



Orientation Guide

Women on Wheels (WOW)

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Welcome to the WOWs! The WOWs are an active and friendly group of women who have much in common. We enjoy the ride, the fitness it provides, the mountain scenery, and the camaraderie we experience with each other. Welcome to the group!

This orientation serves primarily to give all club riders a common set of safety guidelines.

Additional resources: "Share the Road, A guide for bicyclists and motorists", published by Pima County.

The Vistoso Cyclists website (<https://vistosocyclists.org>)

A. JOINING THE WOW GROUP

The WOWs are part of the Sun City Oro Valley Vistoso Cyclists Club. Our schedule is posted in the monthly club ride calendar tab in the Road Bikers tab, on the WOW page and on the Ride With GPS app.

We ride on Tuesdays and Fridays all year long, the same start time as the regular club rides and at the same meeting place. We are a group that has grown to about 100 riders and we always welcome new women.

WOW rides tend to be a little shorter (20-40 miles) and slower (average 12-14 mph) than some of groups in the larger Vistoso Cyclists Club, with sociability and friendship as our focus. Our one rule is that NO ONE IS EVER LEFT BEHIND! We always ride to a spot for coffee or refreshments and some of the faster riders may get there earlier, but that is ok. Usually, we all end up together for catching up on what is going on in the community as well as our own lives.

If some of our riders want a longer ride than our usual, they can extend after our coffee break. The rest of us just ride home to complete the ride. We usually have a "travel ride" the third week of the month, where we explore other areas of Tucson. Every so often we do a "special ride"; a longer distance ride or clinic to improve our skills. The rest of the time we ride around and through the neighborhoods or on the Loop path trying to avoid too many hills! In addition, we also love to occasionally socialize at other times than our weekly rides.

If you are a Sun City Oro Valley resident or renter and this sounds like a group for you, then contact either Barb or Renee so we can get you happily involved. It is a real bargain at only \$15 a year! So strap on those helmets & bring along a water bottle so we can enjoy a ride together!

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B. SAFETY FIRST

THE RULES OF THE ROAD

Learn how to share the road legally and safely in Pima County. Read the booklet, "Share the Road", listed above.

In addition to knowing the rules of the road, it's helpful to understand how most bike/car accidents occur so you can ride defensively. Two types of accidents are more common than any others:

- The left-hand turn, where a vehicle turns left directly into the path of a cyclist going the opposite direction. In this situation, the motorist often never even sees the cyclist until it's too late.
- The right hook, where a vehicle passes a cyclist who's riding in the bike lane or right shoulder going the same direction, then immediately makes a right turn directly into the cyclist's path.

Other situations can occur, such as vehicle doors opening into a cyclist's path, or rear-ending situations. Whatever the case and however severe, they should be treated in a specific manner.

If you should ever be involved in an accident with a car, always contact the police and collect the driver's information (name, address, insurance, phone). You may be inclined to just ride on and not realize until later that you're injured. Treat this like an accident you'd have with your car.

C. RIDING IN A GROUP

BEST PRACTICES

At the start of a WOW ride, we'll divide into pods (groups of 6 or less) loosely based on riders' speeds. Look at who is in your pod so you can recognize if someone has been dropped or left behind on the ride. Pods should stay together and try not to pass other WOW pods, otherwise pods can get confused/intermingled.

PODS:

- 6 or less riders
- Stay with your pod during the ride
- Have at least one phone number of people in your pod
- If you're leaving ride early, let someone in pod know so others aren't looking for you

Riding two abreast is legal in most places. It's okay on a straight, flat road where drivers can see you from behind, and you can usually see or hear them approach. However, when riding with the WOWs, ride single file ALWAYS when riding on a bike lane along a busy road. We may ride two abreast on the trail when there is no traffic ahead, or behind us, but be careful – even the trail gets very busy for two abreast riding. A rear-view mirror helps you to check on the cars behind you. With a mirror, you can ride side by side more often and still pull back into a single line to let the cars pass you. Never ride side by side on a hilly or winding road. Maintain a safe interval among riders - safe distance depends on skill & pace, but we leave one full bike length between bikes for most riders. "Look through" the rider directly ahead of you so you can anticipate her actions. Unless you're climbing, ride with your hands on the brake hoods, with your index finger around the front of the brake lever, so you can moderate speed if necessary.

