



Guide to Group Riding

Orientation Handbook

Introduction

Welcome to Star Touring & Riding Los Angeles Chapter #415 Group Riding Handbook. This handbook has been developed to help those riding with Chapter #415 to understand the group riding expectations, and to help all in the group, to ride in a consistent and predictable manner. This handbook very closely follows the Motorcycle Safety Foundation's (MSF) *Guide to Group Riding Handbook*. In fact, much of it is directly out of the MSF Group Riding Handbook with additions and modifications made to accommodate Chapter #415 group riding preferences.

This handbook will take you through information you need to know to put safety first whenever participating in a Chapter #415 group riding event. There's a lot to know when comes to riding in a group. Everything from where to place your bike on the roadway to how to communicate with the rest of the group while riding, takes on a larger significance when riding as a group. This is because you're not just responsible for your own safety and enjoyment, but you also share the responsibility for ensuring that the ride is safe and fun for everyone involved.

At the end of the handbook, there is a self-test to help you learn and review the critical information on safety, rules of the roadway, and general group ride courtesies.

So You're Going On a Group Ride

The group ride organizer, usually the **Road Captain** will alert you to the time and place of the ride. Group rides with Chapter #415 will always at a minimum be posted in advance on our website "**Calendar**". In addition, ride details should be found in the "**Star Ride => Rides we're Gonna Do!**" Forum on the Chapter #415 website. The URL address to the Chapter #415 forum is

www.starchapter415.org.

The Road Captain is responsible for letting you know the time of the **Rider's Briefing** which should take place immediately prior to the ride, matching the abilities and interests of the riders in the group, informing and preparing the group of any points pertinent to the ride. While the Road Captain is designated in advance, the **Tail Gunner** (also known as the "Sweep Rider" or "Drag") can be selected during the Rider's Briefing. The Tail Gunner, like the Road Captain, should be one of the most experienced riders in the group, and should assist the Road Captain in controlling the group's activities once under way.

The Road Captain:

- Is responsible for moving the group down the roadway.
- Is the only person **In Charge** while underway (can only be 1 leader).
- Should treat the group as a unit where possible.

Your responsibilities prior to the group ride include being familiar with the limits of your own riding skills, as well as thoroughly knowing the capabilities of your motorcycle. If you are a very new rider, let the Road Captain know in advance. He will then better know where to place you in the group. In some cases, he may suggest that you complete a formal rider-training course, such as the **MSF Basic Rider's Course** prior to taking part in a group ride. For longer trips, you also need to be aware of your own stamina. Also note that your motorcycle may handle differently when loaded with a passenger or luggage.

For the MSF rider training location nearest you call:

(800)446-9227

Ultimately, **you are responsible for you!** If you are uncomfortable with what the Road Captain is doing (going to fast, to slow, etc.) you can:

- Ask the Road Captain to adjust.
- If still uncomfortable you can notify the Tail Gunner and leave the group.
(Never ride beyond your experience level!)

Before your first ride with STAR, you and your passenger (if you have one) should fill out a release of liability form. You should find a copy of this form at the

back of this document. You should also fill out a medical information form that you carry with you whenever you ride.

Preparation

An integral part of your own responsibilities is preparing yourself appropriately for the ride. Mental preparation is always crucial. Riding a motorcycle requires an alert mind that is free from distractions like worry and stress. This also includes riding free from the influence of drugs or alcohol. For some, even too much caffeine or personal prescription drugs can adversely affect their ability to concentrate! It should be noted at this time, **that all Los Angeles Chapter #415, and all Star Touring And Riding Association rides, are alcohol and drug free.** We ride responsibly and soberly.

Preparing your motorcycle is also key. Prior to a longer ride or trip, it's not a bad idea to have your motorcycle serviced at your local dealership if you aren't able to do the work yourself. Tires should be in good condition and fluids should be changed according to the manufacturers scheduled interval, or just if they haven't been changed in a while. Remember to consider such variables as passengers or extra weight from luggage that might require a change in tire pressure or suspension adjustment. A thorough **pre-ride check** before the ride is a must. Use the **T-CLOCK** checklist as a reminder of important components to check.

- T = Tires & Wheels**
- C = Cables & Controls**
- L = Lights & Switches**
- O = Oil & Fuel**
- C = Chain & Chassis**
- K = Kickstand/Side stand**

The **T-CLOCK** system should be utilized before you leave home and head out for the Ride and/or Ride Briefing.

Protective Riding Gear

The Motorcycle Safety Foundation recommends protective riding gear for wearing on your group ride and it should be chosen carefully. Wearing proper riding gear not only can enhance your personal comfort on the ride by shielding you from the elements of harsh sun, warm and cold wind, rain and noise fatigue, but it can also enhance your safety by protecting you in the event of a crash.

Any of you that have taken the MSF Basic Rider Course knows that MSF recommends that you wear riding clothes in high-visibility colors that are accented with reflective trim or patches to make you easier to see. MSF also recommends that each rider and passenger wear a DOT approved helmet as

well as eye protection, a long sleeved motorcycle jacket appropriate for weather conditions, full-fingered motorcycle gloves, long pants and over-the-ankle footwear with soles that provide good grip. The Los Angeles Chapter #415, due to California law, requires that each rider wear a helmet.

A few items that are always handy to pack include a rain suit, cell phone, a first aid kit, your motorcycle tool kit and owner's manual. On a bright sunny day you might appreciate a tinted visor for your helmet or sunglasses, but be sure to pack a clear visor if your ride might continue past dusk.

The Riders' Briefing

When the Ride Captain, or other chapter officer placed the ride information on the Los Angeles Chapter #415 Calendar and Rides We're Gonna Do! forum, he should have included information about the time and place of the Rider's Briefing. Plan to arrive at the meeting with your bike prepped, a full tank of fuel and everything else you plan to bring on the ride. Generally, the Riders' Briefing will take place about 30 minutes before the ride. This is not the time to be utilizing the T-CLOCK system! At the briefing, expect to receive information on the final destination, the route to be taken, and any fuel or rest stops along the way. On longer trips, you should expect a final map noting the group's route, itinerary, and the location of fuel, meal, rest or lodging stops.





Los Angeles Chapter #415 Road Captains may, at their discretion, choose to implement the "**Buddy System**" similar to that used in SCUBA diving. On small rides the buddy system may not be necessary, but if it is a medium to large ride, you can either select your buddy, or one will be assigned. If you choose your own buddy, and you and your buddy are both new riders, the Road Captain may choose to pair you up with a different, more experienced buddy. Using the buddy system, it is the responsibility of you and your buddy to look out for each other. As in SCUBA diving, your buddy will be responsible for a pre-ride inspection of your equipment. During the **Pre-Ride Inspection** you should go over your buddy's bike and check:




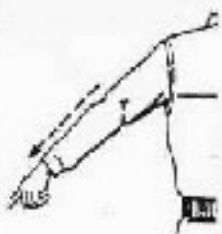

- Tire tread
- Tire inflation
- Headlamp (low & high beam)
- Turn signals (left & right)
- Tail lamp
- Brake lamp
- For current inspection and tags.




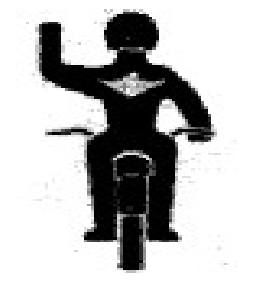
Your somewhat on the honor system here, but remember, it's your buddy you're looking out for.

