

**Motorcycle Safety
And
Group Riding**



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Introduction:

Philippians 2 (NKJV)

¹ Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, ² fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. ³ Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. ⁴ Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.

When Paul wrote this in 61 A.D to the Philippians he was trying to both motivate and encourage them. If the Philippians church was to succeed, and the gospels preached, then everyone needed to be on the same page and like minded. If they could accomplish this they would enjoy the true peace, love and enjoyment intended through Jesus.

That sentiment is still valid today and is a driving force for having this course. We've all been on rides where there was little to no communication, confusion, and individuals "doing their own thing" or "the way it should be done in their eyes" while in the group. All of these types of issues strip the enjoyment from the ride, cause tension and hurt feelings, and ultimately make people not want to ride with the group. Essentially the group loses its focus, purpose and potential.

The Lieutenants and Riderz leadership have worked hard on this course with some very simple goals:

- Get everyone on the same page (Like Minded) on basic motorcycle safety items and group riding
- Increase the "fun" level and enjoyment of riding in a group and showing off for the Lord
- Prepare for the growth the Lord is preparing to bless the Riderz with
- Get everyone to and from the event(s) safely

The information contained in this packet is not meant to be the end all / be all of motorcycle safety or group riding. This is simply a starting point that gets everyone on the same page and is flexible to change or be modified as we grow and change as a ministry.

If you have any questions on this information don't hesitate to ask the Road Captain or a Lieutenant. If you're a prospect, ask your sponsor to go over this with you and help you get some practical experience by riding together.

I. Basic Motorcycle Safety:

As a motorcycle rider there are several risks to you when you're out on the road. Your motorcycle shouldn't be one of them. The importance of your bike's condition is multiplied several times over when you're riding in a group. Your failure to repair faulty brakes, bad tires, or properly adjust your drive chain / belt can lead to serious injuries and even death if the bike fails during a ride causing you, and everyone behind you, to go down. The Motorcycle Safety Foundation (MSF) has created a comprehensive checklist that you should run on a weekly basis to make sure your bike is up to snuff. If you aren't a frequent rider you should run this checklist each time you get on your bike. The MSF calls this checklist the T-CLOCK system: (Please See the T-CLOCK Attachment)

- **T — Tires & Wheels**
- **C — Controls**
- **L — Lights**
- **O — Oil**
- **C — Chassis**
- **K — Kickstand**

While this is a great system that walks you through each of the major components of the bike to ensure that you can catch things before they become an issue it can be somewhat time consuming. There are several good habits that you can get yourself into that can dramatically reduce your risk.

1. As you walk up to your bike to start it look at the following:

- a. Fluid drops or puddles
- b. Do the tires look low (Its best if you inflate them to the proper PSI and then get a visual as it sits when parked)
- c. Do the tires have tread

2. When you turn the key on:

- a. Does the headlight and Tail light come on (On most Harley's the High Beam indicator will come on when the switch is in the Low Beam position and the bulb is burnt out)
- b. Do the running lights come on (Most bikes will only have the two in front but some also use the rear signals as running / brake lights)
- c. Do the indicator lights come on
- d. When you pull in the clutch to start the bike does it operate freely
- e. As you pull the choke (Non Fuel Injected Bikes) and pump the throttle do both operate smoothly

3. While the bike is warming up and you're putting your gear on

- a. Are there any unusual noises
- b. Test the brakes,
 - Does the lever and pedal move freely and have a good "feel"
 - Do the brake light(s) all function
- c. Test the signals and hazard lights if equipped. (Usually if you have a signal burnt out the indicator light on the dash will either flash erratically or not at all)
- d. Honk the horn

All of the things listed above can be done in the span of 5-10 minutes which is about the amount of time it takes your bike to warm up before you leave home.

The Road Captain and Lieutenants are responsible for making sure bikes that participate in the ride won't jeopardize the group. Due to the number of bikes at the event they may or may not be able to do a "hands on" check. They begin checking your bike as you pull into the parking lot.

- 1. When you pull into the parking lot**
 - a. Is your headlight on
 - b. Are your front marker lights on
 - c. Are there any strange noises coming from your bike
- 2. As you pull up to park**
 - a. Is your rear light on
 - b. Does your brake light work
 - c. Are there any unusual brake noises (squeals, grinding, etc.)
 - d. Are there any unusual engine noises (rattles, clanking, air leaks)
- 3. When you park**
 - a. Does the kickstand make unusual noise when you put it down
 - b. Does the bike sit securely on the kickstand
 - c. Do the tires look low
 - d. Do the tires have enough tread
 - e. Are the brake pads good

If the Road Captain or one of the Lieutenants finds issues or concerns with your bike they will pull you aside and talk to you prior to the ride. This is not meant to make you feel or look bad. They need to make you aware of items so you can fix them. You won't be asked to not participate in the ride but, depending on the severity of the problem, you may be asked to ride in the rear of the pack just ahead of the drag bike so the group as a whole isn't at risk. We understand that for some, finances are very tight and often times motorcycle repairs are at the bottom of the list. We will have a section on our "Needs List" web page to address things such as tires, brakes, and oil to help lighten the burden.

II. Group Riding Basics:

Who's In Charge?

