

Great Canadian Bicycle Tours

Ride Leader Guidelines

GCBT volunteer ride leaders are at the heart of the club. If you're interested in hosting a ride but would like to know what's involved, these guidelines should give you a pretty good idea. Don't hesitate to contact the Tour Director if you have questions or want to discuss a ride that you'd like to lead.

Planning Your Ride

GCBT has an "organization" or "club" account on Ride with GPS (RWGPS). Our club rides are planned using this web-based app. You can design your own rides or check out the club's route library in RWGPS. If you would like to lead a ride but are not familiar with RWGPS, feel free to contact the Tour Director.

The ride and events schedule covers weekends and long weekends from April to October. Typically, one day ride per weekend is offered. Check for available dates in the club's Event Calendar in RWGPS or contact the Tour Director. Once you have decided on a date for your ride, please notify the Tour Director.

- The ride start location should have ample free parking, ideally with restrooms nearby or enroute to the ride start. Community centers, arenas and shopping mall parking lots, as well as commuter parking lots, are common starting points.
- Rides usually offer short, medium and long distances.
- Riders appreciate routes that include places that offer food, drink and a washroom.
- Early in the season, rides generally are shorter and flatter, becoming more challenging as the season progresses.
- Try to strike a balance of quality of roadways and scenery with traffic levels. Typically, club rides are on paved roads and trails. However, gravel riding has become very popular and ride leaders are welcome to add dedicated gravel rides to the club calendar.
- Travel your planned routes by bike and/or car within a week or two of the ride date and make adjustments if necessary.
- And finally – post your ride on club's event calendar in RWGPS! If you like, give your ride a catchy name. Reach out to the Tour Director if you need help.

If you are familiar with your routes and enjoy riding them, you can be certain that other members will enjoy them too.

Prior to the Ride Date

- Promote your ride! GCBT maintains a member email list – gcbt-members@googlegroups.com.
- The club encourages riders to RSVP on RWGPS if they plan to attend your ride. This should give you an idea as to how many riders to expect.
- Most riders download the routes to their Garmin or phone. Riders who want paper cue sheets and maps can readily access these on RWGPS if ride leaders do the following:

- open your route - click the More dropdown menu – choose Print Map and Cue PDF – the Include Cuesheet box is already checked - check the Include Maps box – scroll to the bottom and click Set as Official PDF – it will appear on the route in your event – riders click and print!

Ride Day

- Plan to arrive at the start location with time to spare. Riders often arrive early and it's a good opportunity to mingle, welcome riders and introduce yourself.

- The club welcomes non-members to come out and try a ride with the GCBT at no cost. However, non-members are required to complete the GCBT's online waiver prior to riding. Normally, this would be done in advance of ride day. If not, a waiver can be completed on the spot, using either the guest's or the ride leader's cell phone. The owner of the phone will receive a confirmation email.
- If bad weather is in the forecast, use your best judgement. You can notify members of a ride cancellation by emailing them at gcbt-members@googlegroups.com. You may want to be present at the ride start – assuming you live nearby – in case riders show up. However, it's up to you whether you participate in the ride or not.

Pre-ride Announcement

- Shortly before the start of the ride, have everyone gather around.
- Note any changes to the route and any cautions such as construction, tricky intersections, rough roads or sections of gravel.
- Remind riders that they must wear an approved helmet and obey all traffic laws and signals.
- Let riders know that there is not a sweep. They need to be self-sufficient, riding a bike in good repair, and riding within their physical limits. Access to a cell phone is advised.
- Point out at what kilometer mark the routes diverge.
- Note the location of places where riders will find refreshments and washrooms.
- Finally, ask for a show of hands as to who is riding each distance. Usually, the ride leader participates in the ride but it is not mandatory.

After the Ride

- There is no requirement for a ride leader to remain at the start point until all riders have returned.
- Pictures and pertinent information about the ride are welcome for posting on the club website.
- Feel free to provide feedback about the ride to the Tour Director. The Tour Director also may reach out to you.
- If you are aware of any incidents involving riders such as accidents or damage to property, please notify the Tour Director.

Thank you for creating an opportunity for your fellow cyclists to come together for a bike ride!