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SUGGESTIONS FOR SAFE GROUP RIDING

CIGAR CITY HOG CHAPTER

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INTRODUCTION

Organizing, leading, or participating in a group ride is an activity that a lot of riders would like to undertake. However, many riders are somewhat intimidated and reluctant to participate because they are not really sure how it is actually done. There is a good chance they have participated in a group ride and have become aware that there is a lot more going on than readily meets the eye. There is also the chance that they have been on some group rides that were conducted by riders that were long on enthusiasm but really didn't know what they were doing. This resulted in an unfavorable experience and no desire to lead or even join another such an event.

This brief guide is intended to help you get started and hopefully clear up some of the mystery. It is by no means a definitive handbook on the subject. Nor, is it the only method to use to successfully conduct a group ride. It will get you started and hopefully avoid some of the unsafe "happenings" that you may have already experienced on previous group rides.

Organizing a group ride is not the same as going for a ride with a few of your normal riding buddies nor is this guide intended for those types of very small rides. The people you normally ride with are almost always compatible as to the factors that will be discussed below. After all, that is one of the main reasons you all ride together. You need to approach an organized group ride from the standpoint that you do not automatically know what will make the ride both enjoyable and safe for the majority of the participants. The word majority is used because it is very doubtful that you will ever be able to please everyone every time. It is just a fact of life that some people will not be happy conforming to even common sense safe riding techniques. So be it. Your responsibility is to the group you are leading and not to the few that will always want to go their own way no matter what.

In any event, it is hoped that the following will be of some benefit and believe us when we tell you that these are only the basics.

SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS

Safety is always the first and foremost consideration! Road rash or worse really takes the enjoyment out of any ride. Additionally, riding in an unsafe manner just about guarantees much lower turnouts for future events. Most riders are very quick to recognize when they are in an unsafe situation and will normally avoid them in the future. Most of the "rules" that are discussed later are really aimed at keeping everyone (you too) as safe as possible.

You really have to think about safety both in the planning and during the ride itself. Make sure everyone

understands this before the start of the ride. Some examples of this are carry a First Aid Kit on the ride (if you have room to do so) and let everyone know who has it in case of need. Also, be aware of who has had any type of emergency training such as First Aid, CPR, etc.. You hope you never need this but then again, you never know.

Another point to consider is the possible physical limitations of the participants. There are riders that have night vision and/or other physical limitations that need to be considered. And no, I'm not referring to the ever popular T.B. (tiny bladder) problem that always seems to crop up 20 minutes after a breakfast or pit stop. However, even that needs to be considered. A rider that is uncomfortable or is seriously distracted by any physical condition is not going to enjoy themselves and will most probably not be a safe a rider. T.B. may seem a funny situation but not when they crash or run into the back of your high buck paint job because they were badly distracted.

ALL traffic and speed laws must be observed at all times. This needs to be repeatedly stressed. You would be surprised at how many riders think it is OK or even required to blast through a Red Light or exceed the speed limit just to stay up with the group. Point out that it is much better to get temporarily separated from the group than it is to end up as a Buick hood ornament. Methods that will allow temporarily separated riders to rejoin the group will be discussed. However, you need to point out that separated and even lost is much better than plaster of Paris, stainless steel bone pins, or skin grafts.

One last safety pointer. Everyone on a group ride should remember that it is always better to drop out and go your own way if you feel uncomfortable or unsafe for any reason. You and you alone must be the only authority on whether you feel safe and you should act accordingly.

BE SAFE - Live To Ride and Ride To Live

RIDE CONSIDERATIONS

Always let everyone know what type of ride you are planning. An Open Informal Ride such as our chapter's Wednesday night dinner rides may be conducted with none or only a few of the guidelines outlined here. A formal HOG Chapter Ride should require that everyone understand and follow all the rules. A casual 2 hour 50 mile ride appeals to one type of rider while an 8 hour 400 mile ride appeals to an entirely different type of rider. The main thing is tell them what you have planned. This will avoid the dissatisfaction and possible unsafe situation that results from riders finding themselves in over their head. It is no fun when someone thinks they are going on a casual ride across the county and then finds themselves on a ballistic three states home before dark endurance blast. Remember that what may be a medium duration casual ride to you could turn out to be a rather long exercise in trying to keep up on twisty roads for the novice.