The Road Captain, or the Lieutenant leading the ride, is the ranking officer during the course of the ride even if the President and Vice-President are present. In the event of a problem during the trip such as a need to modify the route, being pulled over by police, or other issues on the ride, the Road Captain or Leading Lieutenant is responsible. The President or Vice-President will take control of the situation if it involves another ministry / club or if it's something that affects the Riderz as a whole

Basic Etiquette (Common Courtesy):

1. **Be On Time:** Being late is generally considered disrespectful because it sends the message that your time is more important than anyone else waiting at the starting point. Our calendar lists the Kickstands Up / Leaving Promptly (KSU/LP) times for all rides. That is the time the ride leaves NOT the time for you to be arriving.
2. **Be Fueled Up:** This falls into the same category of disrespectfulness as being late. It also causes delays and aggravation for those on the ride.

NOTE:

It's understood that sometimes life happens and you may be running late or forgot to fuel up. If this happens call the Road Captain, because we want everyone to participate. The ride will still leave at the KSU/LP time but the Road Captain will be able to let you know the route and where you can meet up with the group.

Common Terms:

Lead Bike: This person rides in the first position in the group/pack (in the left track of the lane) and relays information to all other riders via hand signals. The Lead Bike determines the group's direction, speed, choice lane and formation. He/she often must make quick navigation decisions in the face of road hazards, changes in road surface conditions, poor signage, construction and other obstacles while maintaining control of his/her bike. They must make these decisions quickly and without hesitation at the same time as relaying information to the rest of the group/pack. It is possible to have more than one Lead Bike depending on the size of the group/pack.

Cut-Off Bike: Depending on the size of the pack this position may or may not be used. This person rides directly behind the last pack holder when riding in formation. The purpose is to assist the Road Captain or Lead Lieutenant in managing a large pack by being in the center of the pack.

Drag Bike: This person rides in the last position of the group/pack. He/she must secure a lane for the group/pack during lane changes into faster traffic (move first to block oncoming traffic) and close the door (move to block passing traffic) when a lane is lost in a merging lane situation. Usually this is the most experienced rider in the group because the Drag Bike is the rider who is responsible for stopping to assist any rider in the group who has mechanical trouble, loses control, or drops out of a ride for some other reason. The Drag Bike should be prepared to render aid to a downed or disabled rider in the group. If at all possible the Drag Bike should have a co-rider who can assist with traffic control if a serious problem arises. For each Lead Bike on a ride there will be a Drag Bike or Tail Gunner.

Cage: Any non-motorcycle

Cager: Anyone driving or riding in a Cage.

Chase Vehicle: This is any car (cage) traveling with the group. They will follow the group and may assist the drag bike in freeing up lanes when entering or exiting a freeway or while underway. Depending on the length of the ride the Chase Vehicle may also be towing a trailer and carrying tools and fuel.

Group Parking: A formation in which all bikes in the group/pack follow the Lead Bike in a single file line into a parking lot, making a u-turn such that they can line up next to each other in the space available with the rear of their bikes against the curb or edge of the lot and the front tires pointing outwards.

Slot: Any position in the group/pack in the right track of the lane farthest from oncoming traffic.

Track: The zone of a lane in which a rider maintains his/her position in the group/pack. A lane consists of five tracks: the left track is the 2nd zone from the left, the middle track is the 3rd zone (Generally not used) and the right track is the 4th zone. The 1st and 5th tracks are to the far left or right and serve as margins. A rider may need to use these areas to vary his/her path of travel as required due to a road hazard or incursion. When departing from a stop, the rider in the left track (Normally the Lead Bike) usually pulls out first and leads the group/pack back in to a staggered position.

Group Riding Formations:

Parade/Two Abreast: A formation in which all bikes in the group/pack ride two abreast. This is most commonly used only in heavy traffic on the freeway or when riding through cities. It IS NOT the normal riding position at freeway speeds for anyone other than the Lead Bikes and Drag Bikes.

Staggered: This is the standard, normal, riding position when traveling at freeway speeds. This formation allows for the most reaction time in case of an emergency. A formation of bikes which alternates from left to right in the lane track. Bikes in the group/pack generally maintain a minimum interval of two seconds travel time between bikes in the same track and one second travel time between each bike in the group/pack. In a staggered formation a rider still commands and may ride in the entire width of his/her lane if needed. Although the Drag Bike may ride in either track in the lane, it is preferable for him/her to be on the left side so they have the same visibility as the Lead Bike.

Single File: A formation in which all bikes ride in the far right track of the lane.

Common Group Riding Problems:

Poor or Not Using Hand/Foot Signals

Failure to use, or poorly using, signals can cause confusion and unsafe conditions for the group. These signals are used to notify riders behind you of obstacles in the road, upcoming turns, or formation changes. It is your responsibility to watch for these signals and to correctly relay them to the riders behind you. Below are descriptions of standard hand signals.

Pointing to the Tank - No matter what your reason, pointing to the tank on your bike will tell everyone that you need to stop as soon as possible. This may be because you need gas, to make a —potty stop|| because you are having a mechanical problem, crisis with confidence or for any other reason at all. Such a signal should be relayed throughout the group. If possible, the Lead Bike may orchestrate a stop by the entire group. If not, the affected bike can count on the Drag Bike to stop with him and to try to help.

Back Off - Palm of left hand shown to group, pushing motion toward rear of bike.

