



**GROUP RIDING  
RULES**

and

**STANDARD OPERATING  
PROCEDURES**

Issue 2 September, 2010

**Harley Owner's Group  
Dragon Chapter  
Charter No. 1761**

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### Revision History:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Issue, July, 2010 Reason for issue: Initial Issue
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Issue, September, 2010 Reason for issue: Revision
  - Revised Page 6 "...if a rider should exit the group,..." Tennessee state law prohibits one motorcycle from passing another motorcycle occupying the same lane of travel.

### III. Group Riding Rules

#### INTRODUCTION

Group riding requires only some special skills and a willingness to being co-operative rather than being competitive or thinking as an individual. When preformed correctly, riding in a group of any size can be both fun and provide a great deal of satisfaction. However, if done incorrectly, a group ride can be dangerous for both the riders as well as the general public.

Key to successful participation in a group ride is that you must relinquish a little individual freedom and accept that you are now a part of a group. You must willingly accept responsibility for your actions as they may affect the group as a whole. It takes only one rider, acting as an individual, to destroy the whole concept of a group ride.

Safe motorcycling, socializing, and projecting a positive image of motorcycle riders is the objective for a Dragon Chapter group ride.

Socializing takes place whenever the group dismounts from their motorcycles – it is why we ride together as a group. However, while on the road, the public will judge our group through our safe motorcycling practices and riding skills. Our actions as a group will be interpreted by the public, be it justly or unjustly, as a “typical biker image” if we do not act responsibly. Therefore, it is imperative that when riding with our ‘colors’ as a group, or individually, that we exercise foresight and consideration in our riding activities.

Above all, the safety of the individual rider and the group is paramount.

## GENERAL RULES FOR GROUP RIDES

The designated 'Lead Road Captain' is the final authority for the group ride. No individual will assert himself or herself independently without direction from the Lead Road Captain to do so. If the Lead Road Captain should miss a turn or become lost, it will be an adventure that will be shared by all!

- ALL riders taking part in a HOG, Dragon Chapter group ride must conform to all municipal, county, and state laws in effect where they are riding.
- Consumption, or being under the influence of alcohol or illegal substances is not permitted during Chapter rides.
- Always arrive at the designated starting point fifteen minutes early with your motorcycle in proper working order (see Table A. TCLOCS), a full tank of gas, with the rider and passenger ready to ride – empty bladder, alert, and mentally ready to ride.
- Attend the Lead Road Captain's pre-ride briefing. At this meeting, ride routes, rest stops, arm signals, placement of other RCs, lane change, and passing procedures will be reviewed.
- Inexperienced riders are encouraged to introduce themselves to the Lead RC for a briefing and possible match-up with a RC mentor.<sup>1</sup>
- The Lead RC will call for motor start (left arm out, forearm up and index finger in a rotating motion) and move to an appropriate staging area.
- Riders will stage abreast in two columns. The Lead RC will always occupy the left third of the riding lane. One column directly behind the Lead RC and another column to the right of the Lead RC. This will be your ride position for this segment of the ride.
- The group shall depart when all riders are ready and the Sweep RC signals the Lead RC.
- *Optional* - Only the Lead RC and Sweep RC will illuminate their passing/road lamps if so equipped. All other riders will burn only their primary headlamps and turn signal running lights.
- The group will ride in a staggered formation (unless deemed necessary to ride single file by the Lead RC) beginning with the Lead RC in the left hand one-third of the lane. A staggered formation places each rider two seconds behind the rider directly in front and



- Stop signs and traffic control lights will be obeyed at all times. Riders will approach the stop sign two abreast then proceed, when safe to do so, with the rider in the right-hand third of the lane dropping back to a normal one second diagonal spacing. Traffic control lights, if red at approach, will allow all of the riders to approach and form-up two abreast. When the light changes to green, the riders will expeditiously<sup>2</sup> accelerate and re-form into the desired staggered formation with proper spacing.
- Maintain proper spacing at all times. In city or congested conditions where speed will vary constantly, check your two second distance often. When on the open road, if your speed changes by more than a few MPH, check yourself with the two second rule and adjust your following distance accordingly. (Figure A.)
- All visual signals (See 'Hand Signals' Table B.) will be passed from the front to the rear as quickly as it is safe to do so. The use of illuminated turn signals is required in addition to the appropriate arm signals.
- *If a rider should exit the group, the rest of the group should adjust/re-form the staggered formation (fill in the gaps) while maintaining a good space cushion and following distance. This may require all riders behind the one that left to visually indicate their intentions and to change their lane position to the opposite side of the lane. (Rev 2.)*
- Remember that a group of motorcycles is not a single vehicle. Be courteous and allow other vehicles to enter/exit a roadway or change lanes when necessary. A motorcycle is no match for a car, truck, or bus moving into your lane. Always signal a slow down to those behind you when encountering an entering, exiting, or lane changing vehicle.
- Leaving the group for anything but an emergency, physical or mechanical, should be avoided. If you have an emergency, signal your departure from the group. The Sweep RC, and ONLY the Sweep RC will join the drop-out to lend assistance.
- If you know you are going to leave the group before reaching the intended destination, prior to staging and departure, move to the rear of the group and inform the Sweep RC that you will be leaving the group. Provide the Sweep RC with the location of your departure. This will prevent the Sweep RC from falling back with you in anticipation of an emergency.

