

Volume

2

CENTRAL UTAH HARLEY OWNERS GROUP

Officers Meeting Rider Tips & Training



RIDER TRAINING

CENTRAL UTAH HARLEY OWNERS GROUP

Rider Training & Tips Guide



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Bob Johnson
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Internet:
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http://www.motorcyclecruiser.com/streetsurvival/motorcycle_passenger/

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Before We Ride

Items to check before the wheels start to roll.

There are many items a rider should check before going on a ride. You are responsible for making sure you and your bike are ready for the ride.

Check yourself.

Make sure you are rested, alert, feeling well and dressed appropriately. You should be physically and mentally prepared to make the ride. If you are tired, not feeling well, or just "not up to par", it may be wise to stay home and ride another day. Any Chapter member operating a motorcycle in a Chapter ride, event or other activity must be properly licensed and insured to operate a motorcycle.

Perform a safety and mechanical check on your bike.

Check your tire pressure, oil level, turn signals and lights. It is also advisable to check for any parts that may have loosened due to vibration. Any motorcycle used in a Chapter ride, event or other activity must be properly licensed, inspected and insured.

Fill your Gas Tank.

All members are to begin the ride with a full gas tank. The start of a ride will not be delayed waiting for someone to "get a quick fill-up". All rides are planned with ample gas stops considering the smallest tank in the group and that everyone starts with a full tank.

Make sure you arrive for the ride at the designated meeting time.

Not only is it fun to socialize prior to the ride, the Road Captain will make any announcements and give the pre-ride briefing during this time. If you arrive at the last minute, you may miss important information about the ride.

Road Captain Tips

Requirements for a successful ride.

Road Captains Meeting Before the Ride.

We'll try to have a short RC meeting before the ride. The RC for the ride should hand out copies of the route sheet and make sure all RCs have release forms and an accident report form. The sweeper should have a first aid kit. At this meeting we'll select who's leading the ride, who's going to be in the middle and who is sweeper.

Route Sheets.

All rides should have a route sheet. Items on the route sheet should include a general description of the route we're taking. Maps are very helpful. As they say "A picture is worth a thousand words". We're going to get into the habit of posting our route sheets (with maps) on the CUHOG.ORG website well in advance of our rides. Included in the route sheets will be information about the event during our rides (if any). Things like where we'll be eating, cost of the meal etc.

Pre-Ride Meeting.

During our pre-ride meeting there are several things that need to be communicated.

1. Identify ride leaders and sweep riders.
2. Discuss ride destination. This should be a summary of what's in the route sheet.
3. Make sure everyone has signed release forms.
4. Remind riders to ride at their own pace.
5. Review the staggered formation and two second rule

6. Pass along hand signals to bike behind.
7. Explain what should happen if a bike breaks down.

On the Road.

On large groups we should position a road captain in the line about every 15 motorcycles. This increases safety by creating break points in the line. Its not feasible for large groups to make it through all the stop lights. Having a road captain positioned close by a break (caused by a stop light) will keep the anxiety down by not having to catch up with the group ahead.

Pull away from stops slowly. This allows the tail end to catch up. Many times if the leader pulls away quick riders in the middle will gas it to catch up. This causes a “whip-saw” effect and the those riders will have to hit the brakes hard at the next stop.

Riders should obey all traffic signals. Speeding up to run yellow lights is dangerous and many of our riders do it. By having road captains positioned inside the line we can have a leader of the group that was stopped. That leader can keep the group on the route and catch up safely or on to the destination (if the light was a long one). Always be patient. Trying to catch up to the group because you don’t know where we’re going is inviting an accident.

Other Helpful Tips for Road Captains.

- Pre-ride the route if possible
- Get feedback from other riders
- Give tips to unsafe drivers
- Don’t point out interesting landmarks. People think you’re turning.
- Remember that Sportsters and VRods have smaller gas tanks.
- Stay with the job when things get tough. No “bailing out”.

Group Riding Rules

Group riding made fun and safe

Riding with a group can be fun and exciting, but only when everyone in the group observes the same rules. When riding with the Chapter, everyone is expected to observe the following rules so that the rides will be fun, safe and enjoyable.

The Road Captain will leave first from the starting point and is followed by all other bikes, which fall into the staggered formation as soon as possible. The Sweep Road Captain will follow the group. When a large number of bikes are present, the Road Captain may divide them into two or more groups. Each group will have a Road Captain.

Ride within your ability and comfort level.

Riding within your ability and comfort level is very important for the safety of the group. If at any time you feel that the ride has exceeded your riding ability or comfort level, or you have safety concerns, you should consider pulling off to the side at a safe place. The Sweep Rider will stop with you. You can then decide whether to continue the ride or not.

