

# Some Bike Hash Basics for Riders

Contributed by Kuala Lumpur MTB Hash

In general terms, the purpose of a Bike Hash is to provide an unguided social ride that can be enjoyed by both new and experienced riders, even in unfamiliar terrain. Weeks or months in advance of a Hash an area will be explored by a small group of riders called &ldquo;Hares&rdquo; who are responsible for setting the hash. They will plot out two trails, the &ldquo;Long Ride&rdquo; (longer and more challenging), and the &ldquo;Scenic Ride&rdquo; (shorter and easier), and mark them with paper, flour, signage and other methods, leaving gaps called &ldquo;Checks&rdquo; at intervals to provide a challenge for the hashers and keep the pack together. These gaps in the trail markings force the faster riders to explore in order to find where the trail resumes. The lead riders are expected to find where the trail resumes and use extra paper to fill in these gaps so that slower riders can thus follow a complete trail. In this way riders of vastly different fitness and ability can share the same ride and still have an enjoyable time.

## SIGN IN:

When you arrive at the bash site, look for the sign in desk. For your own safety it is mandatory for all participants to sign in for either the long or scenic ride, leave contact details and get a bike tag. The purpose of signing in is to have a record of who is participating so that the hares can be sure all riders make it back at the end of the ride. (Of course it should go without saying that for this to work riders returning from the ride they must sign themselves out and return their tags!)

## RIDE BRIEFING:

Before the riders set off, it is customary within the KLMBH for the Hares to give a short briefing that should prepare the Hashers for any special aspects of that day&rsquo;s bash. For example: the type of paper used for each ride, any remarkable signage, how to recognize a Check, checking distances, whether there are any false trails, relative length of the ride, etc. It&rsquo;s important to pay attention during the ride briefing as a couple of minutes of information can make a huge difference once you hit the trail. This is also the best time for you to ask any questions you may have about the ride.

## ON!ON!

At the appointed time the riders will be instructed to set off and follow the respective trails. If you listened at the briefing you will know which one to follow, long or scenic.

## CHECKS:

After some time the trail markings will stop, and there will be a small circle or pile of paper. This is called a Check. The purpose of the Check is to slow up the FROP's (&ldquo;Front Riders On Paper&rdquo;) who will spend time looking for the next paper trail - thus allowing the slower riders to catch up. The intent is to bunch the riders up together into one peloton as much as possible. A normal ride may have 5-9 checks. You will usually be advised of the number of checks at the ride briefing.

From the Check the trail will resume, in any direction, within a specified distance - usually within 75 to 150m &ndash; however this distance is at the discretion of the Hares (and influenced by the terrain and trail conditions etc) and so the check distance can vary considerably &ndash; in some cases up to 400m or more from the Check. The Hares will usually advise you of the check distance(s) at the ride briefing &ndash; if they don&rsquo;t, then at the briefing - ask them. The following diagrams give examples of the various varieties of checks. In the diagrams the trail leading to the Check is called the &ldquo;In Trail&rdquo;, the trail to be found and followed after the Check is called the &ldquo;Out Trail&rdquo;.

## FORWARD CHECKS :

The most basic Check is a &ldquo;forward&rdquo; Check as the new Out Trail starts in &ldquo;generally&rdquo; the same direction as the old trail.

#### BACK CHECKS:

The new paper trail may also start "behind" the Check and generally may be found by back tracking along the old paper trail.

#### CIRCULAR CHECKS:

A Circular Check is designed to get the FROP's to loop for about 400 - 500 metres (usually around a hill or obstacle) and come back to the Check within 20 - 30 metres of the trail they were on, and where the rear riders can see the FROP's. With a Circular Check the trail again will recommence within 150m of the Check, and not from any part of the loop itself.

#### FALSE TRAILS:

A False paper Trail starts within the usual 150 meters from the Check and then runs for approximately 150 metres before the paper trail ends (i.e. there is NO circle of paper at the end indicating a Check). A false trail means, 'go back to the Check and look for a different Out Trail'. The real Out Trail is also to be found about 75 - 150 metres from the Check. NOTE: there can be more than one False Trail per Check.

FALSE TRAILS: may be identified in one of 3 ways:

1) The paper trail just stops and like this:

2) The paper trail stops at a tree and may "climb" the tree a short way:

3) The paper trail stops with an "X" of paper at the end – like this:

The Hares should indicate at the Ride Briefing as to which method is used for the ride. If they don't - then ask them.

#### ILLEGAL CHECKS:

Checks that do not comply with any of the above formats are illegal and should NOT happen – so don't go looking for them. Examples include (but is not limited to):

ILLEGAL – Forward Out trail too far from Check:

ILLEGAL – Out Trail starts off Circular not from the

Check:

ILLEGAL – Some examples of ILLEGAL New Trails following off FALSE Trails (should be from Check):

#### "CLOSING" THE CHECK:

Once the (true) Out Trail has been found by riders, one or more riders waiting at the old Check should take some of the paper left at the Check and use it to "close" the trail by dropping pieces of this paper on a trail to join from the Check to the start of the next (true) Out Trail. This should be done by tearing the paper into smaller pieces – this (torn paper) indicates to riders following that this was a Check and has now been closed and they can safely follow on the new paper trail. NEVER EVER DROP PAPER unless you are absolutely certain that the new Out Trail IS CORRECT (and not for example a False Trail).