Ready to Ride – Right hand extended with the —Thumbs Up|| sign high enough to be visible to the Lead Bike.

Single-File Formation – One finger points to the sky on top of the helmet.

Slow Down – Left arm is held out straight, then goes up and down.

Smoky Alert (Police or emergency vehicles) – Hand taps top of helmet several times.

Speed Up or Close Ranks in Formation – Fully extend left arm out to side with palm up and motion up and down.

Staggered Formation – First finger and little finger point to the sky. (Also known as the —Hook _em Horns|| sign.)

U-Turn – Left hand makes circle in air over head.

Exception / Note:

Under normal circumstances, the Lead Bike will choose a lane, will determine the speed at which the riders are to travel and will suggest the formation which makes maneuvers the most safe. The Lead Bike also navigates the group. However, if a rider is inexperienced or is unsure of their ability to complete a maneuver as indicated by the Lead Bike he / she may do what is necessary to ride within their comfort / safe zone. This may be calling for single file formation behind them or signaling bikes behind them to back off until the maneuver is completed



Start your engines



Stop



Go ahead and pass me



Bikers ready



Hazards on the road



Don't pass me



Stop your engines



Turn off your turn signals



Single riding



Left turn



Slow down



Staggered riding



Right turn



Speed up



Time for a pit stop

Inattentive Riding

When riding it's important to have your head in what you're doing. If your mind is wandering, or overly focused, on things such as work, family issues, or the awesome scenery you aren't able to focus on what's going on with the ride, the group or your motorcycle. It only takes a split second to miss the signal of an obstacle in the road before you're on top of the obstacle. That split second can be the difference between a great day or tragedy. Enjoy the ride and have fun but pay attention.

Rubber Band (Yo-Yo) effect

Reaction time for a motorcyclist when confronted with an unexpected threat is, on average, about one second. If the need to react is anticipated (such as when a turn has been announced), then riders can usually react within about half a second after the bike ahead begins to react. When a group of riders change speeds very gradually, however, it usually takes two or three seconds for a rider to recognize this and begin to change his speed to maintain his position in the group.

This doesn't sound like much time, but experienced group riders manage their risks reasonably well with a minimum one-second interval between each bike and a minimum two-second interval between bikes that are traveling in the same track. When the group has more than six bikes in it however, gradual changes in speed within the group can become tricky.

When a Lead Bike begins to accelerate, the second bike doesn't instantly start to travel at the faster rate. Instead, a gap grows between them while the second bike is reacting – and it continues to grow until the second bike is fully up to the increased stable speed of the Lead Bike. Clearly, once the speeds are the same, the gap will remain the same size. However, since most groups prefer to keep a one-second minimum interval between bikes (two seconds between bikes in the same track), the new gap caused by the Lead Bike's acceleration may be larger than is desired. When this occurs, the second bike must go faster than the first one for a brief time in order to —catch up||.

If we assume that the Lead Bike speeds up from 60 to 70 mph over a period of two seconds, the second bike will have to ride at 75 mph for two seconds (after his reaction time passes) in order to close the gap. Then he will take another second to decelerate back to 70 mph to create a gap of the proper size. If there were only two bikes in the group, this example is easy to follow. When the group is larger, and the bikes involved are riding further back in the pack, the —rubber band|| effect can be especially dangerous to all bikes from the middle of the group to the Drag Bike.

For example, the third bike in the group has this problem: About two seconds after the second bike has begun to accelerate, the third bike responds. Now, however, the second bike is moving at 75 mph rather than at 70 mph like the Lead Bike. The third bike must use even more effort to catch up to the second bike than the second bike did to match his speed to the Lead Bike's new speed, if the gap is to stay relatively constant. He will have to move at 75 mph for four seconds, not two, to catch up. The fourth bike will have to accelerate to 80 mph.

(If you're like most people, you will need to read this paragraph seven times in order for it to make any sense at all to you. If you still don't understand, please see the Road Captain or one of the Lieutenants.)

In a group of only six motorcycles, the last one will find the gap between himself and the fifth bike has grown to 143 feet before it begins to close, once he starts to speed up, given these average reaction times. And it will be at least 11 seconds after the Lead Bike first began to accelerate before the sixth bike does so.

Now, imagine what happens in the group if while this is taking place, the Lead Bike must apply his brakes! This rubber-band effect becomes extremely important if the Lead Bike happens to make an abrupt and major change of speed at certain critical moments, such as when approaching a sharp turn or a tricky curve. Those who ride as Lead Bike or near the lead bike for their group should be aware of the importance of avoiding sudden changes in speed if at all possible so as to reduce the risks to those following.

Reducing the Rubber Band effect:

1. Lead Bike changes speed more gradually
2. All riders watch farther ahead than just the bike immediately in front of them in order to notice and to react quicker to changes in speed.
3. All riders restrain the impulse to —crank it up|| in order to quickly re-establish normal spacing.
4. Lead Bike does not increase speed within 15 seconds of entering a curve which may require braking or some slowing down to maneuver safely.
5. All riders abandon the one-second spacing rule when riding twisties.

“Doing Your Own Thing”

There is an expression that says “Ride Your Own Ride”. This DOES NOT mean you can ride however you want or in whatever formation / position you want when you’re riding in the group. The expression means never ride out of your comfort zone or beyond your skill level. When you are riding with the group you are to follow the direction of the Road Captain or Lead Lieutenant concerning speed, lane changes, and formations.