Pre-ride briefing.

The Road Captain will give a pre-ride briefing covering the route, the Chapter riding rules and any other information concerning the ride. Listen closely and feel free to ask questions.

Staggered Formation Riding.

Below is the primary riding formation.

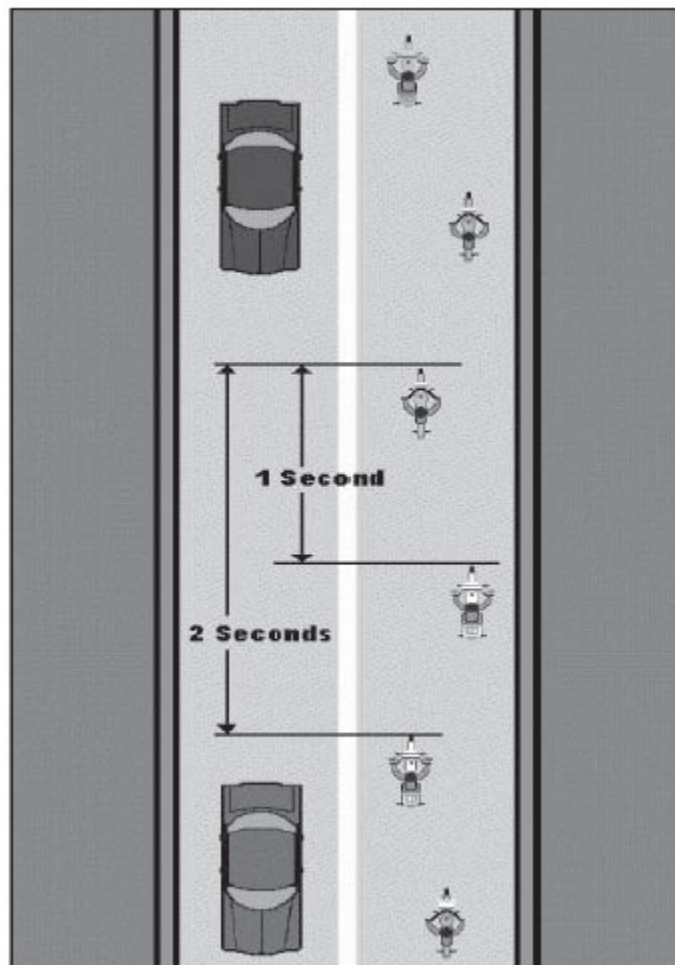
Single file is used when directed by the ride leader.

One-second rule: The bike in the lane to your left or right should not be less than one second ahead of you.

Two-second rule: Maintain at least two seconds between you and the rider in front of you.

Four-second rule: Look ahead four seconds at your immediate path of travel to give yourself more time to react to a hazard.

Twelve-second rule: Also look ahead at your anticipated path of travel. Twelve seconds is about one city block.



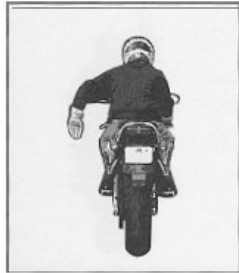
Fill gaps by changing column.

When a bike drops out of the ride and creates a gap, the following bikes fill the gap, in turn, by moving up and changing column into the gap.

Use hand signals.

The Road Captain will use hand signals to indicate a change of course, hazards or other information to the group. Each rider uses the same signal to pass the information back through the group (Form the signal well and clearly visible to the riders in back of you).

The common hand signals used by the Chapter are:



Stop

arm extended straight down palm facing back



Slow Down

arm extended straight down, palm facing back palm facing back



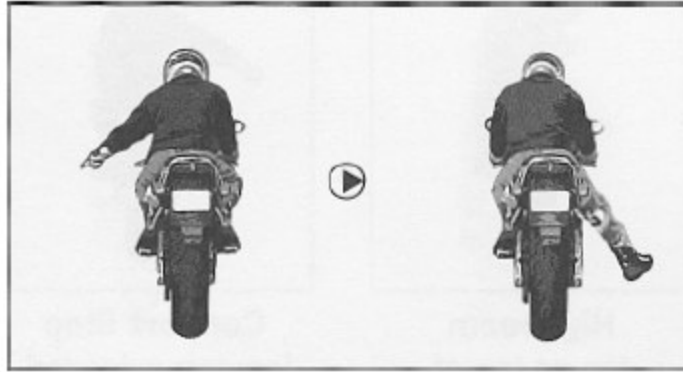
Single File

arm and index finger extended straight up



Double File

Arm with index and middle finger



Hazard in Roadway
on the right, point with right foot;
on the left, point with left hand

Keep the group together without heroics.

