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# Rules of the Road for OHWT and Century Tours

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## OFFICIAL HIGH WHEEL TOUR (OHWT)

1. The purpose of riding an OHWT is to become a voting member of The Wheelmen by riding at least 10 miles. Only riders of high wheels, hard tired, and pneumatic safeties manufactured in 1918 or before are eligible for voting status. Riders of other machines may be awarded certificates or other awards at the discretion of the sponsoring committee.
2. To constitute an "Official" tour, the ride must be authorized by a National or State Officer. Authorization must be given before the ride.
3. Any OHWT sponsored by a National, State, or Local organization of The Wheelmen will be conducted both for the enjoyment of the members riding in it and to present The Wheelmen to the public in the most favorable manner for their enjoyment and education.
4. The National Commander, or another National Officer designated by him, shall be invited to ride in #1 position (front right). The State Captain shall be invited to ride in #2 position. The event chairman rides #3 and the national or state bugler rides #4. The event chairman decides whether state contingents are to ride separately, each with its captain, bugler, and pennant, or whether to encourage social mixing. Officers will be followed first by the uniformed riders and then riders not in uniform.
5. Uniforms, as selected by individual states but compatible with national standards, are to be encouraged. The use of comic costumes is forbidden unless compatible with the intent of the tour or ride.
6. The riders will stay in columns of 1, 2, 3, or 4 as directed by the tour commander and will stay at the interval directed. The speed and rest stops will be adapted to the abilities of the group to maintain the integrity of the tour. Ride to the right and observe stop signs, red lights and all road rules unless otherwise directed. Ride in track of bike ahead, handlebars in line with the rider to the right, and lines close together. Bicycles are to be off paved roads at stops.
7. The main body of the group will be followed by a rear deputy selected by the tour commander who will enforce the alignment and spacing. Those having mechanical difficulty or unable to maintain position will drop behind the deputy and others will close up in his space.
8. Orders or information will be passed between the tour commander and the rear deputy, forward and back, by bugle, by voice from rider to rider to rider, or by courier at the option of the commander.
9. As a general rule, only high wheel bicycle types will be in the leading echelon of the formation, followed by high wheel tricycles. These will be followed by hard tired safeties and then by antique pneumatic tired safeties. Modern safeties must stay behind all other classes. Excepted will be couriers, patrols, and official photographers appointed by the Commander and identified as such.
10. High wheel bicycles must be authentic in appearance. Riders of reproductions will be eligible for tour certificates. Marginal or challenged cases will be decided by the state or national officers present.
11. Only members of The Wheelmen will be considered for awards and certificates. Non-members may be made honorary members for a specific OHWT or ride and be eligible for a certificate of completion without voting rights.
12. A sag wagon or other suitable means of assistance to riders may be provided to bring up the rear to aid any who may drop out or lag behind the main group. No rider will be left behind unless they desire and are able to continue or return on their own.

## CENTURY RUN

1. A century run is a special occasion for a specific purpose and as such will not be governed by OHWT rules as a whole. To qualify for a Wheelmen Century award, the following rules will be followed.
2. A century run is a ride of at least 100 miles held on roads and highways, with a definite starting and ending point. The starting time need not be the same for all riders, but an accurate account will be kept for each rider and the vehicle used.
3. Comfort and safety are paramount, and each rider will be responsible to a great extent for his or her own procedures and clothing.
4. The route will be planned by the sponsoring group to provide the least hardship and the greatest freedom from hazards. The route should be clearly marked so that each rider will cover the same ground. Maps or written directions may be helpful to the riders.
5. Rest stops will be at the option of the rider and no substitute riders will be permitted. A change of vehicle will be permitted as long as the substitution is of the same type. (That is Ordinary for Ordinary, Star for Star, Eagle for Eagle, etc.)
6. Century runs conducted on indoor tracks will not be eligible for Wheelmen awards or certificates.
7. Contact will be maintained with riders by means of patrols or check points. Any loss of contact will be investigated without delay.
8. A time limit will be established for the century run by the sponsoring committee. All riders will complete the century run within a single 18 hour period.
9. A sincere attempt should be made to have riding only in daylight hours with good visibility and road conditions. Should it be necessary to have riding at night, there will be a car closely following each rider with headlights and flashing emergency lights. Under no conditions will a rider on an official Century Run be abandoned to look out for himself or herself. On roads closed to other traffic, rules for following after dark need not apply.
10. Riders who wish to attempt more than a century distance will do so only with the knowledge, approval and control of the sponsoring committee.
11. An Official Wheelmen Century is to be ridden on high wheels or a hard tire (pre-pneumatic) safety bicycle, or a pneumatic safety manufactured in 1918 or before. At the option of the sponsoring committee, other bicycles may be included on the ride with appropriate awards or certificates given. Only riders of the above described cycles will be listed on The Wheelmen roster as century riders.
12. To constitute an "Official" Wheelmen Century, the ride must be authorized by a National or State officer. Authorization must be given before the ride.

