

GROUP RIDING

EHOG Chapter conducts group rides for the benefit of its *members*. This Group Riding Guide contains information that each member is expected to know and observe so that everyone can participate in safe and enjoyable group rides with the Chapter. New members are encouraged to review this guide prior to participating in group rides.

There are four components to a safe and enjoyable group ride:

Personal Preparation Group Preparation The Ride Emergencies

Personal Preparation - You are responsible for making sure you and your bike are ready for the ride

- **Check the web site www.ellingtonhog.com for schedule changes.**
Regardless of the amount of planning for the rides, a schedule change will occasionally occur. Typically, rides are cancelled due to adverse weather but may be cancelled for other reasons. Check the message board on the web site also.
- **Check yourself**
Make sure you are rested, alert, feeling well and dressed appropriately. You should be physically and mentally prepared to make the ride. 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 of 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 inspected and insured.
- **Fill your gas tank**
All members are to begin the ride with a full gas tank (and an empty bladder). All rides are planned with ample gas/rest stops considering the smallest tank in the group and that everyone starts with a full tank.
- **Make sure you arrive for the ride at least 15 minutes prior to the departure time.**
Prior to departing, Road Captains will make any announcements and give the pre-ride briefing. If you arrive at the last minute, you may miss important information about the ride.

Group Preparation – Rides are scheduled to depart at a certain time. Prior to departure you are encouraged to socialize with your fellow Chapter members and listen to the pre-ride briefing.

- **Meet on time**
- **Sign the Event Release Forms**
Any guest of a member must sign an Event Release Form. Minors must complete a Minor's Assumption of Risk Acknowledgement which must be signed by both the minor and parent.
- **Headlights to low beam, other running lights off**
All riders except the Sweep Road Captain should set their headlights to low beam and turn off any other running lights. This makes it easier for the Lead Road Captain to see the Sweep Road Captain.
- **The 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.

The Ride – 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 Lead and Sweep Road Captain.

- **Ride within your ability and comfort level**
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 Road Captain will stop with you. You can then decide whether to continue the ride or not.
- **Obey all laws; speed limits, stop signs, stop lights, helmet law, etc.**
- **Ride in a staggered formation with approximately 2 second spacing**

The Chapter rides in the standard staggered formation. The bikes form two columns, with the leader at the head of the left column. The second bike will head up the right column and ride approximately one second behind the leader. The other riders follow the bike directly in front of them by two 2 seconds, which puts them 1 second behind the diagonal bike in front of them. Using the 2 second spacing, the distance of the gap will increase with speed.

- **Fill gaps by changing column**

When a bike drops out of the ride and creates a gap, the rest of the group should adjust the formation while maintaining a good space cushion. The proper way to fill in a gap is to switch positions. Right to left and left to right, crossover, rather than ride straight up. Use hand/mechanical signals AND do a head check (not just mirror) before changing lanes. Passing a bike in the same lane is illegal.

NOTE: EHOH has decided that unless ALL participants are experienced GROUP RIDERS we will NOT fill the gap until we stop (traffic light, etc.). The ride Lead Road Captain inform the group of the method to be used.

- **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.
- **Keeping the group together without heroics**
Often the group will get separated by a stop light, traffic congestion, etc. 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 so that you can elect a leader until you are able to rejoin the group.
- **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.
- **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 or they need to exit the roadway, yield and give them plenty of room.

- **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. Look with your head, not in your mirror, to see if you have clear space. If so, then make the turn or lane change.

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.

- **The ride officially ends on arrival at the destination**

You can return home at any time and by any route you choose. If you are not sure how to get home, ask a Road Captain for directions.

Emergencies – In the event of an emergency requiring a stop, observe the following procedures so that the emergency may be resolved in the safest manner possible. We do not want a group of motorcycles on the side of the road in an unsafe manner under any circumstances.

- **Problem bike stops – all other continue**

If a bike encounters a mechanical or rider problem that requires a stop, it should signal and stop in as safe a place as possible, preferably well off the road. All other bikes are to continue with the Lead Road Captain to avoid having a group of motorcycles on the side of the road.

- **Only the Sweep Road Captain stops to help**

It is the Sweep Road Captain's responsibility to stop and assist the problem bike.

- **Lead Road Captain leads the group to a safe location**

If the Road Captain deems it necessary to check on the problem, the group will be stopped at a safe place and he will call the Sweep Road Captain to determine the action to be taken.

- **Some Road Captains have mobile phones and CB radios**

The Road Captains use their mobile phones and radios to communicate when necessary.

- **Accidents**

In the event of an accident, the group should work together to insure everyone stops in a safe location, notifies the authorities by calling 911, renders aid, maintains the accident scene, and gets the name and addresses of witnesses whenever possible. **DO NOT MOVE AN INJURED PERSON OR REMOVE THEIR HELMET.** This should be done by trained emergency response personnel.