

***El Paso  
Bicycle Club***



**MEMBER HANDBOOK  
2005-2006**

THE ELPASO BICYCLE CLUB  
Membership Handbook

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## PURPOSE

The purpose of the El Paso Bicycle Club (EPBC) is to promote cycling in the El Paso area. We do this by various methods as listed in the Benefits section below. The club was formed approximately 25 years ago and was incorporated in 1999.

## BENEFITS

There are numerous benefits to membership in EPBC:

- Participate in scheduled rides
- Members enjoy various social events or gatherings throughout the year. Such events are announced to members by e-mail.
- Meet other cyclists
- Learn the best routes in the El Paso area for cycling
- New riders can receive valuable information about cycling from experienced cyclists. Some club members have volunteered to be mentors to new riders. New members interested in the mentoring program should contact the club's president
- Become more knowledgeable about bicycle maintenance,
- Some of the area bicycle shops give club members a discount on purchases.
- Riding with a club provides safety in numbers. It is nice to have someone to help you when you have a problem.
- Receive up-to-date information from our web page, [www.elpasobicycleclub.com](http://www.elpasobicycleclub.com)
- Receive information via email
- The club owns four bicycle suitcases members may use when traveling by plane
- The club also has a trailer that safely carries 12 bicycles. Ride leaders may check out the trailer for use on club rides.
- The club represents your interests as a rider by sending a representative to Texas Department of Transportation meetings and to other public forums to increase visibility of cycling and advocate for safer cycling on the streets of El Paso.

## CLUB RIDES

The El Paso Bicycle Club provides scheduled weekend rides for different levels of riders led by experienced ride leaders. The club's web site ([www.elpasobicycleclub.com](http://www.elpasobicycleclub.com)) provides a list of rides scheduled each month. The rides are also listed in the free monthly El Paso Scene publication readily available in front of businesses throughout El Paso and on line. The ride list provided on the El Paso Bicycle Club's web site provides the fitness level for each ride, the planned pace or speed, the meeting place, time of departure, general description of the route and the total mileage. The ride leader is also listed with contact information. Riders should feel free to contact the ride leader with questions concerning a ride. It is suggested that riders select rides that comply with their own riding abilities. A modest selection of beginner/easy, moderate and fast rides are usually offered each month. Following are descriptions of the levels of rides.

### **Beginner/Easy Pace 10-14 mph**

**Fitness Level 1(FL1)** = these beginner/easy rides are especially for those folks just starting to bike or those who have been away from cycling for a while, but who want to ease back into the pleasures of a good bike ride. The terrain is usually flat and the pace leisurely (10 to 14 mph depending on the skill levels of the riders).

### **Moderate Pace 15-17 mph**

**Fitness Level 2(FL2)** = these rides are for cyclists who have been at it a while, but aren't ready to tackle Transmountain Road. The terrain will usually be flat but there might be a short hill or two, the pace is moderate (15-17 mph), and the distance between 20 and 50 miles. These rides are good training for endurance.

### **Moderate Pace 15-17 mph OR Fast Pace 18+ mph**

**Fitness Level 3(FL3)** = these rides are for experienced cyclists who are ready for a challenge. The terrain may have significant hill climbing, the pace moderate or fast, or the distance between 30 and 75 miles. The ride leader should declare the pace at the beginning of the ride.

### **Fast Pace 18+ mph**

**Fitness Level 4(FL4)** = these rides are for experienced cyclists interested in maintaining a high fitness level. Count on these rides requiring much endurance for speed, hill climbing, and/or long distances (60 to 100+ miles).

**Fitness Level 5(FL5)** = training for the Tour de France. Watch out, Lance!

Most of the routes for the scheduled rides are in the upper valley. However, some rides are scheduled in other areas of the city or surrounding areas. Rides outside of El Paso that are frequently attended by members of the EPBC are also listed in the ride schedule.

Some members regularly ride in organized day and weeklong rides outside of El Paso. The Ride for the Roses in Austin, TX, Tour de Tucson in Tucson, AZ, RAGBRAI (week long ride across Iowa), Oklahoma Freewheel (weeklong ride across Oklahoma from Texas to Kansas), the Rosarito to Ensenada Fun Ride (on the Baja of Mexico), Hottern' Hell Hundred in Wichita Falls, TX, and Cochise County Cycling Classic in Douglas, AZ are examples of rides some of our members regularly do.

