

AOAC Standard Operating Procedure for Cycling

1. Introduction

This Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) sets out the procedure for holding cycling events within the Avon Outdoor Activities Club (AOAC). This document identifies the responsibilities of Activity Leaders and participants to ensure that cycling events are safe and enjoyable for all.

This SOP applies to cycling events which are listed on the Club Calendar or Forum. As defined in the Club's Activity Management Policy, unless otherwise stated, these events are covered by AOAC policy and insurance.

2. Participation Statement

AOAC recognises that cycling (road, mountain, trail or touring) is an activity with a danger of personal injury or death. Participants in these activities should be aware of and accept these risks and be responsible for their own actions, equipment and involvement.

3. Event Planning

At least every six months the Cycle Co-ordinator will convene a meeting to establish a calendar of cycling activities throughout the following 6 months. The meeting will also determine the Event Organisers and Activity Leaders responsible for each individual event.

Events will be suitable for participants with a range of different Experience Levels and will be listed on the Club Calendar by the Event Organiser.

4. Experience Levels

The Experience Level is the level at which participants can confidently and safely perform the skills identified in Tables 1 to 4 below. These levels are self-selected by the individual and it is strongly recommended that caution is exercised in doing so. As individuals progress, they may choose to self-select a higher Experience Level; however, it is recommended that they seek advice and the opinion of the Activity Leader before doing so.

Table 1. Road Cycling –

Experience Level	Pace (mph)	Terrain	Distance (miles)	Time in saddle (hours)
Beginner	<10	Flat and short hills or shallow hills	Up to 25 depending on terrain	Up to 2.5
Intermediate	10-14	All types of terrain.	Up to 60	Up to 6
Experienced	14-20	All types of terrain.	Up to 100	Up to 12

Table 2. Mountain Biking (Trail Centre) -

Experience Level	Technical Difficulty	Fitness	Trail and Surface Types	Gradients and Technical Trail Features (TTFs)
Green	Easy	Suitable for most people in good	Relatively flat and wide. The trail	Climbs and descents tend to be

		health	surface may be loose, uneven or muddy at times. May include short flowing single track style sections	shallow. No challenging features.
Blue	Moderate	A good standard of fitness can help	As green but specially constructed single track. Trail surface may include small obstacles such as roots and rocks	Most gradients are moderate but may include short sharp sections including small TTFs
Red	Difficult	Higher level of fitness and stamina	Steeper and tougher, mostly single track with technical sections. Expect very variable surface types	A wide range of climbs and descents of a challenging nature will be present. Expect boardwalks, berms, large rocks, medium steps, drop-offs, camber, and water crossings
Black	Severe	Suitable for very active people used to prolonged effort	As red but with an expectation of greater challenge and continuous difficulty. Can include any useable trail and may include exposed open hill sections	Expect large, committing and unavoidable TTFs. Sections will be challenging and variable. May also have "downhill" style sections

Table 3. Mountain Biking (Cross Country) -.

Experience Level	Technical Difficulty	Pace (mph)	Terrain	Distance (miles)	Time in Saddle (hours)
Beginner (green)	Easy	3 – 6	Gentle rolling	10 - 20	
Intermediate (blue)	Moderate	4 - 8	All terrain without advanced technical obstacles	25 - 30	4
Experienced (red)	Difficult	6 - 8	All terrain	25 – 50	

Table 4. Touring -

Experience Level	Pace (mph)	Terrain	Distance (miles)	Time in Saddle (hours)
Beginner	Up to 8	Flat and short hills or shallow hills	40	Up to 5
Intermediate	Up to 12	All types of terrain	60	Up to 7
Experienced	12 or more	All types of terrain	Up to 80	Up to 8

5. Individual Event Requirements

Each AOAC cycling event must be led by an approved Activity Leader.

The Activity Leader will run the event according to their responsibilities set out in Section 6. Event participants will participate in events according to their Experience Level and their responsibilities set out in Section 7. All shall comply with the Club's Health & Safety Policy.

6. Responsibilities of the Activity Leader

To comply with the Club's insurance the Activity Leader must:

- Be familiar with the published Risk Assessment and Club H&S Policy;
- Carry out dynamic risk assessment during the event;
- Submit any Incident Reports as may be required, through the form available on the Club website.

The Activity Leader should also check that all participants have suitable equipment, in suitable working condition for the event.

6. Guidance

Activity Leaders should consider the following best-practice recommendations:

- Identify all beginners and where possible pair each one with an individual of a higher Experience Level;
- Confirm that the equipment and fitness levels of the individual are of a sufficient / appropriate level for the event Experience Level;
- Consider the size of the groupings on the road and be aware of other road users;
- Consider management of the group when making right turns at junctions and roundabouts. Warning the group in advance of such turnings is good practice.

It is Club policy that the wearing of helmets is mandatory for off-road cycling events. For road rides, the decision is vested in the Activity Leader who should consider the terrain, levels of technical difficulty in conjunction with the Experience Levels of the participants. The Activity Leader's decision on this is final.

7. Responsibilities of all Event Participants

Each event participant must ensure that he or she:

- Self-selects into an appropriate Experience Level and errs on the side of caution if unsure;

- Contacts the Activity Leader or Event Organiser prior to turning up to confirm there is space on the event for an individual at their particular Experience Level;
- Wears a cycle helmet whilst mountain biking. The Activity Leader will advise if helmets are to be worn for road cycling events;
- Follows the instructions of the Activity Leader/ Trail Centre staff and Trail Centre Rules; and
- Acts in a way which does not negatively affect the enjoyment of other cyclists or Trail Centre users.

8. Selection of Activity Leaders

The current position in AOAC Cycling is that there is no agreed process for approving Cycle Activity Leaders. However, AOAC needs to have a list of Approved Leaders for insurance purposes; so, as an interim measure, until a full process is agreed, the Approved Leaders for cycling will be those who have previously led rides and have the approval of the Cycle Co-ordinator.

This SOP will be updated when the formal process for approving Cycling Activity leaders is agreed.

The interim process: An individual wishing to be a Cycling Activity Leader must fulfil the following criteria:

- Be a proven competent leader for the level of activity and have led cycle rides previously; or
- Hold National Governing Body (NGB), Cycle Touring Club (CTC) or British Cycling qualifications (or equivalent).

All Activity Leaders must be approved by the Cycle Co-ordinator and a minimum of two already approved Activity Leaders to have a suitable level of experience to lead the particular activity.

A register of Cycling Activity Leaders will be maintained by the Cycle Co-ordinator and made available through the Club website.

9. Risk Assessments

Generic Risk Assessments will be produced by the Cycle Co-ordinator for road cycling, mountain biking (trail centres and cross country) and touring activities. The generic risk assessments will be published on the Club website and should be reviewed by Activity Leaders as part of event preparations.

10. Definitions

Activity Leader: The person supervising, directing and providing guidance to participating members during the course of an AOAC activity or part of an activity.

Cycle Co-ordinator: The individual with overall responsibility for organising and leading the AOAC cycling programme. Individual events will be organised by the relevant Activity leader or Event Organiser.

Event Participant: Individual AOAC member participating in a specific event.