



Ride Marshal Manual

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Thank you so much for volunteering your time for WABA!

Our signature rides, which are major fundraisers for WABA, can only happen with your help. We take your commitment very seriously and we appreciate your time and expertise. We are very grateful for your support and everything you do for biking in DC, Maryland, and Virginia.

If you have any questions or comments about your marshal commitment or the information provided here, please contact WABA's Events Coordinator at events@waba.org.

I. Overview

Purpose

Ride marshals perform two very important functions for WABA rides.

- **First, you are WABA's eyes on the road** and the first line of response if there is an incident involving any ride participants. You are responsible for alerting WABA staff about all incidents involving ride participants and 911 if someone needs medical assistance.
- **Second, you are a representative of WABA.** Therefore, you should set a positive example for other bicyclists during the ride and be an enthusiastic ambassador for WABA . Marshals provide a friendly and welcoming ride environment for all participants and encourage other riders. Your participation in the ride, and how you interact with other riders, can "make it or break it" for paying participants.

Responsibilities

Respond to Emergencies & Incidents

Since WABA staff can't go along for the ride and see everything that happens along the route, marshals are the eyes and ears of what happens. We aim to have a 1 to 10 marshal to rider ratio, so that when an incident or crash occurs, there is a marshal present or nearby. As a marshal, it is your duty to respond to incidents involving riders participating in the event.

You are not required to assist bicyclists not participating in WABA events, however, use your best judgment to respond these situations as they arise. If you see a bicyclist who just got in a crash and is in need of emergency medical assistance, feel empowered to assist them.

We will review the specific response procedures in the next section. Below are some of the common situations at which you should stop and respond:

- If someone in your group is involved in an incident or crash
- If you pass by a group of participants in the event (who can be identified by the colored wristband and cue sheets) in which someone has been involved in an incident
- If you just see a participant stopped on the side of the road or trail looking like they might need help

If someone is having trouble with their bicycle, and you feel confident assisting, please offer your help and expertise. A good way to approach this kind of situation is to ask a rider "Do you have all the tools you need?" rather than "Do you know what you're doing?". Don't feel pressure to donate your spare tube or CO2 cartridge, but if they have the supplies or you can fix it with the patch kit in your marshal kit, help them out. Alternatively, if it is not something that can be fixed on the spot, encourage them to end the ride early.

If a rider experiences a minor injury, such as a blister or scrape on the knee from falling while clipped in, offer first aid supplies to the person. You are not required to perform first aid yourself, only to offer supplies from your marshal kit that we provide you. If a person on our ride is resting on the side of the road, see if they are okay and need help with navigation or want to join your group. If they seem like they may be dehydrated or nearing physical exhaustion (signs can include extreme sleepiness, headache, dizziness, or lightheadedness), encourage them to drink more water or eat a snack if they have it, or retire early and call a friend to come pick them up.

If the incident or crash is major and it seems like the person needs medical attention, or if the crash involved a vehicle, it is a very good idea to call 911 to have the police arrive and take down a police report (and to request an ambulance if the person is injured). If the incident or crash is major, you must call the WABA Emergency Response Staff to alert WABA of the incident and let us know if we are needed to respond and drive out to provide assistance, speaking to the police if the crash involved a vehicle, or collecting the injured person's bike if they leave in an ambulance.

At the end of the ride, turn in any Incident Report Cards to the WABA table at the finish location.

During the week following the ride, you will also receive an email asking you to complete a Google Survey online. We ask that everyone complete this form as it is crucial in letting us know of any incident that went unreported the day of the event as well as useful for collecting information about the route that we can use to improve the event for next time.

Be a Positive Representation of WABA and Bicycling

While marshaling a WABA ride, you are representing WABA. Riders tend to think of all marshals and event volunteers as "WABA staff." From the time you arrive at the start location, at each pit stop, along the route, and until the time you leave the post-ride celebration, you are a representative of this organization, and we ask that you act accordingly.

A positive representation means biking responsibly and abiding by traffic laws. Mainly, don't be a jerk. Show respect to all other road users. As a WABA ride marshal you should follow ALL traffic laws. Please take special care to:

- Stop at all red lights
- Yield to pedestrians

- Be predictable (i.e. use hand signals when turning to let drivers know your intentions)
- Do not ride more than two abreast
- Show a willingness to communicate with riders you don't know (no earbuds or loud music)

Help Make the Event a Positive & Fun Experience for Participants

This experience should be fun for both you and other ride participants. By being friendly and welcoming to other bicyclists, you'll enjoy the ride even more.

Share bicycling advice with others. Chat with bicyclists in your group and talk about how long you've been riding, what bikes you have, how you got involved with WABA, etc. Be prepared to answer basic questions about WABA and what the organization does (hint: we're an advocacy organization that works to make it safer and more enjoyable to ride a bike in DC, MD, and VA, and we teach people how to bike and how to bike more confidently).

