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# **GROUP RIDING MANUAL**

## **BIGGS CHAPTER NORTH SAN DIEGO COUNTY**

**Harley Owners Group**

**March 2015**

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## FOREWORD

The Group Riding Manual documents our group riding culture. It represents the knowledge, research, and experience of Chapter leaders working together to select the best policies, procedures, and standards to create our riding culture. This culture and the Road Guard Program began in 2000 and has continually improved and expanded to serve the membership in conducting safe, organized, and enjoyable riding events.

The Group Riding Manual is available to the membership on-line through the Chapter website.

This is a living document that will evolve as needed without notice.

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## 1. PURPOSE

This is a reference and control document containing the Chapter's group riding policies, procedures, and standards. As such it is the governing instrument for the operation of the Chapter's group rides. It is the basis for training general members, Road Guards in Training, and the recurrent training of Road Guards.

## 2. INTRODUCTION

For group riding to be enjoyable, it should be safe and organized. To achieve this, there should be policies, procedures, and standards for rides so participants know how to conduct themselves and what to expect from their leaders and fellow riders. This provides consistency for executing maneuvers, handling ride situations, and minimizing surprises. All of this should be done with safety as the most important objective.

This manual documents the policies, procedures, and standards for conducting group rides. It is the result of considerable experience, knowledge, and research. Much of what is included is applicable to all riding whether as part of a group or by oneself. Other organizations may use different procedures for their own reasons. Our procedures fit us best.

**The policies, procedures, and standards in this manual are subordinate to the use of good judgment as the ultimate factor in decision-making and conduct. This applies to special situations that may occur and may not be considered justification for disregarding policies, procedures and standards one does not agree with.**

## 3. BEST PRACTICES

There is no universally accepted set of best practices for group riding. The philosophy, practices, and standards of riding organizations vary widely all though the intent is to facilitate the safe and orderly conduct of group rides. This chapter has methodically developed a set of procedures and standards over many years and with much research, experience, and hard work. The procedures and standards established here are deemed best for this Chapter.

It is recognized that other organizations have different procedures and standards. The decisions on procedures and standards made by other organizations, though respected, are not relevant for this Chapter's rides.

#### **4. RIDER COMPETENCE**

The Chapter does not teach people how to ride. To ride with the Chapter on group rides, riders should be competent riding their motorcycle under the demands of traffic. The other riders have a right to expect that.

#### **5. SAFETY**

Safety is paramount for both the safety of the Chapter riders and the general public. Safety should dictate the attitude and behavior of every rider in the Chapter. The Road Guards will contribute all they can to the safe conduct of Chapter rides, but the message that safety is the most important factor should be communicated to all. As motorcyclists, we are vulnerable to a greater degree than other motorists. The well being of our fellow riders should always be in our minds and control our actions.

#### **6. CRITICAL PERSONAL INFORMATION**

Riders should carry critical personal information including allergies (especially to medication), medical conditions such as diabetes or pacemaker, medications in use, and emergency contact information. Medical bracelets and necklaces are a good place for some of this information. Cell phones are a good place for emergency contact information. Store it under ECI for *Emergency Contact Information* or ICE for *In Case of Emergency*. A purse or wallet is another place to keep this information.

#### **7. RIDE SAFE AND HAVE FUN**

A group ride is one of the great motorcycling and social experiences associated with H.O.G. Taking part in a group ride is a great way to enjoy the fun, camaraderie, and passion of motorcycling. Following the policies, procedures, and standards in this Group Riding Manual will help make group rides safer and more enjoyable, for yourself and everyone taking part.

#### **8. WAIVERS**

All participants on group rides are required to have signed a waiver that is in effect for that ride. Current Chapter members signed a waiver on joining, or renewing, which covers the year. Non-members must sign a waiver for each ride. This includes non-member spouses and children of members and it must be signed by a parent or legal guardian for each event even if the minor is a member. Minors 12 to 18 years of age must sign an *Assumption of Risk* form for each event even if they are a member. The waiver for minors is different from the waiver for adults.



## 9. ROAD GUARDS

Road Guards are responsible for conducting Chapter group rides. The Road Captain is responsible for the operation and administration of the Road Guards. There are three primary Road Guard ride positions:

- a. **Ride Leader.** A Ride Leader is assigned for each group ride and is in charge of the ride. The Ride Leader rides at the front of the group. The Ride Leader guides the entire group of riders safely and orderly.
- b. **Mid-Pack.** Mid-Pack is a Road Guard who rides in the middle of large groups and assists where needed. A Mid-Pack is an experienced rider capable of assisting the Ride Leader and Sweep during the group ride, and is capable of leading the group as necessary.
- c. **Sweep.** Sweep is a Road Guard who rides at the back of the group. The Sweep provides protection from the rear and assistance to any rider who may require help. Sweep is capable of guiding the group if necessary.
- d. **Secondary Positions.** A Road Guard may be assigned a secondary position to assist one of the positions above.

## 10. RIDER EDUCATION

Motorcycling is a sport requiring knowledge and skill. The higher the level of knowledge and skill the more rewarding the sport as is the level of safety for the rider. The Chapter encourages all riders to continually increase their knowledge and skill through reading, practice, and formal training courses such as the Motorcycle Safety Foundation's Experienced Rider Course.

## 11. OBEYING THE LAW

It is Chapter policy to obey the law on all Chapter rides. This includes the blocking of an intersection without specific authorization from a legal authority.

## 12. COURTESY

Always be courteous and respect the rights of other roadway users and pedestrians.

## **13. RIDE PREPARATION**

### **13.1 Rider**

An integral part of a rider's responsibilities is preparing for a 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. Illness or allergies may be cause to not participate. Riders should consider their stamina and not start a ride they cannot be sure they can complete safely.

### **13.2 Motorcycle**

The condition of the motorcycle is key. Factory recommended service is advised. Tires should be in good condition, and fluids should be checked. Consider such variables as extra weight from passengers or luggage that might require a change in tire pressure or suspension adjustment. The T-CLOCK checklist is a good reminder of important components to check.

- T = Tires & Wheels
- C = Cables & Controls
- L = Lights & Switches
- O = Oil & Fuel
- C = Chain & Chassis
- K = (Kick) Side Stand

### **13.3 Clothing**

Clothing choices should be made intelligently and take into consideration: adequate crash protection including an approved helmet, eye protection, full fingered gloves, over ankle footwear, abrasion resistant clothing that doesn't melt and is appropriate for the weather. Riders should be prepared for the ranges of temperature and changes in weather that might occur. Consider rain gear. It can double as a windbreaker or insulation.

