

Harley Owners Group®



Rules of the Road

RULES OF THE ROAD AND GROUP RIDES WITH THE ROCKET CITY CHAPTER HARLEY OWNERS GROUP

The intent of this handbook is to help familiarize the Rocket City Chapter membership with some important rules of the road and the methods adopted by our Road Captains (**RC**) to safely conduct group rides.

When riding in a group or “pack”, it is essential to understand the techniques used to change lanes and keep the group together

As you read this material, you will find it contains easy-to-follow, common sense instructions that must be followed to ensure the safety of the group.

After you have read this handbook and understand it, there is but one thing left to do: Come on out and put to use this information – ride in a group of Harleys.

Your Road Captains are out there to help. Your questions and comments are always welcomed.

Ride Safe and Have Fun!

Group riding is basically a combination of two (2) different games: “Follow the Leader” and “Simon Says”.

“FOLLOW THE LEADER”

A group ride should appear to be one large body of motorcycles, held together by an invisible “spine” that holds each motorcycle even with the bike next to it and spaced a safe distance behind the ones in front of it. Safety is our main concern. Bikes should be spaced close enough to discourage vehicles from entering the group, yet allow enough room to stop in an emergency. Under normal conditions, bikes should ride in a staggered formation, one second from the person to your left or right front; this gives you a two second following distance from the person directly in front of you. As the group “flows” through traffic and corners, the “spine” will flex to the left or right, but continue to hold the bikes together and following in the tracks of the bike before it. If a mistake, such as a missed turn or wrong exit is made, stay in formation until the mistake can be safely corrected.

“SIMON SAYS”

Communication throughout the group is limited to the use of hand signals (**see page 6**). Everyone must know and use them. Be sure all hand signals are passed to the rider behind you with your left hand.

Exception: Road hazards to the right of the column you are in should be pointed to with your right hand or foot.

Remember that we do not own the road. If a situation occurs when you must let a car enter the group, be sure to communicate your intention to the riders next to and behind you.

When a lane change is signaled, do not move until the front Road Captain does. Sweep riders will pull out and block the lane before group lane change occurs.

Follow front Road Captains!

To avoid confusion, all riders will pull into destination. If you do not wish to stay, leave only after all the bikes are parked.

When “Simon Says” pass a hand signal back... DO IT!

A TYPICAL GROUP RIDE

Arrive with a full tank of gas. If you plan to leave the group between destinations, tell the Road Captain now!

1. Safety officer explains “rules of the road” to persons riding with us for the first time.
2. **RC** announces destination and Road Captain Assistants (**RCA**).
3. Riders line up staggered behind lead **RC**.
4. Group exits parking lot in formation.

The hand signals on page 6 are the ones most commonly used. All hand signals must be passed back.

- Hand signals must be passed back
- Hand must be held high overhead.
- When a rider in front of you signals a road hazard, point whether you see it or not.
- A helmet on the side of the road means help is needed.

CHAPTER GROUP RIDES

These rules have been compiled from multiple sources. They have been tried, tested and found to be a safe method for group riding.

1. Riders who choose to follow in a group must do just that, follow. If a mistake is made, follow in a group until it can be safely corrected. Example: missed turn or missed exit.
2. Each signal is passed back by every rider so you can be sure everyone is informed.
3. Each rider has a responsibility to be aware of all vehicles around him or her. Maintain a minimum 2-second following distance to the vehicle in front of you. Increase as weather or road conditions dictate.
4. Ride by these rules or don't ride with the group. **"Safety is our number one priority."**
5. Riding in an unsafe manner within the group will not be tolerated, i.e., drunk driving, drugs, hot-dogging. **The safety of the group is everyone's responsibility.** It is your obligation to report the non-compliance of any group-riding rule to a **RC** ASAP.
6. Novice riders should check with the RC for instructions on where to ride in the group. They may be placed near the front or rear of the pack depending on roads, weather, and the group composition.
7. Bikes will line up and maintain staggered formation unless otherwise signaled by **RC** or road conditions require single file. Side by side riding is not permitted.
8. When single file formation is signaled or necessary, the bike on the left will go in front of the bike on the right.
9. When a rider drops out of formation, readjust your position to fill the gap created. Do not pass another rider in the same lane

10. We don't own the road. If you decide to let a car pass through the group, communicate your intentions to the rider next to you and behind you.
11. All bikes will be out of the mainstream of traffic while parking at a destination. Maintain formation while parking and upon departure.
12. On breakdowns, only the sweep rider and ride buddy will assist the troubled bike. The rest of the group will continue on.
13. When turning left into a destination, each rider is individually responsible for crossing the oncoming traffic lane safely. Make sure riders ahead of you are clear so you aren't blocking the traffic lane.
14. Everyone pulls into the destination at the end of the run, maintaining formation. If you do not wish to stay, leave only after all bikes are parked.
15. Maintain a steady pace with as few drastic speed changes or sudden moves as possible.
16. Ride as if your Harley is as long as the entire group. Follow the leader.
17. Sweep Riders will pull out and block the lane before a group lane change occurs. When a lane change is signaled, do not move until the rider in front of you does. Follow the leader.
18. All infractions should be reported to Road Captains.
19. All sidecars or trikes ride at the rear of the group.
20. If you leave your place in the group, re-enter at the rear, in front of rear Road Captains.

