

GROUP RIDING SOUTHSIDE RIDER'S ASSOCIATION



Terms & Techniques Part One

Whether you've been riding motorcycles for decades or days, a Group Ride demands special skills and disciplines. These skills are both obvious when pointed out and easily acquired. To travel safely for any distance, each rider must temporarily relinquish some of those cherished personal liberties and assume some measure of responsibility for both self and group. To behave otherwise is to invite great risk and excessive danger. Riding with "the group" is a choice and is never mandatory.

With the continuing rapid growth of our Association, much has lately been made of the vast differences between riding in a large group as opposed to putting along solo or with a friend or two. We have members of long standing, newer members with years of saddle time, members returned after years away from motorcycles, members younger and older relatively new to the lifestyle. Knowledge of the terms and techniques of organized riding spreads across the same spectrum.

What follows is a simple "primer" to aid everyone in maintaining the Maximum Fun Level.

The Road Captain (RC) is the ride leader. The RC plans the route and controls the run to assure the safe and pleasurable passage of everyone. The RC stays in the front position and controls the pace and tone of the ride. The RC will plan rest and gas stops, but YOU should arrive with a full tank and an empty bladder. YOU are responsible for your own warmth, dryness and personal comfort and are expected to have your machine in a state of good repair and readiness.

The TailGunner (TG) remains at the rear of the group. The TG assures that no one gets stranded on the road and tries to maintain the "wholeness" of the group. The group is in effect sandwiched between the RC and TG. The TG will signal blockers to rejoin the ride and provides a consistent "last person". Should you decide to leave the group, it is best to signal with an OK sign and goodbye wave.

Road Guards(RG) assist in getting the band through intersections safely, quickly, and efficiently. While technically illegal, blocking also eases the effect of the passage on traffic in general. It also helps to avert any rider or riders from making a risky choice rather than chance being separated from the rest. Road Guards, when directed to a position by the RC, should activate their flashers just prior to pulling out of formation. The flashers should be shut off after rejoining just ahead of the Tail Gunner. While blocking it is wise to stand up straddling the motorcycle and remain in gear and ready to move should another vehicle ignore the request to wait. A "stop" hand signal is suggested while blocking and is most easily accomplished by the passenger if present. A polite "thank you" signal by Road Guards and TailGunner as well is a nice touch and usually appreciated. Since a Road Guard assumes the responsibility of holding up traffic, plus a remote possibility of a traffic violation, it is of course voluntary. Should you have no desire to block, position yourself toward the rear of the pack. In the event that you later anticipate being called upon, signal rearward riders ahead of you at an appropriate time. NEVER do what you are not comfortable doing.

FYI – STARTING up in unison from a stop makes it more aware that we move together. Allowing gaps at starting from a stop ENCOURAGES the motorist to take their turn at intersections and along the way.

Group Riding is, by its very nature a social activity. It is human interaction enhanced by a shared motorcycling experience. Group Riding is not for everyone and is not for anyone all of the time.

Group Riding safely requires that each rider be a responsible component and adhere to the established protocols.

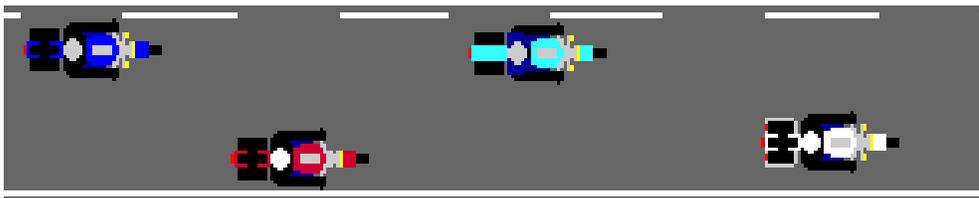
BE AWARE!

A group of motorcycles is a dynamic unit. It constantly changes from second to second as speeds, weather, traffic, and road conditions change, and as rider fatigue increases. When riding in a group you become a part of that unit, and your actions affect more than just yourself, they affect all those riding around you.

Be aware of what's going on around you at all times. Stay alert and keep an eye on the Road Captain and those in front of you at all times. You can gawk at the scenery some other time. Everyone must maintain a constant speed and distance from everyone else, without falling back and speeding up, to avoid the notorious "Slinky" effect.

Maintenance - Be sure your bike is in good running condition BEFORE the run -- otherwise stay home. Follow the T-CLOCK method of bike inspection before each ride. Tire Pressure, Tire Condition, Brakes, and Lighting, can affect the quality of your ride, the motorcycle ability, and your ability. This is dangerous enough when riding by yourself, but multiplies many many times when you are in a group setting. You are not only putting yourself at risk, but you are putting everyone on the ride at risk too.

