



By [Marc Lindsay](https://blog.mapmyrun.com/10-cycling-hand-signals-need-know/) March 9, 2017 - <https://blog.mapmyrun.com/10-cycling-hand-signals-need-know/> - edited by Darwin Cycling Club 2019

When riding in groups for the first few times you might hear or see these calls or signals. Learn them to keep you — and those around you — safe out on the road. While you may prefer to ride at the back, being aware of these is important. As you become more confident make sure you alert others as well. Ensure your calls can be heard by those around you and pass along. Ensure hand signals, especially for obstructions are passed backward.

Also see the Darwin Cycling Club ‘Rides’ web page for [Bunch Riding Etiquette](#).

Calls without hand signals

Situation	Call
On coming cyclist or pedestrian on narrow road or path.	“Rider Up” or “Walker Up”
Moving to right side of lane/s for turning right after checking for traffic from the rear –this call should come from the rear of the group (if they know the route) and should be passed up the line.	“Take the Lane” followed by right turn hand signal
Car approaching from the rear on single lane road where overtaking is difficult and the group should move as far left as is safe – this will come from the rear of the group and should be passed up. Where traffic is constant there is no need to repeat the call.	“Car back”
When passing through give way intersection and there is no need for riders behind you to stop.	“Clear” or “Clear left/right”
When passing through give way intersection and riders behind should stop due to oncoming traffic.	“Car left/right”
Stopping in a hurry (no time to hand signal – hands on brakes)	“Stopping”
There is no longer a need to stop or slow at an intersection or red light.	“Rolling”

Hand signals



The hand signal you use for stopping will most likely depend on the situation. If you're only riding with one or two other cyclists, a closed fist behind the back is probably sufficient. On a large group ride, raising your hand above your head may be a more appropriate option because it is more visible to cyclists several positions behind.

Keep in mind that when a sudden stop is required, you'll likely have both hands on the brake levers. In this situation, calling out "stop" over your shoulder is your next best option.



When you're riding with other cyclists, it's always a good idea to alert those behind you when your speed begins to decrease. This can help to keep others following closely from accidentally riding into your wheel.

To signal that you plan to begin slowing, extend your arm with palm down and move your hand up and down. While signalling, it's always a good idea to call "slowing" if possible.



An unseen pothole has the potential to cause an accident. When in a group, point out a pothole or other obstacle that shouldn't be ridden over by extending your arm on the side of the obstruction and pointing to it.

Always call “hole” while pointing to help others avoid it.



Dirt, gravel, sand or other loose debris on the road that might cause you to lose traction should be signalled to all trailing cyclists.

Though there are two variations to this signal, you should always extend your arm on the side of the loose debris. With your arm extended, you can either wiggle your fingers or wave your hand side to side, palm down. For broken glass always call “glass” to help others avoid it.



While a bit tricky to signal, you'll need to alert cyclists behind you of a parked car, an open car door, chicane, pedestrian island etc. To signal an approaching hazard, place one arm (use the arm that is on the same side as the hazard) behind your back and point in the direction those behind you need to move.

For example, if there is a parked car or slower rider on the left side of the road and the group needs to move right, place your left hand behind your back and point to the right.



This signal is most commonly used in a pace line during a group ride or race. When you find yourself on the front of the pack and have either completed your pull or are too tired to continue maintaining the front position, a flick of the elbow will alert the rider behind you that it is their turn to pull through and relieve you of your duties.

If you are second in line you should keep alert to the front rider's arms.



Whether you're entering an adjacent lane of traffic or making a turn at a traffic signal or stop sign, you'll need to indicate to others on the road that you intend to change your direction of travel. Extend your arm away from your body to shoulder height, parallel to the road.

In a group, extending your arm away from your body to at least shoulder or head height (so others at the rear can see) and pointing in the direction of the turn is usually acceptable.



The road can be a stressful place. While it's easy to get mad when an inconsiderate motorist/cyclist/pedestrian creates a dangerous situation (and there's a few hand signals for that), it's just as easy to forget to acknowledge others when you've been given the right of way.

Waving to other motorists and your fellow cyclists on the roadway helps to create a less hostile environment and positively promote the sport of cycling. It's also a good way to remind yourself to have fun and be friendly when sharing the road with others.