E bikes should be aware that they stop more slowly than road/hybrid bikes since the E bikes are generally heavier. This is important since E bikes will need to allow more room in front of themselves so they don't run into the road bike in front of them at a sudden stop.

Never overlap wheels. The rider most at risk of falling is the one riding behind, even when the front rider may retain control of her bike. If the rider in front loses control, the overlapping rider will certainly fall.

Pay attention to the riders behind you – let the leader or others in your pod know when others fall behind or are caught by a traffic light.

Stay as far to the right as is safe and reasonable—and not so far that you have to swerve left into traffic to avoid hazards, or that you risk falling into the crack between pavement and curb.

Hold your line: Ride directly behind the rider in front of you—aim to stay within six inches to left or right. Avoid sudden changes in direction, but if you must break your line, SIGNAL so the rider behind you knows your intention.

Maintain constant pedaling and speed: Maintaining a steady pace helps the rider behind you predict your speed.

Signal well in advance before turns. The rider behind you needs to be aware of your intentions to avoid a collision.

Look carefully over your shoulder (scan) before signaling and pulling out into the lane. Don't move in the lane if cars are in the lane or overtaking rapidly—they have the right of way. This applies if moving from the shoulder to the travel lane—scan and signal before you move.

Before you pass another rider, make sure the lane to your left is clear and announce you are passing. When you move out to pass, have a plan for how you are going to re-enter the line of riders.

Come to a full stop at red lights—ALWAYS. Come to a stop at stop signs. Take turns with cars at four-way stops. When proceeding through an intersection, travel in groups of no more than 4 (an approximate automobile size). The group will wait if some are separated at an intersection.

Move well off the road (or the trail) if the group stops.

Avoid taking calls or texts during a ride – wait for a rest stop. Do NOT ride while talking or texting. If you must take a call, pull off and let the ride proceed without you.

If you see another rider have an accident, or need to stop because of a flat tire, make sure someone alerts the others in your group of the situation. You are advised to call someone riding in your pod to let them know you have stopped since no one may have realized you're stopped.

On the back of your VCC license plate, write your contact person's name/phone number. In case you are in an accident/hurt and unable to call your person, someone in your pod can call them.

HAND SIGNALING TO DRIVERS AND OTHER RIDERS IN THE GROUP



TURNING LEFT

Extend your arm perpendicular to your body at least 10 yards before you intend to turn.



TURNING RIGHT

Extend your arm perpendicular to your body at least 10 yards before you intend to turn. An alternate version is to extend the left arm away from your body and make a 90 degree angle with your hand pointed to the sky.



BRAKING

Put your left arm down and out to your side, palm up.



ROAD HAZARD (*Pot hole, loose gravel, debris, glass*)

Extend your arm and point to the road hazard. Rotate your arm in small circles for emphasis.

VERBALLY COMMUNICATING WITH OTHERS IN YOUR GROUP

On your left or Passing. Say whenever you are passing. If your fellow rider doesn't know you are there, she might move to the left unexpectedly. This is the same communication to use to alert walkers that you are passing them.

On your right. In the extremely rare event you pass on the right (if the other rider is well out in the lane), use this command.

Slowing. This alerts the rider behind you to slow down too and not run into you. Use in conjunction with hand signal for slowing since it can be hard to hear verbal calls.

Stopping. State this loudly and clearly. Use in conjunction with hand signal since it can be difficult to hear verbal calls.

Car back. Those in the back of line say it first. Everyone else passes it up the line so all are aware. This is also a signal to ride single file!

Car up. Say this when there is a car in the oncoming lane on a narrow road, or a stopped car in our lane.

Walker up. This alerts fellow riders know to move out and give a pedestrian or jogger some space.

