

SAFETY OFFICER

By Chuck Nettles

Hogsafety4755@gmail.com



Tallahassee HOG GROUP RIDING (Part 2)

This is part 2 of group riding with the Tallahassee Harley Owners Group. This month we will focus on intersections, stop signs and red lights, left and right turns, and entering and exiting interstates and freeways.

INTERSECTIONS:

While groups of motorcycles have a visibility advantage over single bikes, intersections are still the area of highest risk-approach with caution, with riders proceeding through only when it's safe and legal. Blocking an intersection without permission and a proper escort is almost always illegal. And always put personal safety ahead of staying with the group.

STOP SIGNS AND RED LIGHTS:

Line up side-by-side, two-by-two, at the stop. At STOP signs, proceed through the intersections two at a time, returning to the staggered formation as you pull away. If the intersection is clear of other vehicles-or if you can be very confident (through eye contact and hand gestures) that other vehicles know what you're doing, it's sometimes okay to proceed in larger groups. But do so only with great care!

LEFT OR RIGHT TURNS:

- Turns At A Protected Intersection With A Left-Turn Arrow: Tighten the formation to allow as many riders as possible to pass quickly. Don't ride side-by-side; make the turn single-file or in a tight, staggered formation.
- Turns At A Protected Intersection With NO Left-Turn Arrow: Proceed with caution single-file, with each rider proceeding through the intersection only when it's safe and legal.
- At An Intersection With A Two-Way Stop (Traffic Light Or STOP Signs: While waiting at a traffic light, close up the formation and wait side-by-side. However, when the light turns green, riders should pull away one by-one and re-establish formation.
- At An Intersection With A YIELD Sign: Turn your head to check for traffic before merging.

INTERSTATES AND FREEWAYS:

When merging onto a multi-lane freeway, do so single-file, and go into staggered riding only after entering the traffic flow. It's the responsibility of the lead rider to accelerate to and maintain a safe merging speed-and the responsibility of those following to keep up. Remember that other traffic may separate your group when you merge. If this happens, take your time re-grouping; don't be so hurried to reestablish your formation that you compromise anyone's safety. Often, a good idea is to slow down a little (staying in the right lane) and encourage the other vehicle to pass, waving the driver around if necessary.

At cruising speeds, the ride leader is advised to stay alert for merging issues as the group approaches on-ramps. If your group is in the right lane, consider moving the group a lane to the left (with enough notice and good communication) when approaching a merging situation.

Exiting the freeway should also be done single file. Adjust your following distances accordingly as you exit-though remember that your following distance (measured in seconds) will automatically increase as you slow down, even if you keep the same linear distance from the bike ahead of you. Every rider should use turn indicators; the lead and sweep riders should also use biker hand signals.

BE SAFE!