

Eyecycle is a Colorado non-profit 501 (c) (3) corporation which provides visually impaired persons with the opportunity to ride with sighted captains on tandem bicycles. Eyecycle has no paid staff and the people responsible for organization of the corporation are all volunteers.

What is an Eyecycle Captain?

An Eyecycle captain rides on the front of a tandem bicycle and is responsible for steering, braking and ensuring the safety of both riders.



Eyecycle captains must be fit, experienced bicyclists. For those who have never ridden tandem bicycles or with visually impaired riders, training will be provided.

Riders need not have their own tandem bicycles as Eyecycle had its own 'stable' of bikes in varying sizes and capacities. If you do own your own tandem, you are welcome to use it provided it meets safe riding guidelines



Eyecycle Rides

Each season, the Eyecycle ride schedule is posted and updated on our website, eyecyclecolorado.org

Rides will be listed by degree of difficulty:

- Easy – up to 25 miles, with few hills, preferably on bike trails
- Intermediate – 25 to 35 miles with moderately challenging terrain, may be on a combination of bike paths and open roadways
- Difficult – Over 35 miles and/or more extreme inclines and downhills, may be in part or entirely sharing roadways with traffic

The option to stop for meals and/or snacks will be stated on the ride schedule.

To sign-up for a ride, please contact the ride leader listed on the website.

Please show up promptly for rides as we need to ensure every stoker has a captain. Please contact the ride lead as soon as possible if you have to cancel.

All riders should bring water bottles. Padded bike shorts are recommended, though not required.

Ride leaders will make a determination and contact riders of cancellations due to inclement weather* or other conditions which may jeopardize rides. If the determination is able to be made with enough time in advance, cancellations will be posted on the web page, otherwise all attempts will be made to contact riders by telephone.

** Includes below freezing temperatures, snow, heavy/steady rain, flooded trails, strong winds*

Eyecycle Captain Guide



What is Eyecycle?

Early in 1993 District Court Judge Ruthanne (Randie) Polidori was presiding over a divorce case where the wife had lost her eyesight due to diabetes. One of the items the woman requested in the trial was \$35/month to rent a tandem bicycle. The husband's attorney sarcastically asked the wife why she needed a bicycle since she was blind. She answered that losing her sight shouldn't mean that she couldn't still enjoy things in life like riding a bicycle.

The episode inspired Judge Polidori to donate to a Colorado organization which would allow visually impaired people to ride on the back of a tandem. When she discovered no such organization existed in the state, she found an anonymous donor who provided \$10,000 of seed money to help purchase 6 tandem bicycles and with a small group of people formed Eyecycle Colorado. That was in 1994 and we've been riding ever since.

The mission of Eyecycle Colorado is to enhance the quality of life and independence of visually impaired bicyclists by offering organized tandem rides in and around the Denver Metro area. We also promote Club multi day rides for our more experienced teams.

To accomplish these goals we recruit and train sighted captains and team them up with visually impaired stokers. We ride from May through October and approximately every other weekend for 20 to 40 miles. Eyecycle Colorado has become a premier partnership for cycling, communication, and fun!

CAPTAIN'S RESPONSIBILITIES

As the name implies, the captain on a tandem bicycle is in control and sets the tone for the ride. Allow the stoker to get used to the bike as well as your riding style. Be smooth, predictable and precise with your commands. Set a tone and pace that fits your stoker's abilities, needs and desires for a pleasant riding experience. Be cautious, because the stoker is solely reliant on you and your abilities. Remember, your obligation is to make the ride fun and rewarding for your stoker, and you!

- 1) Before you meet your stoker, insure your bike is ready to go by checking air pressure, chain condition, gears, brakes, and is equipped with repair kit and pump. A quick spin around the parking lot is recommended.
- 2) After introducing yourself to your stoker, determine his or her level of experience and the extent of his or her visual capability.
- 3) Read and explain the liability release waiver. Ensure both riders have signed.
- 4) Fit the bike to the stoker by adjusting seat and handlebar height. You may have to change pedals depending on stoker's preference (i.e., toe clips, cleats, flat pedals)
- 5) Mounting a tandem bicycle
 - Captain mounts first, then firmly hold bike with brake applied and feet spread wide - never assume other rider is in control of bike
 - Stoker mount
 - Discuss and determine which foot to start from and put down when stopping
- 6) Starting
 - Make sure bicycle is in an easy gear
 - Align pedals
 - Countdown, then push off preferably on flat or slightly downhill surface
 - Establish momentum before clipping into pedals
- 7) During ride, communication is essential
 - Advise stokers of road hazards, traffic conditions and terrain
 - Give sufficient notice for maneuvers such as braking, coasting, shifting and turns.
 - Enhance the riding experience for vision impaired stokers by noting landmarks, scenery, other riders, etc., to the extent they feel comfortable with commentary
 - Provide opportunities for drinking water and taking breaks as needed
- 8) Stopping and dismounting
 - Shift into an easy gear
 - Unclip or release from pedals
 - Count down then announce, 'stop', or 'foot down'

At the end, congratulate each other on a great ride!

BICYCLE SAFETY

- 1) Bicycle helmets are required on all Eyecycle rides.
 - 2) Wear bright clothing.
 - 3) Use the right communications. Signal turns and stops – it's required by the law. Announce when you are passing other riders or pedestrians. Use phrases such as "on your left." Most bikes have bells that can be used for warning others.
 - 4) When stopping, let those behind you know of your plans. Make sure no bicycles or motor vehicles are immediately behind you when you stop. Stop at the right edge of the roadway and immediately move to the shoulder. Don't stop in the middle of the roadway or bicycle path. Stopping is especially dangerous on the crest of a hill or on a curve.
 - 5) Don't weave – ride in a straight line. Don't follow too closely or draft.
 - 6) Ride to the right. Leave room for others to pass on your left.
 - 7) Turn left from the center of the roadway. Turn right from along the curb or shoulder and stay to the right. Stokers may use hand or arm signals.
 - 8) Obey all traffic laws. Bicyclists are required to obey the traffic laws for motor vehicles. Give right of way to emergency vehicles.
 - 9) Don't wear headphones while riding. Keep your eyes and ears open
 - 10) Avoid wide cracks in the pavement. Narrow bicycle tires can get caught in wide cracks. Beware of loose gravel and rough road surfaces.
 - 11) Look out for railroad tracks and cross them at right angles.
 - 12) Eat and drink water frequently when bicycling. Do not drink alcohol.
 - 13) Cellphone use is not allowed while riders are in motion. Stop to make or receive calls.
- Enjoy your ride!