

# Rural Road Safety Coalition

## GUIDELINES FOR CAR & BIKE SAFETY ON RURAL ROADS

May 2012



*Share the road goes both ways!*

Leaders of local cycling clubs and community groups with the support of local governments, churches and other organizations have agreed on commonsense guidelines to improve the safety for cars and cyclists and others who enjoy our rural roads. The curves and hills which make our rural roads beautiful, make us more vulnerable to accidents. These guidelines complement NC law, and represent the considered views of cyclists and motorists experienced with rural roads. While they are not formal advice, used in combination with good judgment, skill and consideration, these guidelines should improve everyone's safety and enjoyment of our rural roads.

### Cars

- Follow all traffic and signaling laws for automobiles. Learn to recognize bicycle hand signals (shown at end).
- Pass cyclists only if there is clear sight ahead (minimum 500'), and ***never on a curve or hill.***
- Stay at least 4-6 feet away from cyclists as you pass. If you are behind a solo bicyclist or group and a car is coming in the other direction on a two lane rural road, slow down and wait to pass. ***Do not pass while another car is approaching in the opposite direction.***
- Give cyclists an extra wide berth passing near driveways and road entrances. Cyclists can't maneuver on gravel without danger of falling and may suddenly swerve into the road to avoid it.
- Avoid startling cyclists with sudden noises or erratic driving.
- Respond to the movements and hand signals of cyclists, *including signals to warn you of upcoming hazards.* A cyclist may move to the center of the lane ("take the road") or signal you to slow down, stop or steer away from the hazard (broken glass, potholes, animals, etc.).

**In general:** Be aware of the vulnerability of cyclists. Even a small tumble at low speeds can cause great harm. Cyclists have to be keenly aware of road conditions and dangers and are always on the lookout. They may need to move suddenly, so *always* allow them ample space. Give even greater room to children on bicycles, as their control over their movement is less refined. Be extra watchful for cyclists and wildlife at night.

**Sponsoring Organizations:** Orange County Voice

Carolina Tarwheels

**Supporting Organizations (so far)::**

Maple View Farm

Orange County Unified Transportation Board (OUTBoard)

Chapel Hill Bicycle-Pedestrian Board

***Please call 911 to report reckless driving or cycling***

## Cyclists

- Follow the same rules and laws of the road as cars, responding to signs and signals, right-of-ways, yields, emergency vehicles, and turning lanes rules. Use correct hand signals to indicate turning, passing and safe movement. (See below)
- Wear bicycle helmets for safety and use mirrors to keep an eye out for cars in both directions. Don't use headphones and cell phones while riding.
- Break large cycling groups into smaller groups of fewer than 12 riders, riding at least ¼ mile apart to give cars safe room to pass.
- In groups, the person at the back of group should act as the designated lookout. You can switch off. Parents bicycling with children should ride at the back and alert their children to cars or other dangers.
- In limited sight areas (crests of hills and curves) with oncoming traffic, members of groups should alert the rest by calling out "Car Back" (behind) or "Car Up" (oncoming) and pass on to whole group. **Move to the right side of road or shoulder in a single line as quickly and efficiently as possible by opening file to allow riders to fall in.**
- If you have to stop, please go into the right of way where you are safe from passing traffic.
- Wear brightly colored and/or reflective clothing, especially on grey days **or at night, and use headlights and blinking rear and leg lights after dark.** **Parents towing child carriers** should use brightly colored flags on the carriers and reflectors.

**In General:** Motorists don't usually understand what it is like to cycle on rural roads. Don't assume cars understand your intentions or movements, and take extra caution any time a car is near.

### SAFE BICYCLING HAND SIGNALS:

