

The Marker System

Anyone who's been on a bike club social run will be familiar with the marker system and will know how effective it is at keeping everyone on the chosen route and allowing everyone to ride at their own pace and within their abilities. When it does go wrong it's usually for one of these three reasons

- 1 Markers leaving their position before the tail-ender arrives
- 2 Unclear direction-pointing by the marker.
- 3 Markers placed where they can't easily be seen

At the start of the run, everyone will be briefed on what to do so hopefully options 1 and 2 should not happen. It is vital for the marker to stay where they are put, even if it means waiting for what seems to be an extra-ordinary length of time. There might have been a puncture, a breakdown, an extra unscheduled fuel stop, or an accident. The tail-ender will come along eventually or the leader, will stop and turn back to investigate when they run out of followers. Make sure you know who the leader is and who the tail-ender is.

Markers must give clear directions. An arm held out to the left or the right as appropriate, or vertically above the head for straight-on. Indicators should be TURNED OFF once the marker's bike is stationary. Many times markers have pulled over with left-hand indicator flashing when the leader has taken a right turn ahead. You can guess what happens next.

- 1 Markers will be placed BEFORE junctions unless the direction is straight-ahead AND there's clear visibility across the junction.
- 2 Markers will be placed on the EXIT from roundabouts. Where there is no ambiguity, markers may be placed on the entrance to roundabouts, eg 1st exit (right turn in Europe).
- 3 When making a turn after a long distance on a stretch of road, or anywhere the actual turning is obscured, an initial WARNING marker may be placed approximately 500 yards before the turn. The leader will indicate that you are a WARNING marker by waving the flat of the hand in a down-wards motion. The use of WARNING markers will be covered in the run briefing.
- 4 The tail-ender will make themselves known by waving their arm or flashing their lights. Maybe even both!
- 5 If you are not ready to move off as the tail-ender approaches, the tail ender will either slow down enough to allow the marker time to get ready, pull in behind the marker or if not safe to do so will pass the marker and wait at the next convenient point until the marker has passed the tail-ender.
- 6 If you need to make an extra fuel/rest stop make sure to flag down the tail ender and let them know. The tail ender will then wait while you make the unscheduled stop.