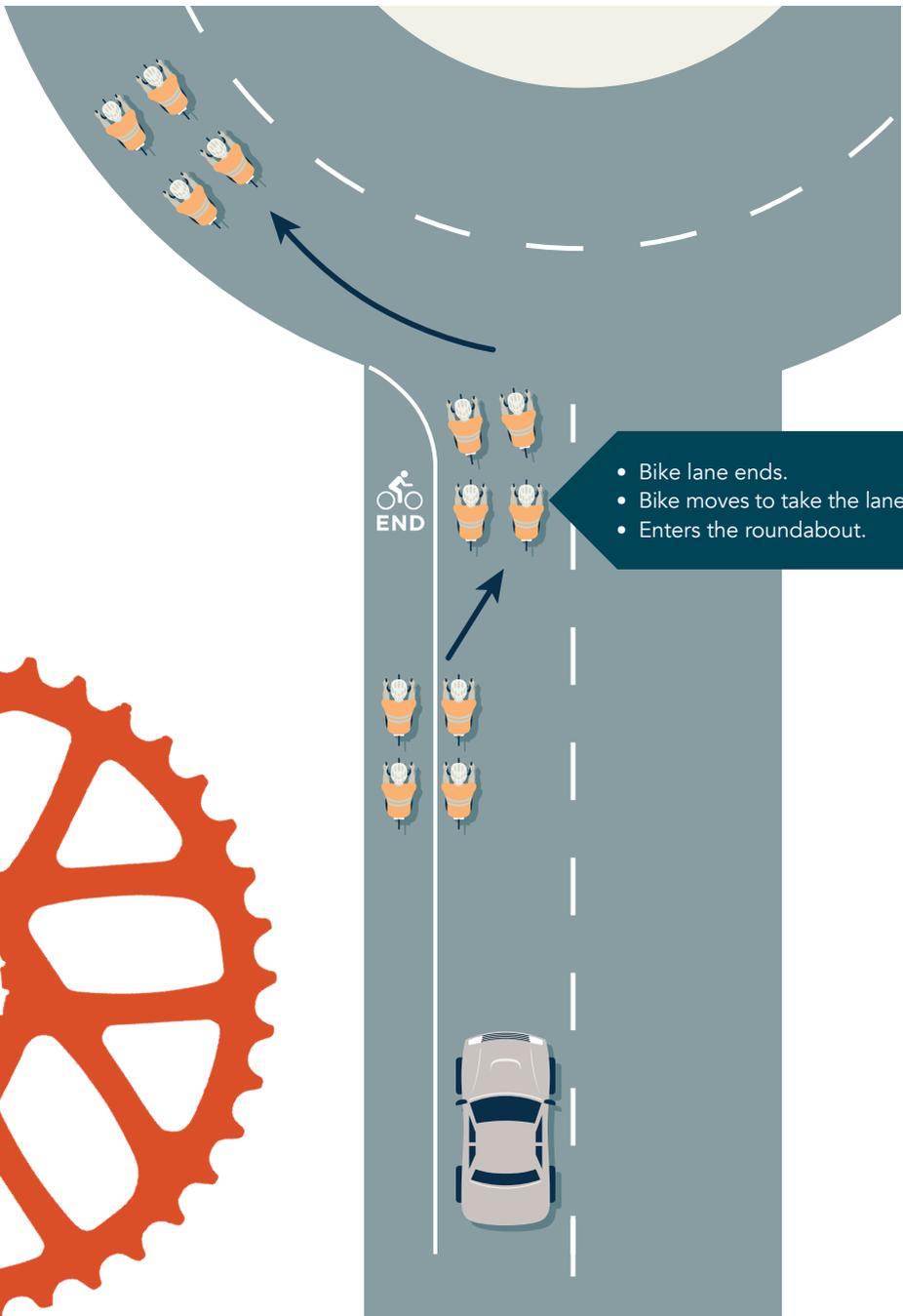
# BE PREDICTABLE

- Keep a straight line at least 1m from the gutter.
- Ride consistently and avoid sudden stops.
- Let other people know what you are planning to do.

# BE COURTEOUS

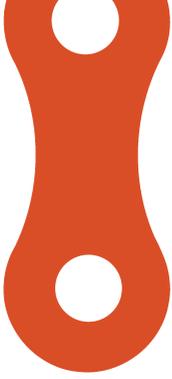
- Follow the road rules. Stop at red lights, obey traffic signs, and don't use your mobile phone when riding.
- Consider riding single file when the road narrows, when going uphill or if traffic is building from behind.
- Always ride single file on paths.
- Only pass when it is safe.
- Give a nod, a smile or a thumbs-up to people doing the right thing.
- Don't react to bad behaviour. Stay calm, and report any dangerous behaviour to police.



