



Common Practices & Road Captain Pre-Ride Checklist

- RIDE SAFELY AND HAVE FUN -

THUNDER MOUNTAIN HOG GROUP RIDE

Common Practices

Group riding requires the full attention of all the participants. Riding in a group does not relieve any of the participants of their responsibility to exercise good judgment and does not place the responsibility for rider personal safety on the Road Captain(s). Riders should know their skill limits, the riding environment, limits of their motorcycle and ride within those limits. All riders in Thunder Mountain HOG sponsored group rides will file an Event Waiver, for them and their passenger, if applicable, prior to departure.

Inexperienced riders should first ride with their friends and learn the basics of group riding before participation in an organized group ride.

A Road Captain will lead the group. Watch for his/her directions and signals. A Sweep rider (Road Captain) will ride at the rear of the group to assist the lead Road Captain.

Before the Group Leaves

- All riders are expected to be ready to depart the group ride assembly point with a full tank of fuel, a full stomach, an empty bladder, and be appropriately clothed, and prepared to ride for at least one hour before the next stop.
- A route map and instructions will generally be provided at the beginning of the ride. If you get separated from the group, make your way to the next stop and rejoin the group.
- Safety is everyone's responsibility. Do not consume alcohol or use any drugs or medication that could impair your judgment and ability to ride.
- Any rider appearing to be impaired or observed using drugs or alcohol during the ride or at stops will be asked to leave the group.
- Turn off passing lamps. Only your headlight should be on. This helps the Road Captain to spot the Sweep rider at the back of the group.
- Examine your motorcycle for mechanical and load problems prior to leaving the assembly point.
- Large riding groups may be split into small groups of 8 to 10, each group led by a Road Captain and followed up by a Sweep rider. The groups will maintain a reasonable distance apart to allow room for other motorists to pass.
- Large groups may be a road hazard so riders must be aware of other motorists wishing to enter or exit the roadway and provide space for them to pass through the group.
- If you have any concerns about the group ride speak to the Road Captains and they will try to address them.



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On The Road

- If at any time you feel the riding intensity is beyond your current skill level you should drop out of the group ride. Trying to keep up with the group may be hazardous to you and other riders in the group.
- Less experienced group riders should ride near the front of the group. This minimizes the rubber band effect and aids the Road Captain in adjusting the pace of the ride.
- Less experienced group riders should ride in the lane position closest to the road centerline. This provides a larger space cushion and better visibility around curves.
- More experienced riders should ride at the rear of the group.
- Watch for signals from the Road Captain. Turning, staggered/single file, slowing and hazard signals are to be passed back through the group.
- When turn signals are given,....pass it back. Wait for the Sweep Rider to clear the lane then move over when safe.
- Only official Police escorts may block intersections.
- The group will stop for all traffic signals and obey all traffic laws. At a 4 way stop, a group of motorcycles are considered one vehicle in Colorado. Proceed through the sign with the group if determined safe to do.
- Watch for traffic signal changes and be prepared. Safely bunch up approaching intersections to shorten the group length. Do not run caution or red lights.
- Staggered formation is the norm on most roads. Single file formation is normal for twisty roads, avoiding bicyclist and pedestrians on the shoulder, Interstate entrance/exit ramps and construction areas. Watch for Road Captain signals.
- **PRIME DIRECTIVE:** Don't hit the bike in front of you...or any other bike either!
- Ideally, in staggered formation you should follow the bike directly ahead by 2 seconds and the bike in the other left or right lane position by 1 second. This is not always possible. See Prime Directive above.
- The entire width of the lane belongs to you or the other rider so do not ride beside another rider. Allow room to swerve in case of an emergency or road hazard.
- Maintain your location within the group and do not pass. If you need to change location in the group wait until the next stop then change your position when the ride starts again.
- If a staggered riding position becomes vacant the following rider in the same lane position is expected to move forward to fill the vacancy. DO NOT CROSS OVER.
- It is common courtesy for the rider who is following, in the other position of the lane, to signal to the next rider in the lane with the vacancy to move up one position. If the rider does not signal, slowly begin to move into the vacant position, trying not to startle the rider you must pass.
- Maintain a constant speed within the group. Do not accelerate past another rider or brake late and pass another rider.
- Check your riding position by checking the rider's mirror ahead of you. If you cannot see the rider's face in their mirror you are too close or too far.
- When riding single file on twisty roads and in curves look well ahead and don't focus on the bike in front of you. Use the SLOW, LOOK, LEAN and ROLL technique.
- **CAUTION:** Ride single file on entrance and exit ramps to interstate highways. SLOW DOWN, bunch up and select a safe turning speed with a slight throttle roll on. Use the entire merge lane for safety.



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Lane Changes & Passing

- Watch for and pass back to Sweep rider all turning signals from the Lead Road Captain.
- When the group changes lanes on a multi-lane highway all riders will maintain their positions within the lane. Sweep Road Captain will reposition into the new lane to open a gap for the rest of the group to enter.
- When passing other vehicles on a two-lane highway no more than one or two bikes should enter the passing lane at any one time. When they have passed and pulled in the next 1 or 2 riders may begin to pass.
- The Road Captain will increase his/her speed when passing any vehicle to provide room for the following bikes.
- The Road Captain will stay in the passing lane after passing, as long as the road ahead is clear, to create a large gap ahead of the passed vehicle. Following bikes pass as individual riders. Return to staggered formation after passing if appropriate.
- Other vehicles may enter the group for a short period. Respect their right to use the road. They usually leave the group at the first opportunity.

