

PELOTONIA®

Safety & Training Handbook

Ride Weekend and Gravel Day



CYCLING SAFETY GUIDELINES

RULES OF THE ROAD

Pelotonia events are Rules of the Road rides. Participants ride on open roadways where vehicular traffic will be present. Prepare to ride safe by reviewing all safety information prior to your event!

- Pelotonia is not a race.
- The Ride is conducted on open roads and vehicle traffic will be present.
- Obey all traffic signs and signals.
- Ride as far to the right of the road as is safely possible, except to pass.
- Never ride more than two across.
- Pass on the left side only.
- Helmets must be worn at all times while riding.
- Headphones and speakers are not permitted while riding.
- Endangering the safety of your fellow Riders is strictly prohibited.
- Ride defensively and in control of your bike at all times (*i.e. be able to stop within a reasonable distance*).
- Communicate with your fellow Riders using proper cycling terms such as "On your left," "Car back," etc.
- Use proper hand signals when turning.
- Make left turns from center of road or left turn lane.
- Cross railroad tracks at right angles to avoid dropping wheels into space between the rails and road.
- Do not cross the yellow centerline regardless of passing zone.
- Obey instructions from Pelotonia staff & Volunteers and pay attention to signage.
- Speak out when observing a violation. When spoken to, the response should be in appreciation of the concern expressed.

Remember, following the Rules of the Road is crucial to keep both cyclists and motorists safe! Be courteous to your fellow cyclists as well as vehicles traveling on the same roads to ensure everyone has a great experience.

SAFETY VIDEO

Our Rules of the Road Video demonstrates basic rules of the road and also provides some tips for safe group riding. An understanding of these concepts will make you more adept at riding and will enhance your ability to anticipate potentially dangerous situations and react to them accordingly.

FIND THE VIDEO AT
[**pelotonia.org/safety**](https://pelotonia.org/safety)



RIDER SAFETY AND TRAINING TIPS

BE AWARE

Know where other riders and vehicles are and keep an eye on traffic patterns.

It is the responsibility of Riders to inform others by saying “car back” when rounding curves, on narrow roads, or when riding double and “car up” to warn of traffic approaching from the front.

Don’t wear headphones, bring a speaker, or talk on a cell phone while riding.

The lead Rider will say “slowing” or “stopping” to alert those behind to change in speed when necessary. When passing through an intersection, some cyclists say “clear” if there is no cross traffic, but each cyclist should confirm before proceeding.

When riding in a group, most of the cyclists do not have a good view of the road surface ahead, so it is important to announce holes, glass, sand, grates, and other hazards. The leader should indicate hazards by pointing down to the left or right, and by shouting “hole,” “bump,” etc. where required for safety.

BE PREPARED

Have a spare tube and multitool to repair a flat, a charged phone to call for assistance, and water and nutrition to power you through your ride and keep you hydrated.

Check your bike thoroughly before every ride.

BE VISIBLE

Wear reflective gear or bright colors to stay visible to drivers and other cyclists.

Use bicycle lights to draw extra attention to your presence on the road.

RIDE SAFE

Protect that cool new haircut (and the head underneath) with a helmet and be sure to stay a safe distance away from other riders and vehicles.

When riding up hills or on narrow roads where you are impeding faster traffic, leave a gap for cars between every three or four bikes to allow a motorist to move around the group.

Whenever stopping, move well off the road so you do not interfere with traffic. When you start up again, each cyclist should look for, and yield to, traffic.

Ride single file or two abreast as appropriate to the roadway, traffic conditions and where allowed by law. Be sure to single up when cars are trying to pass you.

ADDITIONAL GRAVEL RIDING TIPS

While riding, plan to fall into the existing tracks, and ride no wider than 2 bikes across

Be conscious of downhill speed, as it can be harder to slow down/stop on gravel with less traction



BE PREDICTABLE

Follow Ohio traffic laws and make clear signals to let others know where you’re headed.

Other Riders expect you to continue straight ahead at a constant speed unless you indicate differently.

Warn cyclists behind you well in advance of changes in your direction or speed using verbal cues (“left turn” or “right turn”) in addition to giving a hand signal (universal hand signals can be viewed here: bikeleague.org/videos/signaling-and-scanning).

Always pass others on their left. Say “on your left” to warn the cyclist(s) ahead of you that you are passing.



RUNNING AND HIKING SAFETY GUIDELINES AND TRAINING TIPS

TRAINING

An important part of preparing for Ride Weekend or Gravel Day is training appropriately and ensuring you have the proper approaches to hydration and nutrition. Great resources are included both below and at pelotonia.org/training.

HYDRATION AND NUTRITION

Please remember to keep yourself well hydrated before, during, and after the event (regardless of the weather). It is critically important to avoid dehydration by drinking water and sports drinks on a schedule (roughly one liter per hour, starting with water and switching to sports drinks after the first hour or two). Do not rely on thirst—thirst only kicks in when you are already becoming dehydrated. It is also important, however, not to over-consume water. Over-hydration with straight water lacking the sodium found in sports drinks may result in hyponatremia, sometimes referred to as water toxicity. This is a dangerous and potentially deadly condition that can be avoided by switching to primarily drinking sports drinks that contain at least 100 mg of sodium after the first 1–2 hours of riding. Be sure to read your fluid labels as many “sports beverages” contain far less than this minimum recommended amount of sodium.

Carbohydrate loading helps athletes participating in events such as Pelotonia maximize energy storage to improve endurance and delay the onset of fatigue. Snacking on fruits that are potassium rich and pretzels that contain sodium will also help replenish nutrients the body loses during the event.

SAMPLE TRAINING PLANS

For all Ride Weekend distances, our friends with the Ohio State Sports Medicine Endurance Medicine Team have developed sample training plans to ensure you’re getting the miles needed in prior to Ride Weekend! View these plans at pelotonia.org/training.

Additional resources for Gravel Day training are also included at pelotonia.org/training, as well!

TRAINING RIDES AND RUNS

Columbus Outdoor Pursuits offers weekly training rides. Group leaders provide safe routes and welcoming sessions for new Riders. Check out the schedule and register for training rides [here](#).

Ohio Gravel Grinders is a great resource for gravel ride training at all levels. Check out their race series and all ride resources [here](#).



For Runners and Hikers looking to train before Gravel Day, our friends at Fleet Feet offer a variety of training runs throughout Central Ohio. Check out all their offerings [here](#).