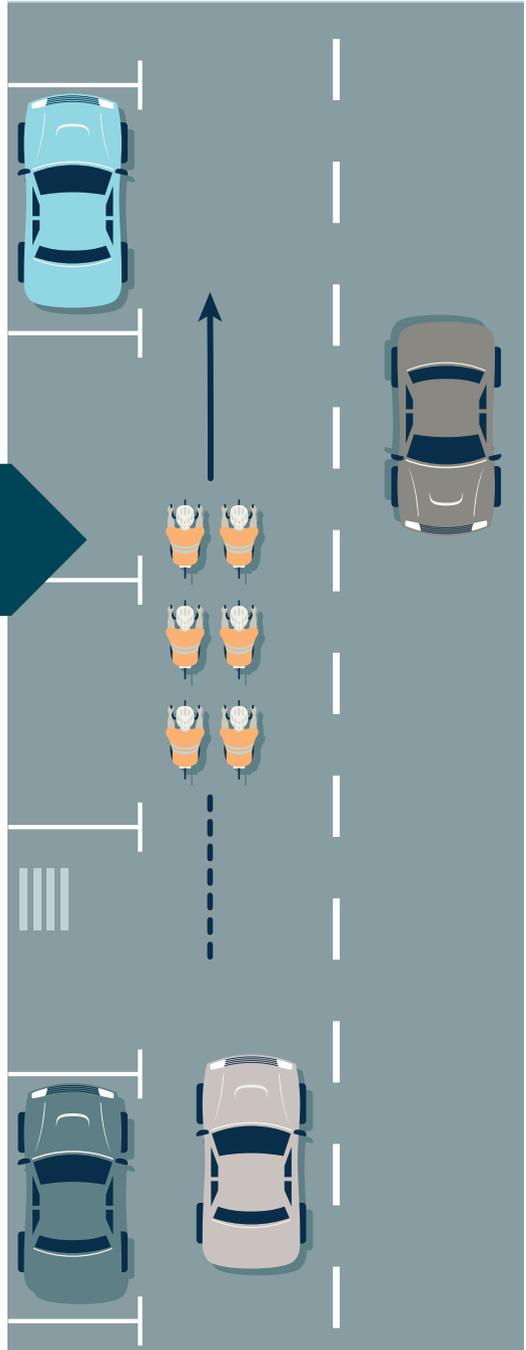


  
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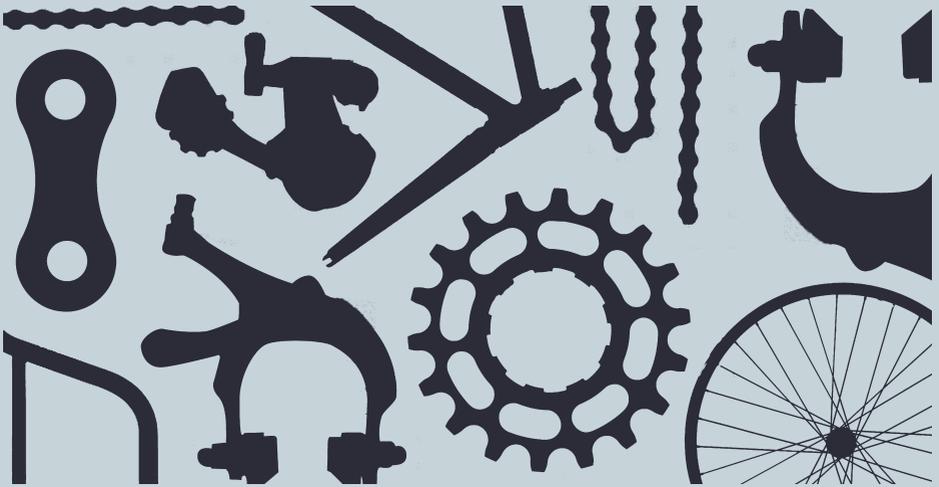
- Bike lane ends.
- Bike moves to take the lane.
- Enters the roundabout.



- Bikes maintain a straight line.
- This avoids unnecessary swerving to avoid parked cars and other obstacles.



# Be Alert Be Predictable Be Courteous



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## Other guides in this series:

Riding safely on your own

Driving safely with bike riders

