

Tips for Riding Safe & Fast at the CT Challenge



Everyone who rides a bike wants to have fun and stay safe. The CT Challenge is a big, fun event! However, riding close to so many other riders can be daunting, no matter how experienced a rider you are. Here are some tips on how you can take responsibility for your bike and your bike handling skills and prepare to stay safe throughout your CT Challenge and any group bike ride so you can relax and enjoy the great company!

1. **Make Sure Your Bike Fits.** A bike that fits you well can make all the difference in your comfort, confidence, and safety. Either riding a bike too small or a bike too big is going to be a problem.
2. **Eyes Forward; Hands-Free.** It is easy to get distracted on a bike, just like in a car. Most importantly, keep your hands on the handlebars, your eyes on the road and on the riders in front of you, and limit all distractions! Mirrors, headphones, bells, phones, lights, and cameras may be tempting, but it's best to get rid of all of these for the CT Challenge. You can use a bicycle computer, but put the phone in your back pocket. Being 100 percent focused on what's in front of you will prevent 90 percent of the mishaps out there.
3. **Look where you want to go.** Factoring in both the road and the riders in front of you is your responsibility. Good riders always pay attention to the riders in front of them and give themselves a little space on the road. Don't put your front wheel into a space if you cannot get it out.
4. **Use Your Hands and Voice.** If you know a car is approaching behind you, say "car back." And "car up" for an approaching car. If someone is coming into your space or vice versa, you can always say "on your left." Try to be as clear and relaxed as possible. Signal with your arm when you are taking a right or left turn. Pointing out holes in the road or the direction you are going is helpful, but make sure you only take your hands off your handlebars when it is safe. In other words, take care of yourself first.
5. **Brake Early and Evenly.** Many problems are caused by riders who grab the brakes suddenly. This will ripple throughout the entire group of riders behind, possibly causing crashes for several riders. Brake smoothly at the earliest indication of a problem, preferably with the rear brake. You'll easily be able to resume the pace thereafter.
6. **Be Deliberate.** It is important to travel in a straight and safe way so you are predictable to the riders on either side of you and behind you. When you do need to change lines, move in a smooth, deliberate fashion in a manner that is aware and courteous.



7. **Follow the laws!** Remember, even though you are part of an event, most cars don't know that! You are still on open roads and need to follow the law. Ride 2 abreast and go single file on roads that are busy or have no shoulder. Stop at all stop lights and stop signs. Obey traffic laws.
8. **Pick One Foot.** When you need to stop, remember to unclip one of your shoes if you are using clipless pedals! Typically cyclists unclip with their left foot, given the presence of a greasy chain on the right side of the bike. It is not necessary to take both feet off the pedals unless you are getting entirely off the bike.
9. **Slow down before the turns.** Bicycle crashes commonly occur when riders "over-cook" a turn. They go into the turn fast only to realize they are running out of road. You want to slow down before the turn so you can avoid braking while turning.

The tips above will all help you stay safe but most importantly, remember everyone is riding to have fun! So, staying calm, pedaling and enjoying the ride is the best recipe for a great day at the CT Challenge.