Hand Signals

During the Riders' Briefing, hand signals will be reviewed so that you can communicate with the other riders during the ride. Hand signals are a useful tool to keep the group aware and cohesive on the roadway. When riding with a passenger, both the rider and the passenger should use hand signals. STAR Los Angeles Chapter #415 utilizes the following hand signals.

	<p>STOP – arm extended straight down, palm facing back.</p>
	<p>SLOW DOWN – arm extended out, palm flat facing down. Wave arm in up and down motion.</p>
	<p>SPEED UP - arm extended out, palm flat facing up. Wave arm in up and down motion. (Similar to Slow Down but with palm facing up).</p>
	<p>FOLLOW ME – arm extended straight up from shoulder, palm forward, <u>wave arm forward</u>.</p>
	<p>Giving Way to Left – arm extended straight up from shoulder pushing towards left with palm facing to the left.</p>

	<p>SINGLE FILE – arm and index finger extended straight up. Hand above helmet.</p>
	<p>Staggered Formation – With your index and pinkie fingers extended, wave your arm side-to side.</p>
	<p>TIGHTEN FORMATION – forearm extended upward, fist clenched with short up and down motion.</p>
	<p>HAZARD IN ROADWAY – on the right point with the right foot; on the left, point with left foot.</p>
	<p>PULL OFF – tap on top of helmet with open palm down. (“<i>Tap Out</i>”) This signal is used by an individual rider that needs to pull off to road. The tailgunner will follow the rider. Other riders will continue with the group.</p>

	<p>TURN SIGNAL ON – open and close hand with fingers and thumb extended.</p>
	<p>Giving Way to Right – arm extended straight up from shoulder pushing towards right with palm facing to the right.</p>
	<p>NEED FUEL – tap on top of helmet with open palm down. (“<i>Tap Out</i>”) This signal is used by an individual rider that needs to pull off to road. The tailgunner will follow the rider. Other riders will continue with the group.</p>
	<p>Left Lane Change – Raise your left arm horizontal with your elbow fully extended. (see Front & Rear Fill definitions)</p>
	<p>Right Lane Change – Raise your left arm horizontal with your elbow bent 90 degrees. (see Front & Rear Fill definitions)</p>

	Signal Vehicle to Pass – Extend left arm waving hand with a forward motion.

CB Communication

CB communication is not essential but can really enhance the enjoyment and safety of the ride. When riding with CB radios, the STAR of Los Angeles Chapter #415 will typically use **channel 8**. Channel 8 was chosen, as it tends to have little communications traffic. Occasionally it may be necessary to change channels as atmospheric conditions can affect CB channel clarity. You may also need to switch to another channel if traffic on the channel becomes too heavy. Before changing channels the group should agree on the new channel. This can

be done prior to the ride, or while on the ride. All riders agree on the new channel then switch. Once on the new channel each member of the group will transmit indicating they are on the new channel.

Ideally, the Road Captain, Tail Gunner, and Chase vehicle will have a CB, with other CB's dispersed evenly throughout the group.

We all enjoy the fellowship of our Chapter members, and enjoy talking to them during rides. You have to keep in mind that the **Road Captain** and **Tail Gunner** need to be able to pass on safety information to the group. Keep conversation short, to keep the airway clear. This is especially true when there is more than one group. Everyone should keep conversation to an absolute minimum.

Important points.

- **Clearly** identify your group when using the CB.
For example, **Lead** says Group one **Drag**, secure the left lane please. **Drag** answers Group one, left lane is secure. Look left, move left.
- Everyone is on the ride to enjoy themselves. Unless in heavy traffic, don't restrict use of the CB by any members of the group.
- **Friends for fun, safety & knowledge.**
- If you are on 2 or 3 channels, this can be confusing as to who is where.
- If a person talks to someone (in their group or another group) on another channel, they could miss important information.
- Groups 2, 3, 4, etc., can pick up valuable information by listening to the first group.

- Notes:
- Channel 9 is for emergency use only.
 - Truckers tend to monitor channel 19.
 - When riding in close proximity you can adjust you squelch to block out most all other CB traffic and static.

Riding in Formation

During the Riders' Briefing, the Road Captain will explain the ride formation. As part of the group ride never pair up side-by-side positioning your motorcycle directly along side another rider. This riding formation does not give both riders an adequate **space cushion** or room to maneuver. There is no place to go if you have to swerve to avoid a car or a hazard in the roadway. If you need to talk, wait until you are both stopped. The only time a side-by-side formation might be required is during a parade event that is using a police escort.

Ideally, the group will ride in a **staggered formation**. Riding formations are for your safety as well as the safety of the group. When a group is riding in staggered formation, it takes up less space on the highway than a single file line,

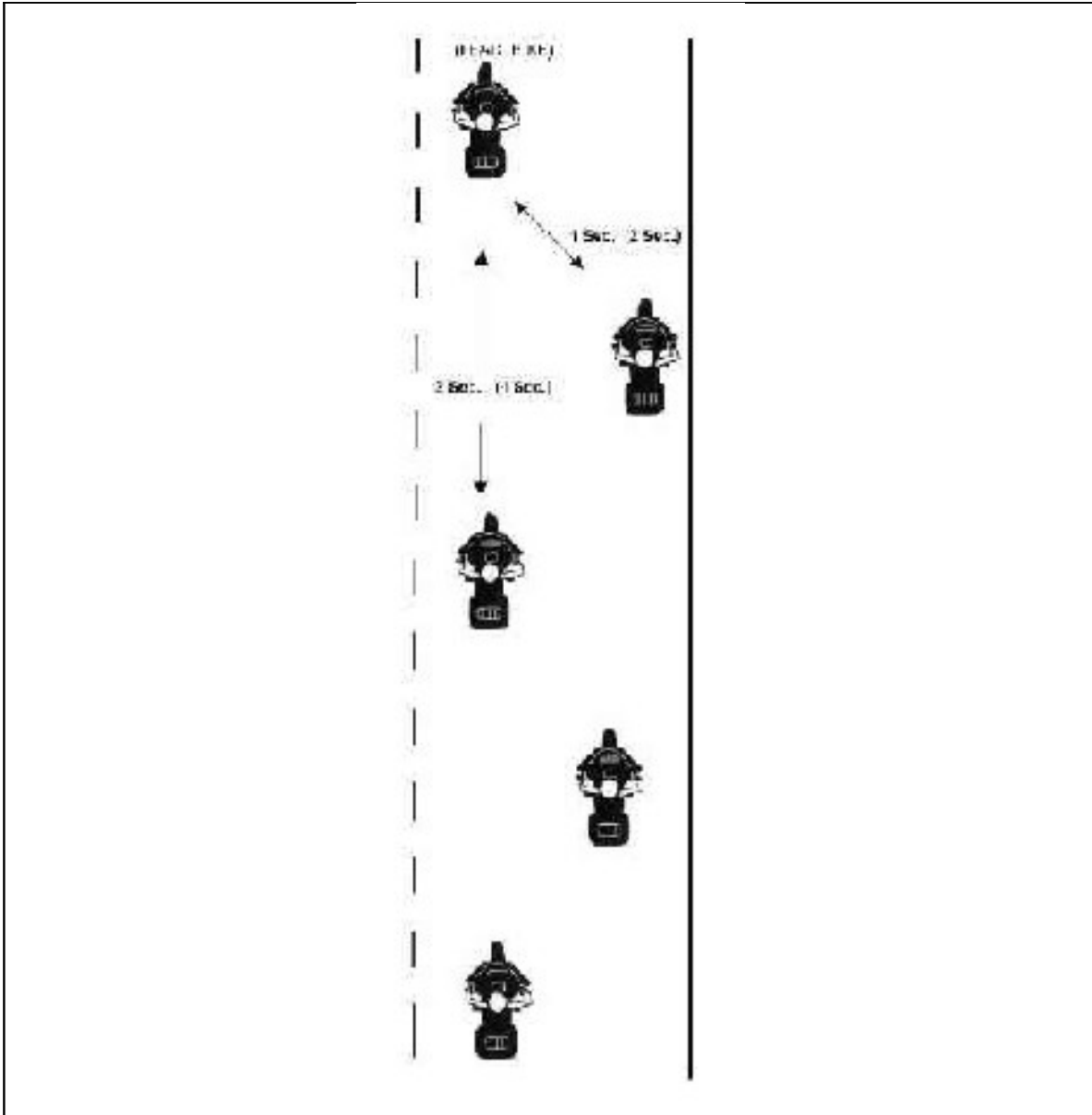
is easier for other motorist to see, and by protecting its lane, is less likely to be separated by other traffic. Larger groups should be divided up into smaller, more manageable groups of 7 to 9 riders.

