

BASIC GROUP RIDING MANUAL



EL CAJON H.O.G. CHAPTER #3203

RIDE SAFE – HAVE FUN

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1. SAFETY

El Cajon HOG (EC HOG) chapter #3203 has adopted the following basic policy for group rides: Ride Safe, Be Courteous, use Common Sense and Have Fun. The fundamental principle of safe group rides shall be reinforced through the sharing of educational material printed by National HOG, the Motorcycle Safety Foundation, Riders Edge and other nationally recognized sources. Nevertheless, the ultimate responsibility for the safety of ride belongs to the individual member/rider. Safety and the use of common sense are paramount.

2. THE SIMPLE STUFF

- a. Be familiar with and observe the entire Chapter group riding procedures.
- b. Show up for rides 15-30 minutes before the pre-ride briefing so you do not miss important information or keep other riders waiting.
- c. Have your gas tank full and your bladder empty.
- d. Check your bike thoroughly beforehand. Proper maintenance is a pre-requisite for a day of safe riding. Check your oil and tire pressure before you leave home.
- e. Have what you will need for the ride (with you): water, proper clothing, etc. There's nothing more uncomfortable than being a long way from home (without proper clothing) and experiencing a major weather change. Come prepared.
- f. Listen to and follow the instructions of the Road Captains unless those instructions will put them or others in an unsafe situation.
- g. Ask questions.
- h. Ride Safe. Be Courteous. Use Common Sense. Have Fun.

3. PRE-RIDING BRIEFING

Fifteen minutes prior to scheduled departure time, the Ride Leader will give a pre-ride briefing to go over the ride route and review group riding communications (signals) and safety topics.

Be patient and give your full attention. Group riding communications and safety topics must be covered at the beginning of each group ride. This may not be your first group ride, but it could be the first group ride for the person riding in front of you.

The pre-ride briefing is for safety. Ask questions, if necessary, and make certain you have all the information you need regarding the ride. This is also a good time to inform Road Captains what they need to know about you and your riding limitations. They will be happy to accommodate any special condition they can, e.g., if you prefer to ride up front or in the rear of the group.

4. GROUP SIZE

Groups are usually limited to 20 bikes or less for manageability. The size of the group will be determined by the Lead Road Captain.

5. KEY GROUP RIDE PERSONNEL

- 5.1 Head Road Captain Responsible for ride organization and training the Road Captain staff.
- 5.1 Assistant Head Road Captain Responsible helping Head Road Captain and all Road Captain.
- 5.2 Safety Officer Promotes safety and supports the Road Captain and Road Guards.
- 5.3 Road Captains Assists Head Road Captain and answers questions from riders.
 - 5.3.1 Ride Leader A Ride Leader rides at the front of the group and is in charge of the ride.
 - 5.3.2 Sweep Road Captain(s) will also be positioned at the back of the group. Known as "the Sweep," they will watch over the group and provide assistance to any rider that may require help.

6. NEW RIDERS AND RIDERS WITH SPEED RESTRICTIONS

Rides will be conducted to the level of the rider with the greatest limitations. Meaning, we will try to ride no faster than necessary to support inexperienced riders, or mechanical limitations like the 55-mph break-in limitation on a new bike. If the situation dictates, a special ride group may be formed for the limited rider or riders. New riders and new bikes may like to ride where they are comfortable, front, back or middle.

7. FORMATION RIDING

- 7.1 **Trikes.** If any trikes are in the group, may like to ride where they are comfortable, front, back or middle. Keep in mind Trikes May stop faster than two wheeled bike. They also may take the whole lane. Trikes can ride staggered when they can. They may also point to road hazards instead of using their feet.
- 7.2 **Staggered.** The standard group riding formation will be the staggered formation. The Ride Leader always leads the group from the left. The hand signal for staggered formation is the left hand raised over the head in the cowabunga (Index and little finger raised) sign and the wrist rotated back and forth on a vertical axis.
- 7.3 **Single File.** It is often desirable to ride single file because of narrow or curvy roads, obstacles, or other hazards. The hand signal is the left hand raised over the head with the index finger pointing up.
- 7.4 **Positioning.** The staggered formation increases the distance from the rider in front, yet, maintains a compact group. Give yourself enough room to stop in an emergency, but do not give unnecessary space and cause the group to be drawn out or lengthened. Remember you or the riders on the other side of the lane may need to change lane sides in an emergency. You should be able to see the face of the rider in front of you clearly in their mirror or use the two (2) second rule. Two seconds behind the rider in front of you in the same wheel track.
- 7.5 **Consistency.** Be consistent. Do not continually open and close the gap between you and the person in front of you. The safest method is to be seen in the mirror of the rider in front of you and to look for the rider to the rear of you in your mirror.
- 7.6 **Safety.** Formation group riding is intended to promote safety by increasing our visibility to automobile drivers. It is not intended to be mandatory if a situation dictates otherwise. Staggered formation, single file adjustments, or emergent evasive action should take place safely and whenever warranted; this remains the rider's individual responsibility. Safety remains the prevailing factor for all rides. Formation adjustments may be warranted and necessary without and/or before a Ride Leader demonstrates such a signal. For example, narrow or winding sections of the road may require a change from staggered to single file. Be alert. Be aware of those around you and, above all, **be safe.**

