

Passing

On a busy two-lane road, oncoming traffic typically prevents a group from passing a slow-moving vehicle while in formation. Each member of the group must accomplish two lane changes in order to pass, and this usually is done on an individual basis. Regardless of what a rider is told by others in the group about oncoming vehicles, each rider must personally check to see that the oncoming lane is clear of traffic before entering it.

Number One Rule (The 'Prime Directive')

In a group ride, the primary job for every rider is to not hit the motorcycle in front of him or her.

Three-wheeled motorcycles, bikes with a sidecar, bikes towing a trailer, or a four-wheeler in a group will be placed at the rear in the last available slot.

Hand Signals

There are some hand signals that may be initiated by any rider in the group :

- 1) Pointing to an obstacle in the road with **left hand for obstacle on left side of road** and using **right foot for obstacles on right side of road**, warning other riders to avoid it.
- 2) Pointing to the tank. For the rider with no CB, no matter what the reason, if they point to the tank on their bike, they will be telling those following them (especially the Sweep Rider) that they need to stop as soon as possible. This may be because they need fuel; because they want to make a "bio stop;" because they may have a mechanical problem; because they or their co-rider are uncomfortable; because they have a medical problem; because they may be having a crisis of confidence; or for any other reason at all. Such a signal will be relayed to the Lead Bike. If a convenient place is available, the Lead Bike may orchestrate a stop by the whole group. If not, the affected bike can count on the Sweep Rider to stop to try to help him or her.
- 3) Palm of left hand shown to group, pushing motion toward rear of bike - Back Off

These hand signals are normally initiated by the Lead bike:

Ready to ride - "Thumbs up" high enough in air to be visible to Lead bike.

Single-file formation - One finger points to the sky.

Slow down - Left arm is held at 45 degree angle and move your hand up and down in a patting motion.

Smoky alert (police or emergency vehicles) - Hand taps top of helmet several times.

Speed up or close ranks in formation - Left arm is held straight out palm up, then moves straight up.

Staggered formation - Two fingers point to sky. Use second finger and pinky if possible.

Stop - Left arm extended downward with palm of hand facing rearward.

U-Turn - Left hand makes circle in air over head.

Exceptions to Normal Guidelines

The often-heard rule, "Ride Your Own Ride," means that any guideline for group riding can and should be ignored when it doesn't make sense. Determining whether this is the case and acting prudently is **each rider's individual responsibility at all times**.

Under normal circumstances, the Lead Bike will choose a lane, will determine the speed at which the riders are to travel, will suggest the formation which makes maneuvers most safe, and will navigate.

Common exceptions to these guidelines occur with a rider who is not yet experienced with group riding. **If a maneuver looks too dangerous or awkward for the new rider to complete safely, he or she should do what they need to protect themselves and to avoid an accident..** This may mean passing up a turn or taking it very slowly, or parking somewhere not with the group, or going more slowly through a curve than the riders ahead of him.

Each rider commands his entire area within a lane and may move to left or right in it as required.



Memphis HOG Chapter Group Riding

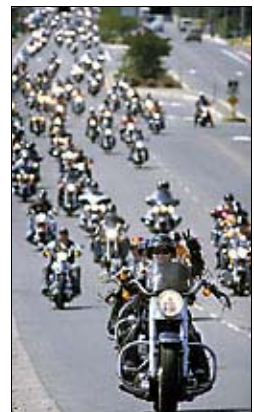
This brochure is designed to help both new and seasoned riders understand how group rides are organized, how to ride in a group ride and most of all, how to be safe when riding in a group.

Message from the Officers of the Memphis HOG Chapter:

The Officers of the Memphis HOG Chapter are committed to having fun on our group rides but, most importantly, we are all dedicated to insuring your safety. With your safety foremost in mind, your Road Captains consistently holds meetings to make sure our rides are planned and organized.

If you have any questions pertaining to group rides, please feel free to ask any Officer or Road Captain of the Memphis HOG Chapter.

A list of everyone can be found on the web at www.memphishog.com



How is Group Riding organized?

Club rides will be led by your Road Captains in accordance with procedures outlined in the Harley-Davidson H.O.G. Handbook. Each Road Captain will have a map and detailed instructions for the ride so we will not be dependent on one sole leader to arrive at our destination. At the pre-ride briefing, your Road Captains will be pointed out and the ride will be broken down into several small groups each being led by a Road Captain who will be the Lead Bike for your group. We will try to limit the size of each group to no more than ten motorcycles. The ideal group size is six to eight motorcycles.

