

Group Riding Tips

Arriving prepared

Always arrive at least 30 minutes prior to the ride departure time. This will give you time to talk to the Road Captains to express you have any concerns about the ride and give the Road Captains time to evaluate the group, inspect the bikes, and arrange the group for a safe ride. The pre-ride briefing will be conducted 15 minutes before the departure time. You can use the time prior to socialize with other riders and review the route. If you arrive and the Pre-ride briefing has begun you will be required to ride behind the sweep until the first stop is made and the Road Captain has a chance to brief you.

Arrive with a full tank of gas, extra water, the proper riding gear for the weather conditions, and use the restroom before the safety briefing. To enable the ride to leave on time have your helmet, gloves, and chaps on before the safety briefing.

If you carry a smartphone you can download a free program called ICE (In Case of Emergency), this is a handy program that you can enter all your medical information that you may need in an emergency. It is wise to carry a Safety Information Card that gives the following information in case of an emergency:

- Your name
- Emergency contact name
- Emergency contact phone number
- Medical conditions and medications
- Motorcycle Policy number
- Health insurance carrier policy number
- Towing service number

On the Ride

While on the ride be respectful of other riders and look out for the wellbeing of the group. Always ride at a safe speed, remember that we are riding for fun not racing. Talk with and get to know the other riders and you will develop friendships that can last a lifetime.

At rest stops use this time to top off your fuel tank, use the restroom facilities, adjust your clothing, and stretch your legs. Inform the Lead and Sweep Road Captains and the Safety Officer if you are having any problems or have any safety concerns so that they can address these concerns.

Always be well hydrated before the ride starts and keep hydrated throughout the ride. It is a good idea to freeze a couple of water bottles and carry these with you on the bike, as they melt you will have cold water to drink. Never wait till you are thirsty to drink, at this point you are already becoming dehydrated. As we get into summer, riding the temperature will be increasing and we will be more inclined to wearing short sleeves and tank tops but wearing long

sleeves or a jacket will reduce evaporation caused by the wind. The use of sunblock will also help keep you from getting burned.

While riding you should always keep your head on a swivel, always checking well ahead of you, directly ahead of you, to the right, to the left, and behind you always looking for hazards. Always be aware of your surroundings and never let a hazard or other vehicle surprise you. KNOW THEY ARE THERE.

Hand Signals

Hand signals are important when riding in a group to ensure the safety of the group. Hand signals should be initiated by the Lead Road Captain and passed all the way back to the sweep. If a Lead Road Captain does not pass a signal you should still pass the appropriate signal back to ensure the safety of the group. Always pass hand signals back as soon as possible even if you just passed the hazard, why you ask? Because other riders will be scanning ahead and the sooner they see the signal the better the chance they have of avoiding a hazard.

If you want to review the hand signals you can by visiting the Alamo Hog website (www.achog.com) and go to the Safety page and click on the Safety Hand Signal link.

New Riders or New Bike Owners

If you are a new rider, let the Road Captains know so that they can assess your comfort and skill level. This will also allow them to position you in the group so that you will be more comfortable riding and surround you with skilled riders that will help watch out for you. In a lot of cases this may be at the back of the group in front of the sweep. As you become more familiar with your bike and more comfortable riding in a group, you may move to an area of the group that suits your riding style. If a Road Captain or Safety Officer approaches you to discuss an observation or wishes to move you to a different position in the group, please do not feel offended as they have your safety and best interest at heart.

If you have just bought a new bike, position yourself in a place in the group where you will be able to get comfortable with your bike. Always ride within the limits of your skills, remember just because you were a very good rider when you were younger, this will probably not be the case if you have not rode for a number of years. Give yourself time to become accustomed to your new bike and get a good feel for the weight and handling characteristics.

Maintaining Lane Control and Position

The ability to maintain your lane and position while riding is a basic skill that is essential when riding in a group. Always try your best to stay in your lane and maintain a proper distance behind the rider directly in front of you. When riding in a staggered formation this distance to the rider directly in front of you should be about 2 seconds and 1 second behind the rider in the other lane. By doing this you will have a little room to dodge road debris without hitting a rider next to you. When riding in a single file formation try to keep about a 2 second space between

you and the rider in front of you. Never ride side by side, doing so gives both riders very little space to avoid hitting each other in the event that they encounter a road hazard.