III. The Ride:

Riding in a group, large or small can be an awesome experience when everyone is working together. There is nothing quite like seeing the line of bikes in front of, and behind, you. There is a strange sense of peace as the group seems to move along with one fluid movement and purpose.

When a group in sync passes people who know little or nothing about motorcycles it does make an impression and the majority of time that impression is positive. They may not know what’s going on but they can feel the power and many times it peaks their curiosity and they strike up conversations. With us, wearing God’s word it is a very real on the spot way to share the power and peace of Jesus.

Also, when this group arrives or exits an event in the presence of other Motorcycle Ministries or secular clubs we are instantly taken seriously and doors are opened.

Correctly riding in a group should be treated with the same importance and pride as wearing your vest. Both go to speak of unity and purpose. One trick that has been known to help people ride better in a group is to “partner up” with another rider. This means that you and this person decide to ride together regardless of where you may fall in the pack. This not only helps you get comfortable riding with other people but, overtime you come to know how they ride. This lets you spend less time worrying about the “other rider” and more time on riding, and enjoying, your own ride.

Who’s In Charge?

Of the overall ride:

As mentioned earlier, the Road Captain, or the Lieutenant leading the ride, is the ranking officer during the course of the ride even if the President and Vice-President are present. Should there be an issue with parking attendants, law enforcement, etc the Road Captain / Lead Lieutenant will handle the situation. If there is an incident or situation concerning another ministry or motorcycle club the President or Vice-President (If present) will take control.

Of keeping the formation organized and safe:

The overall responsibility for safety and staying in formation lays with the Road Captain or Lead Lieutenant. However, it is ultimately your responsibility to keep things safe and to ride in the formation guidelines of the group.

Riding Order:

Just as in the secular world our pack has a very specific ride order, especially when going to an event. When the group is out for a “fun ride to nowhere” the Road Captain or Lieutenant may switch up the order to allow people to experience different positions and responsibilities. Having a specific riding order is a stumbling block for some people because they view it as putting one person (or group of people) ahead of the other. There is a scriptural basis for having this order:

1 Corinthians 9:19-23 (NIV)

¹⁹Though I am free and belong to no man, I make myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible. ²⁰To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law. ²¹To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law), so as to win those not having the law. ²²To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some. ²³I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings.

This scripture isn't about becoming Jewish, overly law abiding, or becoming outlaws. It is about being humble and learning to communicate with a variety of people and groups exactly where they are at. Much in the same way Jesus meets us where we are at.

Because we use motorcycles as a tool and an ice breaker to share the gospel to motorcycle clubs and 1%'rs we have to be able to communicate with them. The primary means of communication is through mutual respect. You gain respect by the way you conduct yourself when riding, meeting someone, and the pride you take in your colors (for us it's a Godly pride that we've been chosen to wear God's word on our back).

Once we've gained, and given that respect, we are invited into areas that are inaccessible to others and we are able to plant seeds and share Jesus in ways others can't grasp. That is a true gift of this ministry, and a fulfillment of the great commission to make disciples of All nations.

Failure to give and show mutual respect not only endangers individual members of The Way Riderz, it also sends the message that we aren't serious and/or don't know what we're doing. If that happens, any chance for communication and sharing are lost.

For me personally, I don't see it as bowing down to lawlessness. I see it as opening a path for the Holy Spirit to reach into the darkness and get a hold of some people, even if it's only one. I also think it's pretty cool to suit up, show up, look sharp, and show off for the Lord.

Basic Riding Order

1. **Lead Bikes** - Road Captain and Lead Lieutenant
2. **Positions of Honor** – Anyone we want to show respect or honor to (Founders of The Way Ministries or The Way Riderz, or invited guests. If we have members of a 3 Piece Patch MC they are also offered these spots)
3. **The Way Riderz Sacramento** –These officers include the officers and their spouses either “two up” on one bike or on individual bikes. If the spouse isn't a patch holder and chooses to ride their own bike they will ride in the Guests / Hang Arounds area of the group.
4. **The Way Riderz Sacramento** – These are FULL Patch Holders (Center Patch, Rocker, and MM's)
5. **Cut-Off Bike (If Used)** – This will be a full patch holder of The Way Riderz Sacramento and may or may not be a Lieutenant
6. **Full Patch Holders of The Way Riderz Chapters** – Nevada County, Wisconsin, etc
7. **Senior Prospects The Way Riderz Sacramento** – These are prospects with their rocker and MM's
8. **The Way Riderz National Members** – Blue Patches
9. **The Way Ministries Street Patches** – Blue Or Yellow, No Rocker and No MM's
10. **Guests and Hang Arounds** – Any formal Hang Around or others who want to go on the ride with us
11. **Drag Bike(s)** – These will generally be Lieutenants however; the Road Captain or Lead Lieutenant can ask any member to act as the drag bike.