8. STANDARD MANEUVERS

- 8.1 **Changing Lanes.** When the Ride Leader wants to change lanes, the standard hand signal or turn signal will be given. Riders are to look first, signal and follow the rider ahead. Change lanes only when it is safe to do so and the **rider leader or the rider in front of you has changed lanes.**
- 8.2 **Stop Signs and Stop Lights.** It is normal for bikes coming to a stop signal to pull up next to each other, two-by-two, and to take off together and re-establish the formation. Obey traffic laws.
- 8.3 **Filling the Gap.** If a rider drops out of a staggered formation and ride is not going to stop (e.g., a rider decides to ride with the Sweep), it may be desirable to preserve the integrity of the formation by filling the gap. This will be accomplished by the Ride Leader signaling the group to ride in single file and then signaling the group back into a staggered formation. When going back into the staggered formation, all riders should stagger to the rider in front of them. The gap may also be filled when the group stops at a stop sign or light.
- 8.4 **Passing.** Pass quickly, but safely. If possible, Ride Leaders will complete the pass far enough beyond the vehicle being passed to provide sufficient room for the entire group to pass. Otherwise, riders will pass on an independent basis. Remember, there are riders behind you.

9. HIGH ALERT AREAS

- 9.1 Intersections. Intersections are one of the more dangerous areas as traffic may come from many different directions including from behind. Red lights provide no physical barrier to traffic. Right turns at stop lights will NOT be made when the signal is red. The group will wait for the green light. Be Aware – Be Alert.
- 9.2 Merging onto Interstate Highways. Merging onto freeways requires alertness and good judgment. The Ride Leader will try to facilitate the merge as a group. Though merging as a group may not always be possible, you should merge safely and, if split from the group, reconnect safely as traffic conditions allow.
- 9.3 Turns. The Ride Leader will signal turns using standard hand or turn signals. Duplicate the signal and pass it back.
- 9.4 Parked Cars. Group rides will usually stay away from the curb lane if there are parked cars. The reason is to avoid suddenly opened car doors and people and/or animals darting out from between parked cars.
- 9.5 Passing Large Trucks. BE SEEN. Assume you are not easily seen and you will probably be correct. Depending upon traffic conditions, the Ride Leader may give the single file signal. Everyone should move to the opposite side of the lane away from the truck. It is a general rule that if you cannot see the truck driver's face in his rear-view mirror, he cannot see you.

10. ROAD HAZARDS

If you see a hazard such as a pothole, rock, tire tread, or gravel, point to it so that the rider behind you sees the problem. Point with your HAND or FOOT, so all riders can pass the signal back.

11 TRAFFIC

Automobiles will sometimes want to merge into the group. They will not like it there and will usually go away the first chance they get. Let them in, and let them out.

12 SO NOW YOU'RE A RIDE LEADER (OF A SPLIT GROUP)

Stoplights and traffic conditions will often break up the group. You may even find that you become the leader of a split group from the original group. Carry on just as you have been. The Ride Leader should realize the break has occurred and slow down, if necessary and when safe to do so, to let the split group catch up. If necessary and when safe to do so, a Road Captain in your new group will pull up and take over. In any case, split groups should continue on to the next destination or planned stop.

13. NEED MORE SPACE?

A rider may need more space (possibly the whole lane) because of their experience level, road conditions, or bike's handling characteristics. The rider should signal this by extending the left arm down and slightly to the side with palm facing to the rear and with a waving motion backward. Riders behind should drop back and give the rider showing the signal more room and be prepared for the signaling rider to move anywhere on the road, and/or pull off the road and stop.

14. NEED TO DROP BACK OR STOP?

A rider may need to drop out of their position in the group and take up a position in front of the Sweep so they can adjust for their special needs such as needing more space or a slower speed or the rider may need to stop. Whatever the need, the procedure must be done safely. There are three methods for moving out of the group.

- a. If on a multi-lane road, the rider signals to change lanes, does so, then waves the other riders to pass.
- b. If a rider has a serious need to drop back or stop, the rider signals the riders behind for more space and pulls off the road when it can be done safely. Immediately wave other riders to pass.
- c. If you plan to leave the ride prior to the completion, notify the Lead and Sweep Road Captains. When you leave the ride, give a Hand Salute.

