

Heartland Chapter Women On Wheels® Guidelines

The designation "guidelines" needs to be understood in its purest sense. These are exactly that, guidelines. They are meant to give anyone who rides with the Heartland Chapter the information they need to ride safely in a group (any number of motorcycles larger than one). If it is your decision not to utilize these guidelines, then you need to proceed to the chosen destination on your own so as not to jeopardize the safety of the group.

For the safety of all participants, consumption of alcohol by members and guests will not be allowed during any Chapter function involving the operation of motor vehicles. Once the final destination has been reached and the operation of motor vehicles ceases for the day, responsible drinking will be allowed in accordance with local, state and federal law.

Groups:

Rides will consist of one or more groups, depending on the number of participants.

Each group will consist of five or fewer bikes. If a 6th bike arrives, we will break into two groups. Group sizes may also vary depending on the type of road(s) and/or amount of traffic.

Each lead (front) and drag (rear) bike will need to know the route being taken. If at all possible, provide this information to the lead and drag bikes BEFORE the ride.

Each participant in the ride must attend the pre-ride meeting:

Discuss the route with all participants

Determine the riding position (slot) of each rider

Discuss the use of hand signals

Discuss the procedures to be used if the group gets split up

Discuss the procedures to be used if a bike breaks down or if someone needs to leave the group

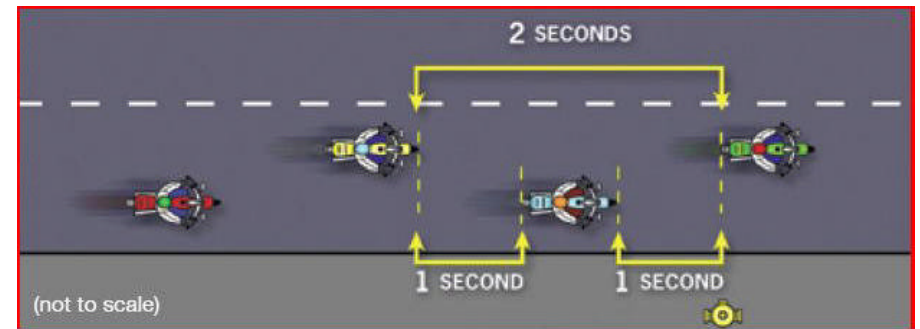
Lead rider will determine when a fuel stop needs to be made based on the tank capacity of all riders

The lead bike(s) will not depart without first checking with ALL riders that they are ready—gear on, cargo secure, motorcycle started, rider in designated slot, etc.

Ride Information:

The lead bike will not exceed the speed limit. Lead bike should check with all participants to see what speed they are comfortable riding. When warranted, a "fast" and "slow" group can be formed. Whenever possible, however, the posted speed limit should be run, especially on interstates.

A staggered formation will be used for each group. The lead bike(s) should ride in the left wheel track and each bike thereafter in a staggered position. The staggered riding formation is the preferred riding style for general riding for its overall safety for all participants in a group ride because everyone is able to maintain visual contact of all other riders.



Riders should ride with a two-second interval behind the bike directly in front of them and a one-second interval with the bike in the opposite track in front of them. Consideration should be given to those who prefer certain lane positions (left or right) whenever possible.

New riders will be placed toward the front of the group.

The single file formation has its advantages on open country roads, around disabled vehicles, narrow roads and in parking lots and other reduced lane situations. Riding in single file on winding back roads permits a rider to select his/her own line through curves. Riding in single file is not practical for urban or city situations where automobile traffic is a real consideration. Riding in single file extends the length of the group longer than what is practical. With lane changing of other vehicles and turns along the route, the group will most likely get separated.

The group always rides within the abilities of the least-experienced rider. A group may have inexperienced riders and riders that are not familiar with group riding. No matter what your riding ability or experience, **BE CONSIDERATE OF OTHER MEMBERS OF THE GROUP AND DO NOT RIDE IN A WAY THAT WILL MAKE SOMEONE ELSE NERVOUS OR PUT THE GROUP IN DANGER!**

Each rider finds her own line through a curve. Do not attempt a curve at a higher rate of speed than you are comfortable with. Do not tailgate the rider in front of you.

The group should tighten up when approaching a stop light to help it stay together. Do not run a red light or a STOP sign to stay with the rest of the group. If the group gets separated, the first group will slow down or pull off the road in a safe place to let the other group(s) catch up.

When stopping at a STOP sign, the riders pull up into pairs. Only one pair of bikes may proceed through the intersection at one time. The rider to the left always moves first. The rider to the right may proceed as soon as the rider to the left has accelerated and this gives the rider on the left space to re-establish staggered formation. The second and subsequent pairs will proceed in this same way until all riders have passed through the intersection. The lead rider will either compensate the speed of the group until all riders have been reunited or will pull off in a safe and visible spot for regrouping.

Anyone that is planning to leave the group, at any point during the ride, should inform the lead and drag rider before doing so. If you feel that riding with the group is too risky, you are obligated to speak to the lead and drag riders so corrections can be made. If you are still not confident riding with the group, the lead rider should be able to provide you with directions to the destination.

Passing (Two-lane Road):

On a two-lane road, each bike will pass in order, one at a time, in turn, when safe. The lead rider should pull out and pass when it is safe. After passing, the lead should return to the left position in the right lane and continue riding at passing speed until she has opened up room for the second rider. As soon as the first rider has passed safely, the second rider should move into the left position and watch for a safe chance to pass. After passing, this rider should return to the right position and open up room for the next rider. After passing, get will clear of the passed vehicle so bikes behind you have a safe distance in front and in back after they have passed.