Note: Two or more groups can ride back-to-back, as one large group, but if separated, they should attempt to break at the group points.

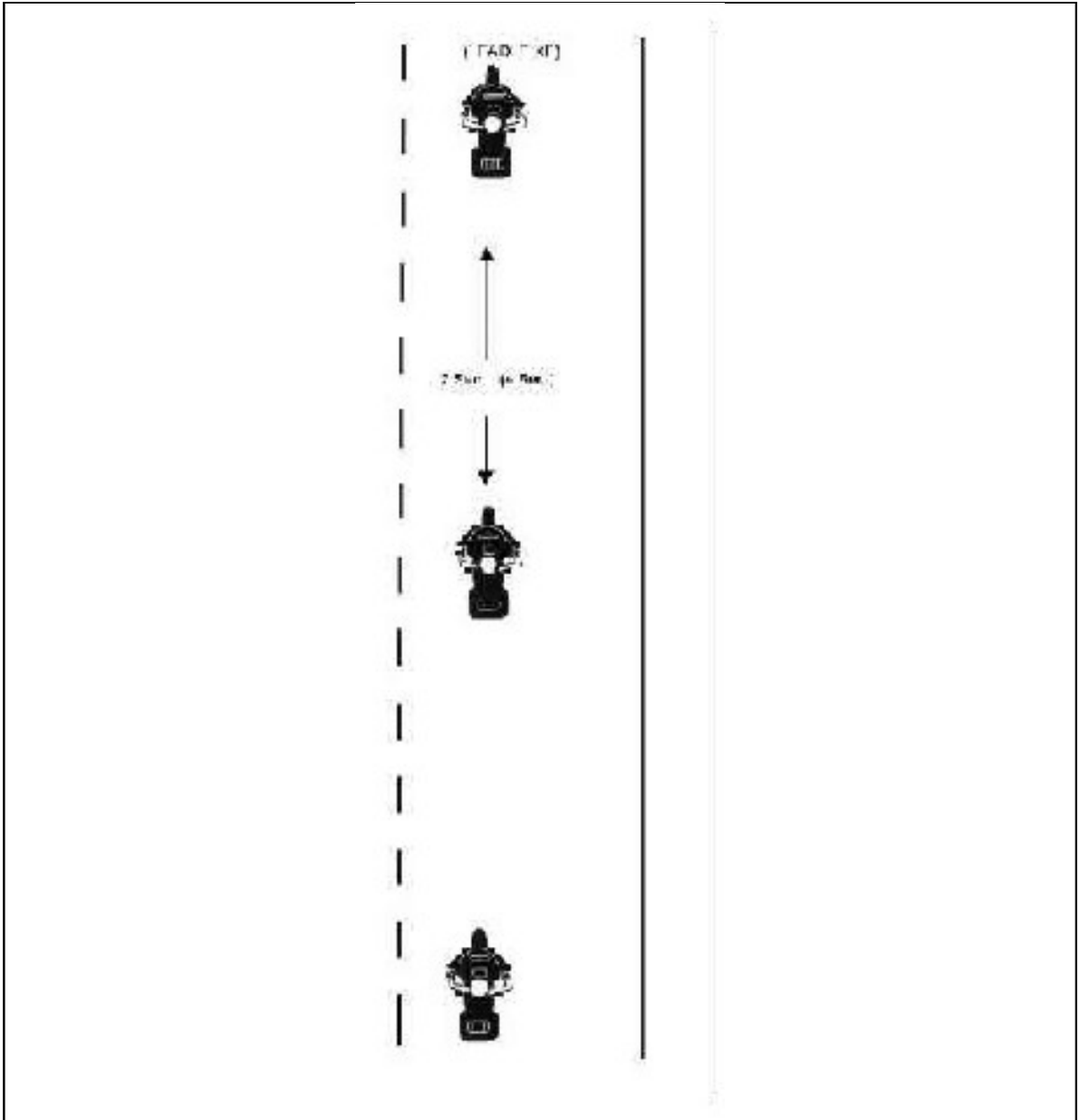
Your staggered formation can be tight or loose depending on traffic and road conditions. During heavy traffic, a tight staggered formation usually works best to keep other traffic from cutting into you group, although keep in mind that **safety comes before the integrity of the group**.

A staggered formation is the best way to keep ranks close, and still maintain an adequate space cushion both in front and behind each rider. A space cushion will give each rider plenty of room to maneuver and still maintain the riding formation. On a sunny day on dry roads, a minimum space cushion is considered to be a two-second following distance between each rider and the rider directly in front of them. During inclement weather it is advisable to increase following distance by adding more space between the riders of the group.

In a staggered formation, consider the lane split into thirds. The leader rides in the left third of the lane, while the next rider stays at least 1 second behind in the right third of the lane. The rest of the group follows this pattern. Each rider should attempt to stay out of the center third. It is reserved for emergency maneuvering. If your formation is correct, the third rider is two seconds behind the first rider. If there are trikes and/or sidecars within your group, those machines should ride at the center of the lane and keep at least a 2 second following distance within the group to maintain their space cushion.



In certain situations, it is safer for the group to ride in single file. The single file formation is best used when more room to maneuver might be needed such as on narrow and/or curvy roadway, in poor visibility, at tollbooths, entering and leaving highways, on roadways with bad surfaces, when entering a traffic circle or roundabout or any other situation where more space cushion may be needed. By riding in single file, each rider in the group can more freely use the entire lane and chose their own line through a turn. As with riding in staggered formation, keeping an adequate space cushion between riders and adjusting it to suit changing needs is important.



Keeping the Group Together

The lead rider (the Road Captain) should plan ahead for changes and signal early so “the word gets back” to the rest of the group in plenty of time.

Many groups put newer and less experienced riders at the end of the group. This way, slower riders won't hold up the group, but the Tail Gunner, who is an experienced rider, is behind them to ensure that there aren't any problems. Other groups prefer to put newer riders up front directly behind the Road Captain so that the entire group can keep an eye on them and no one rider falls too far behind. This decision rests with the group and particularly with the Road Captain who is aware of the demands of the chosen route and the skills of each rider in the group.

