

American Legion Riders
Department of California

SAFETY HANDBOOK



ALWAYS RIDE WITHIN YOUR OWN KNOWN SAFE CAPABILITIES

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Section I. Individual Responsibilities

Participants in a group ride must be willing to follow basic and sensible rules to insure the safety of everyone involved. If you are unwilling to follow the rules, then do not participate in the group ride. Ride behind or separate, not between the Ride Captain and the Safety Officer or you will be asked to leave the group. Know your bike, your own abilities and know who you are riding with. The saying **"Ride no faster than your Guardian Angel can fly"** is very true. Riders should know the basic hand signals of group riding and "use them". Every rider in the group must have the capability and responsibility to use hand signals at any time necessary. In a group ride, you are responsible for more than just yourself. The Ride Captain may miss a road obstacle, or not signal for a variety of reasons, including the fact that he/she just didn't see it. It becomes your individual responsibility to signal to the riders around you and behind you that there is an obstacle in the road. Other riders depend heavily on these signals; riding as a group reduces your view of the road.

- a) Prior to **EVERY** ride, conduct a Pre-Ride Check. We recommend the Motorcycle safety Foundations T-CLOCS Inspection. Attachment (1)
- b) *If at any time you feel the riding intensity is beyond your current skill level, you should drop out of the group ride. Trying to keep up with the formation may be hazardous to you and other riders in the group. You are responsible for riding within your limits.*
- c) Any rider that is uncomfortable with the speed of the ride, should motion the riders behind to pass and take a forward position. The Ride Safety Officer/Tail Gunner will take the responsibility to ride with this person separately or stop to assist if there is a problem.
- d) All signals from the Road Captain should be relayed through the group by repeating the same signal back to the Ride Safety Officer/Tail Gunner. It is important that all signals get passed through the entire group at all times. If the rider in front of you, including the Road Captain, signals an obstacle in the road, **YOU ARE "OBLIGATED"** to pass that information on to the riders behind you using hand signals. If you do not and the person behind you hits the obstacle, you might be facing a serious discussion... See "Basic Hand Signals" on pages 12-13.
- e) Less experienced riders should ride near the front of the group to minimize the rubber band effect. This helps aid the Road Captain in adjusting the pace of the ride. More experienced riders should ride towards the back of the group.
- f) All riders are expected to be ready to depart the assembly point with a **full tank of fuel**, full stomach, an empty bladder and appropriately clothed. Be prepared to ride for at least one hour before stopping.
- g) Every Rider should be prepared for a breakdown, carry an extra bottle of water, snack, etc... Safety is everyone's responsibility.
- h) Do not consume alcohol or use any drugs or medication that could impair your judgment and ability to ride.
- i) Never block traffic yourself. It's dangerous and it is against the law. Can you spell LIABILITY?

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- j) If you have any concerns about the ride, you need to talk to the Road Captain and he/she will try to address your concerns. Safety is everyone's responsibility.

Section II. RIDE LEADERSHIP

1) ROAD CAPTAIN:

- a) The Road Captain has overall responsible for the safety of the ride with the assistance of the Ride Safety Officer/Tail gunner. Road Captain rides front and to the left. If a Chapter has a Safety Officer/Tail gunner who is not the Road Captain, he can ride as the last bike. This does not preclude other members from leading a ride to a location.
- b) The Road Captain is a fundamental part of any ride planning and he/she is in charge of group rides.
- c) The Road Captain deals with the police and other unexpected surprises making sure everybody has a fun and safe ride.
- d) He/she can instruct any rider to ride in a specific position within the group, or to leave the group entirely, for reasons of misconduct, disorderly or unsafe riding, or for observed faulty / unsafe equipment. Watch for his/her directions and signals.
- e) In all cases, the leaders must keep track of what is happening behind them, it is much more difficult to pass information forward than back. Road Captain will designate a Ride Safety Officer/Tail gunner generally an experienced rider who rides last in line and make sure everyone is OK. When going on rides, meet at a predetermined place and time. It is much more enjoyable and safer when everyone follows the same plan.
- f) He/she helps educate new riders in hand signals and other riding etiquette. You should feel comfortable asking the Road Captain questions on all aspects of motorcycle riding and safety.
- g) At each ride he/she, does the following:
 1. Conduct pre-ride briefs, in accordance with Attachment (2), to review the route to the final destination, planned stops, procedure for the return ride (i.e. on your own, organized groups, and planned routes). The Road Captain(s) and Ride Safety Officer/Tail gunner(s) will be identified should it be necessary to break the riders into smaller groups for safety and answer any questions you may have.
 2. Review the ride route and change the route as actual road conditions / weather dictates.
 3. Advise riders about the pace of the ride and the ride formation.
 4. Conduct Pre-Ride visual advisory safety check on all bikes.