Discouraged items include unapproved helmets, gloves without full fingers, shorts, footwear that does not cover the ankle, synthetic clothing that will melt to the skin with pavement friction.

### **13.4 Support Items**

Support items should include tools, water if required, maps, emergency phone numbers, and required medications. Additional items may include cell phones, sunscreen, first aid kit, security lock, spare parts, and spare keys.

### **13.5 Earplugs**

Earplugs may be an aid to riding, particularly on long rides, by reducing the noise from exhaust and wind. Earplugs can protect rider hearing, and they can reduce fatigue caused by listening to a loud noise for a long period of time.

## **14. RIDE GROUP SIZE**

The group size may vary depending on the participating riders, weather conditions, roads to be traveled, known traffic conditions and available Road Guards. The group needs to be one that is easy to monitor and control based on the above conditions. The Ride Leader, Road Captain or Road Guard in charge of the ride will have the final decision on how small or large a group will be. If the Ride Leader, Road Captain or the Road Guard in charge determines that we cannot follow the guidelines set forth by the Chapter, the route may be altered, or the ride can be canceled.

If a ride is organized as multiple groups, groups will be spaced at appropriate intervals.

## **15. RIDE PLANNING**

When there is a Ride Organizer, the Organizer and Road Captain will work together in planning Road Guard support and the route.

## **16. OWN YOUR OWN SAFETY**

Although each rider is a functional part of the group, each rider is also the sole operator of the motorcycle. "Own your Own Safety" is the phrase used to emphasize that each rider should take responsibility for operation of the motorcycle. Riders cannot allow themselves to become complacent or be intimidated into doing something that is unsafe or they are not comfortable with.

## 17. COMFORT ZONE

Being comfortable in your riding situation is being in your *Comfort Zone*. Being out of your *Comfort Zone* can be caused by but not limited to:

- a. Riding above or pushing your skill level
- b. An unfamiliar road environment
- c. An unfamiliar traffic environment
- d. Any situation that is unfamiliar
- e. A situation that you perceive as a possible threat

Riding outside your comfort zone does not necessarily mean you are in danger, but it may. You must evaluate your situation and act if it is prudent. Bear in mind that it is always better to err on the conservative side and take action to get back in your comfort zone.

Being in your comfort zone doesn't mean you are safe. That is why you must always "Own your Own Safety".

## 18. THE SIMPLE STUFF

The following is a list of tasks each rider intending to participate in a group ride is expected to perform:

- a. Riders should show up at least 15 minutes prior to the ride, so they do not miss the start of the pre-ride briefing, or keep people waiting or distract other riders who are trying to listen to the pre-ride briefing.
- b. Riders should have their gas tank full and their bladder empty.
- c. Riders should check their motorcycle including oil and tire pressures before leaving home.
- d. Riders should have what they will need for the ride (like water if it is hot or layers of clothing if it is cold).

## 19. CONDUCT OF A GROUP RIDE

### 19.1 Ride Line

Members can call Ride Line at any time to determine the start time and start location for a scheduled chapter ride. Members can also call the Ride Line to determine if the Road Captain has cancelled the ride due to weather conditions. The Ride Line number is 760-736-2920.

## **19.2 Canceling a Ride**

Conditions may exist that prevent the safe conduct of a ride. The Road Captain will then cancel the ride via the Ride Line.

## **19.3 Pre-Ride Briefing**

The pre-ride briefing is conducted 15 minutes before the start of a ride. The standard pre-ride briefing will:

- a. Confirm that all non-members and all parents or legal guardians of minors have signed Waivers and minors 12 to 18 have signed Assumption of Risk forms.
- b. Emphasize safety.
- c. Review group riding procedures and hand signals.
- d. Identify the Road Guards conducting the ride.
- e. Identify riders with special needs.
- f. Review the route.
- g. Answer rider questions.

## **19.4 Route Familiarization**

Riders should pay attention to the route description given during the pre-ride briefing so they also know the route.

## **19.5 Riding Formations**

Two riding formations are used on group rides: stagger and single file. The group will never ride side-by-side. The Ride Leader will indicate a change in formation as necessary by hand signals.

### **19.5.1 Stagger**

The stagger is the primary formation for group rides. The Ride Leader rides in the center of the left half of the lane. This is the source of the phrase "Lead from the left". The second motorcycle rides in the center of the right half of the lane. The third rider rides directly behind the first, the fourth behind the second and so on. This formation allows for a tighter group, that will less likely be split by signal lights. It gives each rider a safe distance from the rider in front and in back. It also gives each rider the ability to move to the opposite half of the lane, between the adjacent riders in front and behind in case of an emergency. This is known as "A Way Out."

### 19.5.2 *Single File*

A single file formation may be used because a road is narrow, twisty, rough, or contaminated. Riders may assume any position in the lane they wish. Single file is reset to stagger after stopping for a traffic signal or stop sign. The exception is when a group is split from the front of a ride group. The split group retains the formation used before the stop.

There may be occasion when the group is riding in single file and the road condition changes to what appears to permit a stagger formation. Riders should not assume the stagger formation on their own. The Ride Leader may have a reason for not wanting the group to go to the stagger formation such as an approaching hazard or change in road condition dictating the continuation of the single file formation.

### 19.5.3 *Spacing*

Riders will maintain a two second spacing between their motorcycle and the motorcycle directly in front of them. In the stagger formation a one second spacing is maintained behind the motorcycle in the opposite half of the lane. When the rider in the opposite lane half is not maintaining proper spacing, the one and two second spacing should both be considered not-less-than rules.

The best method to maintain spacing is to mentally count, at a one second rate, the time between when the rider in front passes a point and you pass the point.

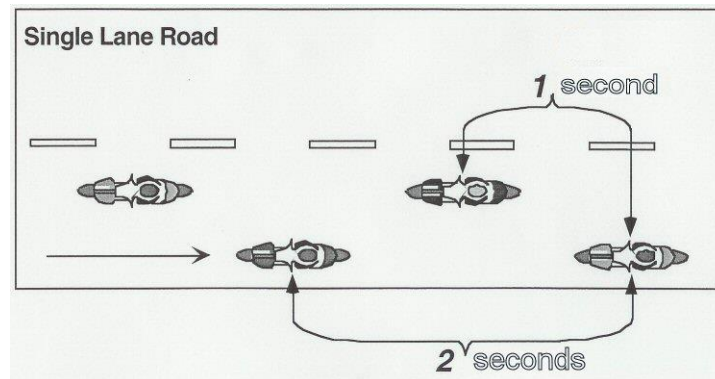


Figure 1. Spacing

## 19.6 **Trikes and Motorcycles with Sidecar or Trailer**

Trikes and motorcycles with a sidecar or trailer participate in group rides like all other motorcycles, using the same policies, procedures, and standards.

