

VERDE VALLEY CYCLISTS COALITION

P.O.Box 20332
Sedona Arizona 86341
www.vvcc.us



VVCC Ride Leader Guide

Thank you for your interest in becoming a VVCC ride leader. Our ride calendar is in many ways the heart and soul of the club. After all it's our shared love of riding that is the basis for what we do. In order to provide these opportunities, we rely on volunteers such as you. Taking the time to plan and lead a ride is one of the easiest yet most important contributions you can make to our club. Any current member of the VVCC is eligible to lead a club ride.

This guide is intended as a resource to assist you in planning and leading a successful VVCC group ride.

Ride Leader Requirements

With regard to rules for leading VVCC rides the club only requires the following:

- Ride Leaders must be a current VVCC member.
- Ride Leaders must provide full details of their ride when scheduling on VVCC's Meetup.
- For more information on the Rules of the [Road](#) and/or [Trail](#) please go to www.vvcc.us.
- Ride Leaders must ride in a safe, legal and responsible manner that sets an example to other members and riders with the group. This includes appointing an experienced rider to ride at the rear of the group or "Sweep" to ensure no rider is left behind.
- No one is allowed on a VVCC ride without a helmet. If a rider shows up and does not have a helmet, they simply cannot be part of the group ride. While you cannot physically stop them from riding make it clear that they are not part of the group ride.

If this should happen, please take a moment to explain the importance of wearing a helmet. If they pull the old "I'll look dorky in a helmet" routine feel free to remind them how dorky they'd look relearning how to walk and talk. If someone has an extra helmet available be sure to offer it up so they can take part.

- HAVE FUN!

Meetup Basics

The VVCC uses Meetup for ride scheduling. The VVCC has three Meetup Groups for ride scheduling – [VVCC Road Bike Rides](#), [VVCC Mountain Bike Rides](#), and [VVCC Gravel Bike Rides](#). The first step is to become a member of the VVCC Meetup Group(s) that meet your interest level. To do so, you must have a Meetup account. If you don't already have a Meetup account, here's how to obtain one:

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Desktop Web & Mobile Web

From meetup.com, click Sign up in the upper right corner of the Meetup homepage

Android & iOS App

- Open the app and tap Sign up

Fill out your personal information and then enter your email address, or connect through Facebook or Google.

After you've created and verified your account, you can join groups and RSVP for Meetups.

Joining a VVCC Meetup

Desktop & Mobile Web

- Log in to your account
- Click Groups
- Click on the card of the Meetup group you want to join
- Click Join Group or Request to join on the homepage of the Meetup group

Android App

- Log in to your account
- Tap Browse
- Find the Meetup group you want to join
- Tap the + icon to Join

iOS App

- Log in to your account
- Find the Meetup group you want to join
- Tap the + icon to Join

You will be added as a new member immediately.

Scheduling a ride

The first step is deciding when and where you're going to lead your ride. Since leading a ride may not be the ideal way to learn a new trail system or road route, it's best to choose a trail/road route you're already familiar with. Everyone has a favorite way to ride a particular trail or road route; sharing your favorite route is part of what makes leading such a fun experience.

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When choosing a ride location, it's also important to be mindful of recent weather and trail/road conditions. Some trails/roads are more resilient to wet weather than others and may be ready to ride when others aren't. For example, trails in the Carroll Canyon are often ready to ride when trails such as Slim Shady are still drying out.

When scheduling your ride, it's helpful to plan it out as far in advance as possible. This gives you plenty of time to advertise your ride and allows people to plan for it.

Once you've decided on a time and location all that's left is to schedule your ride on the VVCC Meetup Group. Please follow the below guidelines when scheduling your ride.