*These rules were suggested to the Executive Committee by Bob McNair and Ernie Knight for the safety and enjoyment of all Wheelmen members.*

*There may arise from time to time, situations which are not covered by these rules or which may conflict with these rules. Common sense and logic should prevail. If it appears there should be a variation of these rules for any purpose, such variation should be authorized by a National Officer prior to the ride.*

*These rules were accepted by The Wheelmen Executive Committee, Commander Menker presiding, June 11, 1978, Bluffton, Ohio. Any changes or amendments shall be passed by the Executive Committee, or by the members at an Annual Meeting.*

*Pneumatic tire safeties manufactured in 1918 or before were accepted for century qualification by vote of Wheelmen members at the Annual Meeting held on July 12, 1992 at White River Junction, VT, Commander Garrettson presiding.*

## SOME THOUGHTS ON LARGE GROUP RIDES

Our group tours at Annual Meets were some of the largest groups The Wheelmen have put on the road. What a spectacular sight; bicycles as far as one could see. There were problems created by such a large group. At times the pace seemed too slow and then got slower causing riders to bunch up and lose balance. At other times great gaps developed in the group as the lead riders picked up the pace more than all riders could maintain. An excellent bugler at the head of the column helps, but with a long column, most of the riders cannot hear the bugle calls. A second bugler at the rear of the column could send messages forward. (We need more riders who are willing to learn to play the bugle.) Two way radio communication, as used during at least one Annual Meet, between the head of the column and the sweep at the very back, kept us from experiencing major problems, but did not allow messages to get to all riders. The following are some thoughts on guidelines to help make large group rides easier to manage and safer.

**DIVISIONS:** Large groups are easier to manage when they are divided into divisions. Forty to fifty riders seems to be the largest group that can be kept together using two bugles, one at the head and one at the rear of the group. Twenty to twenty-five riders can usually be managed with voice and hand signals. Bob McNair initiated a scheme for marking off the divisions using sashes, a white sash to mark the lead rider in the division and a red sash to mark the rear of the division. In Bob's tenure as an active Wheelmen, we seldom had enough riders to warrant multiple divisions. Now that we do, we have his foresight to guide us.

**STARTING FROM REST:** The group should assemble in the formation planned insofar as possible. When the call to mount is sent, the first rider or pair mounts. As they gain their saddles the second mounts and so on back. (Note: this is quite different from parade practice where all riders mount as nearly in unison as possible.) Similarly, when the call to dismount is sent, the first rider or pair dismounts directly. Following riders should either dismount and keep moving on foot to close in with the first, or ride on until, when they dismount, they are close to the group.

**SPACING:** Establishing and maintaining spacing between riders is critical for safety and for appearance! On tour it has seemed advisable to keep approximately one bike length between riders in a column and at least eighteen inches between handlebar ends of adjacent riders. Once

the spacing is established we usually hold it fairly well until we change from single file to a column of twos or from twos to single file.

**DOUBLE COLUMN:** Moving from single file to a column of twos shortens the length of the moving column to one half of the original length. If the lead riders continue at the original pace, all other riders will be forced to speed up to catch up and fill in the spaces taken by the riders that form the second column. Having speeded up, they then must slow down, often abruptly, when they have closed the gap. This is an open invitation to trouble. (A spectacular header occurred during a Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade when a rider speeded up to close a gap only to reach the group as it slowed to a near stop. There is no way to rapidly decelerate an Ordinary and still stay on top!) Instead, when the bugler calls for a column of twos from single file, the lead should slow as the second comes to his side and hold that slowed pace until the rear bugle (or passed voice report) tells him that the whole division is in double file. Speeding up after the desired formation has been assembled does not create the potential for trouble created by the need to slow abruptly.

**SINGLE FILE:** Moving from double file to single file we see the other side of the coin. The single file column will be twice as long as the double file column was. If the lead riders continue at the same pace, the back of the column will be forced to slow down markedly to make room for the riders filling in from the left. This is a particularly great problem when the pace is leisurely to begin with. We often find our newer and less stable riders at the rear of the column and when they are forced to slow down in this manner they have great difficulty maintaining a straight line or even keeping up on their bicycle. Going into single file *requires* the first pair to speed up. As they do, the outside rider (usually the left) moves in behind the lead. They then hold that pace as the second pair speeds up with the outside rider moving into the single line. This pattern follows back to the end of the column at which time the bugle (or voice relay) sends the message forward to resume the normal pace. It should be further noted that this requires considerable road space. The leader must anticipate arrival at a point that requires single file. A rule of thumb is to call for single file when the distance to the restriction is equal to the length of the full double column.

**REST STOPS:** For tours of twenty miles or less with many new riders, rest stops should be planned every half-hour or approximately five miles. These stops need not be long, but should provide shade and water or other beverage. Where possible restrooms should be available at about one hour intervals. After each rest stop, riders should be encouraged to leave with a new riding partner thus getting acquainted with as many fellow Wheelmen as possible. Changing position in the column between rest stops should be discouraged as it requires riders to swing away from the column and cut back in.

**HILLS:** Steep hills that cannot be ridden by all, either up or down, cause another potential hazard that a little preplanning can greatly reduce. Riders who feel they must dismount should announce their plan in a loud voice (shout it out) and move to the far right side of the roadway. Once dismounted they should check to the rear and make way for continuing riders. Also, overtaking riders should announce their plans with "On your left!" or some such

warning. When a number of riders have dismounted to walk a hill, those who ride to the top (or bottom) should dismount there and wait for the whole group to reassemble before riding on.

**BRIDGES:** Such obstacles pose a problem that is often overlooked by people scouting routes by car or modern safety bicycle. Guard rails that seem adequate or more than adequate from that perspective near the ground may seem small and inadequate from the lofty perch of a high wheel rider. Where traffic will dictate riding at the edge of such a bridge the group should dismount before the bridge and all riders walk across. This is particularly important for long, high, or steep bridges.

When these fairly simple concepts are kept in mind by tour planners and leaders and taught to all new riders, Wheelmen tours can provide lots of sociability and pride for the riders without hazard and a spectacular sight for observers.