On STAR Los Angeles Chapter #415 rides the newer riders will typically be placed near the front of the group. In addition to the benefits outlined above, the newer rider is less likely to get left at stop lights and thus avoid the impulse to either run the light, or ride like a demon possessed trying to catch up with the rest of the group. Also, the newer rider will find it easier to maintain a steady and consistent following distance closer to the front as the “Bungee Cord” effect reduces as you move forward in the formation.

In any case, wherever the newer riders are placed, **a good Road Captain will set a pace that accommodates the skill level of all the riders in the group.**

Another good way to keep the group together is for each rider to periodically check on the riders in their rearview mirrors. This way if a rider falls behind, the other riders can slow down to prevent the slower rider from falling too far behind. If all riders of the group use this technique, the group will be able to maintain a fairly steady speed without the others feeling pressured to ride too fast to catch up.

On STAR Los Angeles Chapter #415 rides, the “Buddy System” will be employed. Under the Buddy System, each buddy is responsible for looking out for his counter part.

A side note for Road Captains:

This is just a hypothetical situation presented here to illustrate a point. Suppose you are going to lead a ride that has 20 bikes including your own. If you immediately pull out on to the street and accelerate up to 55 mph, how much time will pass before the Tail Gunner, who is 19 bikes behind you, starts to move?

Well, if there aren't any other vehicles on the road, and the riders manage to follow you at exactly 2 seconds apart, the Tail Gunner will be sitting in the same spot for 38 seconds. At 55 mph, you'll be 3,078 feet down the road before the

Tail Gunner even eases out the clutch. What's more, if you continue to maintain 55 mph, each following rider will have to go faster than 55 mph to catch up with you. If the Tail Gunner throttles up to 110 mph, he can catch up to the group in maybe 30 seconds. If the Tail Gunner is willing to risk only 80 mph, it will take him about a minute and a half to catch up, assuming you hold to 55mph. So you shouldn't be surprised if he's approaching meltdown long before the lunch stop. (Excerpt from *Proficient Motorcycling* by David L. Hough).

Intersections

Intersections are the area of highest risk for a motorcyclist. This is still true for the group despite the increased visibility. All intersections should be approached with caution.

When making a left turn at a protected intersection, where traffic turning left has its own turn signal arrow, tighten the formation to allow as many riders as possible to pass through the intersection. Do not ride side-by-side; the group should make the turn single file or in a tight, staggered formation. Use the same procedure for right turns and remember to respect the rights of other roadway users.

If all the group cannot proceed through the light before it turns red, the group that made it through the light will ride slowly until the group that got stuck can catch up. If the group that is stuck is behind a very long light, then the moving group will find a safe place to pull off the road to the right and wait. On a busy road or highway the group should never just pull off on the shoulder as this leaves those riders as sitting ducks to passing traffic. The moving group should definitely stop, when safe, if they come to a turn in the route that the other group might miss. If possible, the roadcaptain should take the group to a safe place to stop, while the last rider stays back at the turn in the route.

Knowing that the group will wait on the stuck riders will help keep each rider from feeling pressured to jeopardize their safety by running the light, or speeding to catch up.

In unprotected intersections that have no turn signal arrow, riders should proceed with caution and in single file. Each rider should act as an individual, only making the turn when it is safe and legal for him to do so. While waiting your turn, remember to check your rearview mirrors, as other motorist may be expecting you to ride on as a group. The most important thing is to make the turn safely. Should the group become separated, it can always re-form after everyone has ridden safely through the intersection.

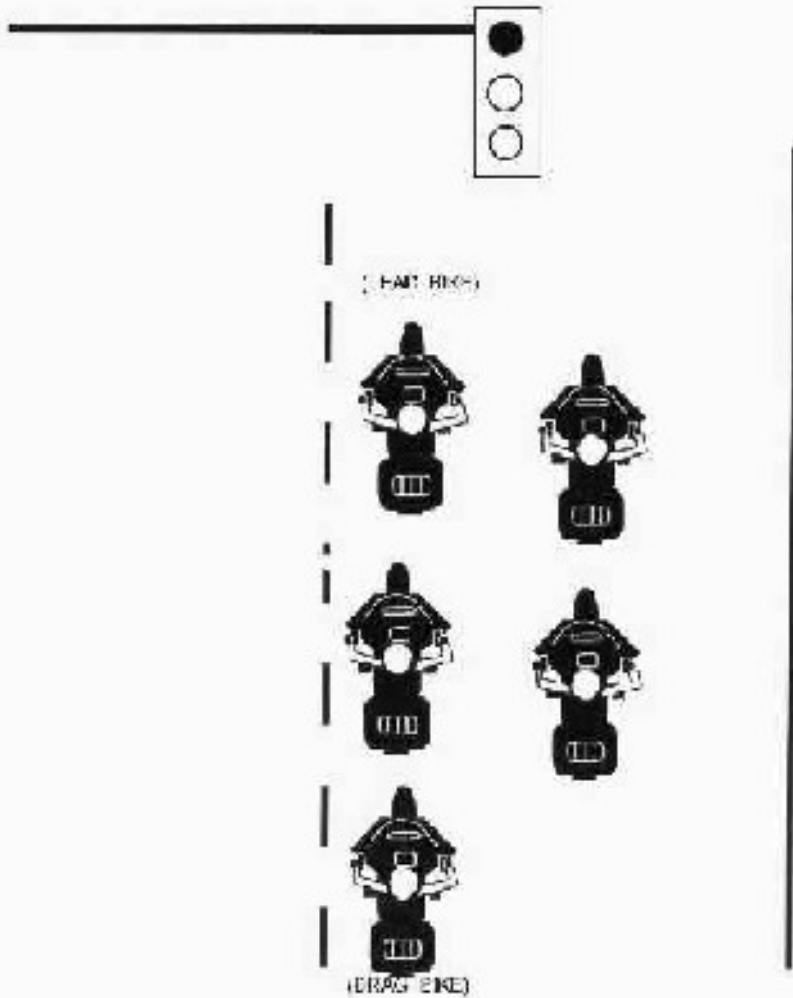
Blocking an intersection without specific permission and an appropriate escort is illegal in most circumstances. In the case of an escorted parade and event ride, riders should be given specific instructions at the Rider's Briefing on group

formation and the procedures to be used for moving legally through blocked intersections.

At two-way stop intersections, where you are required to stop, move through only when it is safe and legal. When stopping at an intersection with a light, it is appropriate to close up the formation and sit side-by-side while waiting for the light to change. If you do this, when the light turns green, the rider on the left proceeds first, followed by the rider on the right, and all following riders do the same re-establishing the staggered formation and the space cushion as they depart.