2) MID CAPTAIN:

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A Mid Captains responsibility is much the same as the Road Captain. In a large group, Mid Captains are used for "breaking up" the main group into smaller more controllable sizes. Most often this is used while traveling in heavy traffic or in areas of multiple stop signs or lights. Smaller groups will allow for a safer ride during certain conditions and may keep everyone out of harm's way. Small groups can blend back into the main group at a later point when appropriate. It will be the Road Captain's responsibility to determine if size of group of the group(s). Mid Captains help prevent riders from speeding or otherwise using poor judgment in the attempt to "keep up" with the main group.

3) RIDE SAFETY OFFICER/TAIL GUNNER:

This very important position is often overlooked, but can be a critical part of the successful and safe group ride. The Ride Safety Officer/Tail Gunner sees all because he/she take the "last" position in the group and, the responsibilities of this position can be varied and numerous.

The Ride Safety Officer/Tail Gunner communicates to the Road Captain, the status of the group. The most used signal is a fist high in the air signaling to the Road Captain that everyone is together and made it through that traffic light or a turn. The Road Captain will "acknowledge" this by signaling back the same way. This also helps to remove the anxiety of the riders in the group, wondering how everyone is doing. Other signals are used and discussed directly between the Road Captain and Ride Safety Officer/Tail Gunner to insure proper communication.

If the group becomes separated, the Ride Safety Officer/Tail Gunner moves to a lead position and becomes a Mid Captain. If there is a problem, it becomes the Ride Safety Officer/Tail Gunner's responsibility to oversee, and communicate appropriately so that emergency services can be notified as necessary. Obviously, the Ride Safety Officer/Tail Gunner should be equipped with a cell phone, radio or device capable of doing so.

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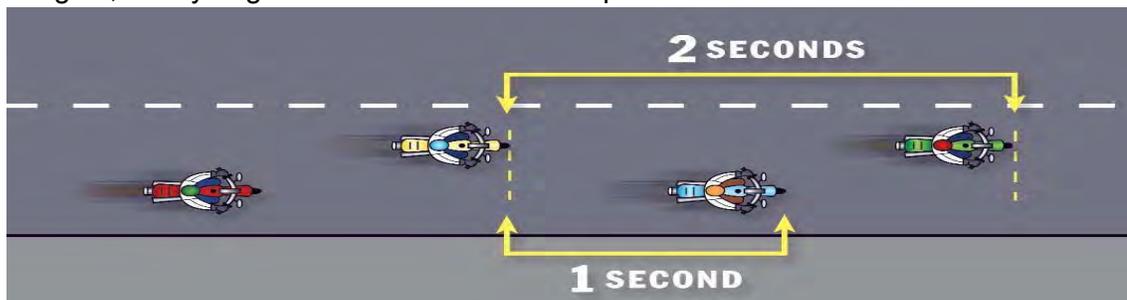
Section III. Riding Together / Group Rides

1) General:

- a) Watch for signals from the Road Captain, turning, staggered, single file, slowing and hazard signals are to be passed back through the formation.
- b) The group will stop for all traffic signals and obey all traffic laws. Do not run stop signs. Only an official police escort may block intersections.
- c) The entire width of the lane belongs to you or the other rider; so do not ride beside another rider. Do not crowd your fellow Rider; allow them and yourself room to swerve in case of an emergency or road hazard.
- d) Watch for traffic signal changes and be prepared. Safely bunch up at approaching intersections to shorten the formation length.
- e) **Do not run caution or red lights.**

2) Formations:

- a) **Staggered formation:** 1–2 Second Rule is the norm on most roads. In staggered formation you should follow the bike directly ahead by 2 seconds and the bike in the other left or right lane position by 1 second. This is not always possible. Maintain your location within the group and do not pass. If you need to change location in the formation wait until the next stop then change your position when the ride starts again. It is common courtesy for the rider who is following, in the other position of the lane, to signal to the next rider in the lane with the vacancy to move up one position. If the rider does not signal, slowly begin to move into the vacant position.



- b) **Single file formation:** is recommended for narrow twisty roads, Interstate entrance and exit ramps and construction areas. Watch for Road Captain signals.
- c) **Stop Sign:** Double up, proceed through as pairs and then return to normal staggered formation.
- d) **Stop Lights** - Stop if the light turns red, regardless of your position in the group. Proceed on green when the way is clear. The Road Captain will slow-up so that you may safely rejoin the group.
- e) **Lane Changes** - Pass the signal back from the Road Captain. Each rider is ultimately responsible for their own safety. On multiple lane highways, hold your lane until the motorcycle in front of you changes lanes. The Road Captain makes the call for Lane Changing at the front, uses hand signals/blinkers and each rider should follow his move

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safely in order to prevent confusion. The experienced Safety Officer/Tail Gunner should be able to anticipate this move to secure the lane, but is not necessary.

- f) **Hand Signals** - Pass signals back to the rider behind you. Do not maintain or perform any hand signal if safety requires two hands on your handlebars. See "Basic Hand Signals" on pages 13-14.
- g) **Lane Splitting** – You should never *Split Lanes* when riding in a large group, all riders in your group may not have the appropriate skills or experience to follow safely.

