

Rider Education Report

With the return of favorable weather, most of us have gotten back to riding. Many of us like to ride in groups, enjoying the hobby we love with others of like mind. Group motorcycle riding is a philosophy that emphasizes a blend of safety, communication, and camaraderie while simultaneously requiring riders to be aware of their surroundings, to maintain proper spacing, and to communicate effectively. It is about riding as a team, where everyone relies on and respects each other to ensure a safe and enjoyable experience.

Here are some important points of group motorcycle riding philosophy:

Safety: proper spacing, staggered formations, and awareness of road conditions.

Communication: hand signals and CB/Bluetooth communication to alert other riders about changes in speed, direction, or potential hazards.

Responsibility: realizing that each rider is responsible for their own safety and the safety of the others in the group.

Respect: acknowledging and collaborating with the leader, the group, and other road users.

Having fun: emphasizing the shared experience and camaraderie of riding together, while maintaining safety and respect.

Group riding is an active, constantly changing, and dynamic event. Conditions on the road are always in flux due to traffic, road conditions, actions from other users, and natural occurrences such as weather and animal activity. This requires a foundation of trust among the participants in the ride. Group riding does not excuse the rider from sound judgement or safe practices. Each rider is responsible for his own decisions, regardless of the group dynamic.

There are several ways each rider can provide the respect and consideration he expects from the others in the group. It is important to maintain lane position especially in tight turns and in traffic. Riders on the inside of a right-hand turn should try their best to stay on the right side of the road, especially when turning from a stop, as at an intersection. At stop signs and traffic lights, the group should collapse together, with each rider moving up next to the person ahead. Proper lane position will normally allow enough room for a bike and a trike to stop next to each other. Close formation at a stop allows the group to get through the intersection in less time, reducing the exposure of all the riders to cross traffic and left turning vehicles.

Remember that your actions have consequences. Every time you brake (for an obstacle or entering a turn), accelerate, or decelerate, you immediately affect ALL of the riders behind you. Any sudden action you make will require a sudden reaction from ALL of the other riders. Always do your best and signal your intentions well ahead to avoid causing panic among those riders who are following you.

Be aware of the differences in the vehicles in your group. Generally, if a vehicle participating in the group ride has less than three wheels, that vehicle will have a great deal of difficulty staying upright without rider input. And the slower that vehicle is moving, the more rider input is required. Group rides these days usually consist of more multi-wheeled vehicles than two-wheeled motorcycles. Many of the operators of these multi-wheeled vehicles were skilled riders of two wheels. Maybe this describes you. Do you remember riding on two wheels and the effort it took to keep the bike balanced and smooth during slow speed operation?

We all know we should ride our own ride, and we are responsible for our own actions. But this does not mean that you can do what you want without regard to the effects on other road users. We all have responsibility to each other when we interact on the highway, regardless of the setting. Using the highway is a privilege, not a right. Be respectful and patient so we all get along and arrive alive.

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