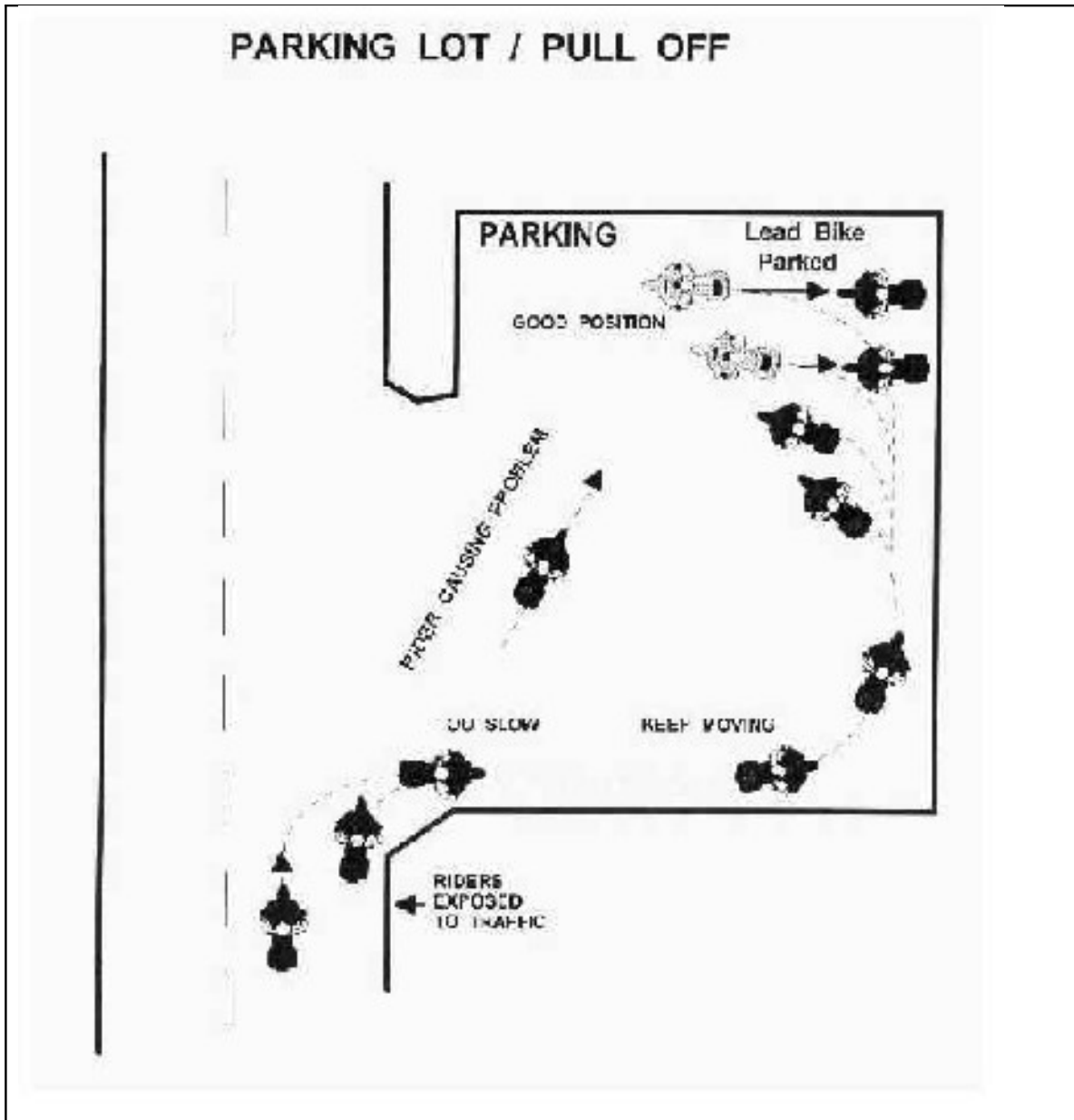
At yield intersections be safe and cautious. Turn your head to check for traffic before merging. Respect the law, other members of the group and other users of the roadway. Put safety and operating within the law ahead of trying to stay in formation. The group can re-establish the formation afterwards.

STOP LIGHT



Parking

Parking as a group has many benefits. If parking is organized, you get your group off their bikes more quickly. You also run less risk of blocking access to others trying to park in the lot. Avoid parking downhill or head-in, or you may find you need to use your fellow riders as a reverse gear! Try to park where you can pull through to make both the arrival and departure much smoother. If this isn't possible, try and position the motorcycles so that the group can depart as a unit in single file.

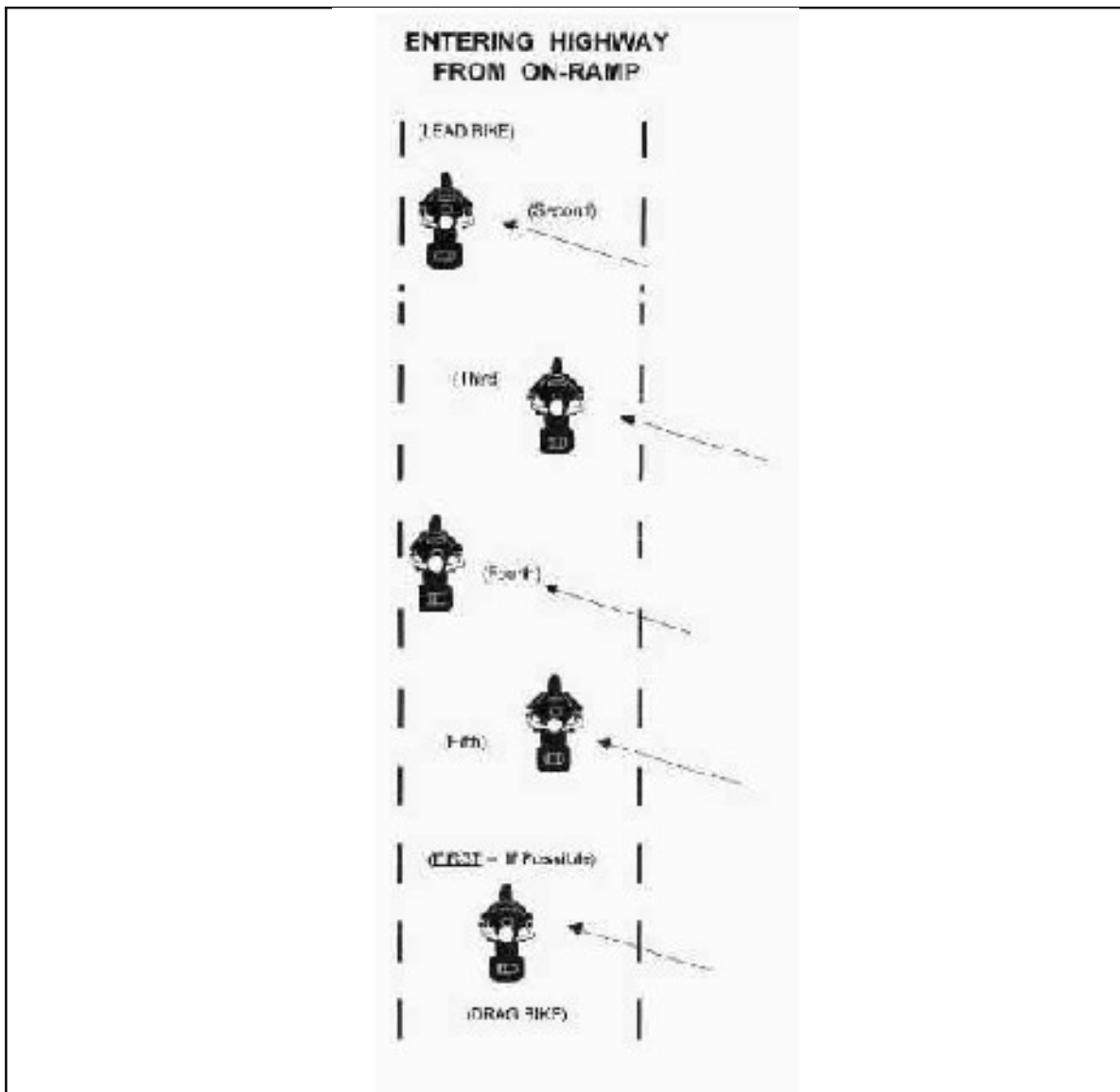


When pulling into a parking lot, the group should enter the lot in single file. The Road Captain should ride along the line where the motorcycles will park with the