DURATION - As best you can, carefully calculate and be sure to announce the total time duration of the ride. This should be broken down into the projected riding times for each of the ride segments, the number and duration of the various stops, and the total duration to the final destination. This gives the riders who are not interested or are not able to commit that much time on that particular day an opportunity to pass or make other arrangements. They may choose not to go or to only go part way. The main point is that you will not turn them off from future rides with an unwelcome sore butt surprise they hadn't planned on.

DESTINATION - It's your ride and you get to pick the destination. However, you need to give the

destination some thought if you want others to go along. Not everyone gets the same level of enjoyment out of a long ride to a remote lake to watch someone hunt ducks with a ball peen hammer. Likewise, not everyone is just chilled with joy over the thought of a 7 mile ride to a 4 hour beer stop or a 40 mile ride to Wanda's Christmas and Lace Shop. Enough said. Just make real sure you tell everyone in a loud clear voice what you have in mind. It's up to them from that point on.

LENGTH - You had better tell everyone just how far you plan on taking them. Long term riders know that it's the saddle and saddle hours and not miles that are the real limiting factor. Newer riders will grumble and moan about the total length of the ride if caught unaware even though other factors may put it well within their comfort zone. You can "sell" a long ride if you break it down into novice manageable small chunks and explain why they won't get overly tired.

ROUTE - Always take great pains to carefully plan and then describe the route. Strongly consider making and handing out maps if you will be leading a large group, using a complex or high traffic routing, or if you suspect you will have a significant number of relative novice group riders. It is not enough for everyone to just know the destination. They must also know the entire route complete with the intermediate stops (and approximate times) so that they can link up should they get separated for any reason. It's no fun to suddenly find yourself separated from the group and no earthly idea how or when to link back up again.

Unless you are planning a "scenic ride", lay out the most direct route to your destination. Few riders really like Interstate rides but they do have their place. They offer the advantage of all traffic moving in the same direction (no left turn or oncoming passers using your lane thrills), no cross traffic, and no traffic lights or Stop signs to separate the group. If you are planning a "scenic ride", be sure traffic conditions will allow it. For example, county fairs, festivals, car shows, horse shows, etc. can really screw up traffic and present the group with complications they don't need.

For safety purposes, try to lay out a route that incorporates as many right turns as possible and avoid left turns whenever possible. Along the same lines, try to make all turns in congested areas using traffic lights with turn lanes. This is safer and helps keep the group together.

INTERMEDIATE STOPS - The number and frequency of the intermediate stops needs to be carefully considered in light of who you expect to go on the ride. This is one of those key areas that strongly influence how people enjoy the ride. Stop too often and they will grumble. Stop too little and you get the same. Everyone knows that you only stop for gas when the reserve on your 22 gallon tank is about to run out, you don't eat or drink between meals, and that you had your bladder replaced with a 16 gallon brass tank. Well strange though it may be, not everyone can match your pace. Give some consideration to those riders who suffer with some physical limitation, advanced age (over 30), or may have other experience or equipment limitations. A general rule of thumb is to stop every 30-40 minutes for a less experienced group and 60 minutes for the experienced riders. However, there are no hard and fast rules here so factor in whatever feels right for your group, the route, weather, season, alignment of the planets, whatever.

You also need to think about the location of the intermediate stops. All stop locations must have adequate parking space and at least every other stop should have gas (no more than 60 miles between gas stops) and Restroom facilities available. Common sense will tell you to cross correlate to the route, mileage and duration for when to schedule these stops. =20

Try to find interesting or scenic locations that will appeal to your particular group for the other stops. Don't keep stopping at gas stations, Minimarts, and Bars if you have the option. Some additional things

to consider are:

- Look for shade if its summer, sun if its winter, quiet if you have just completed a busy highway section, etc.
- Plan stops to avoid gravel and loose dirt. No one likes gravel and it's even less fun in a large group.
- Right hand turns in and out will help keep the group together and are safer.
- Make sure everyone is going to feel welcomed. Call ahead and make reservations or at least tell them that a stop is planned at their location so they won't get uncomfortable when a mass of bikes starts to show up unexpectedly. Along these same lines, it is a real good idea to let local law enforcement know about the ride and maybe drop off a map of the route if one is available.
- Give some thought as to how the group can/should park at these stops. For example, consider if there enough room to park in the same formation as when traveling down the road or should the group parallel park. The main thing is to get the group quickly and safely off the road so no one gets hit from behind and to be able to reform quickly when it is time to leave.