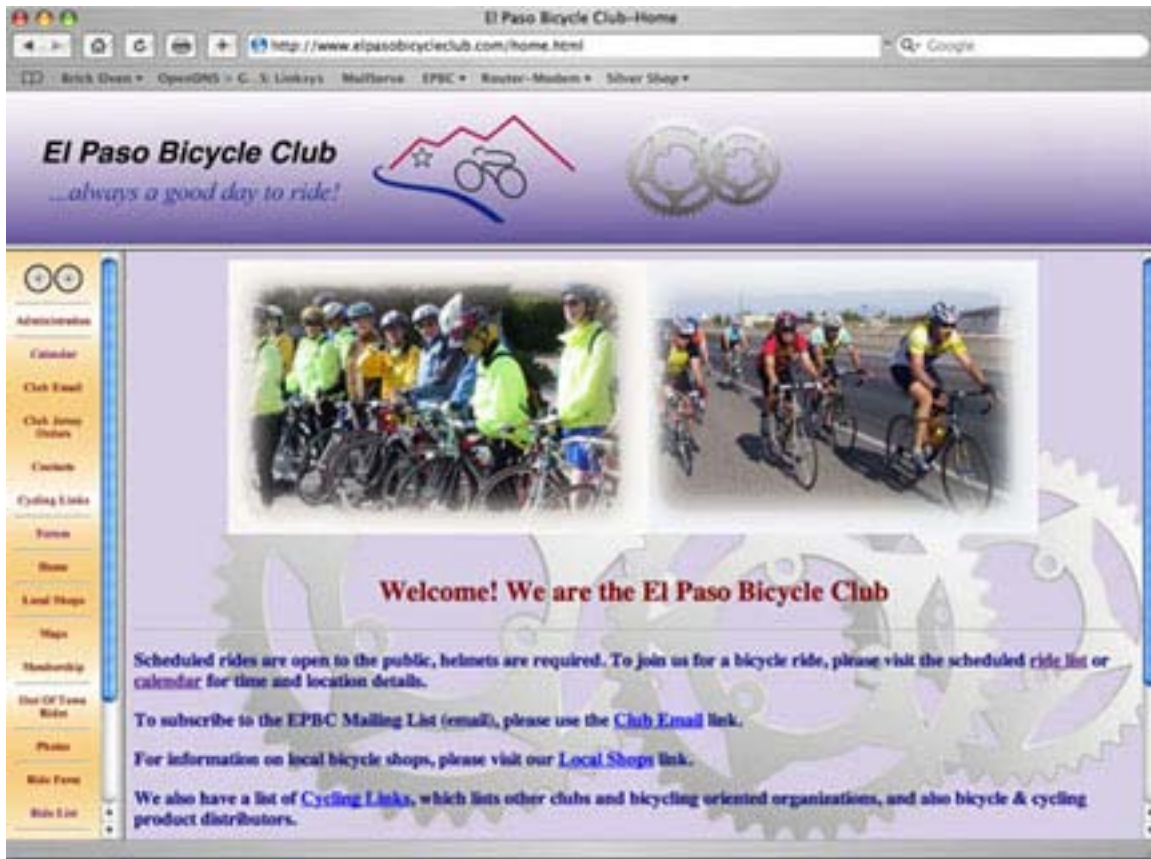
### THE CHILE PEPPER CHALLENGE

The Chile Pepper Challenge is the annual organized ride sponsored by the EPBC held the last Sunday in September. The ride offers various mileage options including a century (100 miles), metric century (62 miles), and shorter rides such as 35 miles or 10 miles. Organized rides provide sag service (vehicles to bring riders back to the start if needed) and rest stops providing water, gator aid, fruit, and porta potties. Participants may purchase an original commemorative t-shirt designed for the event each year. Funds raised from the Chile Pepper are used in two ways. Approximately half of the proceeds are donated to local charities and the remaining are used to support club activities.

### USING THE EPBC WEB PAGE

[WWW.ELPASOBICYCLECLUB.COM](http://WWW.ELPASOBICYCLECLUB.COM)

The Club's web site is a valuable resource for obtaining a calendar of scheduled rides. It provides contact information for the officers and board members and a forum for asking questions, listing items for sale or wanted, and for receiving and providing information about the club's activities. New riders will find the list of tips for new riders particularly helpful.



