

NVP Ride Leader Guide

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The information in this article will help you create, prepare for, and lead safe and fun [Nashoba Valley Pedalers](#) (NVP) club rides. If you have not led a ride before, consider partnering with a more-experienced ride leader the first time. If you have questions, contact the [NVP Activities Director](#) for information or connect you with other ride leaders.

One thing to note at the outset, **a ride leader does NOT have to ride at the head of the ride**. This may be a misconception and something that inhibits people leading rides, but you do not have to go with the fastest group. Plan to ride the ride at your pace. If other people want to go faster or slower, that's their prerogative. Since we offer people GPS routes and cue sheets, people can be trusted to guide themselves if they ride in different groups or alone.

Ride Leader responsibilities

The ride leader is responsible for...

pre-ride

- choosing the ride, date, time, and start location of the ride
- getting the ride posted on the [NVP website calendar](#)
- insuring that the road conditions will be safe on the day of the ride
- printing the map and cue sheets
- printing the non-member [non-member waiver sheet](#) and [minor release form](#)

day of ride

- going to the start of the ride to greet the riders
- have any non-members or minor riders sign the ride waiver forms
- giving the ride safety briefing
- having a safe and enjoyable ride

post-ride

- *Required:* sending the non-member and minor waiver sheets to the Activities Director. You can scan the document and email it.
- *Optional but encouraged:* sending a ride report on the Activities Director, which can be posted on the NVP website.

Planning the Ride

- Choose a day, date, time, and start location for your ride.
- Post the ride on the NVP Events Calendar. If you have never done this before, please [contact the NVP Activities Director](#) to enter you on the ride leader list and find instruction on how to enter rides on the calendar.

Note: When selecting a starting location, consider the availability of parking, whether permission is required, whether special events occur on the day of your ride, and whether bathroom facilities are available.

Build your ride around some general considerations:

- How long and how difficult is the ride you've planned?
- What type of ride will you offer? A moderate ride where everyone rides together at a moderate pace or Leader's choice with a varied pace and grouping of riders?
- Will you have a co-leader or co-leaders that can go at a different paces or act as a sweeper?
- Will you visit a particular spot or stop for lunch?
- What makes your ride special? Beautiful rural views, hills, long stretches of road, or historic sites?

Note: Be aware of the amount of traffic at certain times of the day. Try and avoid busy intersections, sequences of closely-spaced turns, and roads in bad condition.

Mapping the Ride

With the advent of online ride-mapping software, the process of creating routes and cue sheets is considerably easier. NVP is currently using [RideWithGPS](#) to build and store club rides. See the [NVP RideWithGPS page](#) to see routes that have already been mapped. You can repeat a favorite ride or map a new one. The RideWithGPS site will allow you to create cue sheets that you can print and pass out at the ride.

We have recently published some [tips for mapping routes with RideWithGPS](#), which we suggest you read to avoid some of the common "gotchas" we have encountered.

If you need help mapping with RideWithGPS, please contact the [NVP Activities Director](#).

Before The Ride

NOTE: we no longer require that NVP members sign in for rides, so you don't have to print member sign-in sheets. We only require non-members and minor sign waivers (see **Release Forms** below).

- *Optional but encouraged:* within a few days of the ride you should drive or ride the route to get a "rider's eye-view" of the road, road signs, and current road conditions. This might lead to some rerouting to make the ride safe and fun.
- *Required:* Print the [non-member](#) and [minor release sign-in forms](#). You will need one or more non-member release form; you will need one minor release form for each minor (so print a few and keep for other rides). You will bring these to the ride.
- *Required:* Print the cue sheets, whether from the online mapping site or from your manually constructed spreadsheet. Bring enough for the anticipated number of riders.
- *Optional:* get NVP business cards so that you can pass them out to any non-members you might encounter. If you don't have NVP business cards, please contact the [NVP Activities Director](#).

To make sure you don't forget anything you might want to say to the riders on the day of the ride, you might consider writing out a writing out a checklist or script of points you might want to cover in the pre-ride briefing, such as issues of safety, club announcements, etc.

The Day of the Ride

Some general guidelines to use on the day of the ride:

Items to bring

- Cue sheets
- Several [Non-member waiver forms](#).
- Several [Minor release forms](#). You need one minor release signed for each minor riding.
- A pen to sign the waiver forms.
- *Strongly suggested:* a cellphone that could be used to call for help if necessary or to communicate with a sweeper, if you have one.
- *Optional:* A pump. Often someone has low tires or a flat.
- *Optional:* You might want to bring a clipboard to hold the non-member- and minor release forms.
- *Optional:* Your checklist/script for the pre-ride briefing.

At the ride

- Arrive 15-30 minutes before your scheduled start time.
- Greet all riders. NVP ride leaders are friendly that way.
- Introduce yourself to new or unfamiliar riders. Try to identify NVP riders that will connect with these new people during the ride, to show them what a friendly bunch of people we are and how fun it would be to be a member.
- Have non-members sign the [non-member waiver sheet](#).
- Have the parent or guardian any minor sign an individual [minor release form](#). You need one minor release signed for each minor riding.
- Ask the riders if they want a cue sheet.
- Remind riders that helmets are required and their bikes should be in good working condition.
- Remind riders to adhere to the rules of the road, use hand signals to indicate turns, and call out or point out road hazards.
- Review the cue sheet for points of interest, tricky intersections, places that the group plans to stop, opportunities for food and drinks, and so on.
- Tell the riders what the ride policy will be. For example, will it be a no-drop ride or is everyone on their own?
- You may want to suggest that riders group up before starting the ride according ride distance and speed. This is especially important for new riders and for riders that don't ride often with the group. We want people to have a realistic expectation of how the ride will proceed. We also don't want new riders to be left on their own; this is important if we want to retain and grow the NVP membership.

After the ride

Send the sign-in and waiver sheets to the Activities Director

After you finish your excellent and safe ride, you need to send the the sign-in and waiver sheets to the Activities Director. This will allow us to see who is riding and whether there are non-members to whom we can reach out to join NVP. After all, rides are our main way of getting new members.

Here are four ways to pass on the forms, in order of speed and preference:

1. The quickest way to send them is to scan and [email the sign-in and waiver sheets to the Activities Director](#).
2. You can physically mail them to the Activities Director; [email the Activities Director for their mailing address](#).
3. Alternatively, mail the forms to the NVP general mailing address:

Nashoba Valley Pedalers
P.O. Box 2398
Acton, MA 01720

4. Finally, you can give the forms to an NVP Board Member, who will give it the Activities Director.

Write a ride report

Each ride leader should write a short ride report and [email to the NVP Activities Director](#). This allows us to see how things went and whether we should be changing anything. Any NVP member can post a report.

Thanks for leading an NVP ride

Although this may seem like a lot of steps, it's not hard to do, in the end it's fun, and the NVP members appreciate your effort. If you need help, reach out to the Activities Director or other ride leaders. We are happy to help.

Thanks for being willing to lead an NVP ride. Without you, the rides would not happen.

Safe and enjoyable riding.

Release Forms

For insurance purposes, you must get non-members and minors to have signed release and waiver forms. Always bring the following forms to a ride:

1. [Non-Member Release and Waiver](#). Ten (10) non-members can sign one form, so unless this is a big club ride, you can probably just bring one of these forms.
2. [Minor Release and Waiver](#), which must be signed by a parent or guarding of the minor. You must have one minor release and waiver for each minor participating, so bring a few of these to the ride.

Please ensure that each time you lead a ride to bring a few of these forms to the ride with you.