Ride Order Diagram:

Road Captain	Lieutenant	PARADE – LEAD BIKES	
Honored / Invited Guests or MC Guests		STAGGERED	
<u>The Way Riderz Sacramento Officers</u>			
Officer and Spouse Separate Bikes:	Officer and Spouse SAME BIKE:		
President and First Lady Vice-President and Spouse Secretary and Spouse Treasurer and Spouse SGT At Arms and Spouse	President Vice – President Secretary Treasurer SGT At Arms Lieutenant		
Full Patch Holders The Way Riderz Sacramento	Full Patch Holders The Way Riderz Sacramento		
Cut Off Bike(s)	Cut Off Bike(s)		
Full Patch Holders Visiting The Way Riderz Chapters	Full Patch Holders Visiting The Way Riderz Chapters		STAGGERED
Senior Prospects – TWR Sac (Rocker and MM’s)	Senior Prospects – TWR Sac (Rocker and MM’s)		
Prospects – TWR Sac (Rocker Only)	Prospects – TWR Sac (Rocker Only)		
National The Way Riderz	National The Way Riderz		STAGGERED
Street Patches The Way Ministries	Street Patches The Way Ministries	STAGGERED	
Guests and Hang Arouns	Guests and Hang Arouns	STAGGERED	
Lieutenant	Lieutenant	PARADE – DRAG BIKES	

RIDING ORDER NOTES:

- a. Specific riding positions for The Way Riderz Officers will be dependent on which officers are present and where they need to ride to close gaps in the front formation. The Road Captain or Lead Lieutenant will outline the riding positions during the pre-ride.
- b. If there is a particular rider who is less confident in their skills the Road Captain / Lead Lieutenant may move that person closer to them in the riding order. This is to ensure that the lead bikes keep the pack at a pace that is comfortable for everyone
- c. Because of the Rider Mentorship Program the Lead and or Drag Bikes may ask or have a non-Lieutenant Full Patch Holder to the right of the Road Captain or Drag Bike Lieutenant.

Key Positions:

1. **Lead Bikes** – Set the pace for the pack, watch for road hazards, signal any upcoming activities (turns etc.), call for formation changes (Parade, Staggered, Single File), slowing the pace of the group or pulling off at a safe location to wait for the Drag Bike and / or the person who dropped out.
2. **Cut-Off Bike (If Used)** – This position will normally be used in a large pack where it is too difficult for the lead bikes to effectively see the drag bikes. This person rides behind the patch holders, the lead bike looks for this person. If this person is still in place then the lead bikes know that everyone is Ok from them to the lead bikes. The person riding Cut-off keeps track of the drag bike. If they can see the drag bike then they know that everything is Ok from them to the drag bike. If one of the drag bikes needs to pull over with someone due to a breakdown or other situation the Cut-Off bike can let the lead bikes know by temporarily “popping” out of formation and riding up next to the Lead Bikes to relay information. Once the information is relayed the person will fall back into position.
3. **Drag Bike** – This is an extremely important position. Any rider “running drag” should be an experienced rider and be familiar with group riding safety, formations, and positions. The Drag Bike(s) are the eyes of the Road Captain to make sure that all is well. In addition to watching the pack, they are responsible for items such as blocking intersections and helping someone if they have problems during the ride. If someone has a problem or emergency during the trip that person and one drag bike will pull to the side of the road. At no time should anyone or the whole group try to pull over at once. If someone does need to drop out, the Lead Bikes will take the pack to the slow lane of the freeway; reduce speed to allow time for catch up. If the person who fell out and the drag bike are unable to catch up in a reasonable time (usually 5 – 10 miles) the Lead bikes will get off at the next safe available exit and contact the Drag Bike via cell phone to learn about the situation. If there is a chase vehicle with the pack they may also pull over with the Drag Bike. The Drag Bike will also have a route map and directions for the ride.

Preparing To Leave:

The calendar contains all of the month’s rides and events. It is constantly changing so try to check it regularly. The meeting point for all rides is Liberty Towers (LT) in front of the gym unless otherwise noted on the calendar. Each ride has a specific leave time known as the Kickstands Up / Leaving Promptly (KSU/LP). The group will be leaving at that time. Ten to Fifteen minutes before the leave time the Road Captain or Lead Lieutenant will circle everyone up for a pre-ride briefing. This IS NOT the time to get schooling on group riding. If you have questions or concerns please talk to the Road Captain or Lead Lieutenant PRIOR to the pre-ride briefing. The pre-ride briefing is meant to cover the following:

- a. General Route Directions to familiarize the riders of where they are heading
- b. Road conditions / construction if known
- c. Average speed the group will be traveling
- d. Roughly how long the ride is (time and / or mileage)
- e. Riding Positions
- f. Stops along the way (bathroom, fuel, food, etc)
- g. How long we plan on being at the event (if known)
- h. Who will be riding certain positions (Lead Bikes, Cut-Off Bike if used, Drag Bikes)

Once the pre-ride is completed the Road Captain / Lead Lieutenant will ask someone to “Pray Us Out”, after which everyone heads to their bike, fires up, and gets their gear on. The two lead bikes will assume a position in the parking lot and wait for everyone to fall into formation in their appropriate position. The pack has a specific riding order and the Road Captain and Lieutenants will make sure everyone is in the correct position. Only after everyone is in place will the pack leave. We don’t want anyone getting left in the parking lot, feel left out, or that they need to catch up to the group.

Getting Started:

Once everyone is formed up and ready to go the Road Captain / Lead Lieutenant will signal the Drag Bike to block the intersection when it is safe. Once the intersection is safely blocked the Lead Bikes will take the group out of the parking lot. Because the intersection is blocked, DO NOT STOP and look for traffic as you would when riding alone.

