

Swindon Wheelers Cycling Club Supplementary Risk Assessment – Gravel Bike Rides



This Risk Assessment is supplementary to SWCC Standard Risk Assessment for Road Cycling.

Gravel bike riding isn't really a new thing. In fact, the routes that we will probably end up riding mirror pre-trail centre and pre-suspension mountain biking routes. However, the difference is that there are now dedicated bikes that are perfectly suited to lighter off-roading duties, mixed terrain routes and events for you to test your off-road riding fitness and skills on. The biggest advantage of riding a gravel bike is the sheer variety of riding it opens up to you. Road sections aren't the soul sapping drags that they can be on a mountain bike and, when you do hit the dirt, you'll be amazed at what you can ride. This means you can put together routes that you'd probably never ride on a mountain bike, definitely wouldn't on a road bike but are perfect for a gravel bike.

This Supplementary Risk Assessment is intended to cover gravel bike riding on firm surfaces including Bridleways, Byways open to all traffic and Restricted Byways, where in England and Wales there is a legal right to cycle. It is also intended to cover riding on routes with public access (OS term for white roads or green lanes), unsurfaced roads, Forestry Commission tracks, cycle paths and cycle tracks such as converted railways lines and some canal tow paths. In all cases, it is essential that there is either a legal right of way or the permission of the land owner is implied or given to ride on the land.

This risk assessment is not intended to cover cycling on graded mountain bike routes ([MTB Trail Grading System \(britishcycling.org.uk\)](https://www.britishcycling.org.uk/mtb-trail-grading-system)). It is not intended to cover activities which require British Cycling discipline specific cycling techniques or MTB specific equipment to safely and comfortably ride.

THE ROUTE MUST BE WITHIN A TEN-MINUTE WALK FROM A ROAD VEHICLE ACCESS POINT AT ALL TIMES.

Failure to comply with the requirements of SWCC Risk Assessments could result in a rider being asked to leave a club activity.

All riders are reminded that they are responsible for their own safety; individuals take part in any group activities at their own risk. We strongly urge all riders to obtain appropriate 3rd party insurance as a minimum. It should be noted that no liability shall be attached to SWCC (including its officials and members) for any injury, loss or damage suffered	
Risk Assessment: Gravel Bike Rides	Location: All SWCC Gravel Ride Routes Document Reference: Gravel RS.
Completed by: NVD Date Completed: April 2024 Next Review Date: April 2027 Signed off by & Date: BC 24/04/2024	Other relevant Risk Assessment: SWCC Standard Club Risk Assessment -Road Rides

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RISK CONTROL MEASURES

Activity	Hazard	Who is at risk	Level (H/M/L)	Control Measures Recommended	Residual Risk (H/M/L)	Further Action Recommended / Required		Person Responsible
						Y/N	what	
1. Pre-Ride	Equipment Suitability	Rider	H	Cycles and their parts used for off road riding must be designed for that specific purpose i.e. cyclo-cross, gravel or MTB bikes with off road tyres. Ride leaders to visually inspect bikes to ensure suitability for intended route. If in doubt, advise rider not to take part in the ride.	L	N		Rider, Ride Leader
2 Pre-Ride	Equipment	Rider	H	Even with the best preparation, the likelihood of a rider falling and incurring injury is increased whilst riding off road. RLS to ensure that should the need arise to summon urgent assistance, that they have a means of accurately identifying their position when riding off road i.e. https://what3words.com/ or similar. It is recommended to have two first aid trained riders on a ride, with one RL carrying a first aid kit suitable for reasonably foreseeable minor injuries.	L	Y	Club to provide suitable first aid kits for off road RLs	Club, Ride Leader
3 Pre-Ride	Route Selection	Rider	H	The route selection will have a considerable impact on the ability of members to complete ride. The Ride Leader should select a route which is appropriate to the ability/experience of the intended participants. The route should contain appropriate comfort stops, ideally no more than 2hrs apart. Suitable 'escape options' should be identified in advance.	L	N		Ride Leader

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4 Pre Ride	Rider becoming separated and getting lost	Rider	H	All SWCC Gravel rides should have two ride leaders (RLs). The RLs will ride at the front and rear of the group, ensuring all participants remain together. The second RL can be an identified experienced gravel rider where no qualified RL is available. In such cases, consideration should be given to adjusting the difficulty of the route. Group to be briefed on riding in single file whilst off road, with sufficient distance between riders so that safe trail routes can be identified in advance. Riders must not overtake RLs.	L	N		Rider, Ride Leaders
5 Ride	Natural 'gravel' features	Rider	H	Riders must ride in single file, leaving large stopping gaps between each other when entering gravel/trail that have natural occurring hazards i.e. single track, ruts etc. Ride Leader to brief participants of any known features likely to be encountered before entering a particular trail section, and advise riders to ride at their own pace, dismounting if necessary. Rider to point out/call out (whichever they feel safe and confident to do) hazards to following riders. Routes with small drops or jumps should only be used if there is an obvious alternative route to ride around them. RIDERS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR RIDING WITHIN THEIR OWN ABILITY AND SHOULD STOP AND DISMOUNT WHERE ANY SECTION WOULD PUT THEM AT RISK OF FALLING	L	N		Riders, Ride Leaders

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6	Water – including crossing fords/ streams	Rider	H	Water can only be crossed on foot if the Ride Leader deems it to be shallow enough to safely do so i.e. below knee depth. Alternative routes should be used if possible. Riders must dismount when crossing through water or when riding anywhere where there is a possibility of falling into water.	L	N		Rider, Ride Leader
7	Forestry Operations	Rider	H	Riders should avoid areas of active foresting operations. Where there is no alternative route available, riders should follow all signage / instructions from forestry workers.	L	N		Rider, Ride Leader

Incident Reporting:

In the event of a significant incident or significant near miss, the Ride Leader/ injured party should follow the Accident/incident guidance on the SWCC website

Reporting accidents/incidents allows the club safety officer to alert the club if there is a recurrence of a particular type of accident/incident

SWCC strongly encourages ride leads to attend a relevant first aid course to enable them to deal with an accident or illness during a club ride

Riders are encouraged to raise any issues or concerns with the Ride Leader and just as importantly to talk about things that have gone well during the ride

All riders should carry an ICE contact number (In Case of Emergency) within their phone, saddle bag or on their person so others can use contacts if necessary.