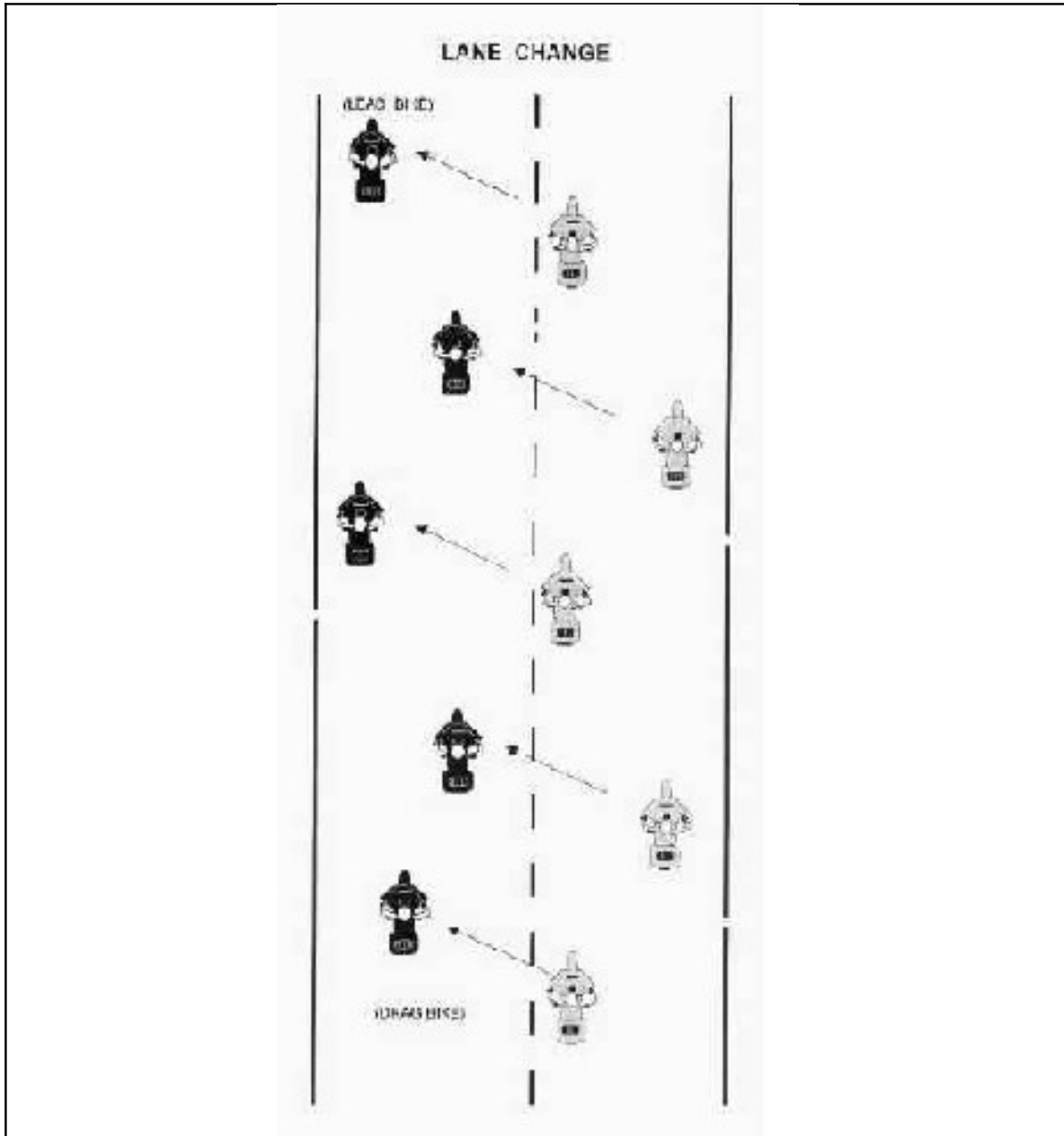
rest of the group following. When the Road Captain has determined that he (or she) has allowed ample room for all bikes, he will swing out and stop. The person immediately following the Road Captain will then swing along side the Road Captain and the others behind will follow suite. The Road Captain will then wait for the rest of the bikes to line up, look at the riders & signal for all bikes to backup into their parking spots. This is done to prevent disorientation of the rider backing up that can occur with one bike moving forward and one moving back.

Interstates And Freeways

A staggered formation is essential on freeways and interstates. Enter in a loose staggered formation, or single file, and form up only after safely merging onto the roadway. Your lead rider should maintain a merging speed that will allow enough space for following riders safely merge.



Since riding in a group doesn't change your right-of-way, be alert to the fact that cars entering or exiting may cut through your formation if your group is traveling in the far right lane. It may be better to move the group over one lane when everyone has safely entered the interstate.



Freeway lane changes will be made in the following order. For a "front fill" lane change, the **Ride Captain** will signal the lane change using hand signals only. The hand signal will be relayed down the group to the **Tail Gunners**. The **Tail gunner/s** will use his turn signal, then move over into the lane and hold that lane open for the group. Once the lane has been secured, the two riders preceding

the **Tail Gunners** will move over only if it is safe to do so, also using their turn signals at this point. This procedure will be repeated, two bikes at a time, until the entire pack has moved over.

In heavier traffic, resist the temptation to close up the formation too much. Maintain your space cushion and at least your one-second/two-second staggered formation following distance.