3) **Lane Changes and Passing:**

- a) **Multi-lane highway lane change:** The Road Captain makes the call for Lane Changing at the front, uses hand signals/blinkers and each rider should follow his move safely in order to prevent confusion. The experienced Safety Officer/Tail Gunner should be able to anticipate this move to secure the lane, but is not necessary.
- b) **Passing Traffic on Two lane highway:**
Only pass when legal, single up while passing and use your own judgment. No more than one or two bikes should enter the passing lane at any one time. When those bikes have passed and pulled into the lane, the next 1 or 2 riders may begin to pass. The Road Captain will stay in the passing lane after passing, as long as the road ahead is clear, to create a large gap ahead of the passed vehicle. When the Road Captain is in the passing lane, it indicates no oncoming traffic. The passing rider must maintain their speed after pulling in front of passed vehicle to create a safe gap between them the passed vehicle to allow the next rider to safely enter the lane behind them. Do not pass if you do not feel comfortable, you can always catch up with the formation down the road. After passing, return to the appropriate formation when it's safe and as soon as possible.

4) **Other Vehicles in the formation:**

Other vehicles may enter the group for a short period. Respect their right to use the road. They usually leave the group at the first opportunity. If you get into a dispute with the driver of a vehicle, the larger vehicle will always come out ahead.

5) **Group Separations / Dropping Out:**

- a) If you must leave the group, exit from the side of the group, preferably at a location that does not disturb the other riders. Signal to another rider that you are leaving so they may inform the Road Captain at the next stop.
- b) The Ride Safety Officer/Tail Gunner will follow at the back of the group and will stop to help any rider who has to drop out of the group. When the Ride Safety Officer/Tail Gunner stops to help someone, the last rider in the group becomes the Ride Safety Officer/Tail Gunner. That person will inform the Road Captain at the next stop that riders have been left behind.
- c) If the group gets separated at a traffic light/stop the last rider of the forward group becomes the Ride Safety Officer of that group. The Road Captain will stop or leave a rider to wait for and direct the following group at any intersection where the group makes a turn. If you become the lead of the trailing group and do not know the group ride route,

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then stop your group at the nearest safe pull off point and get a rider who knows the route to lead the group to the next scheduled stop. The Road Captain may send two riders back to check on the missing riders and/or opt to continue the ride.

6) **Breakdown/Accident:**

If a breakdown occurs during a group ride, the Ride Safety Officer/Tail Gunner will pull over with the rider needing assistance. The Ride Safety Officer/Tail Gunner will communicate with the Road Captain in the best manner possible to advise him/her of the situation. **USE EXTREME CAUTION.**

7) **Parking:**

Watch where the lead Road Captain positions him/herself in the parking area. Slowly ride behind him/her and get in-line. After everyone is in-line the group backs into the parking slots. When the Road Captain pulls into a small parking space, that's your cue to find your own spot to park.

8) **Trike Safety** – All 3 Wheel Motorcycles include Can Am Spiders and Harley Motorcycles.

SAFETY TIPS FOR OUR 3-WHEEL MOTORCYCLES



These are general safety tips for our riders and vary depending on if you are riding the standard Harley (2 wheels in the back) or Spider (2 wheels in the front). Always read your owner's manual before operating your vehicle and look for safety tips that list do's and don'ts.

1. All Riders should watch an instructional video, provided by the Manufacture or on U-Tube, so they can learn everything they can expect to encounter on a three-wheel motorcycle.

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2. Riders are encouraged to take a local riding course which will highlighting the science of riding a three-wheel motorcycle, practice training with coaches to assist in questions/techniques, pass on some common sense three-wheel safety approaches to stopping, curves and emergency stopping.
3. We do not encourage lane splitting for any three-wheel motorcycles, instead:
 - a. An experienced rider should lead the three-wheel motorcycles in case the group decides to split lanes.
 - b. The experienced rider should know the route and location of the next stop or destination of the group.
4. Never, ever, put your feet down. There are three wheels, so you won't tip over.
5. If your Trike has a hand brake, you must release it before moving out. Without a kickstand, there's nothing but the hand brake to keep the trike from rolling into an object or off the roadway or parking lot.
6. The wheelbase of a Trike is about the same as that of the two-wheeler, but because of its bodywork, it's slightly longer and a whole lot wider. To determine just how wide, once seated, stretch out your arms -- that's the width you must allow for when cornering. Make sure you have enough room to pass, turn a curve or park.
7. A trike involves "direct steering." Point into the direction of travel, lock your outside elbow into the turn, and then roll on the throttle through the turn - this differs from a two-wheeler where you counter steer and lean through a corner. Using the Point, Lock, and Roll system, we went into, and out of, every type of corner quicker than when riding any comparable two-wheeler. And what's more, we did so with increased confidence from not having to brake or steer around light road debris, such as sand and gravel.
8. Look into and ahead of your direction of travel. Good advice, whether on two, three, or four wheels.
9. Use both front and rear brakes. On a two-wheeler, your rear brakes are 30 percent of your stopping power. On a trike, though, two rear wheels mean twice the stopping power, so you don't want to override your front wheel. Even in panic stops, the trike stops quickly and keeps straight.
10. Find a parking lot and practice figure-eight, panic stops, quick turns, and even cranking the handlebars in both a hard right and a hard left, while in motion.