Often a stoplight, traffic congestion, etc will separate the group. It is not necessary or advisable to take heroic or exceptional steps to regroup. In the event the group is separated, the Lead Road Captain will adjust the ride (either by slowing down or stopping at a safe location) until the ride is regrouped. In some circumstances, this may take several miles... BE PATIENT. If you find yourself leading part of the group due to a break and you are not sure of the route, pull over to a safe place. Everyone behind you and the Sweep Road Captain will stop. A Road Captain (from the middle of the pack) or the sweep rider can lead this group until they rejoin the main group. If the sweep rider leads this group then a new sweep rider will be elected. Many of our large rides will have multiple Road Captains. You can identify a RC by the fluorescent armband they'll be wearing. In many cases one of these Road Captains will move up and lead.

Pull side-by-side at stops, start together with the left bike accelerating faster.

This helps move the group through stops quickly and get as many bikes through a stop light as possible. As the two columns come to a stop, the right column will move up even with the left column. On the start, the two bikes leave together with the left bike accelerating faster to reestablish the staggered formation.

SPECIAL NOTE:

When stopped or creeping in traffic do not leave a gap for “left” turners to slip through the line in front of you. This single mistake many make (in automobiles and motorcycles) results in more accidents than almost every other incident on the road. We may feel compelled to be courteous but its better to have that motorist angry with you then hit someone coming up the right. The next section goes through yielding to cars. This is meant while in motion and merging not stopped waiting for a traffic light or creeping through heavy traffic.

Yield to cars (especially at entrance ramps and lane changes).

This is very important. When a car needs to enter from an entrance ramp or is signaling to break into the group, yield and give them plenty of room. Remember the old expression: "Just because you have the right-of-way, doesn't mean you are going to get it".

Most drivers (and even bikers when in cars) proceed up entrance ramps assuming that they will be able merge in between two cars. When confronted with a line of motorcycles and no clear space in which to merge, some drivers may become unsure, confused and even intimidated by the situation. You can lessen the possibility of an unsafe situation by simply giving them plenty of room. Once a car merges into in a line of motorcycles, it will generally get out as soon as possible. In almost all cases, you will not need to pass the car to regroup, it will move out of the way. Once the car is gone, close the gap while maintaining a safe speed.

Another case of needing to yield happens when an inattentive driver pulls alongside the group and then realizes that they have to take an upcoming exit. If they signal to break in, LET THEM IN. In a lot of ways, this is an even more dangerous situation than the entrance ramp. People will go completely crazy when they think they may miss their exit. Think about it... it's much easier to just let them in. They will be out of the way shortly and you can close the gap.

Signal all turns and lane changes with turn signal lights and hand signals; Make visual checks before you move.

The Road Captain will signal for turns and lane changes. You, in turn, make the same signal to pass it back through the group and to signal any other vehicles near you.

Before making a turn or changing lanes and after you have signaled for an appropriate amount of time, look with your head (not in your mirror) to see if you have clear space. If so, then make the turn or lane change. **DO NOT MOVE WITHOUT LOOKING!**

It is not always possible for the Road Captains to make lane changes when the group has a clear lane, If there is a car in the way, simply break the group around the car. If you are near the car, do not try to "get ahead" if it will crowd the car. Simply slow down and change lanes in back of the car. The car will soon be out of the way and you can close the gap.

Accidents – Breakdowns and mishaps.

In case of a breakdown the sweep rider is designated to stop and assist. The sweep will have a cell phone and will be able to assist in fixing the bike or call for assistance.

In the event of an accident those behind the accident will stop and render aid. First aid and safety are the immediate concerns. The sweep rider will notify the ride leader (via cell phone). One or more persons will help direct traffic around the accident scene.

There are many variables the rider leader will consider to determine whether the whole group stops, just the sweep, or how many riders are necessary for assistance. **ITS IMPORTANT NOT TO CREATE A UNSAFE SITUATION BY HAVING TOO MANY BIKES PARKED OFF THE SIDE OF THE ROAD.** The ride leader in many cases takes the bulk of the group to a safe parking area out of traffic. The sweep rider will handle the accident scene. Remember an accident report will need to be filled out after injuries are treated.

Two-Up Riding

Sharing your ride safely

While doing some surfing on the Internet I came across a “Motorcycle Cruiser” Magazine article outlining some good tips for motorcycle passengers. The reference and URL are listed at the beginning of this guide. I’ve summarized some of the content from that article in the following pages.