Remember to always clearly state at the beginning of the ride (pre ride meeting and/or written on the ride map) where the intermediate stops will be, approximately how long it should take to get there, how many miles it is from the start or the previous stop, how long you plan to stop, and the approximate departure time if you stay on schedule.

ROAD CONDITIONS - It is obvious you have to consider the condition of the roads you plan to use for your ride. Bouncing along broken pavement, sliding through a long deep sand section, tracking through still wet asphalt, or getting delayed and then strung out due to the whims of a flag person will not get you high marks in the planning category.

What is not so obvious to some is that you should consider the character of the roads in light of who will be going on the ride. Very experienced riders have preferences but can handle just about anything. The less experienced may well be intimidated if you are planning 200 miles of Interstate or 75 miles of nonstop FAST blind twisty back road turns. Think it through and then make sure you tell everyone what they can expect.

TIMING - Give a lot of consideration to the experience level and personal preferences of the riders you are targeting when setting up the starting and ending time for the ride. Not everyone likes to get up at the crack of dawn and hit the road. Likewise, there are a lot of riders that don't want to wait around all morning, afternoon, whatever for the ride to start. Additionally, no matter what they may tell you, there are a lot of new riders that don't have enough saddle time to feel comfortable at night. Carefully describing the timing of the ride will cut down on the misunderstandings and therefore the resulting griping.

WEATHER AND SEASONAL CONSIDERATIONS - This section is all common sense. Don't get offended but do factor in the weather and season for everyone's enjoyment. For example, avoid as much of the middle part of the day as you can when planning a summer ride and use as much of the middle part of the day as you can when planning a winter ride. Take into account rain and fog patterns for your intended route. Avoid inadvertently riding into a rising or setting sun if possible unless you are purposely incorporating the effect for a reason. Think about bug season and the possible effect that

might have. Consider the expected temperature and the effect that might have on the riders. Think about all these considerations when planning your intermediate stops as well as the ride in general.

Another item to consider is whether the ride will be canceled, rescheduled, go as planned or even canceled in the middle of the ride in the event of bad weather. Make sure everyone understands what your definition of bad weather is. Some riders won't leave the garage if it rains 2 states over while others are prepared to ride through an arctic storm. Let everyone know so no one shows up for a ride that has been canceled or doesn't show up for a ride that is going no matter what.

FREQUENCY - Don't back away from organizing a ride just because there is one planned close to or on the same date you are thinking about. There will always be riders who cannot go or don't want to go on the other ride that will be interested in going on your ride. Don't forget the hard-core group of riders that will ride every day and night if they get the chance. The message is go ahead and set your ride up even if you end up with only a small group. The enjoyment and not the number of riders is the important thing.

WHO IS GOING ON THE RIDE? - You have two different "who's" you need to deal with at two different times. The first set of who is going on the ride are the riders you plan for. For example, you may be planning a ride for fairly experienced riders that will cover a medium distance and be primarily routed through tight curving secondary roads. That is your target and you consider all the previously discussed factors in laying out your plan. Fine so far. However, be aware that you will probably have anywhere from a few to many riders show up the day of the ride that don't match the profile you planned for or are essentially unknown to you.

There are a few things you need to do when (not if) this happens. The first is to remind/announce to everyone (at the pre ride meeting) the particulars of the ride as previously discussed and ask if everyone is comfortable with the plan. You are covered if they still want to go. However, in the interest of safety, you should get riders that you are familiar with to watch out for those unexpected/unknown riders that show up. They should understand that you are asking them to monitor these riders from a safety standpoint and should notify you quietly at any time they suspect someone is getting in over their head or is riding in an unsafe manner. This will allow you to take whatever action is appropriate before anyone gets into real trouble. It is much safer for all to have an experienced rider drop back and lead some lesser experienced riders at a reduced pace than it is to have someone crash. Additionally, any embarrassment that might inadvertently result will heal much quicker than skin grafts.