And, as you're biking, call out road hazards like big potholes or debris in the roadway. People are going to depend on you for help with the little things like when turns are coming up, so use hand signals and/or call out upcoming turns.

Lastly, make the event a positive experience for ALL participants. If you notice someone along the ride who doesn't have anyone to bike with, invite them to join you. If you notice people who are on our ride that may look lost, stop and inquire if they need help navigating. Biking is always more fun with friends, so make an effort to incorporate riders into your good experience.

II. Response Procedures

Emergency or Incident Response Procedures

Marshals who are the first to come upon the scene of an incident or crash, or are present when it occurs, should follow the procedures described below.

1. **Check the scene.** First, make sure you don't put yourself in danger. Answer the following questions: is the rider experiencing a mechanical failure on their bike? Do they have a minor injury? Do they have a major injury? Are they just taking a rest?

Next, ensure the rider is out of harm's way. Try to prevent other participants from being involved in the incident.

2. **Check the bicyclist(s).** Verbally ask the injured bicyclist how they are. Look them over for visual signs of injury. Use your best initial judgment to determine if they are

safe to move off the road out of traffic, and if they need Emergency Medical Services.

Do not move a seriously injured cyclist that is lying on the ground, even if they are in the middle of the roadway. Moving an injured cyclist could cause severe damage if there is injury to the neck or back. This is especially true if the bicyclist has lost consciousness. Do not move them, but rather form a circle of protection around them with any other marshals or riders to protect them from traffic. Keep the bicyclist lying down until medical attention arrives.

3. **Call 911.** If it's clear the injured cyclist needs medical attention, YOU should call 911 immediately. Don't ask anyone else to do it or have the injured person do it, you should make the call and describe the situation and give directions to the closest intersection, using your cue sheet to help. Be sure to mention that you are part of a bicycling event, and that there will likely be high numbers of bicyclists nearby. If you need additional help and another marshal is not nearby to assist, pick out a specific person nearby and give them clear instructions on how to help.

Even if the injured rider is able to move off the road to safety, the injured rider may be in shock and the adrenaline from the crash may affect how they feel their injuries. Ask the rider if they want you to call an ambulance if it's not apparent that they need help. If they respond that they aren't sure, err on the side of calling 911. They don't have to leave in the ambulance if the EMS or Firefighters arrive and deem it unnecessary to do so. If the rider seems to have hit their head, definitely call 911.

4. **Render first aid.** If it doesn't appear to be a major injury, help them get out of traffic and to safe spot to rest on the side of the road. Move their bike to the side of the road, too. Offer your first aid supplies to the injured rider. Do not go beyond the medical training you have received.
5. **Help control the flow of traffic.** If you are not needed to stay with the injured person directly, keep the flow of traffic moving around the crash as safely as possible.

Unless other riders witnessed the incident and their reports could prove helpful in filling out your Incident Report Form and/or a police report, encourage other bicyclists on the ride to keep moving on. Do not take on the responsibility of directing automobile traffic, only local police have the authority to control traffic at road intersections. But do ensure that an injured cyclist who can't move out of the roadway is protected and remains safe.

6. **Contact the WABA event staff.** There is a WABA staff person on-call and you have their number on the information sheet/contact sheet in your marshal kit. The number is also listed on the cue sheet.

WABA is required to be alerted to any incidents or crashes as part of our event insurance, and in many cases for more significant crashes it's a good idea for the WABA staff to report to the scene to assist in gathering information, ensure the

police arrive and filing a proper police report, and assist with the injured person's belongings and bike.

If you need to call 911, you should always do that FIRST, before calling the WABA staff, and only call the WABA staff when it is safe for you to do so and when the injured person is being helped. If the incident is somewhere between mild and major and you're not sure whether or not to call the WABA staff (for example if the cyclist was doored and fell off their bike, but is not badly injured or in need of an ambulance), err on the side of calling the WABA staff.

7. **Stay with the injured bicyclist, and call someone for them.** Stay with the injured cyclist until they are able to ride again, they decide to retire early and have transportation home, or they are put inside the ambulance and you find out where they are being taken. Do not leave the injured cyclist, even if the injury was minor, on the side of the road by themselves, even if they say they are okay.

If you called 911, wait with the injured cyclist and talk with them to help them remain calm and reassure them help is on the way.

If the incident was not major and they wish to continue on, make sure they are well rested and 100% okay to continue before riding on together. They should be both physically and emotionally ready to keep riding. Make sure their bike is okay to continue as well. Often after a crash, even if it's minor, the cyclists can be shaken up and not okay to continue biking for a while. If that's the case, encourage them to stop early, go home and rest, and call someone to pick them up.

