



# **GROUP RIDING MANUAL**

**Central Midwest HOG #2793  
Olathe, Kansas**

# GROUP RIDING

**1.0 INTRODUCTION** - The official responsibilities of the Ride Leaders shall include: Leading, Sweeping, and Assisting in planning and organizing closed and open H.O.G. Chapter rides.

**2.0 OBJECTIVE/MISSION** The overall objective of Ride Leaders is to pursue the safety and enjoyment for H.O.G. Chapter Members during rides, promoting responsible motorcycling activities for Harley Owners Group members by conducting chapter activities and encouraging participation in other H.O.G. events. Chapter activities and operations are conducted in a manner consistent with a family-oriented, nonpolitical philosophy.

## **3.0 GENERAL POLICIES**

3.1. Discrimination - Members shall not discriminate against any person on the basis of sex, race, religious preference, sexual orientation or motorcycle size.

3.2. Safety - All members must operate their motorcycle in a safe manner and be responsible for keeping their motorcycle in proper operating condition for the safety of themselves and members who will be sharing the road with them. Each member must abide by federal, state and local laws while participating in group rides. Reckless riding is prohibited. Each member and all passengers shall abide by, and pass along, the Group-adopted hand signals and riding standards during Group events as issued by the Ride Leader and/or any other designated officers.

- A valid driver's license with a motorcycle endorsement
- Current motorcycle liability insurance.
- Current national and Local Chapter H.O.G. memberships.

3.3. Alcohol & Drugs - Consumption of alcohol and/or drugs shall not be allowed during group rides. Any social activity which may include alcohol and/or drug consumption shall be conducted after the motorcycles are parked at the end of the day's destination. Any rider that does not follow this rule will be pulled from the ride.

## **4.0 ROLES**

4.1. Ride Leader - Host or selected "Lead" for the group ride. The Ride Leader should:

- 4.1.1. Plan the ride as complete as possible
- 4.1.2. Pre-ride the route as much as possible to avoid surprises
- 4.1.3. Provide a detailed map and written directions for the ride
- 4.1.4. Make sure all riders have signed a waiver form.
- 4.1.5. Select the Ride Sweep and Mid-Sweeps, and introduce them to the group prior to the ride
- 4.1.6. Conduct the pre-ride briefing

4.2. Ride Sweep - Host or selected "Sweep" for the group ride. This person will be the last official rider of the group, providing support, observations and traffic control for the group as a whole. In the event that any rider needs to leave the group, for any reason, it is the Ride Sweep's responsibilities to pull out & assist the rider and notify the Ride Leader of the situation.

4.3. Ride Mid-Sweep – On rides of 7 or more, a Ride Mid-Sweep may be selected for maintaining group rides. This position is to support the Ride Leader in continuing communication to the group. The Mid-Sweep should be in a position to see clearly the Ride Leader in front of them, such as the #4 position. Likewise, the Sweep should have clear vision of the Mid-Sweep.

At intersections with stop lights, the Mid-Sweep should anticipate if the light will turn RED, and stop at the stop light, with the remaining group, and then will become the Ride Leader for the group in case of separation. Once this group catches back up to the lead group, the group will take their original ride positions. In the event the “Sweep” must leave the group for any reason a Mid-Sweep will become the “Sweep” for the group. The Mid-Sweep may also be assigned to new riders as a “buddy”, to help the new rider with the familiarity of group riding.

## **5.0 RIDING FORMATION & INDIVIDUAL POSITIONS**

5.1. The Lead Rider will supervise the group and typically will ride in a position to observe the group. Other Ride Mid-Sweeps will be assigned positions as required which will be followed by the “Sweep”.

5.2. Each rider should maintain his/her starting line-up position in the group until arrival at the destination. This allows each rider to become more familiar with the riding style and habits of those nearest him/her in the group and is particularly important for the new or inexperienced riders.

5.3. Under certain conditions the Ride Leader will signal the group to form a single file formation. The hand signal for single file is an open left hand, held overhead to display the number 1. The right side rider drops back to a safe distance from the rider in front of them allowing them room to move into the single file formation. In a single file line, maintain 2 to 3 second space between the riders.

5.4. It may become necessary to form smaller groups for safety reasons due to surrounding conditions or local ordinances.