The Sweep will stay with the last rider to either ride with them or provide assistance if necessary.

15. OTHER NON-GROUP BIKES OVERTAKING OUR GROUP

Sometimes other bikes will overtake our group from the rear. This is a concern on two lane twisty roads. The group is likely already in single file. Move to the right and allow the faster rider to pass safely and with as much safety consideration as necessary for both of you.

16. COMMUNICATION (HAND SIGNALS)

Riders often wish to pass information to riders behind them. This is especially true for the Rider Leader. Hand signals are used for this purpose. Be alert and watch for these signals. When you see one, pass it back. Photos of many of the hand signals can be found on Page 15). Hand signals include:

- a. Right Turn – standard hand signal or turn signal.
- b. Left Turn - standard hand signal or turn signal.
- c. Slow Down – left arm outstretched and downward, hand flat, palm down. Raise and lower hand.
- d. Stop – left arm outstretched and downward, hand flat, and fingers pointed down.
- e. Single File – hand raised over your head (like a fist) with index finger pointed upward.
- f. Stagger – hand raised over your head (like a fist) with two-fingered “Cowabunga” (index and little finger raised) sign. Rotate at wrist.
- g. Need more space – refer to Section 13 above
- h. Speed up – left hand, palm up.
- i. Follow me – standard “follow me” signal.
- j. Need fuel – point to gas tank.
- k. Need food or drink – point to mouth.
- l. You come forward and lead me – point back, then sweep arm around to point forward.
- m. Hazard on Left/Right – point to hazard with foot or hand. Foot pointing is preferred.
- n. Pull off road to right – use proper signals, see Section 14 above. “Hans Signals image page 7”

17. FORMING UP TO DEPART

This is an unceremonious activity. When the Ride Leader says it is time to leave, everyone should line up behind him/her two-by-two. The Road Captains may assign you to a group to keep the group sizes manageable. Get behind the Rider Leader if you need to be in the front of the group. Don't be bashful about telling someone that you need to position yourself in the front. They will understand.

18. PARKING

Plan ahead so any pushing will be downhill, coming or going. Park at a 45° angle when group is parking at a curb.

19. RIDE YOUR OWN RIDE

Never ride above your personal comfort level. Advise the Rider Leader during the pre-ride briefing of any issues or concerns that you may have. If, during the ride, you feel pressured or uncomfortable, pull out of the group and take up a position in front of the Sweep. The Sweep will ride at your comfort level and appreciate your good judgment in taking positive action. If the two of you are separated from the group, someone else will assume the Sweep duties of the first group.

Although you are part of a group, you are also an individual and the sole operator of your motorcycle. "Ride your own ride" is the term used to emphasize that you must take responsibility for your riding.

20. HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

- a. Are you well?
- b. Have you had enough sleep?
- c. Have you taken something that would make it unwise or unsafe to ride?
- d. Do you have proper and safe clothing?
- e. Should you tell a Road Captain of your limitations and concerns? Don't be bashful.

21. PRE-RIDE CHECKS

Riders need to take some simple actions prior to the ride to ensure their motorcycle is ready for the road. Check your machine's general condition, critical components, and fluid levels prior to every ride to help ensure a safe ride.

The T-CLOCK checklist covers the exact items to check. The letters T-CLOCK stand for Tires & Wheels, Cables & Controls, Lights, Oil & Fluids, Chain & Chassis, and Kickstand (side stand).

RIDE YOUR OWN RIDE

Be Safe

Be Alert















Be Aware

Be Courteous

Use Common Sense

HAVE FUN!

22. Hand Signals from: Motorcycle Safety Foundation

<p>Stop - arm extended straight down, palm facing back</p> 	<p>Single File - arm and index finger extended straight up</p> 	<p>Turn Signal On - open and close hand with fingers and thumb extended</p> 
<p>Slow Down - arm extended straight out, palm facing down</p> 	<p>Double File - arm with index and middle finger extended straight up</p> 	<p>Fuel - arm out to side pointing to tank with finger extended</p> 
<p>Speed Up - arm extended straight out, palm facing up</p> 	<p>Hazard in Roadway - on the right, point with right foot; on the left, point with left hand</p> 	<p>Refreshment Stop - fingers closed, thumb to mouth</p> 
<p>You Lead/Come - arm extended upward 45 degrees, palm forward pointing with index finger, swing in arc from back to front</p> 	<p>Highbeam - tap on top of helmet with open palm down</p> 	<p>Comfort Stop - forearm extended, fist clenched with short up and down motion</p> 
<p>Follow Me - arm extended straight up from shoulder, palm forward</p> 	<p>Pull Off - arm positioned as for right turn, forearm swung toward shoulder</p> 	

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