



Ride Out Guidelines

On group rides, it's necessary for all involved to understand that an individual's actions can affect the safety of other group members. Group rides are not for the selfish. Group members must be prepared to give some thought and consideration to the safety of others, and enjoyment of all.

Remember that **YOUR** safety is ultimately **YOUR OWN** responsibility.

On ride-outs, we want everyone to ride safely and within their abilities at all times. To avoid the need for anyone to have to ride outside their skill level, in order to keep up with the bikes in front, we use the "**second man drop-off**" technique to signpost the route taken by the ride-out. We also use the "**Buddy system**" i.e. your speed should be dictated by the motorcycle behind you and not the one in front.

There is an absolute **no-overtaking protocol** within the group on ride-outs, this is again for safety reasons. After setting out from each stop, riders should keep to a fixed running order and a safe distance, no matter how slow the rider in front of them may be. A group ride-out is not a race and the overall pace must be set to cater for the slowest group member i.e. the "**Buddy system**".

However, as well as observing speed limits there is also the need to ride at a safe minimum speed. Riding at 30mph on the motorway is not safe! Another example is travelling at 58-63mph on a motorway or dual carriageway is also not safe as this is the limited speed of HGV's etc!! As a guideline we will aim to ride at 65mph on motorways and dual carriageways and at appropriate speeds on other single lane roads as dictated by overriding road and traffic conditions.

Preparation – (Every time you go out on your motorcycle)

1. Before leaving home check your bike is roadworthy e.g. tyres and for any obvious faults e.g. oil leaks, lights not working etc. If found not to be roadworthy you will be asked to leave the ride out.
2. Check that your personal safety gear is legal. If found to be of a deficient standard you will be asked to leave the ride out.
3. Check the weather forecast and dress appropriately, always carry waterproof clothing. The Road Captain will announce before the ride leaves if wet weather is forecast and waterproof clothing is advised. If so, we will not stop during the ride to change in to waterproofs.
4. Arrive at meeting point 20-30 minutes before the scheduled departure time to allow you to say hello to everyone and hear the briefing.
5. Ensure you arrive with a **full tank** of petrol.
6. New and inexperienced riders should speak to the Road Captain(s) prior to departure
7. Depending on the number, new and inexperienced riders will set off in the first group followed by a 10 minute interval for all other riders.
8. All Ride outs, when appropriate, will be split into groups by the Road Captain(s). Each group will have a Lead Marshal and Sweeper.
9. If you intend to leave the group during the ride, inform the Lead Road Captain/Marshal prior to setting off.

The Ride Out

1. The Road Captain(s) will be assisted throughout the ride out by nominated Road Marshals who will be wearing Hi Viz Vests.
2. We will use the **second man drop off** method to mark all junctions /roundabouts where the group is exiting left or right. A drop off will be signaled by the Road Captain/Marshal as the place to stop.
3. If a junction is not manned then the ride will continue straight on.
4. A Road Marshal, acting in the role of Sweeper, will ride at the back of the group. All second man drop offs or riders who have stopped are to rejoin the group and go in front of the Sweeper.