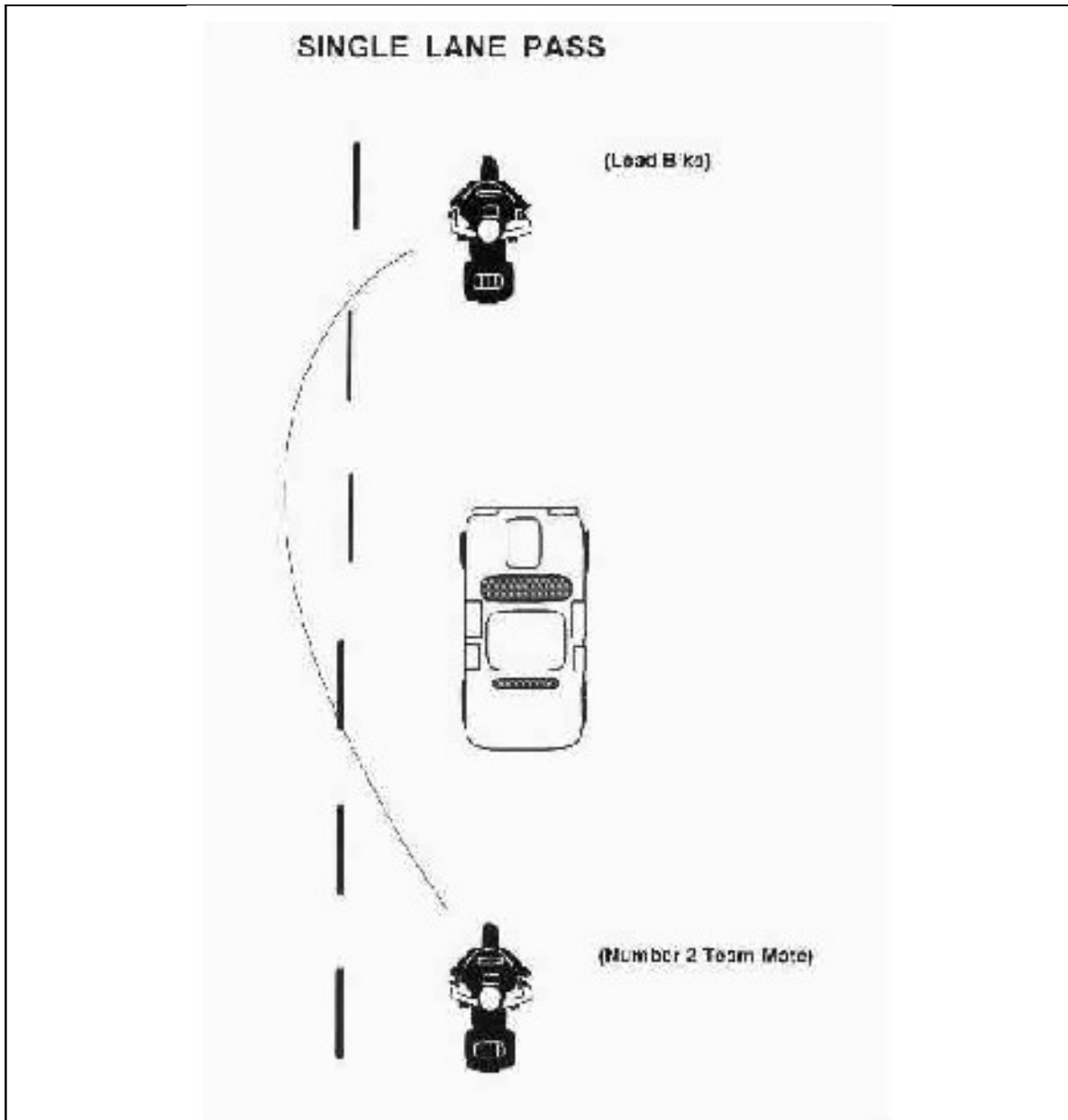
Exiting an interstate always requires a single-file formation (or at least a “loose” staggered formation). Doing so allows a better space cushion and time to react to whatever is at the end of the exit lane or allows you to merge onto another roadway.

Note: You as a rider in the group will be expected to automatically go to single file or a “loose” staggered formation when on an Entrance or Exit ramp. Don't necessarily expect a signal from the Ride Captain.

Passing

When your group wants to pass slower traffic as a group on a freeway or interstate, the group may pass as a unit. When it is safe and legal, the lead rider should signal the lane change when they have determined the entire group can change lanes and pass as a unit. See the previous section for freeway lane changing.

On a two-lane highway, when passing slower traffic such as construction or farm vehicles, the group should pass one at a time. Take special care in passing slower vehicles or horse-drawn carriages such as those that the Amish use. Be courteous and safe by only using marked passing zones. The leader should signal their intentions first and then pull out when it is safe and legal. After completing the pass, the leader should return to the left third of the lane position and continue at a passing speed to leave room for the next rider, then the next rider should move up to the left position and watch for a safe chance to pass. After passing, this rider should return to the right position and open up room for the next rider. The rest of the group should follow the same pattern.



Some people suggest that the lead rider should move to the right side after passing a vehicle. This is not a good idea. It encourages the second rider to pass and cut back in before there is a large enough space cushion in front of the passed vehicle. It's simpler and safer to wait until there is enough room ahead of the passed vehicle to allow each rider to move into the same position held before the pass.

Leaving The Group

If you plan to drop out of the group, notify your leader or ride buddy beforehand about the place or time you will be leaving the group. This way, they know you have not had a problem and need assistance. When you do depart, the rest of the group should adjust the formation while maintaining a good space cushion and following distance. Riders still left in the group should pull forward to re-establish the formation. By doing this only the riders in the very back of the formation must switch sides of the lane.

Roadside Emergencies

If a member of your group has serious mechanical difficulties or has been involved in a crash, the following riders should all stop, including the tailgunners and the **chase vehicle** (if your group has one). The riders ahead of the incident should continue to a safe place to pull off (parking lot, roadside rest stop, etc.) or continue on to the next scheduled stop area since doubling back could cause additional safety problems.

The lead tailgunner should assess the situation and, if it appears there will be a delay, he will send the 2nd tailgunner off to lead the “following” riders to meet the rest of the group. If medical assistance is necessary, the tailgunners can use their cell phone to call 911.

Separated From The Group

You might get separated from the group because of a signal, traffic or other reasons. Don't panic. Your group should have a pre-planned procedure or place selected in which to re-group. Don't feel pressured to catch up, especially if it means breaking the law or riding beyond your limits. Proceed to the regrouping area or call the pre-selected contact person for you group.

Roadway Hazards

You may encounter differing types of roadway hazards or severe roadway conditions while on a group ride. When entering construction zones, it is probably best to ride single file, reduce speed and increase you space cushion. This will allow riders to adjust their lane positions and respond to the roadway conditions more freely.

Maintaining a good space cushion and following distance throughout the ride will allow riders to react to roadway debris like sand, gravel and oil. If riding in a staggered formation, it may be better to change to single file. The lead rider

should use pre-determined hand signals. Avoid riding over debris unless you have no choice. Not only could you damage your tires or bike, but you also risk throwing the debris into another rider's path of travel. Ride as smoothly as possible and avoid sudden changes in speed or direction. The same is true for wet roadways.

Environmental Hazards

Riding into the sun may seem scenic in movies, but can be hazardous for a motorcyclist. The glare makes it hard for all motorists to see one another. This might be a good time to plan a break as these conditions increase rider fatigue. But if you must ride into the sun, reduce speed and increase your space cushion. Remember, it may be more difficult to see roadway hazards.

Take extra precaution when riding at night. Be visible. Consider wearing a retro-reflective vest. Make sure that all lights are working and your headlight is adjusted properly. Reduce speed and increase your cushion. Remember that roadway hazards will be more difficult to see at night.