## **19.7      Parked Car Hazard**

When traveling on streets with cars parked along the side, be vigilant of people opening car doors as well as people and animals entering the street from between parked cars. A lane away from the parked cars should be chosen if available. If an alternate lane is not available, single file and a reduced speed may be in order.

## **19.8      Large Trucks Hazard**

### **19.8.1    *Passing Large Trucks***

Riders should not ride close to large trucks. This includes passing trucks going in the same and the opposite direction and trucks passing the group going in the same direction. It is advisable to change to the opposite side of the lane from a truck to increase clearance. Never ride alongside a large truck.

When passing large trucks going in the same direction, riders should check their mirrors, move to the far side of their lane away from the truck to provide a good amount of clearance, pass quickly and maintain the increased speed to allow space for following riders, then return to normal speed and lane position. The Ride Leader may put the group in single file. If so, everyone should move to the opposite side of the lane away from the truck. Particular care must be taken when passing on two lane roads.

The Ride Leader may choose to treat large motor homes as large trucks. Follow the Ride Leader's lead in such situations. Individual riders may move to the opposite side of the lane from any vehicle as they see fit.

Turn signals are not required when changing sides of a lane, but the mirrors must be checked.

### **19.8.2    *Being Seen***

Trucks have large blind spots that make it impossible to see a motorcycle in some positions around the truck - including in front. Riders should assume they are not seen.

### **19.8.3    *Tire Explosions***

Tire explosions happen often. It is a violent event and can cause a rider great harm. Large trucks should be given a wide berth for this reason. Do not ride beside a large truck any longer than necessary.

### **19.8.4    *Low Pressure Area***

Large trucks can create air turbulence and low pressure areas that can be dangerous to motorcycles. It is worse for motorcycles with lots of surface area. The best defense is distance.

### 19.9 Lane Choice

When there are more than two lanes in the direction of travel, the center lanes are usually the safest and best for a group of riders.

**RECOMMENDED RIDE POSITION:**

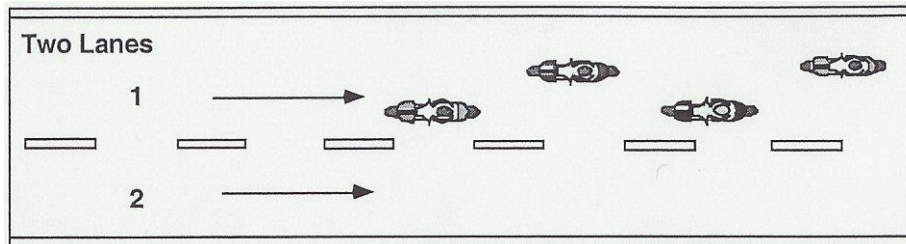


Figure 2. Ride Position when 2 Lanes; Ride in Lane #1

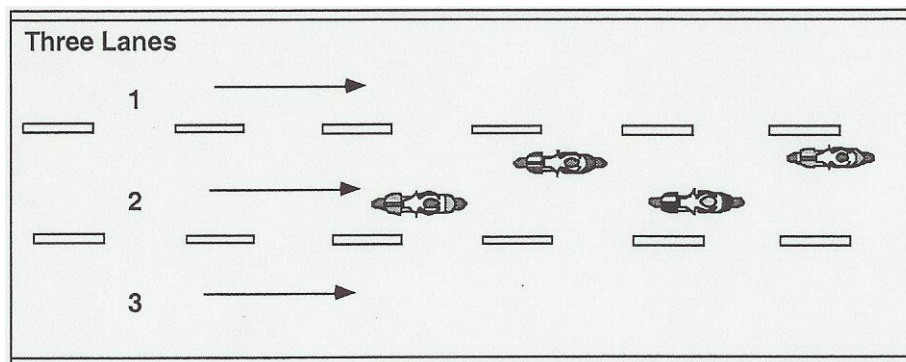


Figure 3. Ride Position when 3 Lanes; Ride in Lane #2

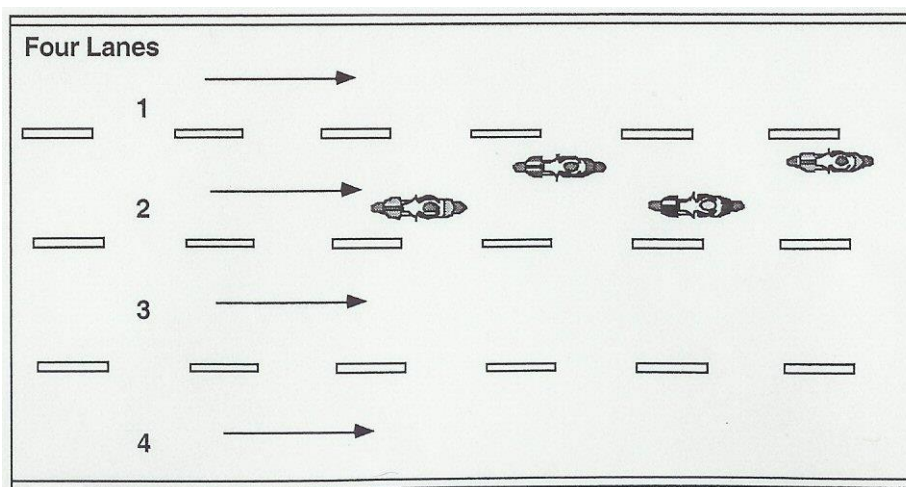


Figure 4. Ride Position when 4 Lanes; Ride in Lane #2



### **19.10 Cars Entering or Exiting the Interstate or Freeway**

Riders should be alert for cars entering or exiting the interstate or freeway that may cut through the formation when the group is traveling in the far right lane.

### **19.11 Lane Sharing**

Lane sharing, though legal in California, will not be done on group rides because of the increased risk.

### **19.12 No Right Turn On Red**

Group Rides do not turn right on red lights although it is legal at most traffic signals in California. Experience has proven the group is not always safe when making such turns.