RULES OF THE ROAD

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

ROAD CAPTAIN - The Road Captain is the leader of the ride. As the leader, he or she is responsible for setting an example for the group. The Road Captain must exercise total control over their own riding preferences and follow the ride plan while simultaneously providing clear direction to the group, constantly monitoring the group for signals being passed forward, trouble, or any situation which could result in an unsafe condition. In short, the Road Captain must act in the most disciplined and safest manner possible. Note - nowhere in the preceding description were the terms fastest or bravest used. These are terms reserved for racing which is absolutely another event altogether.

- The Road Captain always rides at the left front position so that they have the best view of the

route of travel.

- The Road Captain sets the pace according to the ride plan which should indicate a comfortable speed within the posted limit. Keep in mind that (a) riders at the end of the group may have to ride a little faster to "catch up" if gaps develop in the main group, (b) it is also dangerous to set too slow a pace and impede traffic, and (c) a slow initial pace is needed after any stop so as to not create gaps in the group and to avoid an "accordion" effect.

No one is allowed to pass the Road Captain without prior agreement and only for a specific reason. Any rider that does pass the Road Captain without prior arrangement, or who rides in a manner deemed unsafe by the Road Captain is automatically off the ride and will be asked to leave the group. Safety considerations make this an absolute must.

- The Road Captain determines both the direction and lane of travel on a multiple lane road or highway. He or she is responsible for clearly and in a timely manner signaling all changes in speed, lane use, direction, and hazards such as road debris, construction, broken or slick pavement, low buck lunch (road kills), etc.. Everyone needs to understand that the Road Captain will continue on to a safe turn around location should they miss or purposely go past a turn in the interest of safety. They should not second guess the Road Captain and start making independent decisions that can put both themselves and other riders in danger.

Essentially the same rule as that stated for pace applies. That is, any rider that does not follow in the lane selected by the Road Captain is off the ride. The Road Captain must have the ability to pick the safest lane in traffic and to position the group in the appropriate lane for turns, stops, avoidance of road hazards, and when multiple lanes merge down to a single lane. Again, safety considerations make this an absolute must.

- It is advisable for the Road Captain and Sweep Rider to individually or divided between them carry some basic "emergency" type equipment such as a first aid kit, fire extinguisher, flash light, road flares, canteen (water), portable phone, maps of the general area, basic tools, and whatever else is appropriate for the particular ride.
- The Road Captain is replaced by the next rider in line if they have to drop out for any reason. There must always be a competent person in charge of the ride. Consideration should be given to who is placed in this secondary position.
- The Road Captain may in fact deviate from the ride plan as covered at the pre ride meeting if safety considerations so indicate.

SWEEP RIDER - The Sweep Rider brings up the rear of the ride group.

- The Sweep Rider always rides at the left rear position so that they have the best view of the group and route of travel.
- The Sweep Rider maintains the pace according to the ride plan and the pace established by the Road Captain. No one is allowed to fall behind the Sweep Rider. Any rider that is not experiencing difficulties and still cannot maintain the established pace is automatically off the ride and on their own.
- The Sweep Rider is responsible for determining when the group is ready to leave the start location

and any intermediate stops. They signal to the Road Captain to proceed and watch out for traffic until all of the group is underway.

- The Sweep Rider is responsible for and provides assistance to any rider that encounters problems and has to either slow down or drop out of the ride. No more than one other rider should stop to help the Sweep Rider provide assistance as it is generally not safe for a larger group to park along the side of the road. If at all possible, the Sweep Rider should have or be supplied with a portable telephone and the appropriate emergency phone numbers to be used in the event of a breakdown or a mishap.
- The Sweep Rider is replaced by the next rider in line if they have to slow down or drop out for any reason. There must always be a competent person in the sweep position. Consideration should be given to who is placed in position to replace the Sweep Rider.

GROUP LEADER(S) - A very large group may make it advisable to divide the riders into logical groups of from 4 to 6 motorcycles and name one or more Group Leaders. They function under the direction of the Road Captain as leaders of their group.