The pack will form up behind the Lead Bikes in the PARADE riding formation and the drag bikes will fall into position at the back of the pack. Now the fun begins and there are several basic tasks the group will have to do as a whole.

Common Group Riding Maneuvers:

Merging onto a freeway and riding on the freeway

Merging onto a freeway can be a tense, confusing, and frustrating time. As a group we will always ride in the left most lane of the freeway. Often times people feel that they need to get to that lane “at all costs” to keep the pack together. This is absolutely NOT TRUE and shouldn’t be done. When merging onto a freeway in a perfect world the drag bike would move into a lane and hold it until the group got over. They would then repeat the process until the whole group is in the left lane. Because the world isn’t perfect and we have heavy traffic and short onramps on the freeways we ride this is very impractical and unsafe to attempt.

When practical we will make sure everyone in the pack is on the freeway or in straight formation before we begin moving to the fast lane. The lead bikes, and other bikes that can safely, as well as the drag bike, will begin moving to the left most lane. Once they are there they will set a safe and reasonable speed that allows the rest of the group to safely get to the lane without having to cut off traffic, ride dangerously, or go 100 mph to catch up. When all riders are in the lane the lead bikes may ride slower than normal lane traffic. This is meant to encourage any cars (cages) that may have gotten into the group to go out and around the group. Only after the entire group is in the lane, formed up, and all cars are out of the pack will the Lead Bikes move the speed up to regular highway speeds.

Once at freeway speeds ALL bikes with the exception of the Lead Bikes and Drag Bike(s) should assume the staggered riding formation. This is the safest riding formation during highway speeds and allows each rider sufficient time to react to an emergency. When you are riding correctly in a staggered formation you should be able to see the face of the rider in front of you in their rear view mirror.

It is extremely important to maintain a tight riding formation so that cars aren’t “invited” into the formation. Cars WILL squeeze into the pack or crowd you out if they remotely feel that they can “fit”. This is an extreme danger for the pack and the situation should be avoided if at all possible. Occasionally a car will force their way into a pack. DON’T put yourself in danger by trying to prevent them. Instead treat them with extreme caution and slow your pace to keep room between you and the car. The Lead Bikes will see this happen and slow the pack down to encourage the person to go out and around the pack.

Due to lack of understanding, knowledge or disrespect you may occasionally get another motorcycle squeeze into the pack. Don’t try to “force” them out of the pack. The Drag Bike will see this happen and will come up and ask the person out of the group. If the person refuses to leave the pack then one of two things may happen:

- a. The rider will ride for awhile and then leave on their own. You should then fill the hole.
- b. The Lead Bikes may slow the pack down to a point where the rider doesn’t want to be there.

Handling the situation is the responsibility of the Drag and Lead Bikes. Do not jeopardize your ride or safety for this person.

There may be times when a regular 3 piece patch MC may come up on the pack from the rear. In the biker community those groups ride in front of 2 piece patch clubs or MM such as ours. When the Drag Bike recognizes this group they will ride up and move the pack over. If you are on the freeway follow the Drag Bike's direction concerning what lane to move to. He will then ride forward to let the Lead Bikes know what's going on. If you are on a two lane road the Drag Bike will ride up beside you and give you the Single File Signal. You should move to the right most portion of the lane to clear a path for them. They often ride hard and fast and WILL split lanes on the yellow line between you and on-coming traffic. Moving to the right and allowing them space reduces the possibility an accident in the pack.

The staggered position should be maintained unless the lead bikes call for a change, road conditions call for a change (staggered to single file), or an obstacle in the road. If for some reason a gap or "hole" in the formation should form in front of you, move forward to fill the gap. No person should be riding "solo" in the pack inviting a car in.

There are several people who ride together regularly outside of Riderz events and they know and understand how the other person rides. Sometimes these people prefer to ride parade whenever they are riding. This is fine when riding by themselves, but when they are in a group doing this can throw off and endanger the pack as a whole.

For Example:

- The Lead Bikes have called for a staggered formation. This team, or group of people, choose to ride parade. The people behind them are now confused about what the correct riding formation should be. They may or may not try to compensate and the confusion continues to grow the further back in the pack you go.
- Same situation as above but now there's an obstacle in the road such as a piece of shredded tire from a semi. Those riders in the correct staggered position ahead of these people are able to safely navigate the obstacle. When the riders in parade formation reach the obstacle they have nowhere to go to avoid the obstacle or have to over react quickly to avoid the obstacle. The riders behind them now need to react to both the obstacle AND the erratic riding of the people riding parade. Either of these actions can cause an accident in the group riding parade or in the riders behind them. It's a lose lose situation for everyone.

If you are one of these types of people who insist on riding parade no matter what, don't be surprised if the Road Captain / Lead Lieutenant ask you to ride just ahead of the Drag Bike so the whole pack isn't endangered.

When traveling down the freeway you may see the Drag Bike ride to the side of the pack and back and forth from front to back. Don't be alarmed, they're just checking to make sure everything's and everyone's Ok and that there aren't any holes where a car can get in. They may also just be riding by to say hi. If they do see a hole in front of you they may ask you to move up to close the hole. If you are a husband or wife riding together they may bring someone from behind you to fill the void so you two can still ride together.