Turning right on red places riders initially at low speed after the turn, and potentially puts riders in danger from high speed traffic that may not have been in sight when the turn was initiated. This is rare, but not worth the risk. A secondary problem is that the group can get split by cars on the road that the group is entering.

### **19.13 Stops at Stop Lights or Stop Signs**

When riders stop at stop-lights or stop signals, riders will pull up side-by-side. A stagger formation is established on leaving the stop by one rider leaving first or by an acceleration differential if the motorcycles leave together. This means that a single file formation, arriving at a stop, will become a stagger formation after the stop. This does not apply to groups that are split from the lead group. Split groups will maintain the formation last indicated by the Ride Leader after the side-by-side stop, unless a Road Guard comes to the front and assumes the duties of a new Ride Leader.

### **19.14 Stops at Yield Signs**

If riders stop at yield signs, riders will pull up side-by-side. The formation type before the stop is used on leaving the stop by one rider leaving first or by an acceleration differential if the motorcycles leave together to reestablish single file or stagger formation after the stop.

### **19.15 Controlling Surprises**

Riders are safest when they anticipate what is about to happen and have time to react. Ride Leaders should anticipate as much as possible the conditions ahead and prepare and guide the group so the riders are comfortable in all situations. This means avoiding abrupt stops and turns. There may be cases where the Ride Leader, in the interest of safety, will lead the group down an unintended road and make a U-turn or other maneuver to correct the route.

### **19.16 Signaling Turns and Lane Changes**

When possible, use both standard California hand signal and the motorcycle's turn signal indicators.

### **19.17 Signals by Passengers**

Passengers may assist in providing hand signals to other motorcycles in the group; however, the rider is the responsible person.

### **19.18 Changing Lanes**

Lane changes are made from back to front. The procedure for changing lanes is:

- a. The Ride Leader signals for a lane change using both hand and electronic turn signals.
- b. Each rider passes observed turn signals to the riders behind.
- c. The Sweep will move to the new lane when appropriate and provide a visual reference that the lane is clear.
- d. The rider in front of Sweep will move to the new lane after Sweep is there. The next rider up will then follow and so on until the last rider, the Ride Leader, moves to the new lane.

The Sweep may be able to anticipate lane changes by having instruction from the Ride Leader that will allow protecting the lane before the signal is given by the Ride Leader. Sometimes the Ride Leader will not change lanes as planned. This means a rider should not follow a Sweep until, and unless, the lane change signal is given by the Ride Leader. When a rider is ready to change lanes, the rider should clear the area behind and to the side of them before changing lanes. This procedure often does not go as planned for a number of reasons including traffic, late or slow signaling, and riders not exercising patience. In some cases, the group must merge around cars thus separating the group. Riders should give their best effort to make the procedure work properly.

## **19.19 Passing on Two-Lane Roads**

### **19.19.1 *The policies for passing slower moving vehicles on a two lane road are:***

- a. Passes are only made when it is safe to do so.
- b. Riders pass as individuals.
- c. Passes are made quickly.
- d. Riders executing a pass must consider the riders who will follow.

### **19.19.2 *The procedure for passing slower moving vehicles on a two-lane road is as follows:***

- a. The Ride Leader will typically put the group into staggered formation, if not already. This is to tighten the group up prior to the actual passing maneuver.
- b. The Ride Leader will signal his intention to start the passing process by raising the left arm straight up and moving it back and forth, like a tomahawk chop, and using his left turn signal.
- c. When safe to do so, the Ride Leader will pass the slower moving vehicle on the left, in the on-coming traffic lane.
- d. After completing the pass, the Ride Leader will remain in the on-coming traffic lane, as long as it is safe to do so. This is a signal to the riders behind the Ride Leader that there is no on-coming traffic, and that it is safe for the group to start passing the slower moving vehicle.
- e. The next rider should move to the left in the original lane, and then pass the slower moving vehicle when safe to do so. After passing the slower moving vehicle, this rider should return to the original lane and lane position, allowing enough room between him and the slow moving vehicle for the next rider to pass and enter.
- f. The rest of the group should follow the same pattern.
- g. The Ride Leader will move back over to the original lane if on-coming traffic approaches, to signal to the group still behind the slower moving vehicle that it is no longer safe for them to continue to pass. When the on-coming traffic lane is clear to begin passing again, the Ride Leader will move back into the on-coming lane and remains there until the remainder of the group completes the pass.
- h. The Ride Leader will return to their original position after everyone has completed the passing process.

## **19.20 Stopping on a Freeway**

A ride group should not stop on a freeway except in an emergency.

## 19.21 Riders with Speed Limitations

It is Chapter policy that rides will be conducted to the level of the rider with the greatest limitation, be that experience or mechanically imposed limitations like a break-in restriction. New riders fall into this category. In some cases a special group may be formed for these riders and routes may be modified.

Riders with limitations should ride immediately behind a Ride Leader. The reasons are:

- a. The closer to the front, the slower the speed.
- b. Riders at the front are less likely to be separated from the Ride Leader by traffic and stop lights.
- c. The Ride Leader can more easily observe the subject rider and adjust the pace of the group to their needs.

In some very rare cases such as long, difficult, or high speed rides it may not be possible to accommodate the needs of all riders. For example, a rider with a new bike might be asked to not participate in a freeway ride; or, if enough Road Guards are available, a Road Guard might be assigned to lead a smaller group that departs separately from the other groups.

## 19.22 Keeping the Group Together

The Ride Leader will set a pace that accommodates the skill level of all the riders in the group. The Ride Leader should plan ahead for changes and signal early so the signal gets to the Sweep and to the rest of the group in time to prepare for the maneuver. If at all possible, the Ride Leader should make necessary lane changes at least one mile before a turn.

## 19.23 Checking Mirrors

All riders should check their mirrors frequently. Infrequent use of mirrors is one of the most prevalent deficiencies among riders.

Mirror checks before a maneuver such as a turn, lane change, or gap filling should be followed by a head check, turning the head to directly see what is beside and behind you.

Stop lights are a major cause of a split group. Riders should check their mirrors after a traffic signal to determine if the group has been split and if so, the split group hand signal needs to be passed forward. There are a myriad of other reasons for checking the mirrors. Check mirrors as often as safety permits.

All riders should check the mirrors to know:

- a. The general state of the group.
- b. Where the riders are who are immediately behind.
- c. If there is a split group.
- d. The traffic conditions in other lanes.