Try to keep as tight a formation as you can comfortably do with your skill level. By doing this the group will avoid the accordion effect which causes the group to become excessively spread out. Once the group becomes spread out riders must ride faster than necessary to catch up. The use of cruise control and or riding in a lower gear will make this easier. Riding in a lower gear will give you more power on demand to maintain your position especially when riding in hilly areas. Avoid excessive sightseeing while riding as this will increase the possibility of you falling behind the rider ahead of you.

Trikes and Motorcycles with side cars should always ride in a staggered formation. This will allow more stopping room and also allow the Lead Road Captain to be able to look down the center of the formation and see the Sweep Road Captain.

Road Hazards

Always be aware of the road conditions as they can change from ride to ride along the same route. Weather can cause pot holes to appear, gravel to collect at intersections, and rocks may fall into the roadway. Other hazards to be aware of are wildlife that may cross the road in front of you. Adjust your speed and be aware of your path of travel. When you observe a hazard, be sure to pass a hand signal back as quick as possible to warn other riders. Also be aware of the positions of other riders around you as you try to dodge a hazard.

Review the Texas Road Hazards handout which is located on www.achog.com on the Download tab, it has a lot of good information about hazards you may encounter and give some suggestions on how to handle them.

Highway Traffic

When riding in a group on the highway it is important to keep as tight a group as possible but if a car tries to change lanes and split the group allow it and chances are they will soon exit. Always be clear in the use of hand signals so other drivers and riders know what your intentions are.

As the group approaches a truck that you intend to pass, you should move to a single file formation and use the far lane away from the truck. As you pass, try to spend as little time beside the truck as possible to keep out of its blind spot and reduce the possibility of being hit by tire debris in case of a blowout. Once you have cleared the truck make sure you give enough distance to allow other riders to pass and clear the truck then return to a staggered formation.

If you are new to riding on a highway and in traffic, start out on less traveled highways and in a group. This will help build your confidence and help develop the skills that you will need to be successful. Talk to the Lead and Sweep Road Captains and make them aware of your skill level and of any concerns you have. They can help place you in a good position in the group where you will be comfortable.

Signal Lights and Traffic Signs

The group should always follow and obey all signal lights and traffic signs. Road signs that will alert you to recommended speeds, hazards and conditions that will make for a safe ride. When approaching traffic lights use care as lights change from green to yellow to red. Red means STOP not run the light to keep up with the group.

If you get caught at a light, don't worry you can catch up with the group after the light changes. Those in the group that did not get caught by the light should slow down or pull over to allow the rest of the group to catch up. Remember that the Sweep Road Captain can move to the front of the group that was split up till the group rejoins. It is common to have several experienced Road Captains on our rides and if necessary they will step up and lead your group until both groups merge back together.

Tapping Out, Breakdowns, and Accidents

If you need to leave the group for any reason during the ride, you should use the Tap-Out Signal which is tapping your right hand on the top of your helmet and move safely out of your lane and allow the group to pass. Be sure to signal to the Sweep Road Captain that you are either OK or you are in need help. If you need help the Sweep Road Captain will stop with you and provide assistance. If a rider in front of you taps out, move forward to fill that position and never cross over to fill a spot to the side of you.

Breakdowns can happen at any time. The better prepared you are the better off you will be. Always perform a T-CLOCS inspection before every ride. A copy of the T-CLOCS inspection can be downloaded from the Alamo Hog website on the download page. It is wise to carry some basic tools and fuses to help with minor breakdowns. Follow the Tap Out instructions above if you experience a breakdown. Be sure to move off the roadway a safe distance and use your hazard flashers to warn other drivers.

In the event of an accident, the Sweep Road Captain will take charge of the accident. It is important to get everyone off the road as quickly and safely as possible. The Sweep Road Captain will need your help and may assign task such as calling 911, traffic control, and first aid. If you have special skills or training dealing with medical issues or traffic control, inform the Sweep Road Captain. Most Road Captains will carry a first aid kit with basic medical supplies and some will have basic tools to handle minor roadside repairs. Remember to stay hydrated and keep yourself safe.

Drinking and Riding

All Alamo HOG rides are nondrinking rides that end at the ride destination. If you need help finding your way back talk to fellow riders and find someone heading back to town. Once the ride is completed, riders may at their own discretion partake in alcoholic beverages. Riding and drinking is not recommended, encouraged, or endorsed by Alamo HOG.