- When riding in congested traffic or city conditions, the group will not stop if separated. If separated, the lead group will continue at a normal pace until clear of congestion and it is safe to stop or not until the next designated stop location.
- Arrival at a rest stop or final destination and parking will be at the direction of the Lead RC. The Sweep RC will inform the Lead RC that all riders are clear of the main roadway. The Lead RC may ask the group to hold while suitable parking for the group is located.
- At destination, take any and all precautions to secure your bike, riding apparel, and equipment.
- Questionable riding practices. At no time during a Dragon Chapter group ride is unsafe riding practices or conduct acceptable. Any participating rider may identify an unsafe riding situation either to the rider exhibiting unsafe riding or to any Chapter RC or Officer. Group riding is for the enjoyment of every participating rider and an unsafe rider reduces the enjoyment and places him or herself, their passenger, and those riding in the group at risk.

Notes:

1. Group rides are for the enjoyment of everyone at all skill levels. However, they can be intimidating to the new or inexperienced rider. Discuss any reservations that you may have with the Lead RC to determine if this particular ride is right for you. If you are not comfortable with the anticipated pace of the ride, routing, road conditions, time in the saddle, or any aspect of the ride, the Lead RC can/will pair you up with an available RC that might provide guidance that may help you to better enjoy the ride.

On a distance ride where interstate speeds will be maintained, or in difficult road conditions (continuous steep hills or aggressive turns) at the discretion of the Lead RC, it may become necessary to ask inexperienced riders to form a second group so as to not delay the larger group. In this case, every effort will be made to place an available Road Captain with this group to assure an enjoyable riding pace and a safe arrival at the planned destination.

2. The term 'Expediently' refers to acceleration at a rate slightly more aggressive than normal. In doing so, the greatest number of riders can proceed through the intersection before the next cycle of the traffic control light.

## Table A. T.C.L.O.C.K Checklist

### Things You'll Need:

- Motorcycle Owner's Manual
- Motorcycle Insurance
- Motorcycles
- Eye Protection For Motorcycle Riders
- Federally Approved Motorcycle Helmets
- Tire Gauges

The Dragon Chapter recommends using "TCLOCK" as a pre-ride inspection reminder: check **T**ires, **C**ontrols, **L**ights and **A**ccessories, **O**ils and **F**luids, **C**hassis and **C**hain, and **K**ickstand before each ride.

1. Check your tire pressure. Under or over-inflated tires can translate to poor handling and stability.
2. Operate the throttle, clutch, front and rear brakes and shifter. Make sure they're all working properly.
3. Check your brake lights, turn signals, and all other electrical equipment and switches, including the horn.
4. After warming up your motorcycle, sit it up straight, remove the oil tank cap and use the dip stick to check the oil level. Add oil if necessary.
5. Unscrew the fuel cap and make sure there's plenty of fuel. Many towing companies can't tow motorcycles, and running out of fuel isn't good for your bike.
6. Make sure your final drive chain or belt is adjusted according to specifications. Check shock absorber pre-load for proper adjustment.
7. Turn the handlebars to make certain your bike is turning smoothly and properly.
8. Look for any oil, gasoline, or hydraulic fluid leaks.
9. Check that the kickstand is operating properly.



Table B. Hand Signals

Single-File



Position your left hand over your helmet with your finger extended upward. This indicates the leader wants the group in a single file formation.

Staggered Formation



Extend your left arm over your helmet with your index finger extended. This indicates it is safe to return to staggered formation.

Left Turn



Raise your left arm horizontal with your elbow fully extended.

Right Turn



Raise your left arm horizontal with your elbow bent 90 degrees vertically, "closed fist".

**Stop**



Extend your left arm at a 45 degree angle with the palm of your hand facing rearward.

**Slow Down**



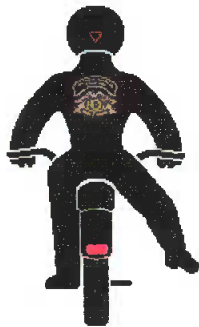
Extend your left arm at a 45 degree angle and move your hand up and down.

**Hazard Left**



Extend your left foot and point towards the hazard.

**Hazard Right**



Extend your right foot and point towards the hazard.

**Tighten  
Up**



**a**Raise your left arm and repeatedly move up and down in a pulling motion. This indicates the leader wants the group to close ranks.