## **19.24 Intersections**

Intersections are an area of high risk for a motorcyclist. This is still true for the group despite the increased visibility due to the number of motorcycles. All intersections should be approached with caution.

### **19.24.1 Clearing Intersections**

Each individual should "clear the intersection" prior to moving through it. Clearing an intersection means to look left and right before proceeding through it to ensure it can be crossed safely.

### **19.24.2 Turns at Intersections**

When making a turn at an intersection, riders should proceed with caution and make the turn only when it is safe to do so. Do not ride side-by-side.

While waiting to turn, mirrors should be checked because other motorists may be expecting the group to turn en masse. The group will re-form on the other side of the intersection.

## **19.25 Parking**

Avoid parking in a manner that may require assistance to get out of the parking spot, such as downhill or head-in. Pull through parking is usually best for both arrival and departure. Riders should position their motorcycles so that the group can depart as a unit in single file.

## **19.26 Merging Traffic**

Traffic will sometimes want to merge into the group. They will not like it there and will usually go away the first chance they get. Let them in, and let them out.

## **19.27 Motorcycles Overtaking the Group**

Often other motorcycles will overtake the group from the rear. This is of concern on two-lane twisty roads. The group is likely already in single file. Move to the right and allow the faster rider to pass with as much safety as possible for both of you. This is a good case for watching your mirrors.

Never try to block a passing motorcycle. It can be half your weight with more than twice your horsepower, and the rider is likely to be extremely aggressive.

## **19.28 Interstates and Freeways**

A stagger formation is normally used on freeways and interstates. In heavy traffic, riders should resist the temptation to ride at unsafe distances from others in the group.

### **19.28.1 *Entering Interstates and Freeways***

The Ride Leader should maintain a merging speed that will allow enough space for following riders to safely merge. If possible, the Sweep will clear enough space for the group to safely merge into the slow lane. If it is not possible for the Sweep to clear a lane, riders will merge as individuals and position themselves in a staggered formation as quickly as possible. In some cases, the group must merge around other vehicles thus separating the group. The separation will usually be resolved by the other vehicles changing lanes or the group changing lanes.

### **19.28.2 *High Occupancy Vehicle Lane***

High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes may be used at the Ride Leader's discretion.

### **19.28.3 *Exiting***

Stagger formation is used to exit the freeway, unless the Ride Leader puts the group into single file.

## **19.29 Split Group and Lost Rider**

The group may become split by a stop signal or other event. A rider may have a physical or mechanical problem and have to stop, or a rider may go down.

When the group is separated by traffic, it is not considered a split group as long as the lead group can see the rest of the group behind them.

Riders should not feel pressure to do anything unsafe, including disregarding traffic signals or speeding to keep from splitting the group. Split groups are expected, and there are procedures for handling them.

### **19.29.1 *Split Recognition and Hand Signal***

As soon as a rider in front of a split notices that the group is split, the rider should signal the riders in front by raising the left arm straight up with the hand in a fist. The

riders in front should pass the signal forward as they see it in their mirrors until the Ride Leader acknowledges seeing the signal by giving the same signal.

### **19.29.2 Rejoining a Split Group**

The Ride Leader will take action to rejoin the groups by slowing down or stopping so the split group can catch up. If the Ride Leader decides to stop the lead group, a safe location large enough for the group should be found. When the second group rejoins the first, the rejoined groups will continue.

### **19.29.3 Entering a Group En Route**

A rider may enter a group that is en route. The rider should enter at the rear of the group just in front of the Sweep(s). Riders re-entering the group should also follow this procedure and not try to re-enter in their previous position. Road Guards may need to re-enter the group in a position other than at the rear.

### **19.29.4 Split Group**

If the second group became separated because of a traffic light or other transitory event, the group should continue until it rejoins the first group. Road Guards in the split group may assume the position of Ride Leader for the split group if necessary. This can be for the comfort or safety of the group or to ensure the correct route is followed. If a Road Guard assumes the lead, the standard "lead from the left" formation will be assumed while in stagger formation. If the rider left in the lead after the split is allowed to continue leading the group and the group is in the stagger formation, the lead rider will lead from their position before the split, be that left or right. This will simplify rejoining the lead group if they have not stopped.

On rejoining the main group, the split group will assume the formation in use by the main group.

If the second group stops because of a problem, the Road Guards will determine a plan of action to handle the problem. If a rider cannot continue, a Road Guard or other riders appropriate to the problem or emergency will be appointed by a Road Guard to stay with the rider with the problem. A Ride Leader and Sweep for the second group will be established and the second group should continue and rejoin the first.

### **19.29.5 Lost Rider**

The Chapter has a policy that **no rider will be abandoned**. Any rider who drops out, for any reason, will be approached by the Sweep and any help within the

Sweep's ability will be given. This situation will be treated as a split group as described above.

### **19.30 Riders Needing More Space**

A rider may need more space, possibly the whole lane because of inexperience, road conditions, mechanical problems, or motorcycle handling characteristic. The rider signals this by extending the left arm down and slightly to the side, hand open and palm to the rear and motions rearward. Riders behind should drop back and give the rider showing the signal more room and be prepared for the signaling rider to move anywhere on the road and possibly to pull off the road and stop. If the rider waves you by, pass when it is safe. If the rider stops, it will be treated as a split group as described above.

The signal may be given by a rider when the rider behind is not adhering to the one or two second rule. The offending rider should reestablish a proper gap.

### **19.31 Riders Needing to Drop Back**

A rider may need to drop out of their position in the group and take up a position in front of the Sweep knowing that the Sweep will adjust for their special needs such as needing more space, to slow down, or the rider may need to stop.

The procedure should be done safely. There are three methods for moving out of the group.

- a. If on a multi-lane highway, the rider signals to change lanes, changes lanes, and waves the other riders to pass.
- b. If on a two-lane road, the rider moves to the right of the lane and waves the others riders to pass. The other riders pass as safety permits.
- c. If a rider has a serious need to drop back or stop, the rider signals the riders behind for more space and pulls off the road when it can be done safely and waves the other riders to pass.

The Sweep will stay with the rider and will ride with them at their pace or stop with them and assist with any problem or emergency. If there are two Sweeps, they may agree for one to stay with the group and the other to stay with the rider who dropped back or stopped. The Sweep staying with the group can motion the group to continue, eliminating or reducing any delay to the group.