Each group will have a Sweep Rider which will be the last motorcycle in that group and should be one of the most experienced riders in that group. A Sweep Rider's responsibility is to look for any problems in the group and report these problems to the lead bike. Whenever possible, we will use C.B. radios (channel 22) to facilitate communication, but hand signals are also effective and will be explained later.

Normal Group Riding Maneuvers

When the Lead Bike for each group sees that all riders in his group are ready to depart, he will check for traffic and enter the roadway. Usually, the Lead Bike will not attempt to exit a parking lot unless there is room for all or most of the group to follow immediately. If the group is split, the Lead Bike will take the slow lane and keep the speed relatively slow until the group can form up in the positions the riders will keep for the duration of the ride. This may mean traveling slower than surrounding traffic, to encourage four-wheelers to pass and allow the group to form up. Occasionally, this cannot be accomplished until the group has made a lane change or entered a freeway, depending on where the entrance ramp may be.

Regardless of the Lead Bike's signals, each rider is responsible for his or her own safety at all times

Ride Your Own Ride

Once all members of the group are together, the group will take up a staggered formation keeping a **TWO (2)** second distance behind the bike **in front of you** and will stay in it most of the time during the ride, unless the Lead Bike signals for a change to single file or the need for a change is obvious. Reasons for changing out of a staggered formation could be a passing situation or poor road surface (single file), dog or other animal charging the group (split the group), or coming up to a traffic signal (two abreast while waiting for a light).

Stop Signs, Four-Way Stops and Traffic Signals

At Stop signs, riders are expected to come to a stop two abreast (side by side). The riders should proceed through the intersections in pairs when safe to do so. The lead bike will go slowly for all members to get through the intersection. This may mean that cars **may** get in between riders. **BE CAREFUL...EVEN IF ONE DRIVER MAY SIGNAL FOR THE ENTIRE GROUP TO GO THROUGH THE INTERSECTION AS A GROUP, OTHER DRIVERS MAY NOT.** Also, keep in mind that a group of motorcyclists riding together does **NOT** exempt you from the basic laws of the road. If the group gets too stretched out, the Road Captain may pull over to the side of the road or in a large parking lot for the group to get back in formation.

Changing Lanes

In regular traffic conditions, there is virtually no time (absent an emergency) when a group of riders should all move at the same time into a different lane. The wide gap required for a whole group to move is difficult to find in heavy traffic, and if it exists, it will be an invitation for other drivers to jump into it, perhaps while the group might be moving. Additionally, such a maneuver could be interpreted as "parading," which may arguably not be covered under some insurance policies.

Each rider must personally check to see that the new lane is clear of traffic before entering it.

The Sweep bike in a group is responsible for creating a gap into which all the preceding bikes can fit. If C. B. equipped, the Lead Bike asks the Sweep Rider to "secure the lane" to the right or the left as the case may be. The Sweep Rider **then moves** when a space in the new lane opens up and radios to the Lead Bike that "The lane is secured."

The Lead Bike then communicates the lane change to the group with his blinker and the use of hand signals. All other bikes **must maintain their current lane** and put their own turn signals on to indicate the move to be made. If not C.B. equipped then the Sweep Rider will receive the communication along with the other members of the group and the Sweep Rider will move when a space in the new lane opens up as explained above.

The lane change will be accomplished starting with the **REAR** of the column and progressing to the **FRONT!** While this seems backwards at first, once you experience it, you'll understand how it increases the safety of such a move.

However, no one is to change lanes at this point!!! First, **each rider must make certain the lane is clear** by **actually turning his or her head** to insure that there is no other vehicle still approaching the group in the new lane. Then, after checking **by actually turning the head** to see that the new lane is cleared of traffic sufficient for one bike to safely enter it, the bike in front of the Sweep Rider moves across the tracks of the current lane, taking up a position in the same track of the new lane where he was originally riding. Then, one at a time, back to front, each rider follows this pattern : signal right or left, move right or left in your own lane, head-check, enter new lane and take up regular position (right or left track) in the new lane.

Change lanes smoothly and give other riders plenty of space. This is not a race to see who can get there the fastest but you should proceed as quickly as safely possible.