5.5. Requests by riders to alter position within a group, or to insert into the group, will be considered by the acting Lead and/or Sweep Riders.

5.6. The Ride Leader and/or other appointed officers can instruct any rider to leave the ride entirely for reasons of, but not limited to, misconduct, disorderly or unsafe riding, or faulty/unsafe equipment. This may include the observation of alcohol or other mind altering drug consumption during the ride.

5.7 The Ride Leader attempts to establish and maintain a uniform speed, consistent with the abilities of the riders, surrounding conditions and safe riding practices.

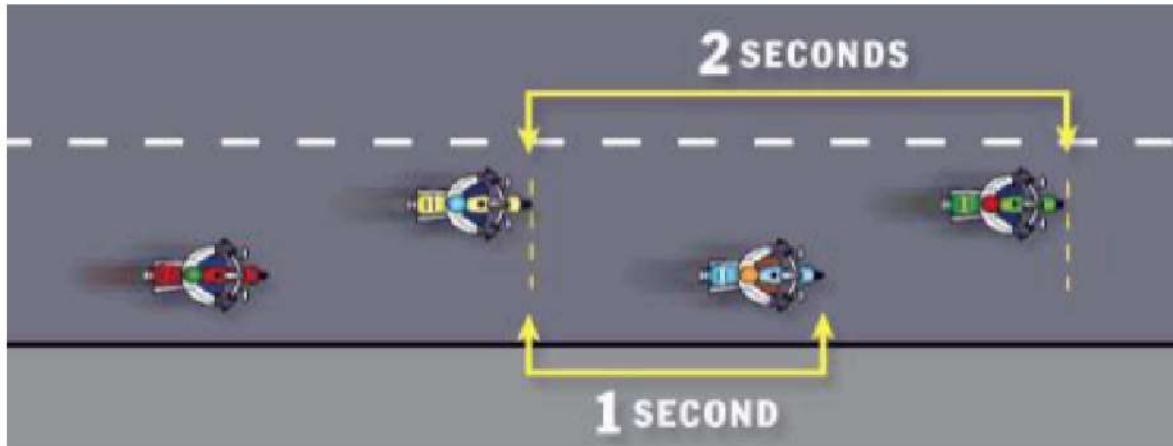
5.8. The Ride Leader may choose to separate or change the group to maintain safety and harmony within the group.

5.9. All riders must make an effort to maintain the same speed to minimize the effect of irregular speeds (rubber band effect) on riders at the rear of the group. All riders will maintain a safe distance and lane position between themselves and the rider directly ahead to be consistent with existing road, traffic, and weather conditions.

5.10. Prepare to stop at YELLOW lights and anticipate STOPPING at all red lights unless directed by a police officer.

5.11. Touring speeds will normally be at the posted speed limit.

## 6.0 STAGGERED RIDE FORMATION



6.1. It is important to keep in mind that a 2 second interval is a MINIMUM safe requirement in order to react in the event of a potentially hazardous condition.

6.2. In group riding, the STAGGERED formation, under good conditions of road traffic and weather, will be a double row staggered in one traffic lane. The interval will be no less than one second between staggered riders, or 2 seconds between in-line bikes. The STAGGERED riders is a policy consistent with the recommendations of most traffic and safety agencies.

6.3. This group riding technique requires all participants to constantly ANTICIPATE and EXECUTE should an emergency occur.

6.4. With respect to vehicles a safe distance is defined as a MINIMUM of a 3 SECOND DELAY between any vehicle directly ahead of the group.

6.5. A safe lane position is defined as riding immediately to the right or left of the center of the lane. This will keep the riders just off the center oil stain, while maintaining the staggered formation, distance between riders and other obstacles, and providing necessary lane protection. (NOTE: Riders who regularly ride on the outside edge of a lane are often subject to our four-wheeled friends sharing the lane at speed while passing).

## 7.0 TRAFFIC LANES

7.1. The Ride Leader will attempt to lead the group in a single lane where the traffic flow appears to be most consistent with the speed of the group. Lane changes will be used only when necessary to pass slower traffic or to avoid a hazardous condition and also to avoid blocking faster surrounding traffic. Traffic lanes are counted from left to right. The left lane is often referred to as the "FAST" or "PASSING" lane, and is counted as lane number one. Remaining traffic lanes are then counted up until the right most, or "SLOW" lane is counted.