To Schedule a Ride on a Desktop & Mobile Web

- Select Schedule from the [VVCC Road Bike Rides](#), [VVCC Mountain Bike Rides](#), and [VVCC Gravel Bike Rides](#) group's homepage
- Once you've filled out the details of your ride, choose Schedule
- Choose Announce Meetup to email riders about your ride

Details to Make Your Ride A Success

- Most Important Ride Details
 - **Ride Name: Road, Mountain or Gravel Bike.** Write a name that will stand out to your riders and get them excited to attend. Keep it brief and interesting.
 - **When:** Pick the date, start time, and how often you'd like this Ride to repeat.
 - **Where:** Choose a place to host your Ride. Be as specific as possible in regards to your meeting place. Often times trails have multiple parking lots or the parking lot is large so be sure to indicate which you'll be using or where you plan to park. It's also helpful to describe the vehicle you'll be in and or the bike you'll be on so riders who may not know you can more easily locate you at the trailhead or ride start location. It's also helpful to indicate a meeting time and ready to ride by time. For example, meet in the parking lot at 9 AM ready to ride by 9:30 AM. Most people have some level of preparation they need to do in the parking lot to ride. Indicating a meeting and departure times generally means a better chance of your ride leaving in time.
 - **Featured Photo:** Upload a photo that will grab your riders' attention and best represent your Ride. The ideal dimensions for a featured photo are 592px x 342px.

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- **What will happen at this Ride?** Be specific. Give riders a clear understanding of the ride's activities and purpose. Keep it brief, but informative. Some things to consider are:
 - **Pace:** It's important to pick a pace and stick to it as advertised. Advertising a ride as casual and leading a moderate or fast pace is a sure way to alienate new riders. While pace is largely subjective, the following is meant to serve as an aid in choosing the pace classification that's right for your ride. Currently VVCC uses the following designations for pace.
 - **Beginner:** This is a very casual pace and completely beginner friendly. Someone who has little to no experience on a bike should be able to stay with the group. Casual rides generally have many stops to allow everyone to rest as needed and to regroup. This is the pace often used for kids and beginner rides. The goal is to keep the group together and encourage/assist our new riders as needed.
 - **Casual:** While still laid back and "casual" in nature this pace will have fewer stops/breaks along the way. Often times stronger riders will lead and attend a casual/moderate pace if the aim of the ride is more social in nature. Riders with an average level of fitness and at least a few months of regular riding under their belts should do fine on this level of ride.
 - **Moderate:** This pace is for the average rider with a season or more of experience under their belt and the desire to push the pace a bit. Riders at this level are often starting to further refine their bike handling skills. While not a race pace moderate rides are considerably faster than casual rides and tend to offer few if any regular rest breaks.
 - **Fast:** This pace is intended for the experienced rider who wishes to push themselves above the average pace. These rides will seldom have regular breaks and require a significant level of fitness and bike handling skills in order to stay with the group.
 - **Race:** This is intended for the "hammer heads" of the club. These rides can and often will be done at a full-on race pace. Pushing yourself to your limits is what a fast pace is all about.

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When in doubt it's better to err on the side of a more casual ride and having fun rather than pushing the pace and splitting your group or dropping riders.

- **Ride Level (Road and Gravel Rides Only):** Ride level is used to describe the route you'll be riding. Currently the VVCC uses the following ride level designations when describing road rides:
 - **Easier:** An entry-level ride. Most climbs and descents will be gradual and there is a painted bike lane or very low traffic. Riding the roads in Big Park and the Village of Oak Creek is an example.
 - **Intermediate:** Assumes the rider has basic bike skills. Short steep climbs and descents may be encountered and there is an adequate paved road shoulder. Riding from Sedona to the Village of Oak Creek is an example.
 - **Advanced:** Assumes the rider has mastered fundamental bike skills. Climbs and descents will be long and/or steep and the road shoulder may not be paved. Riding from Cottonwood to the Village of Oak Creek through Cornville is an example.
 - **Extreme:** A mastery of fundamental bike skills is required along with good fitness. Climbs will be very long and/or steep and the road shoulder may be non-existent. Climbing Mingus Mountain is an example.