When riding in a group, consider the following:

1. All 3-wheel motorcycles SHOULD ride in the rear for safety.
2. Since they ride in the rear, we encourage all our Chapters to have an experienced 3-wheel motorcycle as their Safety Officer/Tail Gunner because he/she can be seen better by traffic coming up from the rear. However, some Chapters have experienced 2-wheel riders with years of experience in fixing bikes on the spot and first aid kits. For this reason, we leave it up to the Road Captain to make that determination. Reasons for riding in the rear of the group:

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- a. Harder for 2-wheel riders to see around a 3-wheel rider.
 - b. Trikes can stop quicker than motorcycles, which could result in an accident with the 2-wheel rider following.
 - c. Trikes can't avoid objects as easy as motorcycles and could flip up objects.
 - d. Some Trikes riders might be slower than other riders, especially in curves.
 - e. Riding with trailers or sidecars can create the same issues and need to be in the rear of the group.
3. It is up to the Ride Captain to determine if he/she wants the 3-wheel riders in a staggered formation or riding centerline based on his experience.
 4. All riders should be encouraged to ride staggered so they can see ahead of the rider in front of them.

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Section IV. Time to Ride

1) Meeting Place and time:

Riders should make every effort to arrive on time at the meeting place. This gives riders an opportunity for a final gear check. The Road Captain will normally arrive at the departure location a minimum of 30 minutes prior to the Pre-Ride Brief. If you have questions, this would be a good time to approach the Road Captain.

2) Overnight/Out-of-Town Trips:

These rides usually have more than one ride plan involving multiple Road Captains. The meeting locations will be pre-determined by the Road Captain leading each group. Each Group Road Captain will lead their ride and they are responsible for all the planning information.

3) Getting Your Head in the Ride:

There are many traps out on the roads, all roads have hazards that we need to negotiate. And there are many motorcycle safety programs (i.e. Motorcycle Safety Foundation [MSF], and the California Motorcyclist Safety Program [CMSP]) that can help train and hone your riding skills. This thought-provoking section highlights only a few road hazards you may encounter. While every hazard may appear the same; all hazards are different and there is no single solution. The rider must decide their own course of action to successfully cope with the obstacle. From one patch of surface to the next, one day to another, it's not realistic to assume the road surface will be consistently good. Look for changes in color or texture of the road ahead. Avoiding common hazards means observing the hazard in time to do something about the situation. Source of the following information is from "Proficient Motorcycling" by David L. Hough - "Mastering the Ride". "Remember, practice is training and when you're excited, you are reliant on your training."

1. Road Configurations:

- a) Twisting and curving roads - Increases the enjoyment of riding on back roads for most riders. Familiar roads free of surface hazards may still take a rider by surprise as a rider doesn't recall every curve exactly. Small errors can have magnified consequences when riding in a group or formation. Always operate your motorcycle at a safe speed not to exceed your range of vision or abilities.
- b) Unexpected Objects - Always be prepared for an abrupt stop or altered courses as you negotiate each curve. Prepare for whatever combinations of dips and turns in the roads that may be just beyond or out of your sight.
- c) Apexes / Cornering lines - The "Tail of the Dragon" is a great example as many riders sharpen their floorboards accelerating through curves. Almost all 318 curves in the 11-mile run camber (slant) nicely into the turn thus increasing traction and lean

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over clearance. However, there are a few curves that slant the wrong direction decreasing lean over clearance and available traction. An improperly graded road can be a disaster in the making. Use the "slow, look, lean, and roll" technique

2. Roadway Contaminants - Spend time learning how to read the road ahead and adjust your speed and line to keep a lot of reserve traction available. The key is to look for changes in the appearance of the surface that indicate a possible change in the road condition. Avoiding common hazards means observing the hazard in time to do something about it.

- a) **Sand** - We live in California, expect sand to build in the corners and/or be blown across the road. Loose sand normally decreases traction on a dry road but might actually improve traction in the rain.
- b) **Edge traps** - Work zone warning signs may be your first indication and shouldn't be ignored. Keep your tires away from raised pavement edges. If you must cross over an edge, do so at maximum angle. Treat it like a curb, swerve away from the edge and cross at a 45-degree angle. Roll the throttle to bounce the front wheel over the edge then straighten the bike.
- c) **Loose Gravel** - Stay out of the deep stuff and away from the center line on a two lane road. Riding too slow causes more wobbles than moving along a little faster. Nothing excites a rider like the front wheel plowing into loose gravel. The deep gravel near an entrance can take down an unsuspecting rider.
- d) **Tar Snakes, Pot Holes and Slippery Stuff** -It's important to devote part of your attention to road conditions. Even when riding in a group, you alone are responsible for your course direction. A rider in front of you may not be aware or may not be able to point out a hazard in the road.
- e) **Dirt** - Dirt blown across the road might decrease traction to some extent but will quickly turn to slippery mud with rain.
- f) **Oil** - When stopping, look at the pavement where you put your feet down. Vehicles leak oil and oil buildups are common at intersections. Be aware of the temperature and current weather conditions. If the weather is hot and dry be suspicious of dark puddles. It may be water that will quickly evaporate off your tires or it may be oil that will lubricate your tires for several miles. **Remember that the center of the road can be the most hazardous when wet.** When it starts to rain, ride in a vehicle's tracks. Often the left tire track will be the best lane position, depending on traffic and other road conditions as well.
- g) **Bridges** - Assured encounter in California. Be aware of smooth concrete or the hated steel grates. Steel grates will cause your tires to wiggle around and change the available traction.
- h) **Agricultural areas** - We all enjoy the country side rides. Scrutinize the road for colored areas indicating farm equipment has tracked dirt or mud onto the pavement. While the speeds are generally the same, usually the back roads are not maintained as well as a major highway.

