

The Simple Stuff!

1. Show up for rides 30 minutes before the pre-ride briefing. Be patient and give the briefing your full attention. This may not be your first group ride, but it could be the first group ride for someone else. Feel free to ask questions!
2. Have your gas tank full and your bladder empty.
3. Ensure you are in good mental and physical condition, suitable for riding.
4. Ensure your bike is properly maintained. Proper maintenance is a pre-requisite for safe riding. Check your bike thoroughly before each ride. Use **T-CLOCS**: Tires, Controls, Lights, Oil, Chassis, Sidestand.
5. Have what you will need for the ride with you; water, snacks, proper clothing, etc. There's nothing more uncomfortable than being a long way from home without the proper gear - equipment. Come prepared!
6. Always wear All The Gear All The Time ATGATT (*Boots, Over-pants, Jacket, Gloves, Helmet*) including all legally required safety equipment.
7. Be familiar with all of the Chapter's group riding guidelines.
8. Stay Alert. Ride Safe. Use Common Sense. Be Courteous. Have Fun!

Ride Your Own Ride!

1. Safety 1st...Safety Last...Safety ALWAYS! The safety of all individuals, whether or not they are a part of the group, is of paramount importance.
2. Group riding requires an extreme level of awareness and concentration.
3. Always ride within your capabilities and those of your machine.
4. Each rider commands his/her entire area within a lane and has a right to move left or right in it as required.

Being Seen! Assume you are not. You are probably correct!

Risk Management Strategy - Use S.E.E.

Search - As you ride, scan the area aggressively, including the areas, ahead, along the road and behind you. Check your mirrors frequently to maintain a constant awareness of your surroundings.

Evaluate - Use that information to evaluate the situation, predict what unexpected hazards and challenges may arise and actively formulate strategies to deal with them.

Execute - Adjust your speed and positioning accordingly, while communicating your intentions to others.

Your Eyes - your eyes should be scanning up the road, NOT FIXED on the bike in front of you.

12 seconds - Anticipation Path - Scanning well ahead to prepare for any situation.

4 seconds - Immediate Path - Time and space needed to react to hazards.

2 seconds - Minimum Following Distance - Between you and the bike in front of you, when conditions are ideal. **Note:** When in single-file formation, INCREASE the minimum following distance between you and the bike in front of you.

1 second - Minimum Distance - Between you and the bike in the track to your immediate right or left, when riding in a staggered formation.

Normal Group Riding Maneuvers

IMPORTANT! Monitor the RCs for cues to prepare to start the ride. **When the RCs are ready**, the Leader will mount up, pull forward from the parking spot and wait for the group to get ready.

Group members when you see this happen; mount up, line up and get ready to leave.

When the Lead Bike sees that all riders in his/her group are ready to depart, he/she will check for traffic and enter the roadway. Usually the Lead Bike will not 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 speed down until the group can form up in the positions that the riders will keep for the duration of the ride. This may mean traveling slower than surrounding traffic, encouraging four wheelers to pass, allowing the group to form up. Occasionally, this cannot be accomplished until the group has made a lane change or entered a freeway. **Note: Regardless of the Lead Bike's signals, each rider is responsible for his/her own safety at all times.**

Once all members of the group are together, the group will ride in a **staggered formation**, keeping **at least a 2 second distance** behind the bike in front of you. Staggered formation will continue unless the Lead Bike signals for a change. Reasons for changing could be a passing situation, poor road conditions, obstacles in the road, coming up to an exit - entrance ramp or tight curves. **Note:** When in a tight curve, the rider on the outside of the curve is required to give room to the rider on the inside,

in case the curve is too tight to negotiate at that speed without crowding.

Stop Signs - Traffic Signals

At stops, riders are expected to come to a stop **side by side**, two abreast. The riders should proceed through the intersections in pairs when safe to do so, **left side bike first**. The Lead Bike will go slowly until all members have passed through the intersection. This may mean that cars might get in-between riders. Let them in! **BE CAREFUL! Even if one driver signals for the entire group to go through the intersection, other drivers may not.** Also, keep in mind that a group of bikes riding together does NOT exempt you from the "laws" of the road. **Note:** If the group gets too stretched out, the Lead Bike may slow down or pull over in a large parking lot for the group to get back in formation.

Lane changes

Make an organized lane change only when safe to do so. **How?** The Lead Bike communicates the lane change first with CB (if equipped), then blinker and then hand signals. All other bikes maintaining their current lane put on their turn signals, then hand signal to indicate the move to be made. If not CB equipped, the Sweep Rider will receive the signals along with the other members of the group. **If possible, when safe, the Sweep RC will move over early to 'secure' the lane, other bikes hold until Lead Bike moves over.** When changing lanes, the group, maintaining a staggered formation, should follow the Lead Bike as if it were the head of a snake and the group is the snake's body. This helps to keep the formation solid and tight as well.