7.2. On highways with two travel lanes in each direction, the group will normally travel in the number two lane (also known as the "SLOW" lane), allowing faster traffic to pass on the left; exception being when the group has to pass slower traffic in the right lane.

7.3. On Highways with three or more travel lanes in each direction, the group will normally travel in the number two lane, keeping the right lane open for other vehicles entering and exiting the highway, and the left lane(s) open for faster moving traffic to pass.

7.4. Lane Changes and Passing, on a multi-lane highway the double row staggered formation will normally be maintained. The Ride Leader will hold their position and signal for a lane change. All riders will hold their positions and pass the signal to the rear. The Sweep will then change lanes at the first safe opportunity, thus protecting the lane for the group, and allowing the Ride Leader to see that the lane is clear and protected.

7.4.1. NOBODY, except the Sweep is to change lanes before the Ride Leader.

7.4.2. ALWAYS make a HEAD CHECK before you begin a lane change, and always maintain safe distances.

7.4.3. The Ride Leader will change lanes first followed by the rest of the riders moving from the front to the rear of the group. This is commonly referred to as the "Snake Effect".

7.4.4. There are times when it will not be possible for the entire group to change lanes as outlined, the Ride Leader will then change lanes when safe to do so. All riders are to then signal, do a head check, and change lanes starting from the front to back as individuals, when it is safe to do so. Should the group become separated, regroup when it is safe to do so. Please use good safety practices, including head checks.

## **PLEASE remember that YOU, and ONLY YOU, are RESPONSIBLE for YOUR SAFETY.**

7.4.5. On a two lane road with two-way traffic (one lane each way), a single file formation should be used when passing other vehicles. On occasion a Ride Leader may continue to travel in the passing lane, while safe to do so, to indicate to the other riders that the way is clear for them to continue the group passing maneuver. When oncoming traffic is imminent, a hand signal will be given for riders to safely merge back into the travel lane and discontinue passing procedures.

7.5.6. If for any reason the group becomes separated, merge safely back into the pack, returning to your original position, using good safety practices. Don't feel it is necessary to break the law and speed to try to catch up. The Lead will be aware of the separation and adjust accordingly.

### **8.0 GAS, FOOD STOPS, REST BREAKS, and TOLLS**

8.1. If necessary, due to the length of the trip, gas, food, and rest stops will be discussed and scheduled prior to group departure. These scheduled stops should be adhered to as much as possible depending on varying conditions as the trip progresses. All riders are expected to top off fuel tanks at each gas stop.

8.2. Deviation from the scheduled stops may be required due to varying weather, traffic, and bladder conditions (availability of gas, rider fatigue, and other unforeseen circumstances).

8.3. Gas and rest stops should be limited to no more than 15 minutes, depending on the size of the group. Remember, the last rider in the group waits the longest, therefore, having the shortest rest period.

8.4. Meal stops will vary in length due to the size of the group, but should be held to a reasonable minimum.

## **9.0 UNSCHEDULED or EMERGENCY STOPS.**

9.1. Unscheduled stops for gas, restrooms, or rider fatigue can lead to confusion in the group, and confusion can lead to accidents. Members are expected to inform the Lead and/or Sweep Road Captains that a stop is necessary in order to lead the group in an organized fashion to the next convenient and safe place to stop.

9.2. Any rider with an equipment problem should inform the Ride Leader and/or Sweep as quickly, and as safely as possible. If this problem needs attention during a segment of the ride and the rider decides to pull out of the group, the rider should signal the Sweep with "thumbs up" for minor problems and "thumbs down" for major problems. If 2 hands are needed to maintain control of your motorcycle the "thumbs down" should not be given.

9.3. If the rider must pull over immediately, the Sweep will accompany that rider to a stop. The Sweep will inform the Ride Leader of the situation. Once the Ride Leader is informed the Ride Leader will lead the group to a safe area to stop as soon as it is safe to do so.

9.4. Any rider observing a problem with another rider's equipment should inform that rider as quickly and safely as possible. If it appears that a stop is necessary, the Sweep will also be notified, and stay with that rider until assistance can be provided.

## **10.0 ACCIDENT**

10.1. In the event the group comes upon the scene of an accident, or is involved in an accident, only the Ride Sweep will stop to attend.