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- i) **Objects in Roadway** - Even flat objects are reason for concern. Flattened soda pop cans have been known to become a ski when the tires cross over the can at the same time the brakes are applied. Always attempt to put your tires over the best surface of the road. Let off the brakes and allow your tire to roll over the object if it becomes lodged under your tire.
- j) **Large Trucks** – Watch out when on the road with near trucks (both large and small). Riders should increase their following distance significantly when stuck behind any truck. Trucks are known for sand, rock or falling debris as with any vehicle hauling an open load. Be careful when passing trucks, they might turn left with little to no notice when you least expect them to turn.
- k) **Railroad Tracks and Steel Plates** – Always approach railroad track with caution, keeping out of groove next to rail and cross at right angle. Your traction will react differently because of the change in surface type; your tire may grip the road on the pavement and be unpredictable on the plate. Always aim high in your driving, that will give you advanced warning for hazards, always approach with caution and do not brake abruptly.

Section V. Be Prepared

1) **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**

- a) **Safety Equipment:** A DOT approved helmet goes a long way towards saving your skull in case of an accident and is required by California State Law. As a reminder when riding on a military installation you are required to have the minimum PPE: helmets, long pants, long sleeve shirts, eye protection, boots, and full fingered gloves.
- b) **Eye protection** is for both the rider and passenger. Eye protection not only keeps wind from making tears streak down your face, they also keep all manner of debris and bugs from flying in to your eyes. California has a lot of bugs ranging in various sizes.
- c) **Earplugs** cut the wind noise on a motorcycle at highway speeds and helps preserve your hearing. Nice item to have on cross country trips.
- d) **Gloves** can protect your palms, knuckles, and fingers. It's a basic human reflex to brake your fall by a cat-like extension of the arms when a rider is thrown off his/her bike.
- e) **Boots** not only protect your feet, boots help keep your feet firmly planted on the floor boards and the pavement, when stopped. Any shoe over the ankle will help protect your skin from coming in contact with the blistering hot tail pipes.

2) **Tool Kits:**

Most Road Captains and Safety Officer/Tail Gunner's carry an extensive tool kit. It's recommended that you bring your own tool kit. If you are without tools and find that you need to make adjustments to continue the ride, check with any ALR officer or some of the more experienced riders. Tool kits are invaluable when needed. A tool kit checklist of the most commonly used tools can be found by searching of the internet.

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3) First Aid Kits:

There is an old saying that, "There are two types of bikers, the ones that have gone down, and the ones that will go down." An ordinary first aid kit just won't cut it, mainly because of the size but also because of the type injuries bikers suffer. There are first aid kits specifically for motorcyclist. You won't have much time to read instructions so know what's in your kit and how to use it. It's always beneficial to take a course in first aid. Responding quickly can save a life!

4) Accident Reporting

In the event of an accident please use attachment (3) to report. The purpose of the report is to gather information to help make future Safety Training decisions.

5) Motorcycle Hand Signals and Pointers While Riding

- 1) **Start your engines:** Point up and circle finger.
- 2) **Stop:** Arm extended straight down, palm facing back.
- 3) **Go past me:** Arm out, forward waving.
- 4) **Point to tank:** I need gas, stop at the next station.
- 5) **Point to ground:** Careful, hazard on the road.
- 6) **Point at ground, rub fingers together:** Road is slippery.
- 7) **Flash brake lights very rapidly:** Major watch out! Be prepared to stop QUICK.
- 8) **Single finger point up from top of helmet:** Ride single file ahead.
- 9) **Two fingers pointed up:** Staggered riding.
- 10) **Point to sign:** Read the sign, if it's a highway sign with multiple exits listed, hold up the number of fingers corresponding to which exit you want (e.g. two fingers for the second exit listed).
- 11) **Point at another rider, then pat leg:** you want that rider to come alongside you (usually so you can talk).
- 12) **Point at another rider, then point to side of road:** Pull over now.
- 13) **Arm out, palm back:** Stay behind me.
- 14) **Waving arm in quick downward motion, with palm down and parallel:** Slow down!
Often used for bikes traveling in the opposite direction to warn of hazard or police.
- 15) **Tap top of helmet, or hand on helmet:** Pay attention! (There is something ahead in the road to be aware of).