- **Terrain (Mountain Bike Rides Only):** Terrain is used to describe the type of trail you'll be riding. For example, is the trail fast and smooth like Bell Rock Pathway or full of rocks and challenging lines like Hiline. Accurately describing the terrain is perhaps the most crucial part of your ride submission. There's a good chance that you'll have folks who are new to the particular trail considering your ride. It's important these folks know what type of terrain they'd be facing so they can make an educated decision as to whether their technical abilities are in line with the type of ride you'll be leading. Currently the VVCC uses the following terrain designations when describing MTB rides.
 - **Easier:** An entry-level MTB trail. Minimal obstacles (roots & rocks) on the tread. Most climbs and descents will be gradual. A step up from riding on a road. Bell Rock Pathway is an example.
 - **Intermediate:** Assumes the rider has basic MTB skills. There will be obstacles which require the rider to get their front wheel off the ground to clear successfully. Short steep climbs and descents may be encountered. Many intermediate trails may be successfully ridden by more fit entry-level riders. Many of the trails in the Dry Creek Area are examples.
 - **Advanced:** Assumes the rider has mastered fundamental MTB skills. Significant obstacles will be present (rock gardens, large and/or drop-offs). Climbs and descents will be long and/or steep. There may be sections where even

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experienced riders will need to portage their bikes. Slim Shady and Llama are examples.

- **Extreme:** A mastery of fundamental MTB skills is required along with good fitness. Slow riding or "trials" skills may be required to "clean" some sections. Areas of trail may be "exposed" (i.e. large drop offs to one or both sides). Even the most skilled and fit rider should expect to portage their bike through sections. HiLine, Hangover, and the Hogs are examples.
 - What do members need to bring? Let riders know if they should bring something to the ride or simply show up!
 - Which important details do you need to highlight? Include any other important details so your riders will show up prepared and have the best experience possible. This could be instructions for how to get to your ride location or information that will help riders participate such as how long or how many miles you plan to ride. Let everyone know a little bit about the route you plan to take and what to expect. Is this a casual ride with lots of stops? Are lights needed? Extra food? Make sure you let everyone know. Be descriptive and avoid jargon. Don't assume everyone knows how to get to the ride start.
- **Host & Number of Attendees**
 - Who will be hosting: The organizer who creates the Ride will automatically show up as the Ride Host. If someone else is hosting the Ride, select *Add a host* and they will then have Event Host controls over the Ride.
 - Maximum number of spots: Would you like your Ride to be intimate or open to lots of riders? Select an attendee limit and whether or not members are welcome to bring guests
- **Additional Settings**
 - Ask riders a question: It's possible for riders to skip these questions, so some riders may click through them without answering
 - Set an RSVP start and end time: This sets an opening and/or a closing date for when your riders can mark themselves as attending or not attending

Tips On What To Bring:

i.e. How to be the "Hero" ride leader and be prepared to save the day.

While not a requirement the following items are recommended to bring along when leading a ride.

- **Additional Spare Tubes / Patch Kit** – Chances are someone may find themselves ill prepared. It's always a great feeling to save someone's ride with an extra tube or patch kit. Besides the obvious rewards of being helpful it's also great PR for the club.

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- **Extra Food** – Just as an extra tube may save someone’s ride an extra ClifBar can do the same if someone is bonking.
- **Water** – An extra gallon of water in the trunk of your car is often useful. Sometimes CamelBaks leak or someone forgets a water bottle.
- **A Cell Phone** – Just in case of emergency. If you don’t own a cell phone, ask to make sure someone on the ride is carrying one before you set out.
- **Basic First Aid Kit** – Nothing too fancy but sometimes just having some Band-Aids and antiseptic can be a big help.

Leading The Ride:

Here are a few basic guidelines to help ensure a successful outing come ride day.