10.2. The Ride Leader lead the remaining group to a safe stop at the earliest possible moment (keeping with known good safety practices). It may become necessary for the group to disperse and park separately to avoid creating additional hazardous conditions.

10.2. Upon direction from the Ride Leader, other members of the group will provide assistance in any practical way possible, including but not limited to:

10.2.1. Slowing, diverting, or stopping traffic in a safe manner using flares if available.

10.2.2. Provide basic first aid if necessary and/or comfort to those involved.

10.2.3. Call 911 to notify the police, ambulance, and/or fire services as the situation demands.

10.2.4. Maintain order and preserve the accident scene for police investigation.

10.2.5. If possible, take photographs and obtain license plate numbers, vehicle descriptions, including driver/passenger descriptions, in the event of a hit and run violation.

10.2.6. Obtain names and addresses of witnesses if necessary.

10.2.7. If possible, maintain overall control of the situation until relieved by the proper authorities

10.2.8. Prepare the HOG Incident Report as thoroughly as possible, and provide to the HOG Chapter Leadership team as soon as possible.

## 11.0 HAND SIGNALS

11.1. At all times, standard hand signals will be used for changing the group formation, all turns, lane changes, slowing and stopping. Turn signal lights will also be used at all times in conjunction with the designated hand signals.

11.2. All hand signals will be relayed to the rear of the group to allow all riders to take appropriate precautionary measures, and be aware of the changes in speed and travel direction.

11.3. The Lead Road Captain will move as an individual to assume whatever maneuver or position that is required.

11.4. The group will follow the Lead Road Captain direction as individuals, in a "follow the leader" approach, signaling and following the Lead Road Captain when appropriate and safe.

11.5. The following adopted hand signals (See below) are the standard signals to be used in group riding. Other hand signals may be developed and added as required. All riders and passengers are responsible for knowing the proper hand signals and passing them back to the riders behind them

# Motorcycle Hand Signals

### Left Turn

Arm and hand extending left, palm facing down



### Right Turn

Arm out, bent at 90 angle, fist clinched.



### Stop

Arm extended straight down, palm facing back.



### Comfort Stop

Forearm extended, fist clinched with short up and down motion.



### Refreshment Stop

Fingers closed, thumb to mouth.



### Fuel Stop

Arm out to side pointing to tank with finger extended.



### Pull Off

Arm positioned as for right turn forearm swung toward shoulder.



### Slow Down

Arm extended straight out, palm facing down, swing down to your side.



### You Lead

Arm extended upward 45, palm forward pointing with index finger, swing in arc from back to front.



### Follow Me

Arm extended straight up from shoulder, palm forward.



### Single File

Arm and index finger extended straight up.



### Double File

Arm with index and middle finger extended straight up.



### Hazard Ahead

On the left point with left hand; on the right, point with right foot.



### Your Blinker's On

Put your left arm around waist height, open and close your fingers to a point.



### Cops Ahead

Tap on top of helmet with open palm down.



## **Pre-Ride**

- Pre-ride the route within a few days of the ride if possible
- Share cell phone numbers with Sweeps and other key riders
- Take a cursory look at the bikes, checking for worn tires, other safety items
- Have all riders sign the ride log and waiver documents if necessary
- Check all riders to be certain they are current to both the National and HOG Chapter, they can be a current member of another HOG Chapter
- Have emergency contact information for each rider
- Query the riders what their gas mile range is in case of a long ride
- Ensure all riders have a full tank

## **Pre-Ride Briefing**

- Introduce yourself, ride sweeps
- Welcome 1<sup>st</sup> time group riders, have them introduce themselves if possible
- Give details of the destination, the roads that will be ridden, details of the road conditions, stops, construction, and other hazards
- Be sure to share with the riders the road difficulty level
- Announce the end of the ride
- Review hand signals by giving examples, remind to pass signals rearward
- Review ride stagger formation, and passing technique
- If there is communication by radio, Sena, Cardo or any other, keep idle chatter to a minimum, please do not overtalk the Ride Leader or Sweep
- Follow the leader, do not attempt to overtake without acknowledgement
- Inform the group that in a situation where one rider is forced to stop because of emergency or equipment failure, the only rider to stop with them is the Sweep. All other riders to follow the Ride Leader to a safe area to stop.
- Stay in your position throughout the ride
- Absolutely, no alcohol or any other mind altering drugs during the ride