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- 16) **Point forward, shrug shoulders:** I don't know where we're going, I probably shouldn't be leading!
- 17) **Little wave to oncoming motorcyclist:** "Aren't motorcycles great?"
- 18) Finally, when someone gives YOU a signal, YOU should nod your head so they know you understand since they can't usually see your face very clearly from behind a helmet.

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Universal Motorcycle Hand Signals Chart, prepared by MWsbike.com



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

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10) General Safety Tips:

- 1) **Big Picture:** When driving, keep your eyes moving and look far ahead, don't focus on vehicle directly in front of you, watch the car sticking out at the next intersection, watch for the stale green light, watch for the car weaving while they are on their cell phone moving and look for a way out, be prepared to swerve and/or stop. Communicate your intentions to other drivers and make sure they see you. Look for oncoming traffic crossing the double yellows on the curves.
- 2) **Panic Stops:** Everyone should practice panic stops on their own before they need to make one in a group formation.
- 3) **On the Highway:** Riding staggered within one lane helps provide good visibility for all riders in formation, use 1-2 second rule. Lead rider should accelerate smoothly and not shoot into gaps that are not big enough for the entire group. Leader should point out exits in advance by pointing to signs and getting into the correct lane soon enough so the entire pack can follow safely. When changing lane, the leader should maintain the same relative position in the new lane so the staggered formation does not have to propagate all the way back. Riders should try to note how many riders are behind them. With a good pre-ride brief, everyone should know which exit beforehand. Riders should not pass each other, as it may cause the other riders to lose focus on the road ahead, disrupt the stagger and makes it harder to keep track of everyone in the pack.
- 4) **Back Roads:** Single-file, slowest to fastest. Don't fixate on the rider ahead; watch the road and traffic ahead, slow down if you don't feel comfortable with the situation, if there is a problem, drop back. When passing cars, don't assume they see you, don't assume if the rider ahead goes, you can also or that they won't abort their pass and nail the brakes. When passing multiple cars, watch for the cars deciding to pass also, glance in your mirrors before pulling out to pass.
- 5) **City Street:** Two per lane at stops, 1-2 second rule staggered while riding, don't split traffic, signal and get in correct lane with plenty of time, avoid unnecessary lane changes. With larger groups, it may not be possible to stay together, split into smaller groups and regroup when conditions allow. Leaders should slow between intersections to allow riders to catch up if there is a chance someone could make a wrong turn and also periodically (perhaps every 10 minutes) to make sure everyone is still there. Be sure to signal turns well in advance. If someone gets stranded at a traffic signal (leaders must watch for this!), when safe, the leaders should pull to the side of road in single file and wait for them.

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Motorcycle Rider Communication:

While hand signals are the primary way that bikers communicate when on rides it is not the only way. Other ways of communication include verbal communication, cell phone communication, Chatter Box, and CB communications. Each one of these can be used as a source of information to keep all riders up to date and informed. Let's look at a few of these.

- 1) **Verbal communication:** Skills can usually only be used when riders are stopped at a traffic light on a city street. However, it remains an important communication tool. It can also be used when you are stopped on the freeway while waiting, for example, for an accident to clear or at a Border Patrol Check Point.
- 2) **Cell phones:** can be used while stopped, or they can be used when riding thanks to Blue Tooth technology. Keep in mind to always be safe and observe the rules of the road. It will help to avoid the distraction that cell phone use sometimes causes if we are not careful. A cell phone can sometimes be paired with a Chatter Box too, using the aforementioned Blue Tooth technology.
- 3) **Chatterbox** is a FMS/GMRS device and nothing like a CB (Note: Different frequencies) and expensive. There are FMS/GMRS radios that can be purchased for about \$100 usually for a pair, with VOX that can be setup for a motorcycle. For a few bucks more can be rigged with a Bluetooth device and made hands free. Understand that this cheap setup won't do the things that Chatterbox can do like connect to your phone - GPS - MP3. But it will do two-way com good for a mile or more.
- 4) **CB Radio:** communication is the last form that we will cover here. With today's technological advances CBs can be used hands free, as well. However, not everyone has a hands-free CB Radio. If your group will be using CB Radios to communicate, the Road Captain should include the channel number that everyone will be using in the pre-ride briefing for group rides. Also remember that on some rides CBs are used as primary communication devices for the road captains and tail gunner or assistant road captain to communicate. Please always use CBs as safely as possible. If you are not using it hands free please come to a complete stop prior to using your CB Radio and other communication devices. Remember communication is important. Safely using communication devices is paramount. Also, remember that staying informed is an important aspect of having a safe ride
- 5) **Bluetooth Motorcycle com devices.** Note that these are not like that mentioned above. They are a device that are mounted on the helmet for hands free operation and can be connected to you Mobil Phone - GPS - MP3 - and can communicate with other riders. They are expensive. But there are some that are not unreasonably priced. Few brands are SENA – SCALA - UCLEAR – INTERPHONE.

