

Thunder Mountain HOG - Group Riding Guide

Remember this is a guide, not a rulebook

The intent of this guide is to provide information for the group to ride together safely. This guide is not intended to restrict your freedom, but to help ensure that we all return home after an enjoyable ride. This guide does not encompass every set of circumstances, and is intended to serve as a guide for most situations. Therefore, it is imperative that each rider read, understand, and apply these guides using their best judgment. **You** have the ultimate responsibility for **your** safety, and must ride within your capabilities and that of your motorcycle.

1. ALL GROUP RIDER'S RESPONSIBILITIES:

- a. Observe the objectives of this guide in order to assure the safety and welfare of each individual within the group.
- b. Road Captains (RCs), designated either Lead (leading the group) or Sweep (chasing the group), will brief and direct the ride. All riders will follow the instructions of the Lead in all situations, unless, to do so, would place the rider or any other individual in an unsafe situation.
- c. Maintain motorcycle in a safe riding condition.
- d. Ride with headlights on (running lights on or off at the Road Captains discretion)
- e. Ride with a "safety first" attitude.
- f. The purpose of the RCs is to lead and assist. They are not traffic cops and they are not evaluating, nor performing check rides.

2. MEETING PLACE AND DEPARTURE TIME:

- a. The meeting place and departure times will be posted to the membership via the website, email, and monthly calendar.
- b. A pre-ride brief will be held just before departure by the ride Lead, to cover intended route, discuss group ride guidelines, and schedule gas and rest stops.

3. RIDING FORMATION:

- a. The standard formation under normal conditions will be staggered, in one traffic lane. The interval will be no less than one second between staggered riders and/or two seconds from the rider directly in front you.
- b. The Lead will be at the head of the group and typically just to the left of lane center. The Sweep will ride at the rear, in the center of the lane, visible to Lead.
- c. New members, or riders inexperienced in group riding, will normally be positioned in the front of the group, just behind Lead.
- d. The ideal group size, when Lead and Sweep do not have CB radios, is 6 -7 motorcycles. With radios, group size can be increased to 10 -12 motorcycles.
- e. Trikes, and motorcycles with sidecars, will ride at the rear of the group, in single file, just ahead of the Sweep.

4. SPEED, INTERVALS, AND DISTANCES:

a. The Lead will establish and maintain a uniform speed, consistent with the ability of the least experienced rider, surrounding conditions and the posted speed limit.

b. Leads may choose to separate the group of inexperienced riders into a group of their own, consistent with expected or actual conditions making sure there is a Lead and Sweep with the group.

c. Within the group, a safe distance is defined as a **MINIMUM TWO SECOND DELAY** between the rider and the rider directly ahead of him/her. This means there is a **MINIMUM ONE SECOND DELAY** between staggered riders. If a single file formation is employed, the safe distance is defined as a **MINIMUM OF TWO SECONDS BETWEEN RIDERS**.

d. Do not get hung up with, "there must be only two seconds between motorcycles". This is a guideline for average highway riding. This gap should be determined by speed and road conditions, but never less than two seconds.

e. With respect to vehicles ahead of the group, a safe distance is defined as an **ABSOLUTE MINIMUM** of a **THREE SECOND DELAY** between the Lead and any vehicle directly ahead of the group. Do not tail gate!

5. LANE CHANGES AND PASSING:

a. Four lane or freeway passing can utilize the Sweep rider to capture the lane. There will be situations where Lead must switch lanes immediately but, under controlled conditions, the Lead can notify the Sweep via radio or signals to capture the left/passing lane. When safe to do so, the Sweep moves into the left lane, followed by the Lead and the remaining riders, front to rear. The group will accelerate and pass in a modified staggered formation so as to keep a lateral distance from the vehicle being passed. When all motorcycles are clear, the Sweep will return to the right lane. The Lead and the following riders, front to rear, now return to the right lane.

b. On a two lane road with opposing traffic, when ready to pass, the Lead will signal, head check, move to the left lane, accelerate and pass. The following riders will signal, head check and pass individually. This is not a group pass. Lead will hold passing speed and return to the right lane. The riders following the Lead will return to the right lane when clear of the passed traffic. As always, each rider does a head check prior to switching lanes. If only part of the group completes the pass, the lead group will maintain a distance and speed ahead of passed vehicle until the entire group has individually passed. Don't be in a rush, take your time and safety first.

6. UNSCHEDULED OR EMERGENCY STOPS:

a. If possible, the Lead should be informed that a stop is necessary in order to lead the group to the next convenient and safe place to stop.

b. If a rider must pull over immediately, only the Sweep will accompany that rider to a stop.

c. Any rider observing a problem with another rider's equipment should inform that rider as quickly and safely as possible.

d. Leads will use good judgment and common sense when choosing a spot to pull over. If at all possible, get clear of the road and avoid sand, gravel, etc.

7. ACCIDENTS:

a. If someone in the group is involved in an accident, the Sweep should stop immediately and the Lead will stop the group when safe to do so. It may be necessary for the group to disperse and park separately.

b. Members will provide assistance:

-Slow, divert, or stop traffic

-Provide aid and comfort

-Call 911

-Maintain order and preserve the accident scene

-Take photographs

-Obtain license numbers and vehicle descriptions

-Obtain names and addresses of witnesses and others involved in the incident

-Maintain overall control until relieved by proper authorities

8. HAND SIGNALS: (see attached)

Hand signals are a courtesy and should be used when appropriate and safe to do so.

9. SAFETY EQUIPMENT:

a. All riders will come to the ride with a well maintained motorcycle.

b. All riders will show up with appropriate riding apparel for the weather conditions.

c. RCs should always carry first aid kit, tool kit, and route maps (if required).

10. TIPS & EXPERIENCE...nothing can replace good judgment and common sense!

a. Always watch for loose gravel or sand.

b. Markings painted on the pavement are extremely slick when wet.

c. Watch for oil slicks anywhere vehicles sit.

d. The use of radios between Lead and Sweep is highly recommended.

e. When starting from a stop, or making a turn, an even steady acceleration is recommended. If the formation is broken, keep the speed five to ten mph below the posted limit to allow the rest of the formation to catch up.

f. Everyone must pay attention to motorcycles and other traffic around them.

g. If you need to speed to get to your destination...you should have made better plans and started earlier. Chapter rides are supposed to be enjoyable, not racing events.

h. If you think the trip will take three hours, plan on taking four. The larger the group, the more time to allow for rest and gas stops.

i. If another vehicle, for whatever reason, starts to move into your group, **LET IT IN!** A two wheeler will always lose the battle with a four wheeler.