

GROUP RIDING

Mark Welch — Safety Officer



Greetings, fellow riders!

Last month, I wrote about signing up for emergency contact information on your driver license and encouraging your family to do the same. I thought I would put that plug here for those of you who may have forgotten.

This month, I want to talk a bit about group riding and provide a few tips to make the ride safer and enjoyable for everyone. So here are a few pointers:

- ◆ Arrive early. It will give you a chance to socialize while everyone assembles and attend to any “pressing business” you may have to do before going on a long ride.
- ◆ Everyone knows to arrive with a full tank of gas, so I am not going to mention that.
- ◆ When the road captain begins the pre-ride briefing, please stop all side conversations and provide them your attention. Yes, you may have heard the brief multiple times, you may have even given the speech yourself! But we owe it to our captains to give them our attention because they have put a lot of effort into the ride to make certain you have an enjoyable experience.
- ◆ Follow the bike in front of you. (Except if they drive off a bridge. Don’t do that.) This includes lane changes. The gunner will move into the lane indicated when signaled. The rest of the group should wait for the captain to change lanes and then the riders follow him.
- ◆ When I wrote “signal” it signaled me to talk about signals. Make certain that you pass them back even if you forgot what they mean. And over-emphasize the gesture. I have been on rides where the person ahead of me signaled using only their hand from the wrist down. I could not understand what the signal was many times.
- ◆ Follow the bike in front of you. (No, I didn’t forget I already said that.) When turning off a two-lane roadway onto a four-lane roadway, I have seen some of our members move into the inside lane on their own while the rest of the group was in the outside lane. This caused a lot of confusion as members between them and the captain were uncertain about which lane they should be in for the ride.

- ◆ We ride in a staggered formation. When something occurs, such as a rider falling out of formation, you should adjust your lane position accordingly. Two seconds behind the bike in front of you and one second behind the bike to your left or right.
- ◆ The image below shows pointing out an obstacle with your hand if it is on the left side and your foot if it is on the right side. The truth is, it doesn’t matter if you use your hand or foot just as long as you point out the obstacle.

We are fortunate to be a part of a highly active HOG chapter with many opportunities to have fun. Our road captains work hard to make those opportunities happen safely. So, when we meet this Saturday, find a road captain and show them your appreciation!

ATTGAT,
MARK

