



Social Riding Policy Document

About MTBA

MTBA is the national body vested with the administration and management of the sport of mountain biking with an extensive network of clubs across Australia. We formed in 1999 and affiliated with Cycling Australia (CA) in early 2004 although we continue to run our own show, set our own rules and manage ourselves independently of CA. However we have agreements in place that allow for an easy entry into road, track and BMX cycling for our members and for CA and BMXA members to gain easy MTBA membership. In 2007 we also joined with BMXA and CA to develop a unified 'whole of cycling' insurance cover for all of our members. We provide a framework through which our affiliated clubs and private promoters can stage MTB events and activities from club level all the way through to national level.

Social Rides

Social riding is one of the joys of being a mountain biker. Getting out in the bush with your mates is a great way of enjoying the MTB experience. Many MTBA affiliated clubs conduct social rides for their members and the public. It is a great way of gaining exposure to a group with a recreational bent rather than a competitive focus.

Because of their very nature social rides are often less structured than racing events. The participants are often a mixed group of unknown ability with some not sure if they are up to the challenges ahead. The terrain may be unfamiliar with unexpected logs, ruts and roots. Added to this is the fact that social rides often need to share the trails with other users.

For these reasons if you are thinking of organising a social ride then some thought is required to make sure that you and your participants have a great time.

Leading a social ride is at the one time a role with lots of responsibility but also one of immense satisfaction. By following these simple guidelines you and your fellow riders should have a well-executed ride through our beautiful bushland.

Contact and More Info

We are always happy to discuss any aspect of this social ride policy. We are only a phone call away. Contact:

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SOCIAL RIDES: *Strategies for ride leaders - DRAFT*

Preliminary Checks. As a ride leader you need to:

- Know the route to be taken and the risks that it has along the way.
- Check bikes are mechanically sound, especially the bikes of novice riders and children. Check that both brakes are effective, drive train is in working order and that tyre condition and tyre pressure are suitable for the trail ahead.
- Carry a tool kit with a set of allen keys, pump, tubes, tyre levers and chain breaker.
- Carry a first aid kit suitable for treating minor injuries.
- Make sure that all your participants have suitable food and water for the expected time on the trail. Carry extra water and food as a back-up.
- Carry a mobile phone – 000 or 112 are mobile phone emergency numbers.
- Check and confirm that all riders have an Australian standard helmet and that it is fastened securely before setting off.

Before the Ride. Before the ride starts you need to:

- Do a head count.
- Understand the capability of the ride participants and tune the ride accordingly.
- Allocate a lead rider and back-marker. Brief the back marker on the route and that he is not to pass any of the participants.
- Brief the riders that:
 - ▶ No one is to pass the lead rider and that each rider should wait at each intersection until the following rider catches up.
 - ▶ If a rider stops, they must call out and let others know they have stopped. This information must be relayed to the lead rider.
 - ▶ If a rider has to leave early, let others know. Don't just leave.
 - ▶ If a rider becomes separated from the group, stop and wait. The group will come back to find you. Ask each rider to buddy up with someone who is at their standard.

During the Ride. As the lead rider you must match your speed with that of the group you are leading. As the ride progresses:

- Do a head count regularly.
- Don't leave anyone behind. Wait at designated points such as intersections for all riders.
- Relay information clearly to others, either forward to the leader or back to the back marker.
- Schedule regular breaks at great vantage points to take in the scenery or to allow the riders a chance to get their breath.

Emergency Procedures. If an injury happens you need to quickly assess if it is something you handle or expert intervention is required. Do not hesitate to get expert help if you feel you are out of your depth. If you need to leave to get help someone must stay with the injured rider. This should be the rider with the most experience in first aid. Send riders to get assistance who are familiar with the area. Never send only one person. Make sure that an incident report is filled out and sent to MTBA.

Ride and Train Responsibly. It is most likely that you will be riding on public land during your social ride. As the ride leader you must know and respect the existing policies of the land managers for the areas that you ride in. For example Group Activity Permits may be required for organised rides of a certain size. Of course a leisurely "sniff the roses" social ride is one end of the social ride spectrum. The other extreme is when you lead a group of riders that has the sole intent of training which generally means riding at a faster pace than a social ride. Three factors should be considered when you lead a training ride; time of day, number of people and speed. Where these three intersect adversely (busy time of day, lots of riders, going fast) you need a special site such as an exclusive-use MTB racecourse. In other cases the following may help you decide on the appropriateness of the ride:

- Busy time + lots of riders + low speed then respect and courtesy rules apply.
- Busy time + speed don't mix at all. Do not ride with this combination on public land.
- Lots of riders + speed, then you need a location away from people.

Obey the Respect Rules of the Trail. MTBA policy reflects responsibility to the environment, to others and to ourselves. You need to be aware of the land management issues where you ride, especially when you are training or racing.