Have Fun

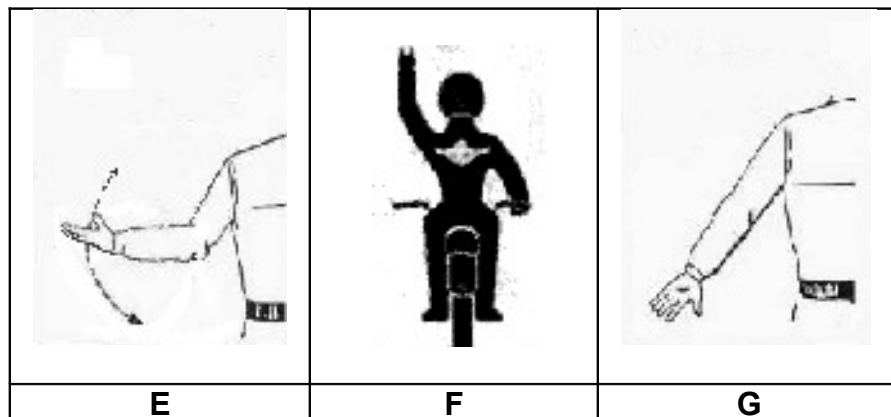
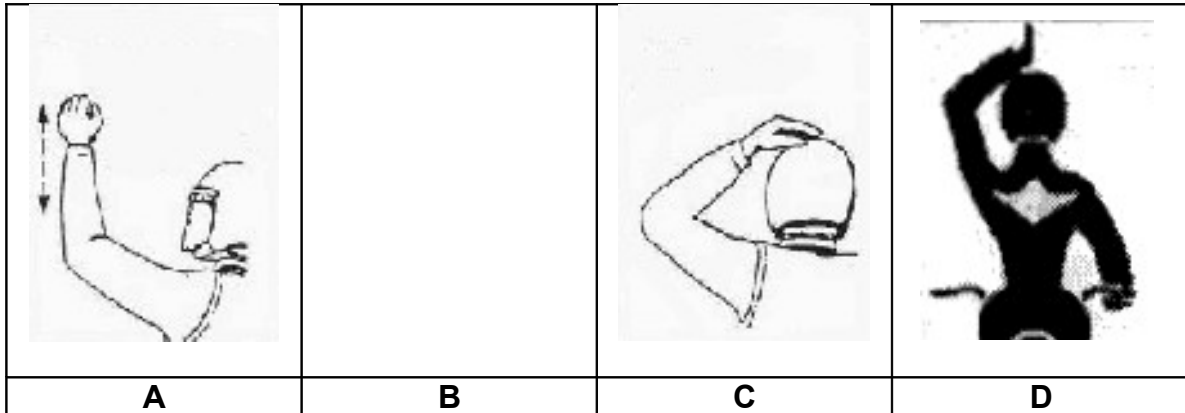
A group ride is one of the great on-roadway motorcycling experiences. Taking part in a group ride is a great way to share the fun and camaraderie of motorcycling. Following these guidelines will help make the ride safer and more enjoyable for yourself and everyone else taking part in the ride.

Self-Test

Communications

Since we can't speak to each other safely while riding, the most common form of communication between riders is hand signals. Remember to signal only when it is safe and to keep your eyes on the roadway.

Please match the correct hand signal with its proper meaning.



1. Signal for speed up
2. Signal for stop
3. Signal for tighten formation
4. Signal for Staggered Formation
5. Signal for pull off of the roadway
6. Signal for Giving way to left

7.Signal for single file

QUESTIONS

Read each question carefully and mark the answer that you think is best.

1. Matching the interest and abilities of a group of riders is a main consideration of the ride organizer. The organizer should prepare the route and control the group's activities while under way. Each member of the group should be aware of their own responsibilities as well. One of those responsibilities is preparing your machine. Before you join a group ride, it is recommended that you:

- A. Eat a good breakfast
- B. Service your motorcycle and fill the tank
- C. Leave a light on at home

2. It is each individual's responsibility to have their own motorcycle ready BEFORE the ride starts. Always do a pre-ride check before each ride. The T-CLOCK system includes which of the following components:

- A. Tires
- B. Controls
- C. Lights
- D. Oil
- E. Chassis
- F. (Kick) Sidestand
- G. All of the above

3. Each rider should mentally prepare for the ride. Look forward to the fun of the ride and avoid alcohol and drugs, excessive caffeine and stress prior to and during the ride. Riders should also pair up in the "buddy system" before beginning the ride. The reason for pairing up in a "buddy system" is to:

- A. Make new friends
- B. Have someone to eat lunch with
- C. Watch out for each other

4. There is no perfect list of riding formations. Different situations call for different formations. However, regardless of the formation, smart defensive riding strategies still apply. Spacing of the group is important for safety. The distance between you and other riders is your safety cushion. A good minimum distance rule of thumb in a staggered formation is:

- A. Nose-to-tail
- B. Side-by-side
- C. Two seconds between every other rider

5. In a staggered formation, the leader will ride in the left third of the lane, while the next rider stays at least one second behind in the right third of the lane. The rest of the group follows this pattern. A staggered formation is usually best for large groups because:

- A. A staggered formation takes up less space on the highway
- B. A staggered formation is easier for other motorists to see
- C. A staggered formation is the best way to keep ranks close while still maintaining a space cushion
- D. A staggered formation is less likely to be separated by other traffic
- E. All of the above

6. Certain conditions will warrant a single-file formation. Single file will allow each rider to more freely use the entire lane. The group should move into a single-file formation under what conditions?

- A. When entering and leaving highway
- B. At tollbooths
- C. On bad surfaces
- D. When entering or leaving a traffic circle or roundabout
- E. When the roadway has more curves or less visibility
- F. All of the above

7. When passing slower traffic, the group should pass one rider at a time. First, the leader should signal and then pull out when it is safe and legal. After completing the pass, the leader should return to the left lane position and continue riding at a passing speed in order to open up room for the next rider. The next rider should move up to the left position and watch for a safe chance to pass. Special care should be taken when passing what kind of slower traffic?

- A. Construction vehicles only
- B. Farm vehicles only
- C. Horse-drawn carriages only
- D. Always use special care when passing slower traffic

8. In non-protected intersections, riders should proceed with caution and in single file. Each rider should act as an individual, only making the turn when it is safe and legal. This is important because:

- A. Making the turn safely is more important than the integrity of the group
- B. Individuality is more important than the group
- C. It gives each rider a chance to break away from the group

9. Riding in a group will increase your visibility over riding alone. However, common sense still applies and areas of highest risk for the lone motorcyclist remain areas of high risk for the group. The area of highest risk for motorcyclists even in a group is:

- A. The highway
- B. A two-line roadway
- C. Intersections

10. Because you are part of a group ride, you might assume that your group has certain extraordinary rights and can legally ignore certain traffic signs in favor of keeping the group formation intact. This is not the case, you must obey all laws and signs and pay particular attention to which of the following:

- A. Yield
- B. Merge
- C. Left turn on arrow only
- D. All of the above

11. If a member of your group has mechanical problems or is involved in a crash, the riders ahead of the incident should continue on to the next scheduled stop to wait for a report on the rider with the problem. Riders should never double back as this could cause additional safety problems. Which of the following members of the group should stop:

- A. The leader of the group
- B. The tailgunner
- C. The chase vehicle
- D. Everyone should stop

12. You may become separated from the group because of a signal or other traffic may break the formation. Your group should have a pre-planned procedure or place to regroup or a designated contact. If you become separated from the group you should:

- A. Panic
- B. Proceed to the pre-planned meeting place and/or call the designated contact person
- C. Ride as fast as possible to catch up

13. Bad weather is always a possibility. Remember that safety is your first priority and wet roadways have slick surfaces. If the weather turns sour, the group should:

- A. Tighten up the formation
- B. Reduce speed and increase the space cushion
- C. Let everybody go home on their own

14. Roadway construction can be a minor inconvenience or cause major delays and severe roadway conditions. Safety and maneuverability should take priority. If the group enters a construction zone, be sure to:

- A. Reduce speed and increase the space cushion
- B. Wave to the workers in hard hats
- C. Don't adjust the formation to fit the changes in the roadway

15. Following the group ride guidelines will help ensure that your ride is safer and more enjoyable for everyone involved. On a group ride be sure to:

- A. Have fun
- B. Obey all traffic laws and rules of the roadway
- C. Be courteous to the other riders in the group
- D. Use your common sense
- E. All of the above

****Special Thanks to STAR Dallas Chapter #172 for allowing us to adapt this handbook from their original material.**