Biker up, or Biker back. Announce this when you see an approaching biker on the trail, or when you know there is an overtaking biker coming from behind.

Hole, Bump, Glass, Branch, Debris, etc. Warn riders behind you of a hazard.

SIGNALS, COMMANDS, AND BEHAVIORS NOT TO USE!

DO NOT...

Call Clear! at an intersection. Conditions can change rapidly – each rider needs to make her own decision about when it's safe to go. Instead say: Going, or Stopping.

Signal to drivers that it's safe to pass the group. This is because conditions change rapidly, and riders in front of us might suddenly move out into the lane.

Wear headphones (but one earbud is OK). You won't be able to hear when fellow riders communicate with you.

Pass on the right. You will cut off someone's safe lane, and they don't expect it.

Pass on a downhill. Riders who are descending may move laterally without warning to avoid a hazard, and they won't be able to signal in advance.

Pass on a blind curve. Riders coming toward you are not visible.

Let your front wheel overlap (laterally) with the wheel in front of you because if they move to the side, you'll go down.

Draft behind other riders (meaning that you ride closely behind to reduce wind resistance) if you are inexperienced at it. It's too close for safety in the group.

Ride more than two riders abreast, EVER. Riding next to others prevents you from safely predicting other riders' behaviors and one may swerve into your lane unexpectedly. It's also dangerous to take up that much space in a bike lane or along a shoulder.

D. PREPARING FOR A RIDE

Have your bike in good working order. The local bike shops can check and "tune up" your bike, teach you how to pump up your tires and change a flat. Tires should be fully inflated (the maximum pressure you should set them at is indicated on the tire sidewall in psi). The chain should be lubricated, flexible -- not rusty or caked with dirt. The bike should have water bottle cages to hold water bottles.

The local bike shops can also help you adjust your helmet so that it fits properly. Your helmet should sit level on your head and low on your forehead— one or two finger-widths above your eyebrow. Side Straps: Adjust the slider on both straps to form a "V" shape under, and slightly in front of, the ears. Lock the slider if possible. Buckles: Center the left buckle under the chin. On most helmets, the straps can be pulled from the back of the helmet to lengthen or shorten the chin straps. This task is easier if you take the helmet off to make these adjustments. Chin Strap: Buckle your chin strap. Tighten the strap until it is snug, so that no more than one or two fingers fit under the strap.

You should always keep a copy of your driver's license, insurance card, and emergency contact on your bike or your person in case of an accident. Suggestion- write your emergency contact person name/phone number on the back of your VCC license plate.

Please arrive at the start location at least 5 minutes before the designated start time for route information and safety tips. If you are late you will be left behind.

ITEMS TO BRING

Tuned-up bike with tires inflated

Sunglasses and sun screen

Pocket food if riding far (bars, trail mix)

Tire lever or Multi-Purpose tool (for changing a flat tire)

ID, health insurance card, emergency contact information

Cash or credit card (we usually stop for coffee)

Riding gloves (recommended)

Properly fitting helmet - REQUIRED

Filled water bottles or camelbak

Spare tube (recommended)

Pump or Co2 cartridge (recommended)

Cell phone

Rear light (recommended)

Front mirror (recommended)

If it's your FIRST ride with the WOWs, please bring a signed waiver form with you. You only have to do this once.

Dress in layers (wicking fabrics, not cotton). Wear BRIGHTLY colored clothing that will not catch in the chain rings or wheels. Use sunscreen.

E. WOW "E" (NEIGHBORHOOD RIDES) Most new WOW riders start here first!

We also offer a shorter (10+ miles), slower paced (10mph) ride option from November through January. These rides are scheduled on Tuesday mornings and leave from the same location and at the same time as the regular WOW rides. These rides will have a ride leader.

If you are a Sun City Oro Valley resident or renter and this sounds like a group for you, then contact either Barb or Renee so we can get you happily involved. It is a real bargain at only \$15 a year! So strap on those helmets & bring along a water bottle so we can enjoy a ride together!

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