You may also see the Road Captain or Lead Lieutenant "pop out" of formation. This IS NOT a signal for the whole pack to move. The only time the whole pack will move is if the Road Captain / Lead Lieutenant has signaled a lane change and BOTH lead bikes move over. When the Road Captain or Lead Lieutenant "pops out" without a hand signal they are going to do the same thing described that the drag bike may be doing. Remember, often times the Road Captain or Lead Lieutenant will pass the lead to the other lead bike and float alongside to see how things are going and may decide to ride in the back for awhile.

One final thing to remember when riding in a group is to look for road signs. People often get focused only on the bike in front of them and begin following blindly. Riding in a group doesn't relieve you of the personal responsibility to know speed limits on upcoming curves, upcoming passing lanes, lanes that are about to end, or the freeway exit you are approaching. Knowing these things can help you adjust your speed to keep in your comfort zone, know when to tighten up so the whole group can get by in a passing lane, or be prepared for a lane change because of an upcoming exit or ending lane.

Changing lanes on the freeway

There is virtually no time (absent an emergency) when a group of riders should all move at the same time into a different lane, in regular traffic conditions. The wide gap required for a whole group to move is difficult to find in heavy traffic. When it does occur, it is an invitation for other drivers to jump in. Changing lanes needs to be approached with extreme caution.

Ideally changing lanes should go from the Drag Bike forward. The Road Captain / Lead Lieutenant should begin to get the group to the right hand exit lane at least two miles prior to the scheduled exit or stop. It should also be done one lane at a time. The distance may be more or less depending on the size of the group and the amount of traffic.

Here is how a lane change should typically work:

- a. The Road Captain / Lead Lieutenant signals a lane change.
- b. The riders relay the hand signal back but **DO NOT MOVE**
- c. The Drag Bike moves over **FIRST** to secure the lane
- d. As cars filter out of the lane past the riders in front of the Drag Bike, riders will move over. As the row of riders just ahead of the Drag Bike moves over the Drag Bike can move over and secure the next lane. The process repeats until all bikes including the lead bikes are in the correct lane.

This method prevents the possibility of cars getting into the pack because everyone is trying to get over at once. Again, remember, safety first. Don't ever rush into a maneuver such as lane change or freeway merging if it's outside your comfort level.

Closing the door

This term applies when you are riding on a road where one of the lanes is about to end. The Drag Bike moves to the lane that is about to close and the rest of the riders maintain their position. This "closes the door" on cars trying to race up and get over.

Adjusting the formation

As mentioned earlier, the Drag Bike or Road Captain / Lead Lieutenant may adjust the pack or where a person is riding. This is not a bad thing and you shouldn't take it as a personal slap. Because they are responsible for, and accountable to you, for the safety and enjoyment of the ride they will do everything to keep potential problems from coming up (holes for a car to get in, riding parade instead of staggered, etc).

Forming up on Trike or Bike with a Sidecar

Trikes and bikes with sidecars present a unique situation and can be hard to form up behind. These type of bikes will be positioned so they take up the entire span of the lane. This throws off the staggered formation for anyone behind them. If you are following a trike or bike with a sidecar form up as follows.

- **Fast Lane Riding** – Form up in the **RIGHT** portion of the lane. Everyone behind you will then resume the staggered formation based on your position.
- **Slow Lane Riding** - Form up in the **LEFT** portion of the lane. Everyone behind you will then resume the staggered formation based on your position.
- **Center Lane Riding** – It is your choice which portion of the lane you want to use to begin the stagger. Everyone behind you will then resume the staggered formation based on your position.

Exiting the freeway

Many freeway off ramps have a stop sign or stop light before turning onto the main road. As you slow from the freeway and approach the stop you should move into the parade formation when it's safe to do so. This will prevent cars from getting into the pack and will keep the group together. The lead bikes will leave the light after they see the group come together.

Intersections

Stop Signs Only

If it's safe to do so, assume the parade formation as you approach the Stop sign. The lead bikes will come to a complete stop. If the intersection permits they will wait for the Drag Bikes to come up and block the intersection. For safety reasons, blocks WILL NOT be used on intersections crossing freeways or with excessive traffic. Be aware that the Drag Bike(s) are coming up and allow them the room to get by. On some occasions one of the lead bikes may need to pull out and perform a block. If this happens, be aware that they will be coming up to get back to the lead. On intersections crossing freeways or with excessive traffic, riders should cross the intersection in small groups. The Lead Bikes will continue at a low enough speed to allow everyone to catch up. If intersection traffic is extremely heavy the Lead Bikes may pull the group over at a safe spot to allow everyone to regroup.

Signal Lights

Unless we are performing a special function with permits intersection blocks won't be used at intersections with signal lights. If the light is green as you're approaching and turns yellow continue through the light if it's safe. You may also choose to stop BUT remember, there are people who are behind you. If you plan to stop on a yellow you need to make sure that there is ample room for those riders to stop safely. You should also pull the outer most edges of the lane to allow room for people behind you who aren't able to stop in time. If the light turns red DO NOT RUN IT! The Lead Bikes will see that you got stopped at the light and will ride slowly enough for you to catch up. The Lead Bikes may choose to pull the group over at a safe spot for the group to regroup. If they choose not to or there isn't a safe spot to pull over, one of the Drag Bikes (a Lieutenant) will assume the lead until that group rejoins the pack.