### **19.32 Riders Needing to Stop**

Riders may encounter a problem and need to stop. The safest procedure is to use the *Riders Needing More Space* or the *Riders Needing to Drop Back* procedure



followed by the stop signal and a safe stop. This will be treated as a split group as described above.

### 19.33 Leaving the Group / Filling a Gap

If a rider plans in advance to drop out of the group, the rider should inform an assigned Road Guard of the approximate place or time of leaving the group. The Road Guard will inform the Ride Leader who will inform the Mid-Pack and Sweep(s). The rider should use the *Riders Needing to Drop Back* procedure to clear the group. This will prevent a false lost rider situation. Departures from the group should be made safely.

The procedure for filling a gap when a rider leaves or is added into a group is for each rider to cross over and fill in the empty space created. Riders should check their mirrors before making this maneuver.

If a rider is unwilling to cross over and fill the gap, they should not be pressured to do so.

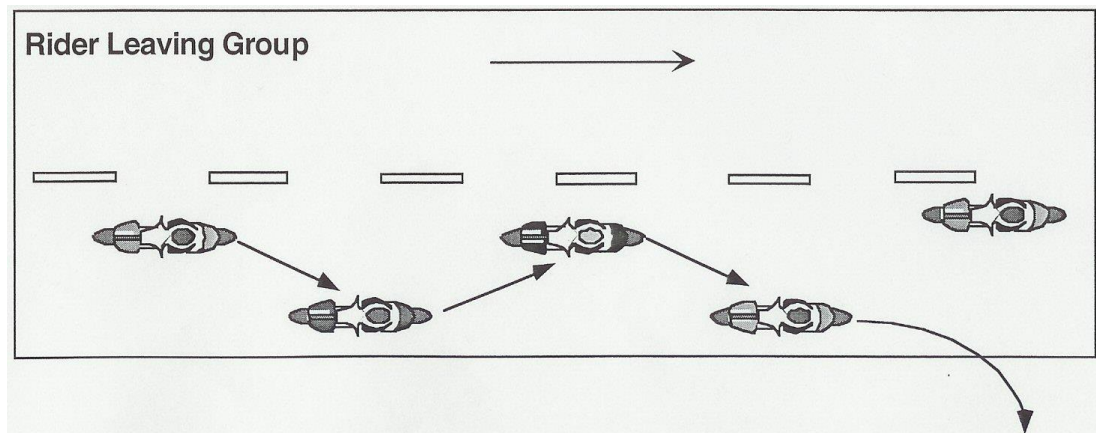


Figure 5. Filling a Gap / Leaving a Group

### 19.34 Overtaking a Stopped Group

If during a ride that has more than one group, something happens to cause one group to stop and the following group overtakes them, the following group should continue without stopping unless flagged down by the stopped group. If the overtaking group is flagged down, that group's Ride Leader will pull the group over as close to the stopped group as safety permits.

## **19.35 Environmental Hazards**

### **19.35.1 *Riding into the Sun***

Safety precautions because of the decreased visibility include:

- a. Use of a sun visor and sunglasses.
- b. Reduced speed.
- c. Increased spacing.

### **19.35.2 *Riding in the Rain***

Safety precautions because of the decreased visibility and traction include:

- a. Use of a visor, breathable eye protection, and anti-fog solution.
- b. Reduced speed.
- c. Increased spacing.
- d. Avoidance of slick surfaces such as: leaves; street markings; steel as in trench cover plates, manhole covers, and railroad tracks; and rubber strips adjacent to railroad tracks.

### **19.35.3 *Riding at Night***

Safety precautions because of the decreased visibility include:

- a. Use of reflective clothing.
- b. Use of all available lights.
- c. Reduced speed.
- d. Increased spacing.

### **19.35.4 *Road Contamination***

Safety precautions because of the decreased traction from road contamination such as sand, leaves, debris, and mud include:

- a. Use of single file formation to increase the rider's ability to avoid contamination.
- b. Reduced speed.
- c. Increased spacing.

### **19.35.5 Fuel and Oil Spills**

Fuel and oil spills should be avoided.

- a. Avoid wet or shiny looking pavement areas on otherwise dry pavement. Wet surface may be from diesel fuel, not water.
- b. Avoid areas of beading water on wet pavement.

### **19.35.6 Riding In Ice and Snow**

Do not ride in ice and snow.

## **19.36 Night Group Rides**

The lack of visibility at night makes group riding very difficult. The problems are:

- a. It is difficult for riders to see what is happening behind them.
- b. Riders cannot easily pass the lost rider signal forward.
- c. It can be difficult to identify a safe place to stop the group.
- d. It is more difficult to see road hazards.

The size of night group rides should be kept small and speed should be reduced. Riders may have to flash their lights to get the attention of riders in front of them.

## **19.37 Problem Riders**

Occasionally a rider will behave in a way that is disruptive or unsafe. Prudent action should be taken to rectify the situation, but the person should be handled with tact and discretion. The situations listed below are a few, but not all of the situations which will require intervention:

- a. Riding beyond one's ability.
- b. Unacceptable formation riding (allowing gaps that are too large or small).
- c. Not maintaining a constant gap to the riders in front (rubber-banding).
- d. Riding beside another rider.
- e. Operating a mechanically unsafe motorcycle.
- f. Riding while impaired by illness, fatigue, or medication.
- g. Riding while under the influence of alcohol.

If a safety breach has occurred during a ride, the person who sees the problem should approach a Road Guard at the next stop and tell them of the occurrence. The Road Guards will take action to resolve the problem. If the problem requires

immediate action for the safety of the group, the person should drop back and inform Mid-Pack or Sweep of the situation. In some cases it may be easier to tell the Ride Leader.

### 19.38 Major Roadside Emergencies

If the group encounters a roadside emergency, the Ride Leader will determine if the group may be of assistance. If so, the Ride Leader will find a safe place to stop the group that will not add any congestion. Those in the group that can render assistance will be assigned tasks. This may include rendering first aid, directing traffic, and calling for emergency services. The group will resume the ride as soon as possible and may leave riders at the scene if they are providing assistance.