Above is a portion of the EPBC's web page. Members are encouraged to review the various sections of the web page often. There is a wealth of information available on the site.

Members are encouraged to subscribe to the club's membership e-mail list. E-mails are sent to alert members about changes in the ride schedule, upcoming social events, and other important announcements. If you would like to subscribe to the e-mail list please contact the club's membership coordinator and provide your name and e-mail address with your request.

## **RULES FOR THE ROAD**

Following are the basic rules for road riding. Many accidents can be avoided if cyclists remember to follow these rules without exception:

**Ride with traffic** as far to the right as practical.

**Obey signs and signals.** Bikes must follow the same rules as motorized vehicles.

**Respect the right of way** of others. Yield to crossing traffic and yield when changing lanes.

**Yield** to pedestrians.

**Use hand signals** so that others understand your intentions. Extend the left arm when turning left, the right arm when turning right, and extend the left arm downward when slowing down.

**Turn left** from the left lane.

**Be bright at night** with lights, reflectors and light-colored clothing.

**Rest off the road.** Do not block traffic lanes while stopped.

**Steer straight** and predictably. Don't duck in and out of traffic or parked cars.

## A GUIDE TO SAFE AND FUN CYCLING

Cycling is fun, relaxing and great exercise. In order to enjoy cycling to the fullest, the following tips are recommended:

1. **Bicycle Condition and Fit:** Make sure your bicycle is in good condition and that it fits you properly. The El Paso area is fortunate to have a number of really good bicycle shops with knowledgeable employees who can help riders make adjustments for a better fit and for overall bicycle maintenance and repair.
2. **Helmet:** Always wear an ANSI or SNELL approved helmet. The helmet should fit properly to provide maximum protection. When buying a helmet, put it on without fastening the chinstrap. Bend over and if the helmet falls off, you need a smaller size.
3. **Check Equipment:** Before beginning a ride, check the air pressure in your tires and check your bicycle to make sure the wheels are secured and the brakes adjusted properly.
4. **Clothing:** Wear bright colored clothing so drivers of vehicles can readily spot you from a distance. If wearing street clothes, tuck shoelaces into your shoes and put a band around pant legs so they won't get caught in the chain ring. Don't wear any type of underwear under your spandex bike shorts. If you want to know why, ask any of us. We've all made that awful mistake!
5. **Repair Equipment:** For emergency repairs, always carry an extra tube, a patch kit, pump and whatever tools you need to remove the wheels from your bike. It's much easier and quicker to replace a tube on the road than to patch a punctured tube, especially when the weather is hot. Patching is sometimes necessary, however, if a rider has the unfortunate luck of having multiple flats on a ride. If you don't know how to change a flat or to do basic maintenance on your bike, attend a class on maintenance or find a friend willing to teach you.
6. **Food and Water:** Always have with you enough water and food to sustain you during the ride. Fig newtons, pop tarts, raisins, oatmeal cookies, peanut butter crackers, and many other snacks high in carbs are great to eat in small portions during a ride for that extra boost of energy. Remaining well hydrated is very important. Many cyclists wear hydration units on their