Whether the incident was minor or major, while waiting with the person, always offer to call a family member or friend for them if they want to. You must stay with the injured cyclist at least until the WABA staff has arrived.

If the injured person is put in an ambulance it is important that you ask the EMS personnel or police officers what hospital they are being taken to. This is important for our records and in communication with the injured cyclist's family or friends.

8. **Fill out the Marshal Incident Report Card.** While waiting for the ambulance or police to arrive, if the person is well enough to provide information, fill out the Incident Report Card found in your marshal first aid kit. There will be a small pencil in the kit to write with. *You must collect all the information.* It is very important you put down your full name and number, and the injured person's full name and number so we can follow up if necessary.

If the crash involved a vehicle, take photos of where the car and bike ended up, the license plate, and/or property damage, which could prove helpful if the bicyclist needs it for future action.

9. **Continue on your ride.** Once the cyclist decides to continue on, retires early and transportation arrives to take them home, gets put into the ambulance, or the

WABA staff arrives and dismisses you, then you may continue on the ride.

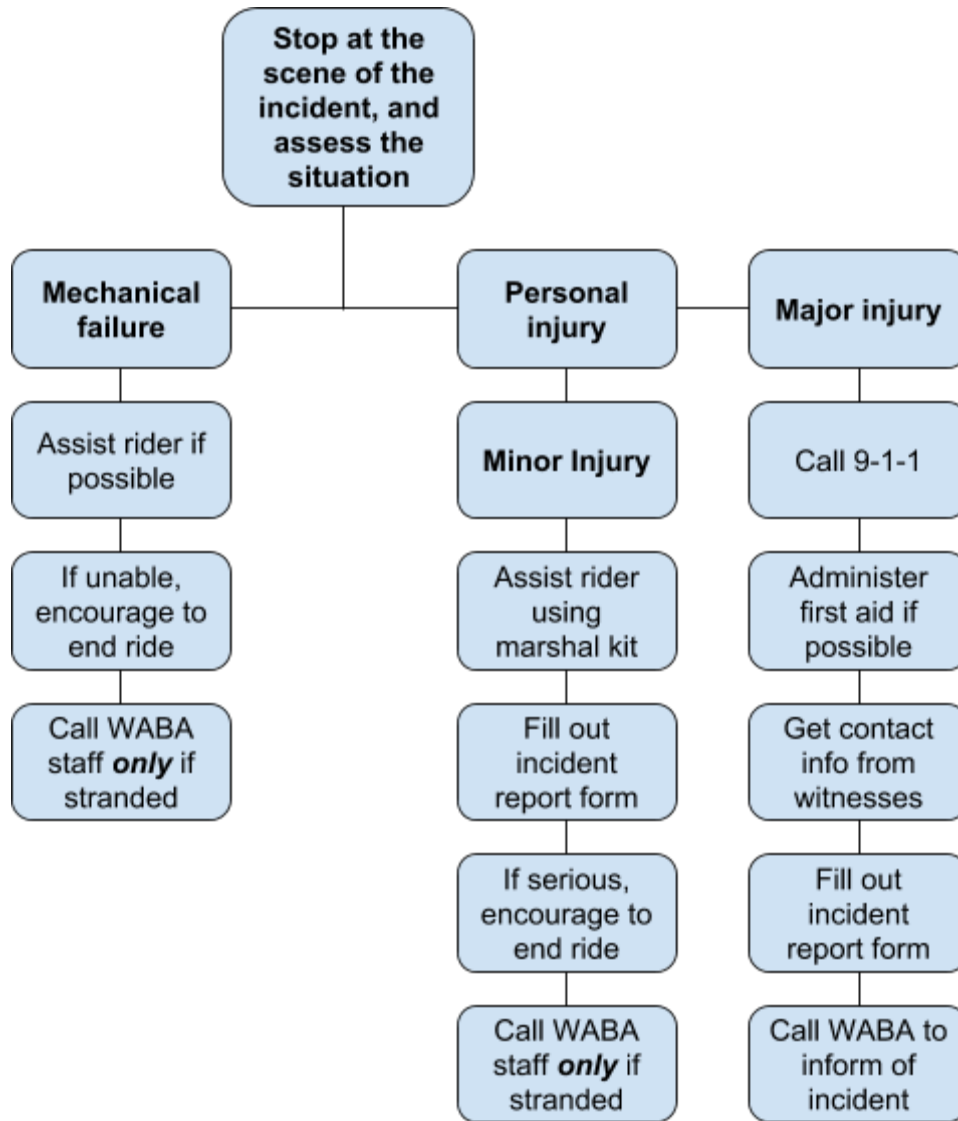


Figure 1. Marshal action sequence for common incident circumstances.