## 20. HAND SIGNALS

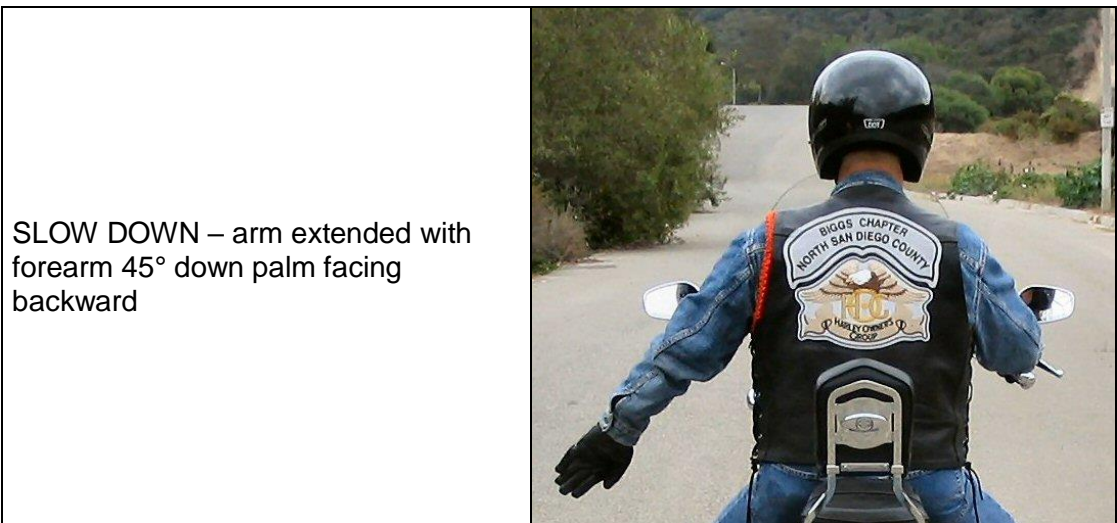


Figure 6. Slow Down



Figure 7. Need More Space

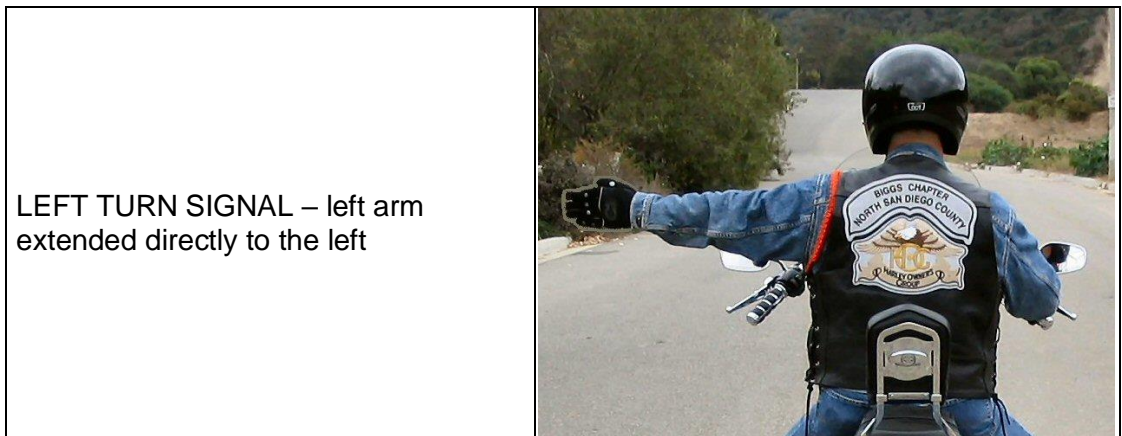


Figure 8. Left Turn





Figure 9. Right Turn

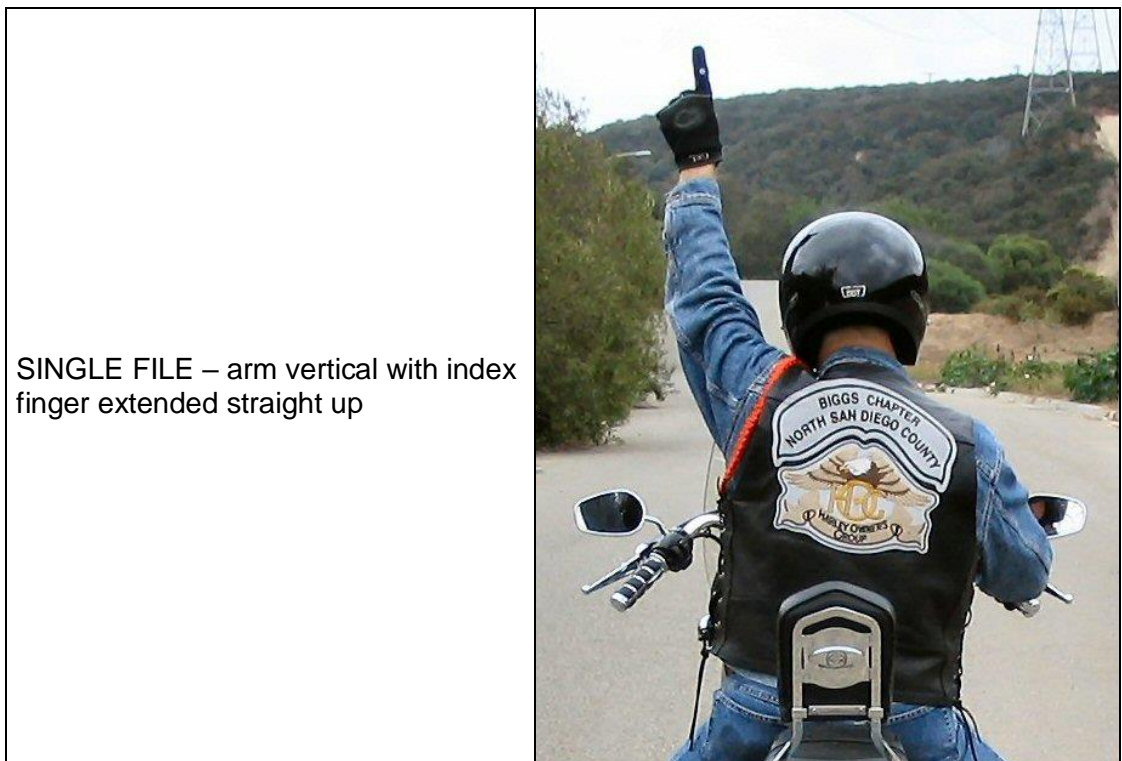


Figure 10. Single File

STAGGERED – arm vertical with two fingers extended straight up and rotate back and forth