Group Separations & Dropping Out

- If you must leave the group, exit from the side of the group, preferably at a location that does not disturb the other riders. Signal to another rider that you are leaving so they may inform the Road Captain at the next stop.
- The Sweep rider will follow at the back of the group and will stop to help any rider who has to drop out of the group. When the Sweep rider stops to help someone, the last rider in the group becomes the Sweep rider and will inform the Road Captain at the next stop that riders have been left behind.
- If the group gets separated at a traffic light/stop the last rider of the forward group becomes the Sweep of that group. The lead group will stop or leave a rider to wait for and direct the following group at any intersection where the group makes a turn.
- If you become the lead of the Sweeping group and do not know the group ride route, then stop your group at the nearest safe pull off point and get a rider who knows the route to lead the group to the next scheduled stop.
- The Road Captain may send two riders back to check on the missing riders and/or opt to continue the ride.
- If your riding partner drops out you may choose to drop out to assist, but it is preferred you continue with the group to the next stop where the Road Captain will be informed of the missing riders.
- **ACCIDENT:** If a mishap occurs with a rider in the group the Sweep rider will stop to render assistance. Other riders should continue with the group. The group will pull off the road at the first safe place and respond to the incident. Do not create congestion on the roadway in the area of the mishap. **USE EXTREME CAUTION.**



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Parking At Stops

- **FORMATION PARKING:** Watch where the lead Road Captain positions him/herself in the parking area. Slowly ride behind him/her and get on line. After everyone is on-line the group backs into the parking slots.
- **FIRST AVAILABLE PARKING:** If the Road Captain pulls into a small parking space that's your cue to find your own spot to park.

Planning the Ride

- It's always a good idea to prepare a map of the route with all the stops indicated. If some bike becomes separated from the group, they can play "catch up" at the next stop.
- If you're not out for a scenic ride, plan the most direct route to an event or activity. Interstate highways offer the advantages:
 - All traffic is moving in one direction.
 - No cross traffic or traffic lights.
- When there are three lanes, it's wise to travel in the middle lane. This allows faster traffic to pass and will also allow vehicles to enter/exit the highway more easily.
- If you're out for a scenic ride, be sure traffic conditions will allow it. Check for local events such as county fairs or car-show type congestion in the area.
- Plan stops to avoid gravel lots and left-hand turns. No one likes gravel and in a group it's even less fun. Right-hand turns in and out of stops will help the group stay together.
- Plan gas stops at least every 90 miles, so those with smaller tanks can fill up and stay with the group.
- If you have a large group stopping at a restaurant, call the restaurant far enough in advance to allow them to prepare for a large group.
- If you expect a particularly large group and it's possible to get a police escort or traffic control at the start/end of the ride or along the route, great! Otherwise, it's a good idea to at least inform the police department of your plans and perhaps drop off a map.
- Never block traffic yourself. It's dangerous and is against the law. Can you spell LIABILITY?

Road Signals Pass The Hand Signals Back!

- **START YOUR ENGINE:** Road Captain rotates index finger vertically over head.
- **ENGINE STARTED & READY TO GO:** Riders place their left-hand on windscreen or raise left hand vertically palm toward Road Captain.
- **TURN SIGNALS:** Electronic or standard hand/arm signals.
- **STAGGERED FORMATION:** Rotating hand with extended index and little fingers overhead.
- **SINGLE FILE FORMATION:** Extended index finger of hand overhead pointing up.
- **SPEEDUP:** Upward sweeping motion of left hand/arm with palm up.
- **SLOWDOWN:** Left hand/arm extended down to side with palm facing backwards.
- **ROAD HAZARD:** Safely point to it with left hand (over your head for right side hazard). Passengers should look for and point out hazards.
- **LOW FUEL:** Point to gas tank.



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Road Captain Pre Ride Checklist

- Conduct a pre ride briefing. Get the riders attention and introduce yourself as the Road Captain and introduce the Sweep Road Captain.
- Make sure that all riders and passengers have filled out and filed an Event Waiver prior to leaving the assembly point.
- Review the group ride route. Pass out the route map if available. Describe the types of roads and any known hazardous areas along the route.
- Announce where the first group (or regrouping) stop will be and make sure it is a gas stop. Tell everyone how many miles it is to the first stop. Ask if everyone has enough fuel to reach the first stop.
- Review the concept of individual rider responsibility and "Riding Your Own Ride"
- Demonstrate and explain all hand signals you will use during the ride.
 - Start engines
 - Ready to go
 - Speed up
 - Slow down
 - Road hazard, etc.
- Invite inexperienced group riders to ride close to the front of the group.
- Announce that the group will obey all traffic laws. State the normal cruising speed if applicable.
- Announce if there will be police escort who will be controlling traffic at intersections.
- Announce that normal staggered formation should be maintained on most roads. Now is a good time to show the hand signal for STAGGERED riding.
- Explain how to fill in gap in the staggered formation. Fill forward position. Under the fill forward method, the rider immediately behind the gap waves the rider to his/her rear to fill forward.
- Announce under what circumstances you will give the SINGLE FILE formation hand signal. Now is a good time to demo the signal.
 - Twisty single lane roads
 - Passing Bicyclist/Pedestrians on the shoulder
 - Entrance and exit ramps to interstates
 - Into and out of parking areas.
 - In construction zones.
- Remind riders about watching the road in curves and not focusing on the bike in front of them.
- Announce what to do if someone drops out.
 - Leaving the group – tell Road Captain
 - Mechanical breakdown
 - Accident.
- Announce the parking routines: Formation parking or first available.
- Ask if there are any questions?