

Chapter C3

Guidelines of Group Riding

“Rule number one. Obey all rules!” ☺ (This is an old joke in my (Evie’s) family. If you’ve ever watched the Andy Griffith show, this was something that Barney Fife said in one of the episodes!)

1. Plan to meet at a destination that has restroom facilities.
2. Arrive with a full tank of gas (and an empty bladder if running late!). Ride leader will communicate when, where, or approximately how many miles the group will ride before a stop.
3. Be prompt. If a ride is scheduled to leave at 10:00 a.m., that means you must be on your bike and ready to roll at 10:00 a.m. However, every now and then SH*T happens! If for some reason something causes you to run late, if at all possible, call the ride leader to let them know you are “X” minutes away. In addition, if you email or tell the ride leader that you are coming on the ride and then decide not to go, please be courteous and call the ride leader to let them know you changed your mind so the group is not waiting for you to show up.
4. The Ride Leader needs to choose a Tail Gunner (or Drag Bike) before the ride begins.
 - a. The Tail Gunner is the person in the last position and is a critical position. This person should be an experienced rider. Among other things they are responsible for securing lanes for lane changes within the group when requested by the Ride Leader and will advise the group when it’s safe to change lanes.
 - b. The Tail Gunner may periodically inform the group of any vehicles or potential hazards approaching from the rear.
 - c. Changing lanes on a freeway should be done from the rear (Tail Gunner secures the lane first) then beginning with the bike in front of the tail gunner, the group progressively moves forward to the clear lane, usually one bike at a time.
5. The Ride Leader needs to pick an alternate Ride Leader in larger groups so they can take the lead in case the group gets split up.
6. Depending on length and destination of the ride, the Ride Leader may want to communicate to the group the route that will be taken so the group has the option to write it down (or, if the Ride Leader has access to a copier they can prepare the route ahead of time to hand out to the group.) *This is more for long distance rides. For local rides, no great details need to be given.*
7. Difficulty of ride:
 - a. The difficulty of the ride should be made known prior to the day of the ride. (We will eventually be creating a scale from 1-5 of difficulty so that everyone will know what to expect and can determine whether they will feel comfortable on any given ride.)
 - b. The Ride Leader should know the group’s riding skills and speed limitations.

8. Novice and inexperienced riders should ride in the middle of the group until they are comfortable riding in a group.
9. Always ride in staggered formation. (There may be times when it is necessary for the group to maintain a single file position (poor road surface, etc.) and the Ride Leader will signal appropriately for this.)
 - a. Maintain approximately two bike lengths between bikes, weather and road conditions permitting. Use the two-second rule. When the vehicle ahead of you passes an object on the side of the road, count “One one thousand, two one thousand.” If you don't pass the object until after you're finished counting, your following distance is fine.
 - b. Important - Leave more space between bikes when riding at night or on twisty or wet roads!
10. Don't make a turn without the person behind you seeing where you're going. If you have to slow down and wait – do so.
11. CB's:
 - a. Use Channel 3.
 - b. People without CB's should ride in the middle of the group.
 - c. Know if someone behind you *does not* have a CB.
 - d. Know which person closest to you *does* have a CB.
 - e. Discuss hand signals (in Gold Book) for people without a CB.
 - f. Chit Chat among the group on the CB is OK – but keep it short. Too much chatter can cause problems (especially for those listening for directions from their GPS's).
 - g. Important: Make sure you press your CB button for a second FIRST before talking so that your first word isn't cut off to the group. If you call out a road hazard (RIGHT track) and your first word gets cut off, the group won't know where to look for the hazard.
12. Stops:
 - a. Try to make restroom stops at fast food restaurants (or even hospitals!) versus gas stations, as the facilities are usually cleaner (especially for the women!)
 - b. Don't be afraid or ashamed to call an unscheduled potty stop or break, if needed.
13. Safety:
 - a. Riders should make it a habit to always point to road dirt/hazards. This helps everyone in the group, with or without a CB. This is definitely an area where a co-rider should get involved and can be a big help. Hand signals are not mandatory but it helps if a co-rider can signal a left or right turn.
 - b. Even though you may be riding in the right or left track position on a group ride, you “own” the entire left, center and right track that your motorcycle is in. The rider behind or in front of you should never encroach in your area as you may come upon an obstacle requiring you to swerve to the left or right and could hit someone if they're riding in your space. Note: When coming to a stop light and/or stop sign, that is the only time you should be next to another rider while on the road.

- c. Ride your own ride (“Pilot in Command”). Stay in your comfort zone. Don’t feel you need to take turns, etc. as fast as the person in front of you.
 - d. Ride Leader usually makes road hazard calls. If he misses a hazard, don’t hesitate to call it out.
 - e. If you spot a road hazard, call out the location of hazard as “right track”, “left track”, or “center track”.
 - f. Announce “pedal pushers” (bicyclists), Barney Fife (sheriff or police), gravel, road apples (“presents” left by horses), deer on the left *or* deer on the right, truck on the right, truck in a turn, etc.
 - g. Know if someone has a medical condition (diabetic, etc.)
 - h. Know who knows CPR in the group in case of an emergency.
 - i. Be observant of the weather and find a safe place to pull over to put on rain gear prior to a downpour instead of waiting for it to pour and having to pull over in a hazardous area.
 - j. SLOW DOWN and be extra cautious when it first begins to rain. The road is slickest at that time. Avoid riding on the “glossy” area of the road at all times, but especially during or after a rain.
 - k. Avoid riding on tar strips – especially in hot weather. They are VERY slippery.
 - l. Regardless of the lead bike’s signals or what other riders in the group are doing, each rider must personally check to see that it is safe to proceed and is responsible for his or her own safety at all times. Again, ride your own ride.
 - m. Avoid rubber banding.
 - n. If for some reason you don’t feel comfortable following a person in the group or riding in front of someone in the group (we all have different riding styles), don’t hesitate to ask to change positions after the group makes a stop.
 - o. Advise the Ride Leader and/or Tail Gunner if you are having a problem and if you need to leave the group. Do not pull away from the group without warning them! The Tail Gunner stays with someone in trouble in the group (mechanical or health problems) and will communicate the conditions to the Ride Leader since a broken bike (possible bad battery) or person in distress may not be able to communicate any longer.
14. Group parking: Follow the lead bike in single file into a parking lot, making a U-turn so that all bikes will be lined up next to each other in the space available with the rear of the bikes against the curb or edge of the lot and the front tires pointing outward. This makes exiting the parking lot easier.

BE SAFE!