- A Group Leader always rides at the left front position of their group so that they have the best view of the Road Captain, the riders ahead, and the route of travel.
- A Group Leader in essence takes over as Road Captain for their group should the main group become divided due to traffic conditions, stop lights, stop signs, etc.. They function as the Road Captain for their group and all the other groups following them until they are able to rejoin the main group. All rules that apply to the Road Captain apply to the Group Leader while they function in that capacity.
- Group Leaders share with the Road Captain the responsibility for the following:
 - Creating the opportunity and the road space required for other motorist to safely pass through the group in order to exit or enter the route of travel.
 - Insure that all traffic laws and safe riding techniques are being observed.
 - Help breakup and reform the group as a result of stop lights, stop signs, flag people, traffic conditions, etc.. They should take over temporary leadership of any stray riders resulting from one of these conditions as soon as safety allows.
 - Helps pass all signals from the Road Captain to the following group of riders.

PARTICIPATING IN THE RIDE

- All Riders are responsible for their own safety at all times and will be required to ride in a safe manner or leave the ride.
- All Speed and Traffic laws must be obeyed by everyone at all times. Additionally, remember that like it or not you are representing everyone on two wheels during a group ride. Be a courteous rider and give cars and trucks every consideration.
- Drinking and driving is never a good idea and must be totally avoided while participating in a

group ride.

- The normal riding formation will be the staggered or diamond formation as it is sometimes known. This formation provides the best safety margin of reaction time and space as each rider only uses one third (either right or left side depending on the stagger position) of the lane. Heavy, very slow traffic may require that you ride in a side by side column of twos for a very short distance. A staggered formation complete with a safe interval should be immediately adopted as soon as conditions allow.
- Everyone is responsible for knowing what all the hand signals mean and for passing all signals from the Road Captain to the following riders. The common hand signals are covered at the end of this guide.
- Dress or pack according to the weather you may find on the ride or on the way home. Being too hot, too cold, or uncomfortable from a sun or wind burn will make you a less safe rider and can lead to an unfortunate situation not only for you but others on the ride.
- All riders are expected to insure that their bike is in a safe operating condition, gassed, and generally ready to go. It is no fun to crash because of a bad tire on your bike or someone else's machine. It is also very embarrassing to be asked to leave the ride because you are riding a rolling disaster and constitute a danger to everyone else. Additionally, the Sweep Rider will help if you encounter problems during the ride. They may not be so inclined if you started out knowing that you had a problem.
- All riders are responsible for knowing as much as possible about the route, times, stops, etc. They should arrive at the departure point in time to hear everything discussed at the pre ride meeting and to familiarize themselves with any maps or written instructions that may be provided. This contributes to a safer ride and adds to the enjoyment. It is not a lot of fun just following people around without knowing where you are going, when you will be able to take care of that last cup of coffee, or will your gas hold out.
- All riders must clearly signal the Sweep Rider if they decide to leave the ride for any reason. Don't make the Sweep wonder if you are having trouble and follow you to see if they can help.
- Riders should not speed up suddenly should a gap develop between them and the bike in front. Rather, they should accelerate slowly until they catch up and are back in position. This will help prevent the riders in back from over reacting and possibly running into the group when they suddenly catch up.
- Riders should signal the Road Captain when they have to pull over for an emergency by flashing their lights. All other riders are responsible for passing this signal forward until the Road Captain acknowledges that he has seen it. Remember that it is normally the Sweep Riders responsibility, if there is one on the ride, to stop and offer assistance and that no more than one other rider should stop to help the Sweep Rider as it is generally not safe for a larger group to park along the side of the road. The Road Captain will signal the group when it is safe to pull off the road should he or she feel it is necessary.

THE RIDE

This section will be presented in the effective order that events should take place. For example, the very first thing you need to do is to pick a date, time, destination, etc., and then let people know that the ride is going to happen. This can be done verbally at your group meeting, via a flyer, combination of the two, or any other way that it is effective. All the various detailed plans need not be completed at this point but enough should be decided to give a fairly representative flavor of what the potential participants can expect. You can then gauge (show of hands, sign up list, boos, whatever) about how many riders you can expect and plan accordingly during the detailed planning stage of the ride. By the way, don't forget to list the event on your groups official events calendar so that no one intending to go on the ride forgets the main details.