Formation - Riding side-by-side, in a column of two's, is NOT SAFE. Ride in a staggered formation. Stay two seconds behind the bike directly in front of you, and at least one second behind the bike to your left or right front.



Order - The Road Captain rides in front. Often this is the Senior Board Member. The next Senior Board Member present will ride just behind him and to the side. Behind the Road Captain(RC) and Senior Officer(SO) come the Members of the SRA and the friends who have joined us in the ride. The first sets of these riders are Road Guards and will act as

blockers to block cross-traffic at any intersections. If at all possible, the Road Captain will discuss the route with the riders at the beginning of the ride. At that time, there will be discussion of the intersections that will need to be secured.

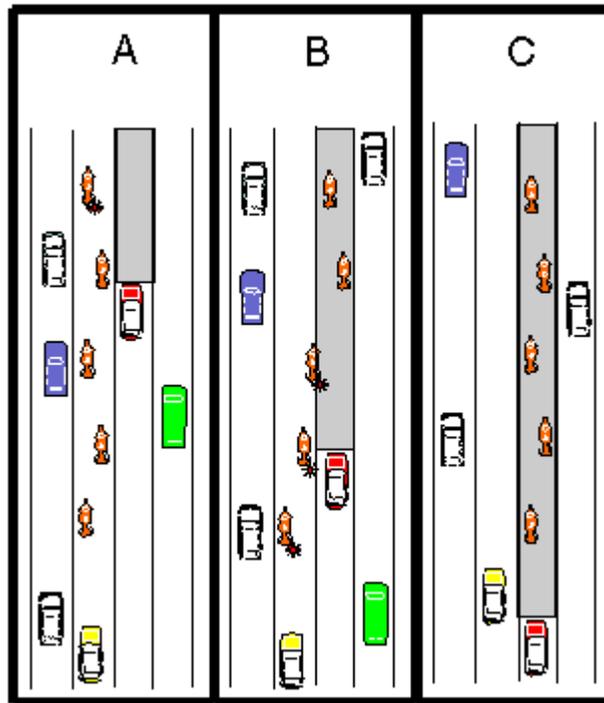
Blocking - The Road Guards will operate as **pairs** to politely and respectfully secure us through these intersections. Several sets of Road Guards may be required. After the entire column has passed through, the blockers will fall in at the extreme rear in front of the TG. At the next timely group stop, they assume their position at the front again, falling in at the rear of the RC and SO. *AT NO TIME, should the RGs pass the group in the oncoming lane or turn lane.* On Multi Lane Roads, the RGs may move to the lane beside the group and signal with their horn as they move forward. Otherwise, the next opportunity to move forward will be when the group has left the roadway for a stop.

Pace - The Road Captain sets the pace. Typically, the speed will be THE SPEED LIMIT or 2-5 MPG over. This is dependant on the size of the group and the skill set of the riders. Road surface, terrain, curves and/or other hazards may also play a factor in the speed. **DO NOT RIDE PAST YOUR COMFORT ZONE.....** If the speed is too fast for your abilities, **SLOW DOWN.** Otherwise, if the pace is not to your liking, talk it over with him at the next stop, but until that time, **KEEP UP! Do not allow a huge gap to form.** A gap in the group allows for a VERY unsafe situation to occur should a motorist see this as an opportunity to cut in or thru the group.

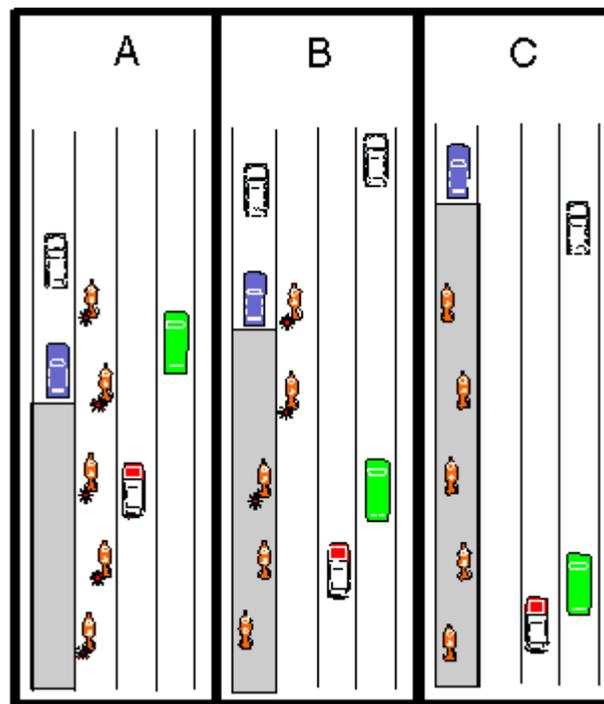
Position - NEVER at any time move from one side of the column to the other except to avoid obstacles in the road. Once the ride is underway, the position you are in, is the position you must maintain. Some riders do not like the position nearest the center line. Others prefer it. Chose your position before the RC begins the ride. Once underway, avoid gaps in the columns. If the next position becomes vacant for any reason, **DO NOT** change your lane position to fill it. Motion for the rider to your rear to fill this position. NEVER assume a vacant forward position without receiving the signal to pass from the rider ahead of you. NEVER allow a position ahead of you to stay vacant because you did not signal a rear rider forward.

