**🦺 Safety Skills**

**The golden rule is to always consider the people behind you in the paceline.** They are placing their trust in you by following your wheel, think about how your actions can affect them. The following suggestions may help:

**Feather the brakes**

Rely on feathering your brakes to protect the rider on your wheel. Strongly apply your brakes only as a last resort. If you miss a turn do not slam on the brakes. Instead, gradually slow down and tell the paceline that a U-turn is coming up.

**Pedal downhill**

It's important for the first wheel to pedal downhill, otherwise the riders behind will be forced to slow down.

**Always pedal**

Riders who stop pedaling in a paceline are communicating to riders behind that there is a problem or they are slowing down. It's not easy, but riders in a paceline should ***soft pedal*** when necessary. *You are still pedaling but applying less pressure to the pedals, to, little or no pressure to the pedals, hence soft pedaling.* As an alternative in certain circumstances to have complete control of your speed. Feather your brakes and keep pedaling with the same resistance. You will slow down, but at the same time applying consistent resistance while pedaling, you have maximum control over your speed.

**Stay close to the paceline**

Riders rotating to the back should remain close to the paceline. On public roads this keeps you out of traffic. In park laps this makes it easier for you and the paceline to pass other riders on the right side. Avoid passing on both sides of a slower rider: The paceline passes on a rider's right while the rotating rider passes on the rider's left.

**Park Ride Laps**

**Passing another group**

Passing other pacelines in the park is fairly common. The faster group should pass on the right side of the slower group whenever possible. This is because slower traffic is on the left side in the NYC parks. The faster group should announce that they are "**passing on your right".** Both groups should avoid rotating the paceline while passing.

**Rides on Public Roads**

**Passing another group**

While uncommon, we should be prepared for cycling groups to pass one another. For instance, if a faster group stops for a repair and when they resume they catch up and would like to pass another group of cyclists. The faster group should pass on the left side of the slower group. The faster group should announce that they are "passing on your left". Both groups should avoid rotating the paceline while passing.

**Separate on steep descents**

On steep descents safety takes a priority over paceline efficiency. Maintain distance from the rider in front of you, the faster your speed the more bike lengths of distance is required. This distance gives you time to react if the rider in front takes evasive action or applies their brakes.

**Go your own pace up steep climbs**

It's more effective for riders to find their own pace up steep climbs rather than try to maintain a paceline. At slow climbing speeds there isn't much to be gained in a paceline. Each rider should try to find their cadence, gearing, and speed to drop into their ideal climbing rhythm and make it to the top.

**Second Wheel Navigate**

The rider at the front of the paceline, the first wheel, should be 100% focused on navigating a safe path for the group to follow at a smooth pace. To help the first wheel focus, the second wheel should navigate the route, telling the first wheel when turns are coming up. This way the first wheel won't be distracted while looking at the route on their bike computer and lead the paceline into a hazard.

**Missed Turn**

When you realize you are no longer on the route, *avoid* strongly applying your brakes putting riders behind at risk of crashing. Instead, when you realize you have missed the turn announce to the group that you are going to gradually slow down and turn around. Better safe than sorry.

**Videos**

**Single Paceline**

The single paceline is commonly used and riders generally pull to the left side regardless of wind direction. **WATCH VIDEO HERE.**

**[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I6LITUc8SMg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I6LITUc8SMg" \t "_blank)**

[Preview YouTube video How To Ride In A Paceline | Through And Off Explained](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I6LITUc8SMg&authuser=0" \t "_blank)

[[](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I6LITUc8SMg&authuser=0)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I6LITUc8SMg&authuser=0" \t "_blank)

[[](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I6LITUc8SMg&authuser=0)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I6LITUc8SMg&authuser=0" \t "_blank)

**[How To Ride In A Paceline | Through And Off Explained](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I6LITUc8SMg&authuser=0" \t "_blank)**

**NYCC Paceline**

Think of paceline riding as team riding. It requires cooperation and a lot more than just keeping up. It calls for focused attention, taking responsibility and leading. When riding in a paceline observe the following:

1. **Paceline Position**
   * **PUBLIC ROADS: Ride tight to the right on Public Roads** − keep the paceline to the right side of the road away from car traffic. Pull off the front to your left and indicate you are doing so by *flicking* your right elbow. Pass slower groups on their left side and announce you are "passing on your left".
   * **CENTRAL PARK: Ride tight to the left in NYC parks** − Slower traffic stays to the left in the park. Authorized vehicles and faster riders/groups will be passing on the right. Pull off the front to your left and indicate you are doing so by *flicking* your right elbow. Pass slower groups on their right side and announce you are "passing on your right".
2. **Ride in a straight line**, at a steady pace and pedal constantly (no coasting). Do not swerve or brake without warning. Pedal through bumps in the road − do not swerve around them. Don’t panic and jam on your brakes − the bike behind will run right up your rear wheel. Feather your brakes to modulate speed.
3. **Keep your head up and your eyes scanning** up the road as much as possible. Do not get hypnotized by the wheel in front of you. Use your peripheral vision to monitor the wheel in front of yours while you watch the road and riders ahead. You can then better see the paceline slowing or accelerating, as well as traffic lights and stop signs and you will be better prepared to react to any situation.
4. **DO NOT overlap the rear wheel of the bike in front** of you. If your front wheel touches the rear wheel of the bike in front of you, you risk crashing and taking down riders behind you. The cyclist in front may not feel a thing − they always win in this sort of incident.
5. **Keep a constant distance to the rider ahead** and adjust your speed by feathering your brakes as you continue to pedal. Maintain a steady-as-she-goes, predictable, smooth pace. Close any gaps gradually and gracefully. Jumping to close a gap and then slowing down creates a yo-yo effect that adversely affects the entire group. Doing this all day will wear you out and get you yelled at by the cyclists behind you. Ride smoothly. Ride predictably.
6. **When at the front of the group, pedal smoothly** at all times, even down hills. You will need to keep pedaling on the down hills so that the bikes in back of you do not have to brake in order to avoid riding up your rear wheel.
7. **When at the front you are the eyes of the paceline**. Watch for hazards. Ideally you will see a hazard far enough in advance to move the path of the paceline well clear of it. Call out obstacles or holes in the road as well as your intentions to slow or stop. Every rider in the paceline is depending on you − you at the front of the line. Not every single hole warrants a shout. Call out hazards, don’t call out little bumps. Ride through rough spots by rising slightly off your saddle and pedaling through.
8. **When at the front of the paceline and it is time to pull off**, maintain the same steady pace (don’t slow), check for traffic behind you, and then inform the group, “PULLING OFF.”Then, still maintaining speed, decisively move to the side and when clear of the paceline slide gently to the back of the line to pull in behind the last bike. Stay at the front only for as long as you’re directed, shorter if you are feeling tired. When a rider has pulled off and approaches the back of the group the second to last rider should call “SECOND”and the last rider should call “LAST” so the rider coming back won’t have to chase to get back on and will know when to get back on.
9. **When taking the lead in a paceline** DO NOT surge or pick up the overall pace. Maintain the same speed as when drafting. As you take over you will naturally have to put out more effort. Learn to finesse your effort in order to maintain a smooth transition as you take over. If you are tired, make your turn at the front as short as possible. No one has to prove anything at the front.
10. **Good group riding means working together** as a team. We are a team. Forget about your personal competitive urges − it’s not about you, it’s about ALL OF US.
11. **Safety always comes first!** [**Central Park Protocol**](https://nycc.org/CP-Cycling-Protocol)**.**