The second action is to, either by yourself or with the other riders that agreed to help, lay out the detailed plans for the ride as discussed in the previous section. By now, you should be well aware of just how important to the overall success of the ride this detailed planning really is. Document your plans on the back of a bar napkin, a clay tablet, jury duty summons, whatever, but document them so you can cover them at the pre ride meeting. You probably want to do a fairly neat job of documenting your plans if you are going to have a large turn out and plan to pass out written information to the participants.

The third action is to touch base with the appropriate people at the starting location, the final destination, the intermediate stops, and any appropriate law enforcement agency if you are planning a really BIG ride. Make any required changes to your detailed ride plan at this point.

The fourth action if you have not already done so is to pick or get volunteers for your road crew. Remember you need at least a Road Captain and a Sweep Rider even for a small group. They need to be fully briefed prior to the day of the ride. Don't wait until the last minute to do this as you can have a bunch of small stuff come up at the last second that will distract you. By the way, you may want to lead the ride, but then again, you may not if this is the first ride you have organized. Working with an experienced road crew is an excellent opportunity to learn how it should be done. This, of course, is your choice.

The fifth action takes place just before the actual ride departs. That is to hold a pre ride meeting and hand out any written instruction/details you feel are appropriate. You need to cover both the details of the ride and the rules of the road. This will help insure that you have both a good time and a safe event. Be very sure to name the Road Officers for the ride.

The sixth action is to have the ride and then meet informally with the road crew and discuss the ride. This should be done as soon as practical so no one forgets anything and you and the road crew can benefit from the experience. This allows you to make any future changes that will be effective.

COMMON HAND SIGNALS

Hand signals should be kept simple, easy to learn and understand, and few in number. As soon as you see a signal given, you and/or your passenger should repeat the same signal so the rider behind can see it and have the maximum amount of time to react. There really are no standard rider hand signals. The following signals may not be consistent with those used by your normal riding partners. They are offered only as a suggestion and are in addition to the normal DMV (Department of Motor Vehicles) approved hand signals. Also note that for safety reasons all signals are given with the left hand so as to allow the right hand to have full control of the throttle and front brake.

Start Your Engine - The Sweep Rider waves his hand in a circle high over his or her head in a "wind them up motion".

I'm Ready To Go - When your bike is running, place either your left or right hand on top of your windshield. If you do not have a windshield, raise your hand high enough for the Sweep Rider to be able to see and gauge when everyone is ready to depart.

Slow Down - Left arm straight down and palm towards the back. Move your arm back forth at the elbow for emphasis.

Speed Up - Left arm straight out with the palm up. Raise and lower the arm.

Hazard In The Road - Point with left hand at the object or situation.

Turn - Use your turn signals whenever possible in addition to the DMV approved hand signals.

Need Gas - Point at gas tank.

Need Food/Drink - Point at you mouth.

Comfort Stop - Pat the top of your head.

Turn On Lights - Left arm bent at the elbow, hand facing forward and open and close your hand rapidly.

Turn Signals are On - Left arm bent at the elbow, hand facing rear and open and close your hand rapidly.

Form Single File - Left arm bent at the elbow and hold up one finger.

Form Double File - Left arm bent at the elbow and hold up two fingers.

Form Staggered Formation - Left arm bent at the elbow and hold up three fingers.

FORMATION RIDING

General Comments

Staggered Riding - The lead motorcycle (Road Captain) should be in the left 1/3 lane, the second motorcycle should be in the right 1/3 lane, and so on. Each rider should leave enough room for the motorcycle in front of them to make a left or right maneuver without danger of hitting the next motorcycle in line. Typically, you should leave a minimum of about a motorcycle and a half length between you and the next motorcycle in your (1/3) lane whenever possible. Another way of stating this is that at slow speeds you should have at least a three second interval between you and the next bike directly in front of you and at least a two second interval between you and the bike to your left or right front. This time or distance interval is of course adjusted for speed.

Always stay in line with the bike in front of you and do not switch between left and right side of the

lane. The objective is to keep as tight a group as possible and yet have enough separation so as to allow for required safe maneuvering room.

