

## "ABC Quick Check"

All cyclists are responsible for keeping their riding equipment in good working order, so check your equipment before every ride. The "ABC Quick Check" is a brief yet complete bicycle safety check.

### A is for air

- Check your wheels for worn tires, loose spokes, warped rims and your tires for proper inflation.
- Check your handlebar for looseness at the headset and stem.

### B is for brakes

- Check brakes for function, cable tightness, worn pads, frayed cables and alignment of the pads with the rims.

### C is for cranks, chain and cassette

- Check your pedals and cranks for tightness.
- Check for chain looseness and bad links; clean regularly. Lubricate with bicycle chain lube.
- Check the derailleur for worn cogs and adjustment. Check that your gears change smoothly.

### Quick is for quick releases

- Check to ensure that the wheels are clamped securely in the drop-outs before each ride.

### Check

- Check your helmet for cracks and make sure it fits properly.
- Check your shoes for tight cleats and straps and buckles in good repair.
- Make sure your bicycle saddle is the right height and the bolt is tight.



## Group Riding Basics

Group riding takes practice. As when driving a car, it is most important to create your own safety zone. This may vary depending on the speed and ability level of the people you are with, so be flexible.

### Your responsibility in a pack includes:

- Be aware of others around you.
- Communicate well in advance. Use gestures in combination with verbal commands.
- Ride with your head up. Look ahead at the road, not at the person immediately in front of you.
- Maintain control and speed of your bike, even going downhill.
- Know your limits. Crashes can occur when inexperienced riders do not have bike-handling skills to make quick decisions in a pack.

➤ Safety starts with you. Group mentality is not always safe. Expect to stop at all red lights and stop signs – it is the law! Each cyclist is responsible for verifying that the intersection is clear.

➤ Adjust your safety zone to fit the conditions of the road, weather and traffic. Always plan an escape route.

➤ Never overlap your wheels with another cyclist.

➤ Do not use aerobars in a pack.

➤ Be aware of how weather will affect your bike. Riding in wet conditions requires slower speeds and greater braking distances.

➤ Be respectful of other riders.

➤ Help others when needed.

## Safety Starts With You!

Our focus is on providing a high quality, safe and fun bicycling experience. For this reason, the National MS Society has partnered with the League of American Bicyclists to provide our cyclists with the knowledge and resources to cycle safely.

We'll be holding group riding skills classes throughout the region this summer to help novice and experienced cyclists alike prepare for the ride. Visit the safety page at [MScycling.org](http://MScycling.org) for more information.

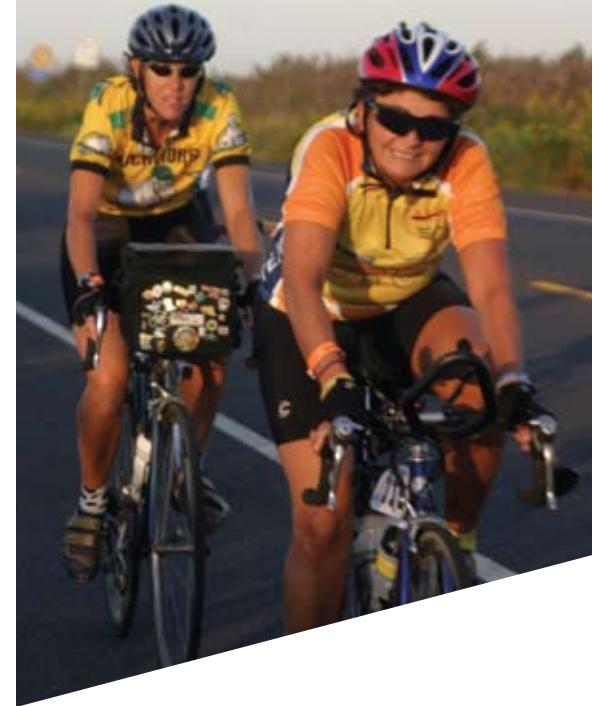
### Please remember to always carry:

- identification
- rider number filled in with your emergency contact information
- insurance card
- any important health information

Headphones, cell phones, radios and similar radio devices are not permitted while riding.



# Cycling safety



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**MS**  
bike to  
create a world  
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## Hydration

Knowing how to optimize your fluid intake is critical to successfully complete a Bike MS Ride.

➤ **One bottle per hour:** The rule of thumb is to consume a bottle of liquid every hour, and every second bottle should be a sports drink. Also, remember to eat small snacks frequently during the ride. If you find that you experience extreme fatigue, the inability to recover your energy or frequent muscle cramps, seek assistance from first aid – you may have the early signs of dehydration.