Merging into traffic- When entering a highway, changing travel lanes and similar situations, it requires only some common sense and a cool head to maintain safety. The same qualities aid in dealing with other vehicles merging onto "our" highway or cutting into "our" travel lane for whatever reason. It will tick you off, but it will happen, as dumb as it seems. A string of motorcycles, is not a single vehicle. There will be times when the group will get spaced apart into different pockets, but the RC & TG will make allowances for everyone to gradually re-form. The TG may sometimes anticipate such a situation and secure the lane by providing an envelope for everyone to ride into by "closing the back door" if it can be done with minimal risk. In either event, all will get together at some time without any undue heroics. Do not put yourself at risk.

Standard Lane Changes

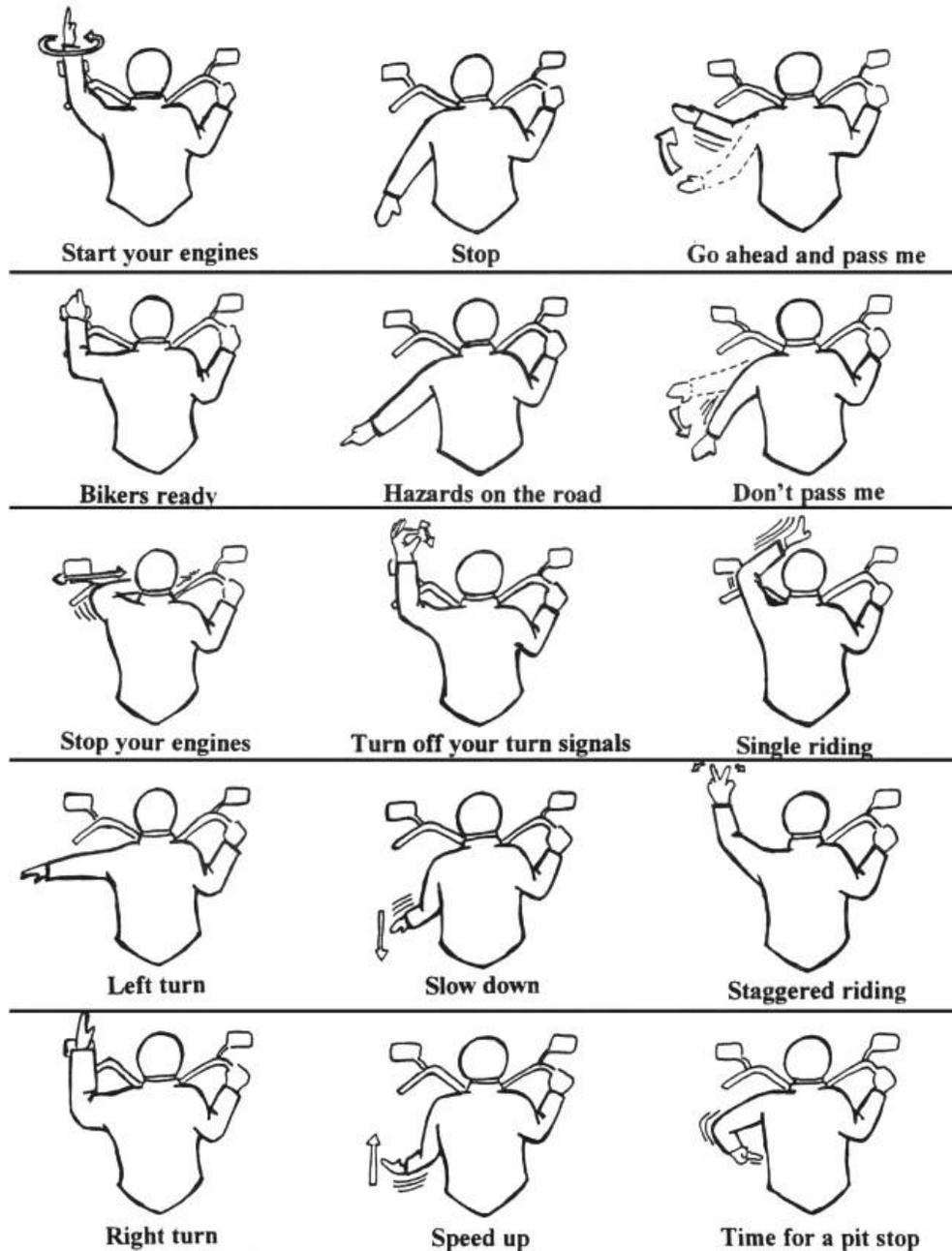


Changing Lanes into Faster-Moving Traffic



HAND SIGNALS and SIGNS- These are the best and often only available means of communication amid a throng of motorcycles in motion. Being observant of them in actual use will readily show the distinctions and confirm their value.

Hand signals should be used by all riders, and should be passed along to those behind you. The Southside Riders Association has adopted a specific system of hand signals that have proven effective in years past. The following figures show examples of these signals - **Learn them.**





DIFFICULTIES

Anyone dropping out of formation for any reason should let the Tailgunner know. If you are dropping out because of problems with your bike, let them know **YOU DO NOT** need help. Waving the group ahead will send the group along the ride. Unless you tell him otherwise, if you drop out of the column, Tailgunner will also drop with you. As each rider ahead sees that the person behind them is no longer there, they will each pull to the side until the entire group has stopped. If you signal the riders behind you not to stop, you are on your own until you rejoin the column. Sometimes, the issue may be minor and require a minute or two to resolve. In that case, wave the group to go ahead and rejoin the group on the road ahead or at the destination. (This is why it is a good idea to discuss the destination at the beginning of the ride.)

If someone drops out of the column and requests assistance, Once the group is safely stopped, a RG will go back to the stopped rider, a decision will be made to stop and repair the problem, call for a tow, or proceed without that rider.