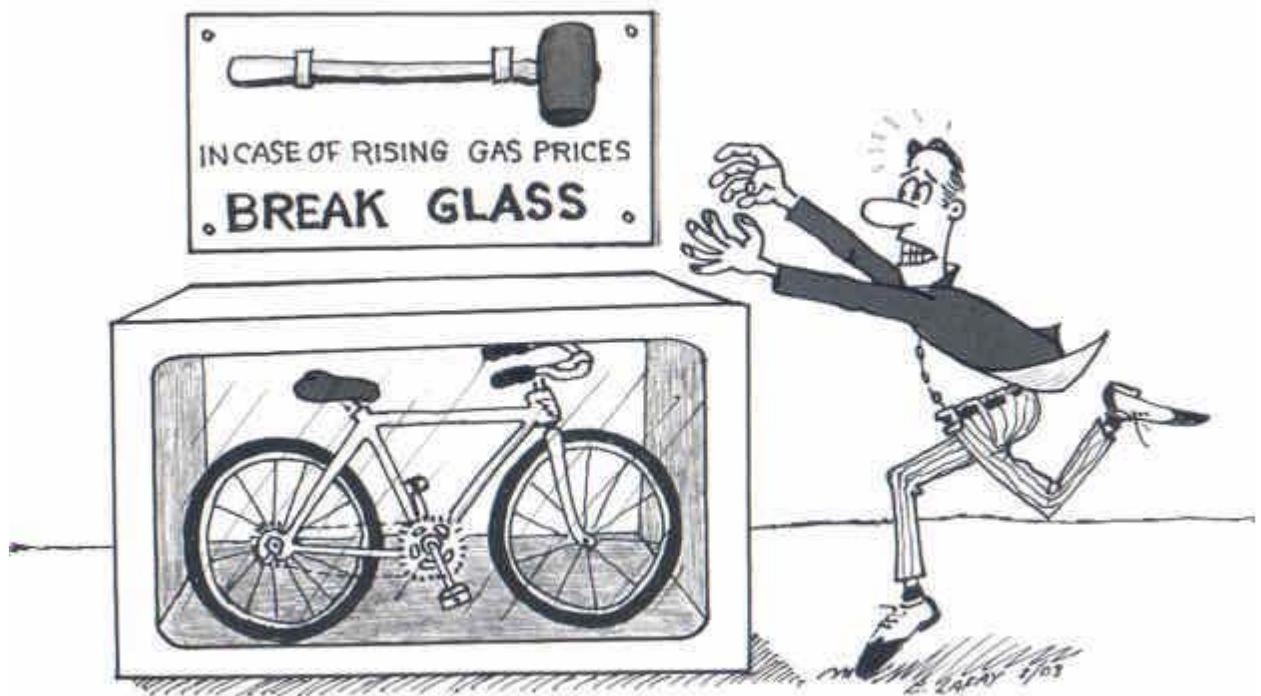
backs so that water is readily available during a ride. One rule of thumb is to drink one bottle of water every 12 miles or every hour. Eat before you are hungry and drink before you are thirsty.

7. **Riding in Traffic:** Ride with the traffic on the right side of the road. Don't block the flow of traffic. Ride single file in high traffic areas. Always be aware of traffic around you. Watch for traffic in intersections, vehicles entering from driveways, and know what is coming behind you. Some riders wear a rear view mirror on the helmet or eyeglasses or mount one on the bicycle frame, handlebars or the back of the left glove to monitor traffic coming from behind. Others may prefer other means of monitoring the flow of nearby vehicles. Cyclists have the right to be on the roadways in Texas as long as they do not impede the flow of traffic.
8. **No Headphones:** Cyclists should not wear headphones. Headphones mask traffic noise and warnings from other cyclists thus causing the cyclist to be unaware of possible dangers.
9. **Obey traffic laws.** Always signal when turning. Point to the right with your right hand when turning right and point to the left with your left hand when turning left. Extend your left hand downward to indicate that you are slowing down. Stop at stop signs and red lights, and stay in bicycle lanes if available. Cyclists are responsible for following the same rules of the road as drivers of motor vehicles.
10. **Avoid Obstacles and Road Hazards:** As you ride, be on a constant lookout for obstacles in the road. Potholes, cracks in the pavement, railroad tracks, wet leaves and grates are but a few obstacles that can cause a cyclist to fall. Cross railroad tracks at a 90-degree angle. Make sure when you move out to avoid an obstacle, you signal so drivers know what you plan to do. Some bridges can be very hazardous, especially when located in isolated areas where the roads and bridges may be poorly maintained.
11. **Keep your cool.** Don't react to angry motorists. A motorist angered by one cyclist may take it out on another down the road.
12. **Avoid Pace lines:** New riders may be tempted to ride in a pace line. NEVER ride in a pace line unless you have practiced with 2 or 3 cyclists who are experts at riding in pace lines. Don't join in until your trainers have said you are ready. There is a lot more to riding in a pace line than meets the

newcomer's eye. It is a very dangerous practice without experience and training.

