

Group Riding Guide

Group riding is typically more fun and safer than being out there on your own...as long as the riders in the group know what they're doing. The key to riding in a group is making sure everyone is on the same wavelength.

To help get the group function better, it's important to know the etiquette and rules of group riding. Discuss the ride beforehand, where you're going, hand signals, and the PACE. The PACE was written by Nick Ienatsch of Motorcyclist magazine and it forms a reasonable outline of how a safe group ride should be paced. The PACE is included on our website for your review.

The following points will help you function in our safe group rides.

1. Agree on the Ride Leader (**RL**) for the ride or for a ride segment. It is OK to change ride leaders during the ride, just be sure to make it apparent who is now in charge of the ride segment.
2. The **RL** should have the ultimate right of way while leading and other riders should be aware of the leader's action.
3. Ride leaders should consider themselves responsible for maintaining a safe ride pace. Spirited, but safe is preferred.
4. The **RL** should strive to keep the group together by waiting for the group to reassemble at any potential turning point or stopping point (decision points).
5. The ride group should form into a staggered double line when possible. The staggered formation allows each rider the ability to move left or right in the lane in an emergency and places each following rider in the mirror of the leading rider.
6. Go through curves in single file and reform the staggered double line after the curve(s).
7. Allow enough space between riders at all times. The spacing between riders should increase as speeds increase. Don't crowd.
8. Passing another rider in the group **MUST** be performed as if that bike was a car, which means that you must cross the centerline and move into the other lane to pass. Passing within the same lane should **ONLY** be performed when both riders agree and acknowledge the impending pass.
9. The **RL** should watch for hazards and point them out to the group or steer the group to safety. Following riders should point out the same.

10. The **RL** should use their high-beams during daylight hours to help the group to stand out while on the road. Following riders should also use their high-beams during daylight hours as long as the brightness does not bother the riders in front (it usually doesn't).
11. The **RL** should strive to be as smooth as possible and avoid sudden stops and turns. Try to anticipate these maneuvers to the degree possible.
12. The **RL** should know how many riders are in the group and verify that number of riders at each group assembly. Do not leave a decision point (turn, wye, split, stop, etc) without reassembling the group or leaving a trailing rider.
13. An alternative to stopping for the entire group to reassemble at each decision point is for each rider to wait at the decision point until the next rider comes along and sees them. The waiting rider can then move on and the following rider then waits for the next rider. This helps keep riders from getting lost, but should not be a substitute for regular stops to reassemble the group and check that all riders are present.
14. Riders leaving the group **MUST** notify other riders (preferably the **RL**) that they are leaving the group. This will avoid making the group search for your non-existent bike and corpse in the last ride segment. Group riding is safer because you have other riders there to watch out for you and help you. We must go back and search for riders that have 'disappeared'.
15. A rider should not ride over their ability if the group's pace exceeds their comfort zone. Ride at your pace, you will catch up to the group at the **RL's** next assembly point.
16. Passing vehicles should be performed in a clean and rapid, yet respectful manner. Don't blow by a vehicle at a high speed difference unless its absolutely necessary. It can be dangerous and doesn't make any friends in the 'Cages'.
17. Be sure to keep moving as you pass a vehicle to make space for other riders following you to tuck back into the lane.
18. Stunting within the group is dangerous. If you feel the need to stunt, please widely separate yourself from the group.
19. Acknowledging someone in a vehicle who has let you go past is always a nice thing. They gave you a courtesy, show them your appreciation with a wave or other nice signal. No fingers or fists!

Hand Signals

FOLLOW ME - Arm extended straight up from shoulder. Palm forward.

SINGLE FILE - Arm and index finger extended straight up.

DOUBLE FILE - Arm extended up. Fist clenched with index and pinky forming "ram's horn" sign.

STAGGERED - Same as with "Double File" while twisting the wrist back and forth.

EMERGENCY VEHICLE - Arm and index finger extended up making small circles (imitates a siren spinning).

U-TURN - Arm and index finger extended up making large circles.

SPEED UP - Arm down to side. Fist clenched. Twist as if turning throttle.

HAZARD IN ROAD - If something is in the road, the first person to see hazard should identify it by sticking a foot out, if possible, pointing at it with emphasis. All others should avoid the object and signal also. Move well away from the obstacle so those behind you can see it with plenty of time to react.

NEED FUEL STOP - Arm out to side. Point vigorously to fuel tank.

NEED FOOD or DRINK STOP - Arm out to side. Fingers closed. Thumb to mouth to mimic a fork or spoon in your hand.

TURN SIGNAL LEFT ON - Repeatedly open and close hand with thumb and fingers extended.

CHECK HEADLIGHT - Tap on top of headlight.

POLICE OR RADAR AHEAD – Tap on top of helmet with palm down.

STOP OR SLOW - Arm extended straight down. Palm back or with a downward patting motion.

YOU LEAD - Arm extended down. Palm forward. Swing forward from hip in arc.

COME ALONGSIDE - Same as "You Lead", but ending with alongside pointing motion.

PULL OFF - Arm positioned as for right turn. Forearm then swung toward shoulder.

NEED COMFORT STOP – Point to your crotch.