

WHAT I NEED TO KNOW TO RIDE IN A GROUP

1. **PRE-RIDE PREPARATION:** Here are just some suggestions. Depending on the model of your bike, you may have more or less things to check.

First and foremost, yourself. Are you physically and mentally prepared for the ride? Riding your bike may be one of the best ways to relieve the stress we have in our lives, but it is very important that you be well rested and alert on a ride for your's and your fellow riders safety.

Check the tire pressure (cold), oil level (according to manufacturer's specifications or engine at operating temperature), lights and horn. What is the weather forecast? Is it going to be hot and dry or cold and raining? Consider this not only from the starting point, but the area in between and the destination. **NOTE:** It doesn't have to be the night before, because we don't want you up all night getting ready, but a couple of days prior would be OK. Before leaving to meet at the starting point of the ride it is a good idea to check yourself and your bike.

Allow yourself plenty of time to arrive at the starting point well in advance of the departure time. Rides leave at the precise time stated, unless the Lead Road Captain (LRC) decides to delay the departure.

This is a breakdown to the most basic level, but we want you to enjoy your ride and the camaraderie of your fellow riders while ensuring everyone a safe ride.

2. **BRIEFING:** The Lead Road Captain (LRC) and the Sweep Road Captain (SRC) will start the briefing approximately 5-10 minutes before departure time. If you are new rider or new to group riding be sure to tell the LRC. It is important that the LRC be aware of this so that they can place you in the group where you will be safest and most comfortable. Riding in a group of 15-30+ bikes can be a little intimidating and we want you to be comfortable and enjoy the riding experience. The briefing will consist of an introduction of the RC's that are responsible for the ride, destination, road conditions on the route, any stops that may occur along the way, and most importantly hand signals. Hand signals are EXTREMELY IMPORTANT because it alerts all the riders of potential hazards in the road or on the road ahead so as to prepare the group to navigate past the hazard safely. When riding in a group the LRC is only one to initiate the hand signals. Other riders initiating hand signals may cause confusion and a potential hazard to the group. As the signal is passed down be sure you continue the signal to the riders behind you so the rest of the group passes the signals down the line. (Kind of like doing "The Wave" at a sporting event). THEREFORE, IT IS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT THAT GROUP RIDERS SHOULD NEVER WAVE AT OTHER RIDERS BECAUSE THIS COULD EASILY BE MISTAKEN FOR A SIGNAL TO THE REST OF THE GROUP.
3. **STARTING THE RIDE:** After the briefing and checking with the SRC, the LRC will proceed onto the road and merge at a safe rate of speed to allow the ENTIRE group to get on the road. The group rides in a staggered formation two seconds behind the rider in front and one second behind the rider to their side. A good "Rule of Thumb" is to ride in a position where you can look to the rider in front of you to the left or right position and see their face in their rear view mirror. NEVER CHANGE RIDING SIDES, once you are in a position STAY THERE! If a space exists immediately in front of you to the left or right when it is safe wave the rider to your side to fill that gap. Once everyone is on the road the LRC will accelerate to the posted speed limit or +/- 5 MPH depending on road

conditions and traffic. The signal to speed up is then given and the group accelerates to the proper speed. The LRC and SRC must always be aware of the road conditions ahead such as an accident, road conditions such as pot holes, debris or other obstacles, slow moving traffic, construction and all the road signs. **This is also every rider's responsibility.**

4. **STOP/YIELD SIGNS:** Unless otherwise directed, always come to a complete stop and cross two at a time through an intersection.
5. **SIGNAL LIGHTS:** The LRC will try to time the light so that all riders in the group make it through the intersection with a green light. If the group does get separated, the LRC will slow down as much as safely possible depending on traffic conditions or may give the single file signal so that the group can pull over to the side of the road if road conditions permit and wait for the rest of the group. (Signal for single file formation is left arm stretched above the head with one (1) finger up - return to staggered formation is two (2) fingers up).
6. **CHANGING LANES ON "TWO LANE" HIGHWAYS:** On a single-lane road the LRC will give single file signal and then proceed to pass with caution. After you pass, return to

staggered formation as soon as possible so that space can be created to allow the rider behind you more room to pass and merge back into the group.

7. **CHANGING LANES ON "FOUR LANE" HIGHWAYS:** The SRC always need to be aware of traffic and road conditions ahead as well as protecting the rear. By observing traffic conditions ahead this will allow the SRC to move into the faster (or safer) lane the group need to move into and "block" the lane so that the LRC can change lanes safely with the rest of the group following behind maintaining their position.
8. **ACCORDION EFFECT:** What is it? It's when riders begin to get large spaces between them during a ride. The LRC sets the pace for the group. The pace (speed) is determined by the LRC who takes into consideration several different variables, e.g. road conditions, traffic flow/volume, weather and group size. All the other riders in the group must maintain the appropriate riding distance at all times in order to prevent this "accordion effect". The SRC will observe the group to see that the appropriate space/gap is maintained between all the riders. Is a stop is made during the ride the SRC will consult with the LRC so that they can address any concerns about a rider and discuss it with that individual so that they will be aware of the concern and adjust accordingly so as to ensure a safe, enjoyable ride for everyone.
9. **BREAK DOWNS:** If a rider's bike becomes disabled the SRC will stop with them and assist them in getting the bike off the road to a safe area as much as possible and will assist them in either getting the bike going again or contact someone that can assist the rider in getting them and their bike picked up and taken to the nearest town, H-D dealership or wherever the rider chooses. It is a good idea to have a cell phone, and your H.O.G.® membership card handy because it has a toll-free number for rider assistance.