In the case that there are Chase Vehicles along the route, please move safely to the shoulder of the road. One of the Chase Vehicles will stop to assist you.

CHANGING LANES

When the column is moving on the highway and needs to change lanes, the column will do so starting with the **REAR** of the column and progressing to the **FRONT!** While this seems wrong at first, once you experience it you'll understand how it increases the safety of such a move.

The mechanics of such a change are as follows:

- The Road Captain signals a lane change by raising his left arm to a 45° angle and pumping it several times, then signalling either to the left or right.
- When any passing traffic has gone by him, the TailGunner will change lanes first, in order to block off any more passing traffic from the new lane.
- When **ALL** passing traffic has gone by, the remainder of the column will change lanes from Rear to Front.

Use your mirrors and check your rear quarter **BEFORE** changing lanes! Change lanes smoothly and give other riders plenty of space.

FOOD/FUEL STOPS



Gas up before the run starts, and be sure that you have enough gas to reach the next rest stop. Everyone must stay together and stop at every scheduled fuel stop.

On long rides, stops are staged no more than 90 miles apart, so that bikes with small tanks will not have to leave the formation. If you have five-gallon tanks, you should only have to gas up at every other stop. If this is the case, try to pair up with another bike with big tanks and alternate gassing up. This will keep fueling time to a minimum at any one stop.

At each stop along the way, follow the Road Captain into the facility. He will go by the fueling area to the staging area where he has chosen to form up the group for departure.

If you need to fuel up, stop at the pumps, otherwise, fall in behind him and park. If he needs gas, he will go back after showing you where to form up.

As soon as you have gassed up, move your bike to the staging area. You don't need to be in the same position in the convoy for each leg of the trip.

When the Road Captain signals to start up to leave each stop, raise your hand when your bike is running, and leave it up until the road captain sees that you're ready!

When leaving each stop, the column will go slowly until the Tailgunner is visible to the Road Captain and everyone is formed up properly. Only then will the column accelerate to cruising speed.