Figure 11. Stagger

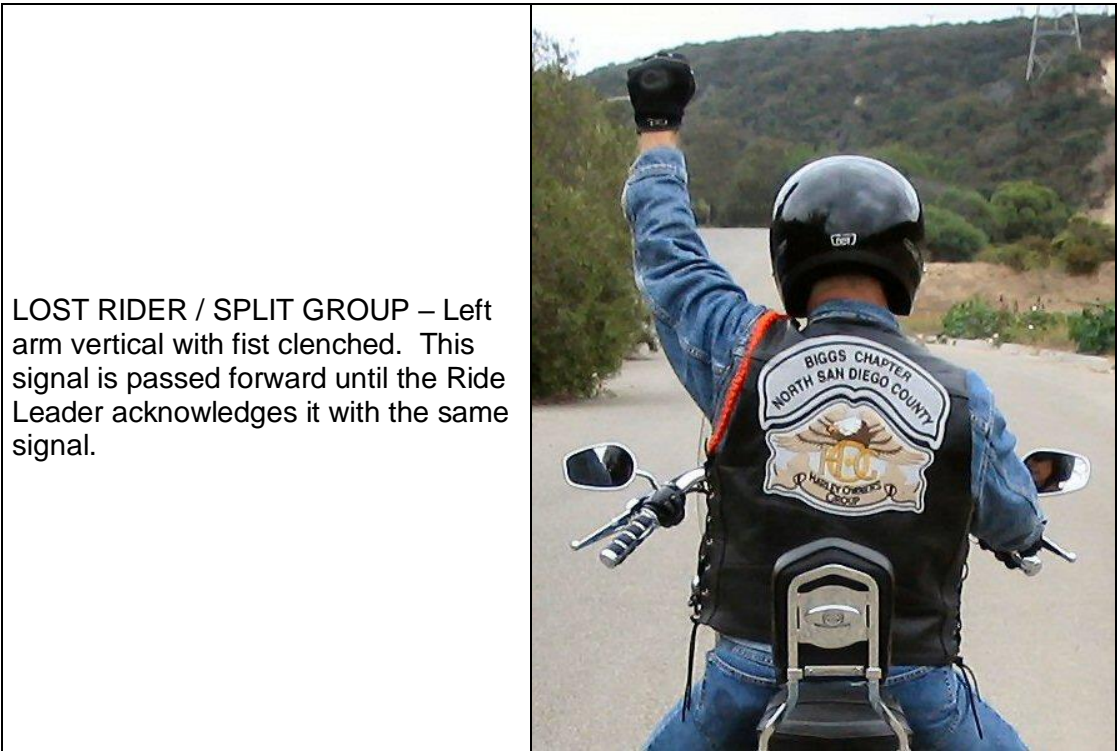


Figure 12. Lost Rider / Split Group

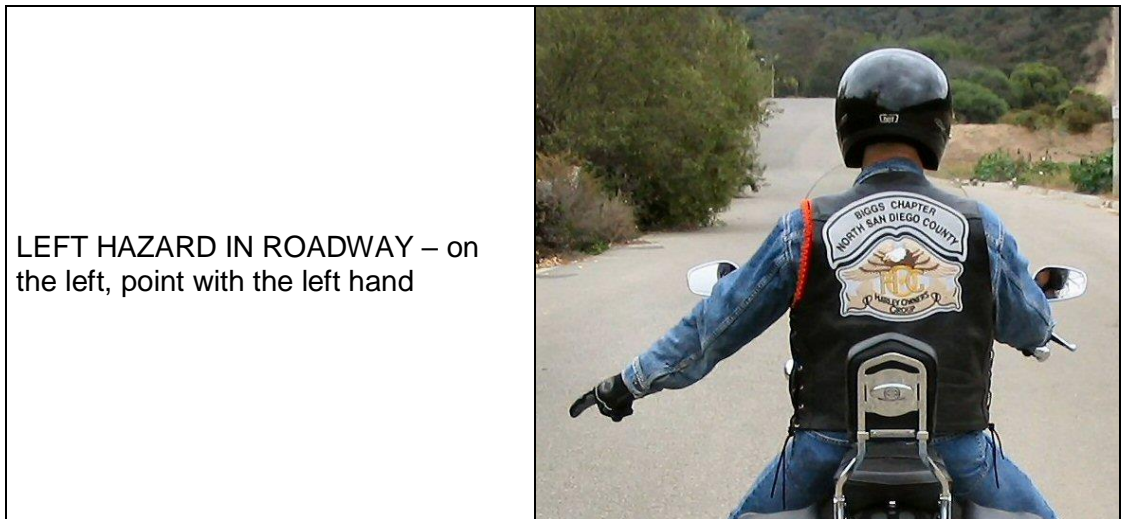


Figure 13. Hazard in Roadway (Left)



RIGHT HAZARD IN ROADWAY – on the right, point with the right foot

Note: Trike riders, and riders with sidecars or trailers will point out hazards to the right by pointing their left hand over their head. This is because the trike/sidecar/trailer blocks the view of the right foot method.



Figure 14. Hazard in Roadway (Right)



Figure 15. You Pass / Come Forward

## 21. CHASE VEHICLES

Chase vehicles may accompany a ride. These vehicles are not part of the ride. The chase vehicles should be behind the last group in a ride.

## **22. MANAGING ALCOHOL RELATED RISK**

Alcohol increases the risk of injury; it is illegal to drink and drive and H.O.G. insurance does not cover alcohol-related claims.

National H.O.G. recommends and this Chapter and our Sponsoring Dealership have adopted a policy of no alcohol before or during a riding event. The Chapter will not furnish alcohol at any event.

## **23. H.O.G. CHAPTER ALCOHOL GUIDELINES**

Safe and responsible motorcycling activity is a major H.O.G. goal. In this regard:

- a. The consumption and use of alcohol is a serious personal responsibility involving the safety and welfare of family, riding friends, and the individual H.O.G. member.
- b. Alcohol consumption before or during motorcycling activity is not safe responsible behavior.
- c. National H.O.G. has no direct operational control over Chapter operations. Consumption of alcohol after riding activity or at non-riding events is a matter to be decided by the sponsoring dealership and H.O.G. Chapter leadership. All such decisions are subject to final review and approval by the sponsoring dealership.
- d. If the sponsoring dealer and Chapter decide that alcohol may be consumed at a Chapter activity, then the recommended approach is either to "Bring Your Own" or to "Buy Your Own" from a vendor licensed and insured to sell alcohol.

### **NOTICE**

**LIQUOR LIABILITY COVERAGE IS NOT PROVIDED BY THE CHAPTER GENERAL LIABILITY INSURANCE POLICY.**