Road Rage

Road rage takes the form or manifests itself in two ways for motorcyclists. One way takes place when a car driver is angered by something the motorcyclist has done and responds to it in some negative manner. There is also the opposite case. This is when a

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biker is either cut off or experiences some other negative or unsafe road event that causes him or her to respond in a negative way. Both of these forms of road rage that involve motorcyclists are very dangerous and could easily spiral out of control and lead to the injury, jail, or death of any or all parties involved.

It is for this reason that we should be able to recognize when a road rage episode is taking place, although that is not always easy to do when we are in the heat of the moment. When it does happen, we should realize the importance of letting cooler heads prevail. We should also not try to take matters into our own hands. If you think that someone has violated the law or broken a traffic rule, please report that person or persons to the authorities. There is rarely an accident where a motorcyclist was involved and escapes without injury, but if this is the case, exchange information such as driver license info, registration, and proof of insurance with the other driver(s) involved, and turn that information over to your insurance company. Any major accidents of course need to be reported to the police.

Mentor Program:

Purpose: Simple, decrease accidents. Any new rider or members with questions – contact the Chapter Ride Coordinator to be teamed up with a volunteer mentor that will help teach the ropes. Our mentorship program is to help materialize our number one goal, "To ride safe and have fun while representing the American Legion." The beauty of this mentorship program is that riders can ask any question and receive quality counsel without the fear of being ridiculed. We have all been there, the new American Legion Rider with countless questions about motorcycles and motorcycle customs. A new Rider can really benefit from getting great advice from experienced riders. Mentors enhance a rider's experience by serving as role models and advisors. A successful riders program requires the support of its members. A Chapter's informal mentoring program should match experienced seasoned riders with new riders to provide support in safety, helping understand motorcycle dynamics, and to provide knowledge about the American Legion Riders and motorcycle club etiquette.

GET INVOLVED: One of the most exciting and rewarding ways you can volunteer with the American Legion Riders is to become a mentor. It's simple, contact the American Legion Rider's Director and when a new rider request assistance, you'll be there to help.

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Info Sites

ALR DOC

<http://alrdoc.org/home.php>

CA DMV Motorcycle Handbook <https://apps.dmv.ca.gov/pubs>

California Motorcyclist Safety Program (CMSP) <https://www.chp.ca.gov/programs-services/programs/california-motorcyclist-safety>

Acknowledgements:

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ALR DOC Area 5 Safety Representative:	Jeff Dodds (ALR 149)
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For additions and corrections, please contact
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T-CLOCSSM Inspection Checklist



T-CLOCS ITEM	WHAT TO CHECK	WHAT TO LOOK FOR	CHECK-OFF	
T-TIRES & WHEELS				
Tires	Condition	Tread depth, wear, weathering, evenly seated, bulges, embedded objects.	Front	Rear
	Air Pressure	Check when cold, adjust to load.	Front	Rear
Wheels	Spokes	Bent, broken, missing, loose, check at top of wheel: "ring" = OK. — "head" = loose spoke.	Front	Rear
	Cast	Cracks, dents.	Front	Rear
	Rims	Out of round/true — 5mm. Spin wheel, index against stationary pointer.	Front	Rear
	Bearings	Grab top and bottom of tire and flex. No freewheel (click) between hub and axle, no growl when spinning.	Front	Rear
Brakes	Seals	Cracked, cut or torn, excessive grease on outside, reddish-brown around outside.	Front	Rear
	Function	Each brake alone keeps bike from rolling.	Front	Rear
	Condition	Check pads and discs for wear.	Front	Rear
C-CONTROLS				
Handlebars	Condition	Bars are straight, turn freely, handgrips and bar ends are secure.		
Levers and Pedal	Condition	Broken, bent, cracked, mounts tight, ball ends on handlebar levers, proper adjustment.		
	Photo	Lubricated.		
Cables	Condition	Fraying, kinks, lubrication ends and interior.		
	Routing	No interference or pulling at steering head, suspension, no sharp angles, wire supports in place.		
Hoses	Condition	Cuts, cracks, leaks, bulges, chafing, deterioration.		
	Routing	No interference or pulling at steering head, suspension, no sharp angles, hose supports in place.		
Throttle	Operation	Moves freely, snaps closed, no raveling when handlebars are turned.		
L-LIGHTS & ELECTRICS				
Battery	Condition	Terminals; clean and tight; electrolyte level; held down securely.		
	Vent Tube	Not kinked, routed properly, not plugged.		
Headlamp	Condition	Cracks, reflector, mounting and adjustment system.		
	Aim	Height and right/left.		
Tail lamp/brake lamp	Condition	Cracks, clean and tight.		
	Operation	Activates upon front brake/rear brake application.		
Turn signals	Operation	Flashes correctly.	Front left	Front right
			Rear left	Rear right
Switches	Operation	All switches function correctly; engine cut-off, hi/low beam, turn signal.		
Mirrors	Condition	Cracks, clean, tight mounts and swivel joints.		
	Aim	Adjust when seated on bike.		
Lenses & Reflectors	Condition	Cracked, broken, securely mounted, excessive condensation.		
Wiring	Condition	Fraying, chafing, insulation.		
	Routing	Pinched, no interference or pulling at steering head or suspension, wire looms and ties in place, connectors tight, clean.		
O-OIL & OTHER FLUIDS				
Levels	Engine Oil	Check warm on center stand on level ground, dipstick, sight glass.		
	Gear Oil, Shaft Drive	Transmission, rear drive, shaft.		
	Hydraulic Fluid	Brakes, clutch, reservoir or sight glass.		
	Coolant	Reservoir and/or coolant recovery tank — check only when cool.		
	Fuel	Tank or gauge.		
Leaks	Engine Oil	Gaskets, housings, seals.		
	Gear Oil, Shaft Drive	Gaskets, seals, breathers.		
	Hydraulic Fluid	Hoses, master cylinders, callipers.		
	Coolant	Radiator, hoses, tanks, fittings, pipes.		
	Fuel	Lines, fuel valve, carbs.		
C-CHASSIS				
Frame	Condition	Cracks at gussets, accessory mounts, look for paint lifting.		
	Steering Head Bearings	No detent or tight spots through full travel, raise front wheel, check for play by pulling/pushing forks.		
	Swingarm Bushings	Raise rear wheel, check for play by pushing/pulling swingarm.		
Suspension	Front Forks	Smooth travel, equal air pressure/damping, anti-dive settings.	Left	Right
	Rear Shocks	Smooth travel, equal pre-load/air pressure/damping settings, linkage moves freely and is lubricated.	Left	Right
Chain or Belt	Tension	Check at tightest point.		
	Lubrication	Idle plates when hot. Note: do not lubricate bolts.		
	Sprockets	Teeth not hooked, securely mounted.		
Fasteners	Threaded	Tight, missing bolts, nuts.		
	Clips & Cotter Pins	Broken, missing.		
S-STANDS				
Center stand	Condition	Cracks, bent.		
	Retention	Springs in place, tension to hold position.		
Side stand	Condition	Cracks, bent (safety cut-out switch or pad equipped).		
	Retention	Springs in place, tension to hold position.		