Passing Other Vehicles - Pre-position yourself for the pass by being far enough behind the vehicle you are going to pass to be able to see clearly down the road for an "oncoming traffic check". Signal, and if you have a passenger, have the passenger signal as well. Do a mirror check, then a head check of your blind spot, to make sure no one is passing you. Accelerate and change lanes. Remember, you legally cannot exceed the speed limit. Before returning to your lane, make a mirror check and a head check, to be sure there is space between you and the vehicle you are passing, and anyone else that is also making a pass. Return to your lane riding position and turn off your blinker. To be safe, no more than one motorcycle should pass at the same time. Never have the last motorcycle pull out and slow traffic so that the group can pass as a unit.

When Being Passed - Allow the vehicle to pass you safely by slowing down and if need be, creating a gap so that they can pass the whole group in segments rather than trying to make it all at one jump. Passing or getting passed anytime can be hazardous so use common sense and a safe approach.

GENERAL COMMENTS

PICTURES - Always try to have at least two riders bring a camera and enough film to shoot lots of pictures when planning a large ride. These visual reminders accomplish at least two things. First, everyone likes to have a record of a good time and second, they can help to build interest in future rides among viewers who were not present. Additional uses of these pictures are for chapter historical purposes, submission to HOG Tales or the local media, etc..

CHASE/SUPPORT VEHICLE - A big plus for a formal or large group ride is the use of a Chase or support vehicle to help with emergencies. This vehicle should be large enough to pull a two bike trailer or capable of carrying a couple of bikes in the event of serious breakdowns (I know, I know, but a Harley did break down in 1948 and it's better to err on the safe side). This is a real "crowd pleaser" as no one can stand the thought of possibly leaving their bike on the side of the road even temporarily or turning it over to a wrecker driver with a rusted hook.

- Driving the Chase Vehicle can be an opportunity for someone who would or could not otherwise participate.
- The Chase Vehicle becomes an excellent additional carrier of the emergency supplies normally carried by the Road Captain and the Sweep rider.
- The Chase Vehicle can easily carry additional emergency supplies such as a can of gas, flat fixing supplies for tubeless tires, a few containers of motor oil, a spare set of gapped spark plugs for Sporsters and big twins, a few more tools than are normally carried by each rider, etc.. However, remember that we are talking emergency use only and not a substitute for normal maintenance.
- The Chase Vehicle becomes a welcome alternative ride should someone become ill on the ride.
- A magnetic sign or banner can be procured for the vehicle to help identify our organization to the local community and to other Harley riders who are not yet members.
- Again, a portable phone for communicating with the riding group and/or emergency agencies would be helpful.

This guide, incomplete though it may be, should help in the organization and performance of your group rides. As previously stated, this is far from a complete treatment of this worthwhile activity and is in no way intended to be viewed as "THE WAY TO DO IT". Ignore anything in this guide that you do not feel is safe and include anything that you feel will result in a safer more enjoyable ride.

Good luck and have a great time.

Note: This document may be copied and distributed ONLY under the following conditions:

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GROUP RIDE INFORMATION

Ride Date _____

1. Road Captain is _____

2. Sweep Rider is _____

3. Group Leader(s) is _____

4. Destination is _____

5. Route will be:

Expected Departure Time is _____

Expected Arrival Time is _____

Expected Return Departure Time is _____

6. Intermediate stops will be at:

- Location: _____ Arrive At: _____ Depart At: _____

- Location: _____ Arrive At: _____ Depart At: _____
- Location: _____ Arrive At: _____ Depart At: _____
- Location: _____ Arrive At: _____ Depart At: _____

7. Expected Expenses: _____

8. General:

- All traffic laws will be obeyed at all times.
- We will ride in a staggered formation whenever possible.
- YOU are responsible for your own safety!
- The Road Captain (or the Group Leaders if the group becomes separated) will make all decisions concerning the route, speed, lane of travel, etc.. These are not suggestions! Follow the Road Captain or leave the ride if you feel your safety is at risk.
- Be attentive to, and pass back to the next rider, all signals from the Road Captain.
- You must not fall behind the Sweep Rider. You are off the ride if you cannot keep up.
- Please extend all safe courtesies to motorist sharing the route of travel.

Wayne Fernandez



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