➤ **Seeking medical assistance:**

If you find that you experience bloating with progressive symptoms such as swollen hands and feet, confusion, throbbing headache, dizziness or nausea, please seek assistance from first aid.



## Helmet Smart

Head injuries are a special concern for cyclists. Even falling at a slow rate of speed can cause a serious head injury. **Helmets must be on your head and strapped correctly while riding in a Bike MS Ride – no exceptions.**

## Bicycle Laws

All states consider cyclists to be vehicle operators and give them the same rights and duties as other drivers.

➤ **Know and obey all traffic laws:** The golden rule of bicycling in a group is to be predictable!

➤ **Stay right:** Ride in the right portion of the right most lane in the direction you are traveling and leave at least four feet between your handlebars and parked cars or other hazards such as other users. You may move left when passing slower vehicles or preparing for a left turn.

➤ **Obey all traffic signs and signals:** Avoid “following the leader” through traffic signs and signals. You are required to obey all traffic signs and signals, including stopping at red lights and stop signs.

➤ **Look & signal before you move:** Always scan behind you before changing lanes or making turns. A continuous arm signal is required prior to a turn or lane change (unless arm is needed to control the bike) and while stopped waiting to turn.

➤ **Two at a time:** Ride no more than two abreast, and ride single-file if riding two abreast is impeding traffic. If a part of the road has been closed and dedicated to bicycle travel only, you may ride more than two abreast.

➤ **Hands on the handlebars:** Do not carry anything that prevents keeping one hand on the handlebars.

➤ **Pass with care:** Do not pass at intersections.

## Helpful Tips

Here are a few additional suggestions to help keep everyone safe on the ride:

➤ **Thumbs down for help:** SAG vehicles and motorcycle escorts will stop for you if you are off the road, off your bike and giving a “thumbs down” sign.

➤ **Rest stop etiquette:** All cyclists who enter a rest area must pull over, dismount and move completely away from the road and rest-stop entrance. When exiting, move beyond the rest area and proceed with caution before merging with faster cyclists.

➤ **Passing:** Passing others and being passed occurs continuously during the ride. Call out “passing on your left” and allow time for the cyclist being passed to move to the right – then pass safely.

➤ **Mechanical problems:** Examine mechanical problems and change flats completely off the road. If you have a problem you cannot fix yourself, flag down a SAG vehicle for mechanical support.

➤ **Be courteous:** Be courteous and use no more than half the road so as not to block the flow of other users, as our route is still open to the public.

## Know the Lingo

The following are the most common terms you may hear during group rides:

➤ **On your left:** This means a rider is approaching your left side. Allow room to pass.

➤ **Car back:** This means a car is approaching from the rear. All riders make an effort to move to the right of the road in a single file until the car passes. The law requires cyclists to ride no more than two abreast.

➤ **Gravel - pothole - sand - tracks:** Each of these messages is to alert the riders behind you of hazardous road conditions. The words are combined with the gesture of pointing to the hazard well in advance.

➤ **Flat:** This indicates that a rider has suffered a flat tire. Allow enough room for the rider to slow down and move to the right side of the road or trail for repair.

➤ **Stopping:** This indicates that a rider ahead is stopping. Do not forget to unclip from your pedals.



➤ **Slowing:** The cyclist in front of you is slowing down. Use caution and prepare to stop. Many cyclists use the palm of their hand toward riders behind them to indicate slowing and stopping.

**Because communication is so important, headphones are PROHIBITED on Bike MS Rides.**

## Cycling for Minors 101

It is critical that parents, guardians and their children understand the risks associated with cycling events and are comfortable that a young cyclist has both the skills and judgment to ride safely.

Following are some of the considerations that a young cyclist and their parent or guardian should make when participating in a Bike MS event.

➤ All cyclists, including minors, need to possess basic bike-handling skills and safety knowledge to keep themselves and others around them safe.

They should be comfortable with, and able to practice, all of the safety information in this brochure.

➤ There will be many cyclists on the course, so young cyclists should fully understand rider etiquette and how to ride in large groups.

➤ In partnership with the League of American Bicyclists, the National MS Society has developed materials and coursework that provide good, basic information about bicycle safety and riding in a group.

The National Multiple Sclerosis Society strongly encourages, and in some cases requires, that parents take the League of American Bicyclists group riding skills course with their minors. See our Web site for details.

➤ **Visit [MSccycling.org](https://www.msccycling.org) for more safety information.**