5. All riders in addition to Marshals may be required to do, and should be capable of doing, second man drop off.
6. During the ride out we will obey all speed limits and traffic regulations.
7. While riding in formation you should maintain the 2 second distance rule in dry conditions, between you and the rider immediately in front and 1 second distance between you and rider in your inside/outside (**these distances should be increased as required in adverse conditions**).
8. We will maintain the staggered riding formation (one nearside – one offside) wherever possible; this allows the group to remain tight but gives enough room for manoeuvres where necessary.
9. Riders should try, as much as possible, to maintain a steady speed. Any need for acceleration or slowing down should be carried out as smoothly as possible to reduce any 'accordion' effect within the group.
10. When riding in 2 abreast, staggered formation, once you have occupied a position within the group (i.e. nearside or offside) this position should not change except when road and traffic conditions dictate i.e. riding on a particularly narrow road or if it is obvious that everyone in front of you has changed position. Remember the 2 second rule and maintain a safe distance behind.
11. In narrow roads the Road Captain will signal when to ride in single formation. This will be indicated with the left arm and index finger extended straight up. This signal should be passed down the group.
12. Conversely if the Road Captain wants to reform the staggered formation this will be indicated with the left arm raised and two fingers extended straight up. This signal should be passed down the group.
13. All changes in formation are to be actioned from the front. Do not try and second guess the Rider in front of you.
14. When road or traffic conditions dictate, changing position should only be performed when safe to do so. (Note that crossing over from inside to outside staggered riding position (or vice versa) can be very hazardous if the gaps between riders are too short. Remember the 2 second rule and maintain a safe distance behind.
15. When riding in 2 abreast, staggered formation, if a rider has to pull out of the riding group and this causes a gap, **Do not** change position. Maintain your position in the group with the gap.
16. **Do not** overtake any other riders in the group. Only Road Marshals should overtake other riders in the group and then only in the case of an emergency.
17. Check your mirrors often.
18. If you need to stop during the ride, pull safely in to the left when possible and indicate (Thumb down) to the first Marshal you see if you have a problem. They will pull in and assist. If you do not have a problem, indicate with the thumb up signal. The Marshal will not stop.
19. On Motorways and Dual Carriageways, at times the group will need to overtake. When the Road Captain signals to pull out, this does not mean that the rest of the group has to pull out and do the same at exactly the same time. This is dangerous and also causes congestion. Wait in the nearside lane until you personally encounter the obstruction, then overtake when it is safe for **YOU** to do so. Then rejoin the main pack. Do not pull out before the bike in front to block traffic.
20. When the group is held up or stops, riders should close up side by side so that the group occupies the minimum length of road necessary. This is especially beneficial in built-up areas in getting as many bikes through a junction or traffic light sequence in as short an interval of time as possible.
21. The Road Captain and Sweeper will ride in a central position within the lane/road, so that they can see each other along the central gully between the other riders in the column.
22. We will not stop for bad weather, unless unsafe to carry on, until the next designated stop point.
23. When slowing down you should 'indicate' to the rider behind you are doing so, i.e. show a brake light with a gentle touch on the back brake. In normal riding, we all slow down by easing off the throttle and shifting down through the gears but in a group ride, the rider behind might not realize what's happening and run into the back of you!
24. If you ride a bike that is equipped with a radio/cassette/CD etc please be considerate of the riders around you who may not share your taste in music, i.e. when riding in a group please switch off the speakers.



In summary

The group ride is supposed to be fun and enjoyable for everyone. We ride together because it is part of our chosen hobby. It looks good when we ride safely like a well oiled machine. Follow the rules, turn some heads and above all, enjoy yourself.

The Road Captains and Marshals will do everything they can to prepare for the ride and make it safe for everyone. Safety is not just the jurisdiction of the Road Captains and Marshals it is the collective responsibility of all chapter members.

As previously stated, group riding is not for the selfish, it's not a race so **DON'T CHASE THE RIDER AHEAD**. But **DO KEEP THE RIDER BEHIND IN VIEW** at all times (Buddy System). If contact with following riders is lost - slow down and/or stop (where it is safe to do so) and wait. The rider in front of you should then also slow/stop until the Road Captain realises there is a problem and will stop at a place where the group can reform safely before continuing.

Develop a safe attitude and ride with pride. Maintain a good margin of safety at all times, whether it be the gap between riders, the distance from opposing traffic, keeping within the capabilities of machine, rider and observing all speed limits. Overtaking opportunities should be taken as they are presented but, if in doubt, hold back.

Remember that **YOUR** safety is ultimately **YOUR OWN** responsibility.

THESE GUIDELINES ARE NOT INTENDED TO REPLACE THE HIGHWAY CODE. RIDERS SHOULD ADOPT THESE GUIDELINES AND APPLY THEM AS REQUIRED IN GROUP RIDING SITUATIONS.

Ride Safe Ride Free and Enjoy!

The Road Captains

Sandy Scott (Head Road Captain).

Frank McGregor (Head Road Captain).

John Naples.

Chris MacPhee.

Ross Jamieson