

OBC Policy #2

Dealing with Motorists or Police

Motorists

When having to deal with motorists as the result of an incident during a Club ride, the only spokesperson for the OBC should be the Group Leader. Other riders, whether directly involved or not should stand nearby but let the Group Leader do the talking. It is important at all times to be calm and courteous. Remember – you are the image of our Club. As heated as the moment may be – stay calm. For most incidents with motorists, it is a drive-by incident and you are not confronted by the motorist.

Examples of non-confrontational incidents are:

Motorist cuts off the group when passing. Motorist makes an unsafe pass due to oncoming traffic.

Motorist's passenger hangs out the window yelling obscenities or telling the group to ride single file.

Motorist leans on the horn while following the group and slows right down in front after passing the group.

For all of these types of incidents, try to get the license number and a description of the vehicle (and driver, if possible). It is advisable to pull the group over for a few minutes to make notes. If the incident was extremely dangerous to the group, call 911 right then. This information should be passed on to the Touring Director or Club office. You may choose to report this incident to the police yourself before relaying the information to the OBC. The OPS (Ottawa Police Service) phone number is 236-1222 X 7300 or simply 311. When dealing with a motorist who gets out of their car and confronts the group at a stopping point or actually stops the group, be cautious. Here again, the Group Leader should be the spokesperson for the group and the best course of action is to lead the group around the motorist and immediately phone 911.

If the motorist is calm and appears only to want to talk about double-file or other issues, be calm too and also be courteous. You can advise the motorist that double file is permitted under the Highway Traffic Act and is the preferred method for safety reasons for the cyclists. You could ask for identification (also get a license plate #) and offer to have someone from OBC or even the OPS contact them regarding our practices and our rights to the road.

If the motorist appears confrontational, call 911 immediately and tell the motorist that you have done so. When calling 911, state that you feel you are dealing with an impaired driver so that they will give the situation some urgency. 3. Inform the confrontational motorist that you will not have any discussion with him (her) until the police arrive.

Police

If your group is stopped by the police, immediately have your riders pull right off the road onto the shoulder.

Be calm, courteous and diplomatic.

If you are in Quebec, be aware that Quebec laws are different from Ontario and much more restrictive to cyclists on the road. You are not permitted to ride double file, and if there is an on-road cycle lane, cyclists must use it.

If necessary advise the police officer(s) that the OPS is aware of our group riding practices. If you are told by the officer to ride single file and you don't feel that it is necessarily safer to do so, advise the officer that you are concerned about the safety of your riders and would ride double file as permitted by the Traffic Act. If the police officer(s) is not in agreement with your choice to ride double file, do not object any further and proceed in single file. Be sure to report this to the Touring Director or the OBC office. You may also choose to report this to the OPS yourself as well upon your return from the ride. The OPS (Ottawa Police Service) phone number is 236-1222 X 7300 or simply 311. If the police officer(s) has stopped you due to a public complaint, inquire as to the nature of the complaint and ask who (which rider) the complaint was against. Whatever the complaint, every rider in the group could not be an offender so the complaint should be specifically directed at 1 or more riders.