

# Cycling Ireland Best Practice Guidelines on facilitating an AXA Community Bike Ride

## Aim

The *Cycling Ireland Best Practice Guidelines for facilitating an AXA Community Bike Ride* have been developed to promote best practice and ensure that all participants attending are provided with a safe and enjoyable experience. They aim to provide guidance to Leaders on how to effectively run their activity based on the focus of the programme; that being free, social, leisure rides. This document provides an overview of best practice in facilitating an AXA Community Bike Ride, and forms part of the best practice documentation within Cycling Ireland (e.g. Guide to Cycling on the Road; Code of Conduct).

This document is a step-by-step approach to facilitating an AXA Community Bike Ride:

### 1. Plan your Route through Risk Assessment

#### Decide on your route:

- How long will it be?
- Will it be looped or point-to-point?
- What kind of terrain is it on?
- What kind of bikes is it suitable for?
- What level of experience does a cyclist need to complete it?
- How long do you think it will take?
- Where will your group have a cuppa, on route or on return?

#### Risk assess the route:

- When you've decided the route, print off a [Risk Assessment template](#) and cycle the route to assess it.
- As discussed on your Ride Leader training, risk assessment involves identifying potential hazards (e.g. a complex junction), assessing the potential risks based on the different levels of cyclists (beginner, intermediate and advanced), and recording how the hazard can be reduced to an acceptable level (i.e. beginner riders become pedestrians temporarily to navigate the complex junction).
- Each Risk Assessment should focus on three types of hazards – physical (e.g. road junctions, road surfaces), moving (e.g. the group itself, other road users, animals) and weather (e.g. wind, ice, fog, mist).
- As a Leader, you should regard your risk assessment as a set of self-made rules to follow.

### 2. Create and Promote your Ride

**Create your ride on the AXA Community Bike Rides website.** As leader, you have access to create and upload information on your specific ride. You must complete all information boxes and a detailed written description of the route so potential participants have all the specifics about your ride in advance. You'll have the option to upload a map of your ride using Strava or Mapmyride. Imagine you are attending for the first time, what information would you like to have in advance? Highlight where the coffee stop will be (during the ride or at the end?). Make recommendations to potential participants, like:

- Wear appropriate clothing (e.g. reflective/waterproof).
- Carry a spare tube and the tools to replace it (e.g. levers, mini-pump).
- Check your bike and helmet before you leave for the ride to ensure both are in working condition – no helmet, no ride.
- If you have any medical conditions, for example asthma or epilepsy, please ensure you bring all necessary items with you (e.g. inhaler/EpiPen/tissues/bandages).
- Bring money for a cuppa and cake!

**Promote your AXA Community Bike Ride.** The AXA Community Bike Rides' website and all associated social media sites will heavily promote all rides. Cycling Ireland are also working with your Local Sports Partnership or Local Authority Sports Development Unit to help with the local promotion of your ride. But there are also things that you can do, for example:

- Promote your ride through your own social media account(s).
- Inform local groups/clubs/committees in your area.
- Advertise your ride in the local notes of your local newspaper.
- Advertise your ride within the local parish newsletter.
- Advertise your ride through your local radio station (i.e. Community Diary).

### 3. Meet & Greet your Participants

**Welcome all participants to your AXA Community Bike Ride.** It's useful to check your online account the day before (or morning of) your ride so you'll know how many participants will be on the ride. Things to remember:

- Ensure you're there at least 15 minutes before the start time to meet everyone:
  - It's important to make sure you individually welcome all participants as they arrive - this is a social cycle after all!
- Check their names off your attendance list on your phone. Only those who are registered on the website can take part in the ride. The rides are adult-only rides, so all participants must be over 18.
- Provide the group with a short introduction:
  - The ride is all about enjoyment and socialising.
  - If there's an emergency, you have access to their online emergency contact details. Let them know exactly where your emergency contact details can be found in the event of something happening to you (It's recommended, as Leader, you carry a mini-first aid kit and a mini-pump/spare tube/levers in the event of an accident or incident).
  - Highlight that you may take photographs/recordings during the ride for promotional purposes, and they need to inform you if they don't want photos/recordings taken of them.
- Perform a safety check in relation to helmets and bikes:
  - Before we go on our ride, we're just going to individually check our own helmet and bike to make sure they are roadworthy.
  - Your helmet should have no cracks or damage and should be worn 2V1 (2 fingers above the eyebrows and 1 finger loose in the chin strap).
  - For our basic bike check, we will each check the following to ensure they're in good working order:
    1. Nuts/Quick Release front and back
    2. Brakes front and back

3. Tyres/wheels pressure and wear
  4. Saddle secure and comfortable
  5. Pedals securely fitted and working
- Lead a short, fun activity in the carpark or off-road before the ride. Facilitate this activity ([Ability Check](#)) so that participants get to know each other, and you get to see everyone in your group cycling prior to commencing the ride.
    - If you notice that a participant is unable to cycle their bike, please advise them that unfortunately they cannot take part in the ride for their own safety. You can suggest they contact their Local Sports Partnership or Local Authority Sports Development Unit to book a 'learn to cycle' course, and they'd be welcome back once they have learned how to cycle competently.
    - If you notice that a participant's bike and/or helmet isn't roadworthy, let them know they aren't covered by insurance to take part in the ride, and they should get their bike/helmet fixed so it's safe on the ride.

#### 4. Lead your Ride

**During the ride**, it's important that you are aware and vigilant throughout:

- Be observant of the group at all times.
- Adhere to the Cycling Ireland Guide to Cycling on the Road.
- Consider ways of equalising the group when it's of mixed ability (e.g. rotate positions).
- Reinforce group cycling etiquette, rules of the road and communication, which must be adhered to throughout the whole ride.
- Ensure the group only moves as fast as the slowest cyclist – this is a social, leisure ride, so you need to ensure the group sticks together from the start to the end.
- Provide time for a refreshment stop during or on completion of the ride.
- Take photographs and or video recordings for promotional purposes.

#### 5. Complete Ride Administration

**When your ride is complete**, it's important you encourage feedback from the participants. This will help inform your future rides:

- Facilitate a short discussion about the ride and take feedback.
- Record any accidents/incidents for your own records.
- Complete online administration on [www.axacommunitybikerides.com](http://www.axacommunitybikerides.com)
  - confirm all attendees' participation
  - post a comment and or picture on your ride page
  - plan and advertise your next ride!

**Remember: If for any reason you must cancel your ride, please log into your account as soon as possible and change the status of your ride to 'cancelled'. All participants will be advised to check the website before leaving for the ride to make sure it's taking place as planned.**