Rocket City Chapter #1535 Harley Owners Group will not be held responsible for accidents, injuries or thefts. Each individual will be responsible for any violation of the law. Ride at your own risk.

LINE-UP RULES

1. Bikes will line up and maintain staggered formation. Trikes or sidecars are tire only vehicles permitted to ride in the center of the lane.
2. A full tank of gas at the start of the run is a must.
3. If a rider is pulling out of the group before reaching the destination, he must let the Road Captain know prior to the ride beginning.
4. Line up in formation directly behind the lead Road Captain.
5. The entire group will be in formation before the group leaves.
6. Make sure all questions about the ride are answered prior to departure.

BREAKDOWNS

The sweep rider and the ride buddy are the only persons to stop with a breakdown. The group will either pull over at a safe location or continue to their destination as determined by the **RC**.

ACCIDENTS

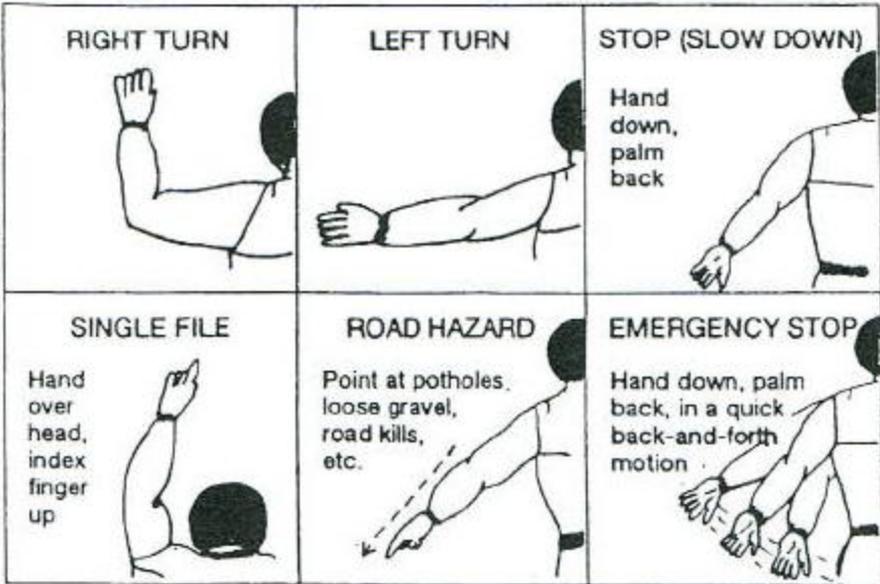
In the event of an accident, follow the **RC** to a safe parking area. **Don't "panic stop" and rush to the scene**, as this will only cause more problems. Make sure your bike is in a safe location out of traffic before dismounting. Listen to the **RC/RCA** for instructions on securing the accident scene; they will instruct you to direct traffic, call 911, or perform other tasks to ensure group safety. Do not move an injured person or remove their helmet.

BIKE SECURITY

Everyone who participates in the run may be asked to watch the bikes for a 15-minute "shift", in pairs, as conditions require.

BEING PULLED OVER BY THE POLICE

If the police stop the group, the **RC** will lead the group to a safe stop. Stay in formation and on your bike. Let the officer come to you. The **RC** is the only person who should approach the officer and identify him/herself.



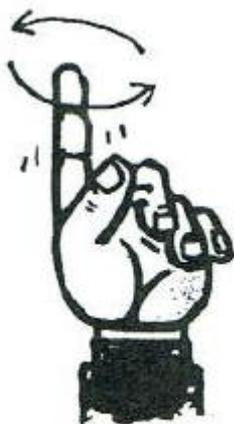
HAND SIGNALS

- The above hand signals are the ones most commonly used.
- All hand signals must be passed back through the “pack”!
- Hand signals must be used along with turn signals.
- Hand must be held high over your head.
- When a rider in front of you signals a road hazard, point whether or not you see it.

RIDE SAFE AND HAVE FUN

Remember

Varying speed and following distance should be a group action, not an individual action. There are some things we must sacrifice as individuals to participate as a group. The first of which is independence of individual riding. All movements must be done as a group. Ensure safe riding by constantly forming a smooth group riding technique.



Start 'em up!

**Special Thanks to
The Motown HOG Chapter for
Their contributions to this booklet**