Before You Ride

If you have never or rarely ridden before, the rider should go through a number of details with you. He should show you how to get on and off the motorcycle. This should include whether he wants you to get on first (usually not, but more common on big bikes with passenger backrests), whether he expects you use the passenger peg as a step or simply throw your leg over the seat (let him know if you can't do this), which side you will approach from, whether you can use his shoulders or arm to steady yourself, and most importantly, how to confirm that he is ready for you to mount. If you catch him by surprise, you could cause the bike to fall over. When the ride is over, will you get off first or will he? Which side and will you use the footrest as a step? He should warn you about any hot parts, normally the exhaust system, to avoid touching.

He should show you where to put your feet while riding, which should be on your own footrests. If they can fold up, he should demonstrate this and make sure they are folded down. He should warn you to keep your feet clear of the wheel and drive system, even though problems are rare. At a stop, he should be able to support the bike without your help, so you should keep your feet on the pegs when stopped. You should establish what you will hold on to. This will not be much of an issue on a motorcycle with a large passenger backrest, but on other bikes you should hold on to the rider at the waist with at least one hand. If there is a large grab rail around your seat, you can hold onto this with your second hand if it's comfortable to so. Otherwise hold onto the rider's waist with both hands. There are belts available with handholds to make this easier, though they are rare. Do not hold on to his shoulders or arms, which

can interfere with control, and do not bother trying to use any strap attached to the seat, which provides an unsteady anchor and will affect the motorcycle's stability.

Leaning for Corners

The rider should explain what he wants you to do when leaning into corners. Your body position will influence steering and lean angle, so what you do will affect the rider's control of the bike. I normally tell the passenger to stay neutral—that is, to lean neither with nor against the motorcycle—and to look over my inside shoulder. It is important to not shift your weight suddenly in the corner. You should also know that if you are uncomfortable about how far the bike is leaning, that leaning out of the corner and trying to straighten the motorcycle up will probably have just the opposite effect. The rider will have to lean the motorcycle even deeper into the corner to maintain his arc. On some bikes, such as the big wide cruisers, some parts will drag rather easily in corners. The rider should inform you of this and perhaps even demonstrate in a parking lot. He should also be sufficiently familiar with his bike that he can warn you when it's about to happen for the first time. Though it may make an alarming noise, particularly if you aren't ready for it, but it doesn't actually signal anything dangerous.

Braking and Acceleration

During heavy braking, you may be pressed against the rider. If you have a grab rail and can take up some of the pressure, that's fine, but the rider, who has an easier time of supporting himself, should be able to support your weight against him, even under very heavy braking. You may want to hold yourself off the rider's back with your hands or simply lean into his back. Motorcycles can accelerate more forcefully than cars, which may cause problems if there is no passenger backrest. It may not be possible to get a firm handhold on the rider for a variety of reasons, and you can hold on only so tight by gripping with your legs. If this is a concern, be sure you tell the rider about it so he accelerates more gently or provides a secure hold point. He should also transition from steady speed or slowing to acceleration somewhat gradually, so you have time to react. However, you should pay attention to the traffic situation too, so you can anticipate what might happen. It's not uncommon for your helmets to bump when accelerating or decelerating. Don't apologize. This is not causing a problem, and it's normally the rider's fault because he isn't riding as smoothly as he should.

Communication

Before you leave on a ride that's longer than around the block, you should set a few basic signals to communicate your needs. One tap on the right shoulder, for example, might mean "I want to stop when it's convenient." Two might mean, "It's kind of urgent." And three means, "Stop right now!" A tap on the left shoulder might mean "Look at this" or what you are pointing at. Tapping both might mean "I have a problem." A thumbs-up means "I'm having fun," thumbs down the opposite, and sideways means the jury is out. You may be able to communicate vocally at low speeds

or when stopped but the wind will probably prevent it at speed. A patting motion in front of the rider might mean "Please slow down." You should plan to stop a few minutes into that first ride to discuss things and every 20 or 30 minutes thereafter. You should also have established how long and far the ride is going to be. As I mentioned before, the first ride should be short with a provision to opt out of any further riding if you don't like it. It should also be just your motorcycle, since riding in a group of motorcycles puts pressure on the rider to do what the group does. Other riders and bikes also create distractions. Ideally it should be where there isn't much traffic, though a stint at highway speeds is probably a good idea if you are contemplating longer rides in the future.

You should assert yourself any time you aren't comfortable or enjoying the experience, even before you get on. If the rider or the bike make you feel uncomfortable, it's best to stop things before they get worse.