

# Mountain Biking Policy of the Rensselaer Outing Club

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## General Policies

- The club provides a limited number of bikes, helmets, etc., all equipment is first come first serve.
- Helmets must be worn on ALL rides regardless of difficulty.
- There must be at least three riders on every trip.
- All leaders must meet the club first aid requirements as listed under the First Aid Policy in the Bylaws.
- Bikes are considered technical and can be used only on official club trips

## Classification of Trips:

### Easy:

- Beginner and intermediate riders, on-road experience is strongly recommended.
- Terrain consists of mostly double track with short, easy, sections of single track.
- Weather is mild, with no snow or ice
- Pace is moderate and rides are short (less than 8-10 miles or depending on terrain).  
Examples: Albany Pine Bush, Colonie Town Park

### Moderate:

- Intermediate riders comfortable on single track and capable of periods of climbing
- Terrain is varying and more technical; trail is mostly single track.
- Pace is faster and rides may be longer, this is also determined by the terrain.
- Some snow or light ice may be present on the trail.
- Examples: Reservoir Trail at Grafton, Central Park at Schenectady, Ridge Trail Colonie Town Park, North Bethlehem Park, Pittstown trail system

### Difficult:

- Skilled riders with considerable experience only.
- The terrain is highly varying and very technical, includes extended climbs
- Heavy snow cover or consistent ice may be present on the trail, low temperatures
- Freestyle features fall under this category.
- Examples: Vassar Farms, Skytop, Gore Mountain, Ski resort rides

## **Strenuous:**

- Advanced riders on overnight or 50+ mile trips.
- Terrain is highly technical and involves strenuous climbing.
- Trip leaders are required to have sufficient Backpacking leadership and experience for overnight rides.
- Extreme weather conditions, related to cold or heat
- Examples: Kingdom Trails, White Rim Trail, Kokopelli Trail

## **Classification of Leaders:**

### **Assistant Trip Leader:**

- Familiar with proper trail etiquette (see “Understanding of Trail Etiquette”)
- Able to attach bikes to cars without damage.
- Knows basic bike and participant maintenance/repair (see “Required Skills”)
- Knowledge of basic mountain biking techniques (see “Demonstrable Technique”)
- Requires outdoor wilderness first Aid and CPR

### **Day Trip Leader:**

- Leaders must meet all the requirements of an assistant leader
- Fluent in basic bike mechanics, must be able to repair the following on the trail: Flat Bike Tire, Brake Adjustments, Chain break
- Substantial technical proficiency and extensive experience

### **Overnight Trip Leader:**

- Must be able to achieve and obtain day trip leadership as well as obtain backpacking overnight leadership
- Must have prior experience with overnight bicycling trips, and have the endurance for difficult to strenuous biking

## **Required Knowledge:**

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### **Required skills:**

- WFA and CPR certifications
- Ability to change a tube
- Ability to patch a tube
- Ability to safely mount bicycles on a variety of rack types
- Ability to repair broken chain
- Basic adjustment of components such as handlebars, seats, cable tightness

## **Demonstrable Technique:**

- General:
  - Braking: brake gradually, with pulsed inputs to avoid locked brake slides. Do not rapidly apply front brake
  - Maintain level feet whenever not actively pedaling
- Descent:
  - Higher gear for higher speed
  - Low center of gravity, muscles loose to absorb impact, often slightly above seat
- Ascent:
  - Lower gear for greater torque
  - Proper weight distribution, maintain weight on back wheel for traction while pressing handlebars down to keep front wheel grounded
  - Typically hold body higher, more forward than riding downhill or flat
- Obstacles:
  - Judge whether or not the bike has sufficient clearance to ride an obstacle. If not, ride around remaining on trail, or carry bike over obstacle.
  - Remain low over the bike. Keep body loose to allow bike movement with minimum body movement
  - Avoid significant pedaling inputs, and keep feet flat as possible

## **Understanding of Trail Etiquette:**

- Yielding right of way:
  - Hikers always have right of way. Step off of bike and move to side of trail
  - Horses always have right of way. Retreat as far from trail as possible while respecting LNT principles.
  - Ascending mountain biker has right of way over a descending mountain biker, but must forfeit right of way to non-biking parties. Step off of bike and move to side of trail.
  - When yielding to a hiker or biker, keep bike tires on trail if possible. Lean against a tree while doing so. If necessary, leave trail carrying bike. Do not ride bike off of trail.
- In double track, ride on the right side of the trail
- When passing another rider:
  - Pass on the left when possible
  - Politely communicate intent to pass to other rider
  - Do not make a pass on a corner or leading into a corner
  - Avoid passing during climbs and at high rates of speed while descending
  - Pass at reasonably slow speed
- When passing a hiker:
  - Pass on the left, on bike only if double track and very wide trail
  - Communicate intent to pass
  - On single track/narrow trails, dismount bike and walk/carry bike past hiker
- Do not ride when trails are wet or muddy, especially when riding in large groups
- Never ride bicycle off of established trails
- Use caution when approaching corners and blind hills, especially when descending and at speed. If possible, make noise when approaching blind corners
- If the trail has an established riding direction, always go with the flow

# Trip Gear:

## Required:

- Minimum toolkit of:
  - pump
  - patches and spare tube
  - tire levers
  - hex wrench set
- Map, compass, first aid kit
- Extra food and water
- Clothing appropriate for the conditions. Long pants and sleeves are strongly recommended, especially for beginners and on challenging trips
- Bike Helmet

## Optional Gear:

- Extra Clothing
- Pads (Knee or Elbow) Gloves. May be made mandatory for freestyle features
- When riding a significant distance from a trailhead, chain repair tool and links. Required for difficult and strenuous trips.