#### HASH CALLS:

Hash Riders will call to each other 1) to help one another, 2) to help keep the peloton together and 3) to help prevent riders getting lost. The most common calls are – "Checking", "Are You ?", "On On", "On Called", and "On On On On".  
CALLS AT CHECKS - "CHECKING" and "ARE YOU ?":

#### "CHECKING":

The call "Checking!" is made in 2 circumstances:

- As a statement - when you arrive at a Check ahead of other riders – you can make this call - it signals to riders behind you that they are about to arrive at a Check and to start looking for the next paper trail (especially if it is a Back Check).
- The second is in response to the call "How Are You?"; (see below) and you are still looking for the new Out Trail.

#### "ARE YOU ?":

If you arrive at a Check and decide to help "close the Check" - that is, to go looking for the next paper trail - calling "Are You ?" to riders who are already checking tells you where they are and how many of them there are and is useful in deciding which direction/area you could search and not be duplicating other rider's efforts.

The reply call to "Are You ?" is "Checking" if you are still looking for the new paper trail, or "On On" if you have managed to find paper or "On On On On" if you have just found the next Out Trail.

Also, if you think you are lost off paper at any point you can try calling out "Are You?" - as any answer you may get might help you to get yourself "unlost"; and back on paper.

"ON ON ON ON ON &hellip;":

Once a rider has found the next (true) paper Out Trail they will call out loudly "On On On On On"; this signals to everybody that the confirmed next new trail has been correctly found and in which direction. (Take CARE before using this call - refer to False Trails).

"ON CALLED":

After the leading rider makes the "On On On ON" call - other riders hearing this then call "On Called"; this transmits the leaders call "down the line"; to other riders further away that may not be able to hear the leaders call. "On Called"; signals that "the new trail has been found but I am NOT on it yet - so maybe don't follow me";. Do NOT call "On On"; yet. Only once you DO find paper on the new trail then you call "On On"; to signal to other riders that you ARE now on the new trail and they should safely follow your call to get on the correct trail.

"ON ON":

Only EVER call this if you ARE riding on paper. Usually this call is made:

- 1) when you first get onto paper on a new trail after a Check - this signals to other riders that you ARE on paper on the CORRECT new trail and it is safe to follow your call
- 2) when the paper on the trail is hard to follow - this assists the following riders to know where the trail goes
- 3) you want to encourage riders following you - hearing your call can be very helpful to other riders behind you.

RIDER SAFETY - CALLS when Passing Other Riders:

Arguably the MOST DANGEROUS thing out there for a Hash rider - is OTHER HASH RIDERS, particularly when passing riders.

The fundamentals of passing riders are simple enough: clear calling to rider in front, use courtesy when overtaking, use courtesy when being overtaken, and always safety first...

1. Call clearly: - to alert the rider in front of you that you would like to pass them - then call either: "ON YOUR LEFT"; - meaning "I intend to pass you on your left"; OR "ON YOUR RIGHT"; - if you intend to pass them on the right. You should also then WAIT to see that the rider in front indicates that they DID HEAR you and that THEY CAN let you pass them before you try to pass them.

Remember - most of the time the rider in front will have no idea that you are behind them and looking to pass them - until they hear your call.

2. Use courtesy when overtaking - remember the front rider may need to suddenly change direction at any time - so allow them plenty of room and always allow them the easiest "line"; to ride. They may be slower but still riding at their capacity - so don't bully them and remember you can easily "psych-out"; a slower rider just by passing them too closely or at too fast a speed - so show them some courtesy and give them plenty of room and pass them at a moderate speed.

3. Use courtesy when being overtaken - try to allow room for the faster rider to pass you. If you are very slow or walking - try to look behind you frequently to see if there are faster riders approaching or trying to pass you and if so try your best to move to the side to allow them to pass you. Remember it can be very frustrating for a faster rider to be stuck behind a slower rider.

4. Always remember SAFETY FIRST - make sure it is very safe for the rider you are about to pass first before you try to pass them, fast riders take care not to ride too fast or too close to slower riders, and slower riders try and allow as much room as possible for the faster riders. Remember - clear calling, courtesy overtaking, courtesy being overtaken, and always safety first...

**SIGNING OUT:**

After finishing your ride and as soon as you arrive back you must sign the register as returned (and hand back the rider's number). This is critical because at the end of the Hash after the final "sweeper" riders return there should be no riders left out on the trail - and all riders should show as "returned" in the register.

If you have not signed as "Returned" the Hares will not know that you have returned and will therefore expect that you are lost off the trail and will start organising search parties to try and find you. This can cause a lot of effort, time and distress to the Hares and other volunteers who go "looking" for you - PLEASE sign the register "AS RETURNED" at the end of the ride. SEARCH PARTIES - and PAPER TRAILS: One more thing - if a rider does not make it back to the end of the ride - the Hares and other volunteers joining the search party can ONLY sensibly search for you along the known Paper trails. So if you are not on paper they may not find you... A FEW GOLDEN RULES &hellip; This leads to the 3 main rules of hashing: RULE #1: Stay on paper RULE #2: Stay on PAPER! RULE #3: STAY ON PAPER!!

If you do ever find yourself on a trail without paper then:

- 1) STOP
- 2) TURN AROUND - and
- 3) BACKTRACK to where you last did see PAPER and start again.

- Happy and Safe Riding all - **DOWNLOAD THE HASH GUIDE HERE**

(pdf): <http://www.fakawitribe.com/Some%20Bike%20Hash%20Basics.pdf> Acknowledgements: This guideline refers to 1) "Petaling HHH - Recommendations For Setting A Good Run" revision 2/4/07 - refer to PCC web site. 2) "The Idiot's Guide to setting a hash" by Gordon Fraser - refer to KLMBH web site. Co-Hare Authors: Pat Brunsdon, Huang Ying How, Joe Adnan, Philip Bee, Scott Roberts, Tony Stapleton, Brian Wearing - 6 June 2008.

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