While the lane change procedure will be accomplished starting with the FRONT of the column and progressing to the REAR, no one is to change lanes at this point! **First, each rider must make certain the lane is clear by actually turning his/her head** to ensure that there is no other vehicle approaching the group in the new lane. Then, after confirming by head check that the new lane is clear of traffic sufficient for one bike to safely enter it, the bike in front moves across the current lane, taking up the position in the same track of the new lane where he/she was in before. Then, **one at a time**, front to back, **each rider following 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!

Filling the Gap

If a rider drops out of a staggered formation and the ride is not going to stop it is desirable to preserve the integrity of the formation by filling the gap. Always "HEAD CHECK" BEFORE you MOVE to ensure the area is clear!

1. Changing columns "Cross-Over" technique

** Preferred Chapter Method **

When a bike drops out, the following bikes fill the gap, in turn, by moving up and crossing over into the next column.

2. Moving forward one space "Line Movement Forward" technique (Parade - "Escorted" ride)

Each rider in the line, behind the gap, shall move straight forward.

Important! If you are uncomfortable with either of these maneuvers, just stay put!

Hand Signals

These hand signals are normally initiated by the **Lead Bike**.

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

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

Staggered formation: Two fingers point to sky. Rotated side to side.

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

U-Turn: Left hand makes an "O" in the air overhead.

Some hand signals that may be initiated in the group:

Pointing to an obstacle in the road: With **left hand** for obstacle on **left side** of road, **using right foot** for obstacles on **right side** of road, warning other riders to avoid it.

Palm of left hand shown to group: Pushing motion toward rear of bike; Slow Down - Back Off!

Pointing to the tank or mouth: If someone points to the tank - mouth, they are telling those following them (especially the Sweep RC) that they need to **stop as soon as possible**. Because they need fuel; might need a "bio stop"; may have a mechanical issue; they or their co-rider are uncomfortable; may have a medical issue; or for any other reason at all. Such a signal will **try to be relayed** to the Lead Bike. If a convenient place is available, the Lead Bike may orchestrate a stop for the whole group. If not, the affected bike can count on the Sweep RC to stop to try to help him/her.

Note: Do not perform or maintain any hand signal if safety requires both hands on your handlebars!

Two Lane Passing

It is very difficult for a group to pass a slow moving vehicle. If the Lead Bike decides to pass, each individual rider must decide if it is safe to follow.

Note: If passing, only pass when you have ample room and visibility to safely complete the pass. Pass one at a time acting as an individual. Never blindly follow another bike in a passing situation. After passing, move far enough forward to allow room for the riders that will come behind you.

Leaving the Group Early

If you plan to leave the group early, notify the Lead/Sweep bikes and your ride buddy beforehand. This way they will know that you DO NOT have a problem and DO NOT need assistance.

Emergency Stopping

Ride buddy (if possible) and the rest of the group BEHIND the stopped rider will stop. The Sweep RC is in charge and will determine the course of action and notifications. He/she might send rider(s) after the "other" group.

Exceptions to Normal Guidelines

Ride your own Ride! Remember that riding in a group does not mean you surrender any decision making when it comes to your safety. This means that any guideline for group riding can and should be ignored when it doesn't "feel right." Determining when 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 to travel and will suggest the formation which encourages safe group maneuvers. Common exceptions to these guidelines occur with a rider who is not yet experienced with group riding. **Note:** If a maneuver looks too dangerous or awkward for a rider to complete safely, he/she should do whatever is necessary to protect him/herself and/or to avoid an accident. This may mean, not parking with the group, taking a curve slower than the riders in front of you, passing up a turn or taking it very slowly.

Misc: Three-wheeled bikes, bikes with a sidecar, bikes towing a trailer, should ride in the center track, should be given the same amount of space cushion as if they were a car and will be placed in the rear of the group.



Condensed Group Riding Guide

Submitted by Arlen Brunsvold

Rev C

This brochure is designed to help both New and Seasoned riders understand how our Chapter organizes its group rides, how the Chapter rides as a group, and - most of all - how to try and improve safety while riding together.

Message from the Road Captains - Road Guards

While the RCs - RGs and Chapter Officers are committed to having fun on our group rides, more importantly we are dedicated to safe riding. With this in mind, your RC/RGs consistently meet to train for, plan for, and organized the chapter rides. If you have any questions or suggestions pertaining to group rides, please feel free to talk to any Sheboygan RC/RG.

Guest Riders Chapter Members are responsible for ensuring that their guest(s) sign a release form.

Sheboygan HOG Chapter encourages the "Ride Buddy" system. Two riders agree to ride together for the entire ride.

We primarily use **hand signals** to communicate (see **handout**) but whenever possible, we will also use CB radios - channel 04.

How a Group Ride is organized

Chapter rides led by your RCs are modeled after the guidelines outlined in the Harley-Davidson HOG Handbook and the *Riders Edge - MSF* video. The Lead RC will begin the ride with a pre-ride briefing and introduce the other RC/RGs. If the group is very large, it might be broken into several smaller groups each being lead by a RC. We try to limit the size of each group to 10 bikes or less. Each group will have a Sweep Rider (last bike in a group). The Sweep Rider's responsibility is to look for any problems in the group and report those problems to the Lead Bike.