Each rider is responsible for checking for oncoming traffic and the length of passing zones before passing.

Passing/Lane Changes (Multi-lane Road):

On a four or more lane road, the lead bike informs the drag bike which lane is needed by using the appropriate hand and turn signals.

The drag bike moves into the designated lane (when lane is clear) to secure it.

The remaining bikes move to the designated lane one at a time, from back to front, until all bikes have completed the lane change.

Use hand and turn signals when switching lanes. This will alert all riders that a lane change is being made and also lets traffic know that the group will be moving as one unit.

Each rider should do a head and mirror check before switching lanes.

If a vehicle pulls into the middle of the group, change lanes and pass only when safe. Remember that the group is not a "single entity" and that other traffic has the right to make legal passing maneuvers. Keeping the two-second staggered formation often prevents vehicles from cutting into the group, but not always. Stay alert!

When making turns, exiting and entering the highway, each bike should remain in its proper slot (left or right track) position.

Rest/fuel/destination stops:

Lead bike should try and select a large area for all bikes to park. If you are uncomfortable with the area the leader has picked out, do not hesitate to park where you want. It is not expected that everyone needs to park together. If you are uncomfortable following the leader around the parking lot, pull out of the way and stop until the group has parked and then you may join them. REMEMBER—never do anything you are not comfortable doing just because everyone else is doing it.

Group leaders should remember that riders become fatigued at different rates and plan accordingly.

You should not hesitate to pull out of the ride if you are having problems or need to stop for any reason. Let the lead and drag riders know you are having problems—hot, dehydrated, dizzy, sleepy, cold, etc.

Threat of rain:

If it looks like rain, put your rain gear on BEFORE taking off. If already on the road, the lead rider will pull over at a safe spot (exit ramp, gas station, rest stop, etc.) as soon as possible. Do not pull off onto the shoulder or stop under an overpass. It is better to be wet than to place yourself in a situation where you might be hit.

Decrease speed; increase two-second and one-second staggered intervals by an additional second.

Lead bike should be aware of each rider's ability to ride in the rain. If not sure, she should SLOW DOWN.

If it's raining to the point where you are uncomfortable, having problems seeing, etc., DO NOT hesitate to signal the lead rider by flashing your headlights that you need to pull off until the rain lets up. If unable to contact the lead rider, pull off in a safe place and the drag bike will notify the lead bike of the situation.

Miscellaneous:

Safety is first and foremost most important. Stay alert! Be aware of your limits! Do not ride to the point of exhaustion or beyond your abilities.

All group rides start with "tank full/bladder empty."

Arrive at the designated starting point at least 15 minutes before departure. Be "ready to roll" at the designated start time or you may be left behind.

Be sure all gear/cargo is secure and your bike is in proper working condition. Check for dangling bungee cords, loose cargo, etc. Check your tires, tire pressure, fluid levels, signals, brakes and headlights before leaving home.

Develop good eye habits. Look where you want to go. Focus on the intended path of travel. Your bike will only travel in the direction your head is turned and your eyes are focused. Keep your eyes up; aim your vision well ahead.

When carrying a passenger, train your passenger to 1) sit as far forward as possible, without crowding you; 2) hold firmly to your waist, hips or belt—never to your shoulders or neck; 3) keep their feet on the foot pegs at all times, even when stopped; 4) lean forward during acceleration; 5) look over your shoulder that corresponds to the direction you are turning, as you turn left they look over your left shoulder, for example.

Never stop on the shoulder of the road unless it is an emergency. In an emergency, the drag bike should be the only one to pull off and assist. The lead bike should take the rest of the group to a safe stopping point (NOT THE SHOULDER OF THE ROAD). Only one person should then return to check on the drag bike and rider. The group as a whole should not return to check on the situation—this could cause a more serious situation than there might already be.

U-turns should be kept to a minimum. Lead bike should know the route. If necessary, however, U-turns are made one bike at a time, when safe.

You are responsible for your own ride. Ride at your own ability and comfort level. Be considerate of others and most of all—have a fun, safe ride!

Group Riding Hand Signals



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

The Five "P's" of Group Ride Planning

Pick		Notes
	Pick a date for the ride	
	Pick an alternate (rain) date for the ride	
	Pick a destination	
	Pick a route	
Plan		
	How long (hours) do you want to ride?	
	How far (miles) do you want to ride?	
	What type of roads do you want to ride?	
	What is the level of difficulty?	
	Temperature/weather requirements?	
	Anticipated number of participants?	
	Number of lead and drag riders needed?	
	Where will the group meet?	
	What time will the group meet?	
	What time will the group depart?	
	What time will the ride end?	
	How often will you stop for gas?	
	How often will you stop for food?	
	Is overnight lodging/camping needed?	
Prepare		
	Pre-ride the route at least once	
	Note road conditions/construction	
	Note dangerous intersections	
	Note gas stations and rest stops	
	Choose restaurant(s)	
	Note mileage and duration of the ride	
	Circulate information about the ride	
	Circulate information about lodging	
	Print ride/route maps for each participant	
Pre-ride		
	Conduct pre-ride meeting	
	Discuss guidelines and hand signals	
	Choose lead(s) and tail(s) as needed	
Proceed		
	Keep the group on schedule	
	Ride the posted speed limit	
	Maintain a consistent speed	
	Clock mileage for gas stops	
	Keep an eye (rearview mirror) on the group	
	Signal/secure lane changes early	
	Decide when/where to put on rain gear	