- **Show Up** - Barring horrendous weather or damaging trail conditions that make the decision to ride a no brainer, show up to lead your charges. Remember that people are counting on you to guide their day's adventure. However, the final decision to cancel a ride is always in the hands of the ride leader. If circumstance arises that make it impossible for you to attend, try to find another qualified member to take your place. If this fails, contact VVCC’s specific Ride Coordinator for Road, MTB or Gravel for assistance in finding a replacement leader or canceling if necessary.
- **What to do if no one shows up:** If you’ve set up your ride well in advance and have gotten the word out, this is unlikely to happen. If you do find yourself the only rider at the start location, wait at least 15 minutes before deciding to make the call to ride solo or cancel.
- **Introduce Yourself:** Before heading out on the trails take a moment to introduce yourself. Also take a moment to ask how familiar your riders are with the club. If you have a sizeable number unfamiliar with the VVCC take a moment to tell them a bit about our club. For example, let them know that in addition to providing these group rides we also maintain the local trails and take a prominent role in local trail and road bike advocacy. Be sure to mention the web address – www.vvcc.us so they can get more information.
- **Please let non-VVCC member riders know that the VVCC’s insurance only covers members and first-time riders only.** This includes general liability as well as personal injury coverage (the latter of which is secondary coverage.) This notification’s purpose is simply to disclose the limits of the VVCC’s insurance coverage and non-members are welcome to continue participating in club rides but will be riding at their own risk after their initial ride.
- **Use the Online Liability Waivers for Non VVCC Members.** When non-members show up to a ride, you just need to have a smart phone with internet access to our [website](http://www.vvcc.us). Non-members just need to enter their contact info and check the waiver box (if they want to read the waiver first, they simply click on the link). If they’re already a contact in our database, they have two choices. The easiest is to just use a different email address or a bogus one if they don’t have another email address. The second is to log in and update

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their contact info by agreeing to the waiver. I recommend the first option as many folks won't know their password. Unfortunately, email is a mandatory field for contacts. Once a non-member is a contact in our system and agrees to the waiver, then they never have to do so again.

If a rider refuses to sign, they unfortunately cannot participate in the group ride. As is the case with folks not wearing a helmet you cannot physically prevent them from following however, make it clear they are not included in your group.

This waiver is used to protect both the club and you as the ride leader. Please note that parents must list and sign for any minors you may have on your ride.

- **Hardcopy waivers.** If you prefer, liability waivers can be downloaded and printed by clicking [here](#).
- **Set Expectations:** Take a moment to set the proper expectation for your ride. Give an overview of the type of terrain/roads you'll be riding and the pace you plan to keep throughout. Suggest that if anyone wants to go slower or faster on their own, they let you know before splitting off. Let riders know that unsafe and/or inappropriate behavior **will not** be tolerated and could result in a ban from participating in future club rides at the ride leader's sole discretion. While you cannot physically stop someone from riding in future group rides, make it clear that the person(s) will not be welcomed or part of any future VVCC group ride that you lead. Let riders know if you, as the ride leader, are exhibiting any unsafe or inappropriate behavior during the ride to notify the VVCC board at board@vvcc.us with their observations for possible further action. The VVCC board will either refer the matter to the appropriate road/mountain bike/gravel committee chair or take action if the ride leader is the committee chair. If you do ban someone for any future VVCC group rides that you lead, please notify the appropriate committee chair with the person's name so other ride leaders are aware of the ban. VVCC Members who exhibit unsafe and/or inappropriate behavior may be referred to the VVCC board, by the applicable committee chair, for further action in accordance with the Club Rules.
- **Designate A Sweeper:** Ask for a volunteer to server as the sweeper for your ride. The sweeper is a critical part of any successful ride. This individual agrees to ride at the rear of the group and make sure everyone remains with the group during the ride. It's often a good idea as a ride leader to plan ahead and have one of your regular riding buddies present and lined up to sweep for you. Every great ride leader needs an equally great sweeper to be successful. For very large groups 2-way radios are often an effective tool the ride leader and sweeper can use to help keep the group together.

Additionally take a moment to ask all riders to be responsible for the person behind them. This means when making a turn or passing a trail intersection you yell out which way you are going. If you do not hear the person behind yell out the same message to the person behind them, STOP

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and tell the person in front that you are waiting for the person behind to catch-up. Chances are the person behind is too far back to hear the turn (or someone's fallen or had a flat tire or other mishap).

There are few things as demoralizing as being dropped off the back of a group ride. If you and your sweeper are communicating well this will never be an issue on your ride.