T-CLOCK INSPECTION

T-CLOCK ITEM	WHAT TO CHECK	WHAT TO LOOK FOR	CHECKOFF	
T - TIRES & WHEELS				
Tires	<u>Conditions</u>	<i>Tread depth, wear, weathering, evenly seated, bulges, imbedded objects.</i>	Front	Rear
	<u>Air Pressure</u>	<i>Check when cold, adjust to load/speed</i>	Front	Rear
Wheels	<u>Spokes</u>	<i>Bent, broken, missing, tension, check at top of wheel "ring" OK - "thud", loose spoke.</i>	Front	Rear
	<u>Cast</u>	<i>Cracks, dents.</i>	Front	Rear
	<u>Rims</u>	<i>Out of round/true = 5mm. Spin Wheel, index against stationary pointer.</i>	Front	Rear
	<u>Bearings</u>	<i>Grab top and bottom of tire and flex: No freeplay (click) between hub and axle, no growl when spinning.</i>	Front	Rear
	<u>Seals</u>	<i>Cracked, cut or torn, excessive grease on outside, reddish-brown around outside.</i>	Front	Rear
C - CONTROLS				
Levers	<u>Condition</u>	<i>Broken, bent cracked, mounts tight, ball ends on handlebar lever.</i>	Front	Rear
	<u>Pivots</u>	<i>Lubricated.</i>		
Cables	<u>Conditions</u>	<i>Fraying, kinks, lubrication: ends and length.</i>		
	<u>Routing</u>	<i>No interference or pulling at steering head, suspension, no sharp angles, wire looms in place.</i>		
Hoses	<u>Condition</u>	<i>Cuts cracks, leaks, bulges, chaffing, deterioration.</i>		
	<u>Routing</u>	<i>No interference or pulling at steering head, suspension, no sharp angles, wire looms in place.</i>		
Throttle	<u>Operation</u>	<i>Moves freely, snaps closed, no revving.</i>		
L - LIGHTS				
Battery	<u>Condition</u>	<i>Terminals, clean and tight, electrolyte level, held down securely.</i>		
	<u>Vent Tube</u>	<i>Not kinked, routed properly, not plugged.</i>		
Lenses	<u>Condition</u>	<i>Cracked, broken, secure, mounted, excessive condensation.</i>		
Reflectors	<u>Conditions</u>	<i>Cracked, broken, securely mounted.</i>		
Wiring	<u>Conditions</u>	<i>Fraying, chaffing, insulation.</i>		
	<u>Routing</u>	<i>Pinched, no interference or pulling at steering head or suspension, wire looms and ties in place, connectors tight, clean.</i>		
Headlamp	<u>Conditions</u>	<i>Cracks, reflector, mounting and adjustment system.</i>		
	<u>Aim</u>	<i>Height and Right/left.</i>		

O - OIL

Levels	<u>Engine oil</u>	Check warm on centerstand, dipstick, sight glass.		
	<u>Hypoid Gear Oil</u>	Transmission, rear drive, shaft.		
	<u>Hydraulic Fluid</u>	Brakes, clutch, reservoir or sight glass.		
	<u>Coolant</u>	Reservoir and/or coolant recovery tank - cool only.		
	<u>Fuel</u>	Tank or gauge.		
Leaks	<u>Engine Oil</u>	Gaskets, housings, seals.		
	<u>Hypoid Gear</u>	Gaskets, seals, breathers.		
	<u>Hydraulic Fluid</u>	Hoses, master cylinders, calipers.		
	<u>Coolant</u>	Radiator, hoses, tanks, fittings, pipes.		
	<u>Fuel</u>	Lines, fuel taps, carbs.		

C - CHASSIS

Frame	<u>Condition</u>	Cracks at gussets, accessory mounts, look for paint lifting.		
	<u>Steering Head Bearings</u>	No detent or tight spots through full travel, raise front wheel check for play by pulling/pushing forks.		
	<u>Swing Arm Bushings / Bearings</u>	Raise rear wheel, check for play by pushing/pulling swing arm.		
Suspension	<u>Forks</u>	Smooth travel, equal air pressure/damping.	Left	Right
	<u>Shock(s)</u>	Smooth travel, equal pre-load/air pressure/damping settings, linkage moves freely and is lubricated.	Left	Right
Chain or Belt	<u>Tension</u>	Check at tightest point.		
	<u>Lubrication</u>	Side plates when hot. Note: Do not lubricate belts.		
	<u>Sprockets</u>	Teeth not hooked, securely mounted.		
Fasteners	<u>Threaded</u>	Tight, missing bolts, nuts.		
	<u>Clips</u>	Broken, missing.		
	<u>Cotter Pins</u>	Broken, missing.		

K - KICKSTAND

Centerstand	<u>Condition</u>	Cracks, bent.		
	<u>Retention</u>	Springs in place, tension to hold position.		
Sidestand	<u>Condition</u>	Cracks, bent, (safety cut-out switch or pad if equipped).		
	<u>Retention</u>	Springs in place, tension to hold position.		