

Responsible Riding

IMBA Rules of the Trail | IMBA.COM



Respect the landscape

Respect your local trail builders and be a good steward of the physical environment. Keep singletrack single by staying on the trail. Practice Leave No Trace principles. Do not ride muddy trails because it causes rutting, widening and maintenance headaches. Ride through standing water, not around it. Ride (or walk) technical features, not around them.

Share the trail

Most of the trails we ride are multi-use. Mountain bikers yield to horses and foot traffic, and descending riders yield to climbing riders. This yield triangle has been formally adopted by land managers since the late 1970s and is a significant reason why we have the access we do. There are some regional differences and unique rules on single-use, directional mountain bike trails—know the code where you ride. Be nice. Say hi.



Ride open, legal trails

Poaching trails, building illegal singletrack or adding unauthorized trail features are detrimental to our access. Poorly-built features could also seriously injure other trail users. If you believe there aren't enough trails or variety near you, it's time to get involved. Your engagement will be welcomed because it takes a village to create, enhance and protect great places to ride.



Ride in control

Speed, inattentiveness and rudeness are the primary sources of trail conflict among user groups. If you need to pass, slow down, ring a bell or verbally announce yourself, and wait until the other trail user is out of the path. Use extra caution around horses, which are unpredictable. Be extra aware when riding trails with poor sight lines and blind corners, and make sure you can hear what's going on around you.



Courtesy Eva Rocke

Plan ahead

Be prepared and self-sufficient. Every mountain biker should carry what they need for the ride they're undertaking, and know how to fix a flat tire and make minor repairs. Download a GPS trail app on your phone for navigation or carry a map in unfamiliar locations. Ride with a partner or share your riding plan with someone if you're heading out solo.



Mind the animals

When it comes to wildlife, live and let live. In some places, running cattle and disturbing wildlife are serious offenses. If you want to ride with your dog, first find out whether or not it's allowed by looking up the leash laws. Be prepared to take care of your dog. Ensure your companion is obedient enough to not cause problems for you, other trail users or wild animals.



Check with your local land manager for additional trail information.