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Pre-Ride Brief Sheet

Destination			
Est. Travel Time		Est. Travel Mileage	

Pledge of Allegiance	(Typically, the SAA)
Ride Prayer	(Typically, the Chaplain)

Route (basic overview)	(Insert turn by turn overview, major roads, etc.)

Planned Stops	1.		4.	
	2.		5.	
	3.		6.	

Pre-Ride Notes	(note any hazard areas like construction zones)

Special Notes	

(Insert map/directions here)

Attachment (2)

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Lane Splitting Safety Tips

*******DISCLAIMER*******

Lane splitting can be dangerous and extreme caution should be exercised. It should not be performed by inexperienced riders. The risk of death or serious injury during a lane splitting collision increases as speed and speed differential increases. These general safety tips are provided to assist you in the practice; however, they are not guaranteed to keep you safe. Every rider has the ultimate responsibility for their own decision-making and safety.

Lane Splitting Safety Tips for Motorcyclists

- = Consider the total environment when you are lane splitting (this includes the width of lanes, the size of surrounding vehicles, as well as current roadway, weather, and lighting conditions).
- = Danger increases at higher speed differentials.
- = Danger increases as overall speed increases.
- = It is typically safer to split between the far left lanes than between the other lanes of traffic.
- = Avoid lane splitting next to large vehicles (big rigs, buses, motorhomes, etc.).
- = Riding on the shoulder is illegal; it is not considered lane splitting.
- = Be visible – Avoid remaining in the blind spots of other vehicles or lingering between vehicles.
- = Help drivers see you by wearing brightly colored/reflective protective gear and using high beams during daylight.

For more information on how to sign up for motorcycle training, contact the California Motorcyclist Safety Program at www.californiamotorcyclist.com or 1-877-RIDE-411



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Lane Splitting Safety Tips

LANE SPLITTING—Defined by California Vehicle Code Section 21658.1 as driving a motorcycle, as defined in Section 400, that has two wheels in contact with the ground, between rows of stopped or moving vehicles in the same lane, including on both divided and undivided streets, roads, or highways.

Messages for Other Vehicle Drivers

- = Lane splitting by motorcyclists is legal in California.
- = Intentionally blocking or impeding a motorcyclist in a way that could cause harm to the rider is illegal.
- = Opening a vehicle door to impede a motorcyclist is illegal.
- = Drivers in the far left lane should move to the left of their lane to give motorcyclists ample room to pass.

Safety Tips For All Motorists

You can help keep yourself and all road users safe by:

- = Checking mirrors and blind spots, especially before changing lanes or turning.
- = Signaling your intentions before changing lanes or merging with traffic.
- = Being alert and anticipating possible movements by other motorists.
- = Never riding/driving while impaired by drugs, alcohol, or fatigue.
- = Being courteous and sharing the road.