Handling Unsafe or Uncooperative Cyclists

You may encounter ride participants who are behaving unsafely, aren't cooperating, or are acting disrespectfully, and it is part of your responsibility to respond to and resolve the situation.

1. **Enforce WABA's helmet rule.** WABA's event insurance requires all bicyclists on our rides to wear a (buckled) helmet at all times while riding their bike. Every participant

also signed a waiver agreeing that they would do so. Ride marshals who encounter a bicyclist who's part of the WABA ride (again, identifiable by the wristband and/or cue sheet) without a helmet while on their bike, should advise the cyclist to put on a helmet.

You should say something like, "As a WABA Ride Marshal, I must ask that you please put your helmet back on. WABA requires it. You won't be able to continue riding as part of this ride without it." If necessary, ask to take their cue sheet from them if they refuse to wear their helmet. If the cyclist without a helmet is uncooperative, be persistent. Invite them to ride with you and your group. Make sure you keep an eye out for them down the road.

2. **Uncooperative or unruly bicyclists.** Should a cyclist not follow a marshal's specific requests to correct unsafe cycling technique (i.e. riding more than two abreast) or become verbally abusive toward other riders, a marshal should inform the bicyclist that he/she may be removed from the ride and not allowed to participate in any future WABA rides. If necessary, treat it as an incident and try to get the uncooperative cyclist's full name and report back to the WABA staff. Always remain calm and professional when dealing with an unruly cyclist.

Ride Marshals must maintain their composure and walk away from an escalating situation that might become confrontational. Please use good judgment; remain firm, yet polite at all times. Do not become physical. Keep yourself safe.

III. Qualifications

Membership Commitment

Marshals are participants of WABA rides. As such, marshals have the responsibility to be a WABA member and are encouraged to join or renew if they are not current members. Since 2015, we have required all volunteer marshals to be current WABA members. Being a volunteer marshal does count towards WABA's "Earn-a-Membership" program. For more information contact membership@waba.org.

Bicycling Experience

Ride marshals are viewed by other participants as experts. You must be able to complete the entire ride length you signed up for. You must be confident and experienced navigating city traffic and being passed by fast moving vehicles. You must be confident in your ability to follow directions and follow your cue sheet. You should feel comfortable helping to guide and direct, as well as ride alongside other bicyclists.

Maturity

A marshal must demonstrate maturity. The individual must be able to communicate effectively in a way that other bicyclists will take seriously. Always maintain a positive attitude when reminding cyclists of safe riding techniques and the rules of the road. Marshals must always follow the rules of the road, ride responsibly, and always set a good example when on the road. Remember that the marshal jersey is highly visible and labelled with a unique number that is recorded at the start of each event, so riders and WABA staff can identify individual marshals.

Communication Skills

A marshal must have the ability to communicate effectively and be able to speak loudly, especially in situations that are dangerous or complex. Communications should be brief and to the point and not confrontational in nature.

Marshals must bring a working cell phone in order to call 911 and the WABA staff. We cannot make exceptions to this rule. If you don't have your own cell phone, please borrow one from a family member or friend for the ride. Upon checking in the morning of the ride, we will ask you to make sure you have your charged phone with you and that we have your number.

Preparation for the Ride

Marshals will receive information on the route as soon as it's been re-tested, generally one week prior to the ride date, which will usually include links to the Ride with GPS route, GPX and TCX files, and Google Maps layer. Marshals are strongly encouraged to look over the route and map to become familiar with the route ahead of time. Marshals are welcome to pre-ride the route as well. Please DO NOT share the cue sheet or map with anyone else. WABA's rides are fundraisers and if you share the route with friends, fewer people will do the ride and we won't raise as much money for our advocacy work. Ensure your bike is in excellent working condition prior to the ride.

IV. Necessary Equipment

Ride Marshal Vest

Each marshal will be issued a vest with an identifying number on the front and back. The bib is to be worn over your normal clothing or cycling apparel and is to be worn at all times during a WABA ride, even during pit stops. Please make sure you return your marshal bib to the WABA table at the end of the ride.

Other Equipment

Marshals should also carry cell phone, tire levers, a patch kit (marshal kits include a patch kit for you to borrow during the ride), and an air supply of either a portable tire pump or a CO2 cartridge and adaptor. It is also recommended marshals have a spare tube with them.

First Aid Kit

We will supply every marshal with a marshal kit upon checking in the morning of the ride. The small plastic bag needs to be carried with you at all times during the ride, and you will need to return it along with your vest at the ride finish. The marshal kit contains a reminder about emergency procedure response steps, contact information for the WABA staff, and basic first aid supplies. It also contains two copies of the Incident Report Card and a writing utensil.