13. **Avoid cycling at night:** If night cycling is necessary, make sure you have bright rear and front lights on your bicycle and wear reflective clothing.
13. **Have Fun!** Above all, enjoy yourself. Everyone starts cycling at a particular level and with practice becomes more and more proficient. Half the fun of cycling is learning helpful riding techniques from others. It's a great feeling of accomplishment when the rider realizes improvement in his/her ability to ride different terrains, do rides in increasingly longer distances, and enjoy increased stamina and physical strength from the exercise.

Additional information about cycling equipment, maintenance and safety is available on the website [RoadBikeRider.com](http://RoadBikeRider.com).



## GUIDELINES FOR RIDE LEADERS

Members are frequently asked to be ride leaders. Following are guidelines for acting as a leader of published EPBC rides.

**Ride Description:** Give the ride coordinator all the necessary information about your ride. Include in this order the day, date, time of departure, fitness level, starting place, general description of the route, the pace (beginner/easy, moderate, fast) number of miles, any additional needed information such as entry fees to parks and your name and contact information.

**Remember:** Once you submit a ride, you are committed. Rides are scheduled at least a month in advance so put it on your calendar so you don't forget. In preparation for the ride, make any necessary special arrangements for the ride (restaurant reservations or notification of park rangers about the ride on public lands as examples). If you find that you cannot lead the ride, immediately find another ride leader willing to take responsibility for the ride.

**Meeting the Riders:** On the day of the ride arrive in plenty of time to prepare yourself and your bike for the ride and then greet the riders as they arrive. Make the riders feel welcome. Have each rider sign the Liability Release list. Get phone numbers of new riders so that you can follow up with a phone call after the ride. If individuals are carrying cell phones, exchange numbers with them. Emergency numbers in case of a mishap should also be entered on the form. Make sure each rider has a helmet. Bring extra helmets in case someone arrives without one. This is particularly important when leading a beginner/easy ride.

**Providing Information to the Riders:** The ride leader calls the group together about 5 minutes before the start time. The ride leader again introduces himself/herself and introduces new riders to the rest of the group. He/she then describes the route (some leaders provide a map of the route), describes any potential hazards to look out for on the route, gives locations where the group will stop to regroup (if there will be no regrouping, this should be announced), advises the riders that they ride at their own risk on roads shared by motor vehicles, and reminds riders to adhere to traffic laws. Traffic laws include stopping at red lights, staying in the right lane of the road, turning left from the far left lane, avoiding pulling out in front of traffic, and using hand signals (right, left, slow) so that motorists and other cyclists know what the rider plans to do. If there are different levels of riders, the leader may divide the group and appoint a leader for the faster group and then take responsibility for the slower group. The leader may ask for a

volunteer to ride sweep. This individual rides behind all riders so that when he/she arrives at the regroup site, it is clear that the entire group is intact. The leader and sweep should optimally be able to contact one another by cell phone.

The ride leader should also announce that any rider who leaves the ride for any reason during the ride must inform the ride leader before leaving the group. Riders who do not follow the announced route or do not follow the ride leader are no longer the responsibility of the ride leader or the EPBC.

**Start the Ride:** The ride should be started on time. Make sure everyone is ready.

**During the Ride:** The ride leader must provide a good example by following the rules of the road and keeping the ride at the pace listed in the ride schedule. If riders break the rules of the road, the leader is responsible for speaking with the riders about modifying the practice in order to insure the safety of all the riders. The ride leader should carry a basic tool kit and be prepared to help any rider that has mechanical problems. Unless the ride is advertised as leaderless or self-contained, the ride leader is responsible for making sure no rider is stranded for any reason.

On busy roadways, the leader makes sure the riders ride single file in order to prevent obstructing the flow of motorized vehicles and instructs riders to call “car back” when a car is approaching from the rear. Some motorists may resent riders on the road. The leader asks riders not to respond to angry gestures or words by motorists. Making them angrier may place another cyclist down the road in more danger from the motorist.

**The End of the Ride:** Thank the riders for coming and make sure the new riders feel welcome to join the group again for upcoming rides. Bring membership forms with you and hand them out to the new riders while inviting them to join the EPBC.

**Mentoring:** Interested new riders may wish to ride with and learn from accomplished riders who have volunteered for the mentoring program. Ride leaders may inform new riders about the mentoring program. The club has volunteers for beginner/easy, intermediate and fast riders who wish to become more comfortable, accomplished and safe riders.