

In an effort to encourage more Seven Hills Wheelmen members to volunteer to lead rides, we've written a short Ride Leader Guide explaining what's expected. You might think you are too new to the club or not the type of rider to lead a ride, but please think again.

We are not as formal about this as, say, Charles River Wheelmen (yikes, their Ride Leader Guide is 13 pages long, <http://crw.org/rides/RideLeaderGuide.doc>). For example, we typically don't paint arrows, we don't make arrangements with police or town governments ahead of time, we don't require ride leaders to sweep or wait for stragglers, and we don't require a map. We don't have rules about overall distance or distance between stops -- the route can be whatever works for you. This is your chance to share roads or trails that you enjoy with other riders.

We do ask that you make cue sheets, bring a liability waiver for nonmembers to sign, and try not to lose anyone overnight. The waiver is here:

<http://www.sevenhillswheelmen.org/docs/waiver.pdf>

Seven Hills Wheelmen -- Ride Leader Guide

PLAN YOUR ROUTE (or use a route from our online Cue Sheet Library)

1. Pick a starting place where it's OK to park 6-12 cars or more.
2. Bike or drive the route yourself and jot down the directions and mileage for each turn. If you're alone, it might be easiest to talk into a tape recorder, then transcribe the cues later.
3. See sample cue sheets at <http://www.sevenhillswheelmen.org/index.php?a=cuesheetlibrary>. Try to keep your cues brief but specific. For example, use street names, not just landmarks, but note if the street is not marked. Don't forget to name the starting place at 0 on your cue sheet.
4. Here's a template you can use for a cue sheet:
http://www.sevenhillswheelmen.org/cuesheet/cue_sheet.dot
Or just type it in any format you like, and make copies (10-25 copies is probably enough). The advantage of our template is that the cue sheet can be folded to fit those little clips that go on your handlebars. Also, it's easy for our webmaster to add to our cue sheet library -- just e-mail it to admin@sevenhillswheelmen.org.
5. Give the activities coordinator or the newsletter editor the start time, distance(s), start location (including street address) and a sentence or two describing the ride. Include your e-mail and phone number; these will be given to club members but not to the press. Include the ride category -- see http://www.sevenhillswheelmen.org/ride_cat.htm but don't obsess about these distinctions -- everyone ends up going their own pace no matter what, and the main thing that separates "B" from "C" is whether the leader intends to wait for stragglers. Our newsletter deadline is the second Sunday of the month before the ride.
6. If you have to change the start time, start location or other key info about the ride after it's published in our newsletter, notify Lynne at LTolman@LTolman.org or 508-831-0301 so she can e-mail members. It's best to do this by noon Thursday for a weekend ride.

DAY OF THE RIDE

1. Arrive at least 15 minutes early. Bring the waiver and a pen. Bring a floor pump if you can.

Extra credit: Bring a couple of copies of this membership form

<http://www.sevenhillswheelmen.org/docs/7hw-memberform-anyyear.pdf>

and urge newcomers to join the club. Selling points include bike shop discounts, early notice of upcoming rides, and e-mail notice of unpublished rides. Offer to mail in the form for them if they want to give you the money on the spot, and do it! Don't forget to include an SASE.

2. Greet each rider, ask the names of people you don't know, and have nonmembers sign the waiver. <http://www.sevenhillswheelmen.org/docs/waiver.pdf>

Members have already signed a blanket waiver, but it's helpful to put down their names, count noses and make a mental note of how many riders there are, so you can make sure at a midpoint and at the end that you haven't lost anyone. The form doesn't ask for emergency phone numbers, but it's not a bad idea to get them for members and nonmembers alike, in the unlikely event that someone is put in an ambulance unconscious and you need to notify a spouse or someone to meet the ambulance at the hospital.

3. Pass out cue sheets and give a quick talk about the route. You don't have to go over every turn, obstacle and point of interest. But try to mention things that might be easy to miss, such as turns on a downhill, or rough spots such as railroad tracks at an angle, or left turns where traffic is heavy. Say if/where you will stop to rest and regroup and whether there are bathrooms and whether riders can buy food or drink there, or get water. If there are options for shorter/longer routes, explain where the decision point is and ask riders to let you know at that point, if not sooner, which option they will take. Remind riders that cyclists must follow the same rules of the road as motorists, such as stopping at red lights and stop signs, signaling their turns, and making left turns from the left lane. Say whether you intend to sweep or wait for stragglers. Reassure anyone who seems unsure of themselves that we are not a racing club. Frown on anyone who doesn't have a helmet; you can even turn them away, as "helmets are required" is in all our ride listings. Helmets are required by Massachusetts law for all cyclists and bike passengers under 17 years old.

4. Ride!

5. If there is a rest stop, wait for everyone to get there and catch their breath before you restart. If someone is way behind but you think they're doing OK at their own pace, you can continue without them. If you think they might be lost or unable to continue, it's your call whether to wait, backtrack, or just continue without them and hope for the best. At the least you should ascertain at the end of the day -- here's where those phone numbers come in handy -- if they made it back to their car or made it home. Bike repair skills and first-aid knowledge might come in handy but are not required. In the event of a breakdown or accident, please use common sense and common courtesy. Do consider the feelings of newcomers and slower riders -- we don't want to turn people off or give the club a snooty reputation.

6. At the end, try to make sure you haven't lost anyone. See #5. Save the waiver, or give it to the club's activities coordinator or president, just in case an issue arises later.