Right turns on red are sometimes a necessity. If at all possible, the Lead Bikes will wait for the light to turn green. If they must make a right turn on red they will ride at a lowered speed in the slow lane until the rest of the pack can make the turn. The group should make the turn in small groups (4-6 bikes) only when it is safe to do so. DO NOT feel rushed to catch back up to the pack. The lead bikes will not leave you behind and will pull over in a safe place if necessary for the pack to regroup.

Mechanical Breakdowns

As mentioned earlier, the only bikes to pull over in the event of a mechanical breakdown, or other need to drop out of formation, is the affected bike and the Drag Bike. If there is a chase vehicle they may also pull over. Follow the steps previously discussed if a breakdown happens. Don't try to pull over thinking you can help. In the end you will cause confusion and may get yourself, or someone else hurt. Allow the Road Captain / Lead Lieutenant and Drag Bike(s) do their job.

Arriving and Parking

All of the things discussed so far have gotten us safely to the event hopefully with some fun and very little stress. Now you need to park. This is not a "free for all" period. This period actually serves two purposes. First, it keeps the group's bikes together, or as close together as possible, so they are easy to keep an eye on and secure and second, it gets the bikes in a basic position to leave the event in a way that the Road Captain / Lead Lieutenant can make sure everybody's got their gear on, their bikes running, and are ready to leave.

Successfully Parking the Pack:

1. When the pack pulls into an event the Road Captain / Lead Lieutenant will call for a single file formation
2. They will look for a place large enough to park the entire group. Depending on the event this may not be possible. If this is the case they will look for a place to park the bikes close to each other. If multiple parking places are needed the Lead Bikes will split the pack into two columns (Left and Right) and lead a column into a spot.
3. The Lead Bike will pull into the spot furthest in to allow the rest of the bikes to park
4. He will pull to the spot, perform half a U-Turn and get ready to back into the spot. Once the Lead Bike performs the half U-Turn, the bike behind them should pull up and perform the same maneuver. This puts the bikes side by side and they can back into a spot. The process gets repeated for each bike in line.
5. Occasionally we'll get lucky and there won't be a need to back the bikes in. For this situation the Lead Bike will pull to the furthest forward spot to allow the entire group to get in. Each bike behind them will pull up alongside of them so the group is parked in a row.

NOTE:

There may also be times where the bikes need to park in rows or in columns and rows. The important thing is to follow the directions of the Road Captain / Lead Lieutenant.

Once the group is parked the Road Captain / Lieutenant should let the group know how long they plan to be at the event, a common meeting point if needed, and if the group will be leaving as a whole or if it's up to the person(s) when they leave.

Leaving an event

If it's decided that the group will leave an event as a whole the same rules apply as when leaving LT at the start of the ride. The only real exception is that the Road Captain / Lead Lieutenant may have the pack line up in the order they will be getting off of the freeway with the riders getting off first being at the back of the pack. This is to reduce the possibility of people being confused with people changing lanes during the ride home.

Because the Road Captain / Lead Lieutenant are also responsible for getting everyone home they will continue to ride in front regardless of the exit they take. When their exit is approaching they will pass the lead to the other Lead Bike and drop to the back of the pack.

Dealing With Issues During The Ride:

As scripture tells us, "None of us is perfect and all fall short". There will NEVER be a perfect ride no matter how hard we try. What makes the difference for us as a body of believers compared to other Motorcycle Ministries or Motorcycle Clubs is how we handle things that happen, or that we disagree with, on the road.

Unless it's a safety issue that needs to be addressed immediately to prevent harm or damage, during the ride IS NOT the time or place to voice things. If it is a safety issue that needs to be addressed, take your concerns to the Road Captain or Lead Lieutenant NOT to the President, Vice-President or other officers on the ride. Ask them if you can speak to them in private and voice your concern and let them handle the situation. At no time should anyone, including the Road Captain / Lead Lieutenant, reprimand or counsel, or point out someone's faults or shortcomings in front of the entire group. This is extremely disrespectful and causes division amongst us.

We also never want to air our "dirty laundry" while at an event or give the impression that we are a group of whiners or complainers that don't know what they are doing. If you do have problems on the ride either with a person, how the ride was handled, people not signaling etc, bring it to the attention of the Road Captain or any of the Lieutenants (not the President, Vice-President or other officers) after the ride. The Road Captain and Lieutenants need your feedback to help make things better, safer, and more fun when doing a ride or event so please send them an email or pick up the phone. They also need to know the things you liked about the ride so they can continue doing the right things.

Summary:

By following some simple guidelines and using a little teamwork and common sense, we can make sure that everyone has a good ride and that the Lord is glorified in the process.

This may seem like a lot of information to remember and practice, but I'm sure once you see it in action and put it to practice in your riding you'll see how easily it flows and how natural it feels, and it will become second nature to you.

Have Fun and Ride Safe

Acknowledgment Letter

The Way Riderz Motorcycle Safety and Group Riding Course

I have read and understand the information in the Motorcycle Safety and Group Riding Course packet and I have attended the classroom portion to review the information.

I agree to comply with all riding methods and procedures outlined in the packet and to follow the directions of the Road Captain / Lead Lieutenant during the course of all rides.

Printed Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____