- **Expect the Unexpected:** Sometimes the route may need to change depending on who shows up for the ride and/or weather conditions either prior to the start of or during the ride. Be flexible, adapt and improvise in response to conditions and be sure to communicate any route changes to all riders prior to the change.
- **What To Do If You've Lost A Rider:** Despite everyone's best efforts in staying together this can sometimes occur. If you find you've dropped a rider stop the group immediately. Often times all a rider needs is a few minutes to catch up to the group. If after giving the rider 10 minutes or so, consider doubling back to look for them. Depending on how far out you are, you could either assign an alternate ride leader to continue with the group while you or a small group double back for them or you could have a volunteer who knows the trail/roads or someone else go back while you finish with the group.
- **Stick To Your Advertised Pace:** Be sure to stick to your advertised pace. If you're feeling particularly strong it may be tempting to push the pace a bit. If you're not careful that casual pace you advertised can quickly creep up to moderate and split your group. Be mindful of your pace and ask your riders from time to time how they feel the pace is holding up.

Be particularly careful when leading purely Casual rides. These rides typically attract a wide range of riders who vary in both technical skills and fitness levels. On a casual ride, remember to give the last person to stop at a break enough time to catch their breath as well. There is nothing more demoralizing than to finally catch up with the group, start gasping for air, and then watch them take off again the next second. Casual rides are all about having fun and introducing new folks to the sport. Be sure to keep it fun.

- **Manage Mechanicals/Injuries:** While as the ride leader no one expects you to be a bike mechanic or EMT, you can help manage the situation if one should arise. If a rider has a mechanical just do your best to assist them and or find someone in the group who can help if you're not mechanically inclined. In the worst case scenario, find someone to accompany the rider out should they need to bail on the ride. No one should have to walk a bike out alone. If someone manages to injure themselves stay calm and work with the group to make sure the rider gets back to the trail head or ride start location. Often times it may be just walking the rider out and back to their car. If things are more serious use a cell phone to call 911 for professional help.

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- **Keep It Fun:** Just remember these rides are all about getting out with your fellow bike enthusiasts and enjoying the ride! Do your best to maintain a fun and positive atmosphere throughout the ride.

Post Ride:

Here's a few tips to keep those riders coming back.

- Take a moment to simply thank the folks who came out for your ride. Making folks feel welcome on our club's rides is a sure fire way to recruit new members.
- **Make sure everyone has directions and is clear on how to return home.**
- **Remind those who are not already members to check out the VVCC website at <http://www.vvcc.us> and consider joining.** Please remind new riders that the VVCC's insurance will no longer cover them during these rides unless they sign up as members. If you happen to know of any upcoming trail workdays or Adopt-A-Highway clean up days in the area, take a moment to mention them to the group as well.
- Consider heading over to a local restaurant for post ride refreshments.

Thanks!

Again, thank you for your interest in becoming a VVCC ride leader. Without our dedicated group or ride leaders we would be unable to provide this invaluable service to the local bike community. While the information above may seem overwhelming at first glance it's actually far from it. Once you've led a ride or two, all the information will become second nature to you. If you have any questions and or comments, please don't hesitate to contact the Road, Mountain Bike or Gravel Committee Chair.

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Ride Leader Checklist

Pre-Ride

- VVCC and VVCC Ride Meetup Group Member?
- Ride details scheduled on VVCC's MeetUp.
- Equipment check (tubes, patch kit, food, water, first aid kit)
- Introductions (you, the VVCC, participants) – make everyone feel welcome
- [Waivers](#) signed online by VVCC non-members
- Notification to non-VVCC members that they aren't covered under the VVCC's liability insurance after their first ride
- Helmets on every head
- Expectations set
- Riders to notify the ride leader if they're going to modify their ride (turn around early, add an extra leg, etc.)
- Riders counted
- Sweep designated
- Start on time

During the Ride

- Expect the unexpected
- Lost rider procedures
- Stick to advertised pace
- Manage mechanicals/injuries
- All riders accounted for at regroup
- Keep it fun

Après Ride

- All riders accounted for
- Thank everyone for coming
- Make sure everyone knows how to get home
- Remind non-members to check out www.vvcc.us
- Adjourn to a local restaurant for refreshments