

## CVMA 28-6 Group Ride SOP

1. Purpose: The purpose of this SOP is to ensure organized and safe group rides. This SOP provides general guidelines, and should never supersede common sense. During the group rides:
  - We will set the example, and present ourselves as a professional organization. At no time will our actions on the road bring discredit upon the CVMA.
  - We will operate and maintain our motorcycles in a safe and legal manner. We will not ride erratically or at excessive speeds as a group.
  
2. Ride Preparation
  - Arrive prepared – Be prepared to depart on time with a full gas tank. Ensure your bike is ready for the ride (T-CLOCS)
  - Make sure you are alert, feeling well, and have appropriate protective riding gear
  - Any Chapter member operating a motorcycle in a Chapter ride must be properly licensed and insured to operate a motorcycle.
  - The Road Captains will normally select the routing and pre-ride the route prior to the ride in order to identify any potential unsafe conditions and mitigate them when necessary.
  
3. Pre-ride brief.
  - Pre-Ride safety briefings normally will be conducted at least 5-10 minutes before the ride departs (Kick Stands Up: KSU).
  - Will be conducted by the Lead Road Captain and will include the route, rest and fuel stops, and hand signals.
  - A Pre-Ride brief is contained as Annex A to this SOP
  
3. The Ride – Riding with a group can be fun and exciting, but only when everyone in the group observes the same rules. Everyone is expected to observe the following procedures.
  - Positioning:
    - Lead Road Captain – Sets the pace, determines stops and is responsible for overall safety of the ride. The position of the Road Captain will be from the forward left side of the formation.
    - Chapter leadership – Normally rides at or near the front of the formation
    - Sweep (Trail) - Is primary member to stop with any rider who has a problem. Also assists with passing and lane changes. If the designated Sweep/Trail stops to avail assistance, Lead RC will direct another RC to assume Sweep/Trail.
    - New Riders and Guests – will ride at the rear of the formation
    - Trikes– Trikes will travel in a single file position after the last motorcycle, and before the Sweep/Trail.

- KSU and departure - The Lead/ Road Captain will leave first and is followed by all other bikes, which fall into a staggered formation as safely as possible. The Tail Gunner will follow the group. When a large number of bikes are present, The Road Captain may divide them into smaller groups as appropriate. Each group will have a Road Captain and a Tail Gunner assigned to the group.
- Ride within your ability and comfort level – Your own safety, and therefore the safety of the group, are paramount. In all conditions, use common sense to determine what needs to be done. Do not ride beyond your limitations, and NEVER, EVER expect someone else to think for you. If at any time you feel that the ride has exceeded your riding ability or comfort level, or you have safety concerns, you should consider pulling off to the side of the road at a safe place. The Tail Gunner will stop with you. You can then decide whether to continue the ride or not.
- Speed limits. The ride will be generally conducted within the posted speed limits
- Stop signs, Stop lights . Always observe stop signs and lights. In the event the group is separated, the Lead Road Captain will adjust the ride (either by slowing down or stopping at a safe location) until the ride is regrouped. In some circumstances, this may take several miles. BE PATIENT! If you find yourself leading part of the group due to a break and you are not sure of the route, pull over to a safe place.
- Lighting and Radios.–All riders should set their Headlights to Low Beam and turn off any other running lights. This makes it easier for the Lead Road Captain to see the Tail Gunner and determine if a problem has occurred requiring the Sweep/Trail to stop. Riders who have CB radios on their bikes are encouraged to utilize them for group ride communications. Normally, on the longer Chapter rides, more emphasis is placed on using the CB radios. Normally Channel 23 is used.
- Ride in Staggered Formation – The Chapter rides in the staggered formation recommended by the Motorcycle Safety Foundation. The bikes form two columns, with the leader at the head of the left column. The second bike will head up the right column and ride approximately one second behind the leader. The other riders follow the bike directly in front of them by two seconds, which puts them one second behind the diagonal bike in front of them. By using the two second spacing, the distance of the gap will increase with speed. The staggered riding formation (see diagram below) allows a proper space cushion between motorcycles so that each rider has enough time and space to maneuver and to react to hazards. A single-file formation is preferred on a curvy road, under conditions of poor visibility or poor road surfaces, or other situations where an increased space cushion or maneuvering room is required.
- Keeping formation – All riders are expected to maintain their position within the formation. If a rider departs formation, the next riders on that side of the formation pull forward to fill any gaps. This enables all members to maintain 2- second spacing while repositioning.
- Use Hand and Foot Signals –The Road Captain will use hand or foot signals to indicate a change of course, hazards, or other information to the group. Each rider uses the

same signal to pass the information back through the group. If you are new to group riding, only pass the signals back if you are comfortable with taking your hands off the controls. Annex B contains the hand and foot signals used by our Chapter.

- Pull side-by-side at stops, start together with the left bike accelerating faster – This helps move the group through the stops quickly and get as many bikes through the stop light as possible. As the two columns come to a stop, the right column will move up even with the left column. On the start, the bikes leave together with the left bike accelerating faster to reestablish the staggered formation.
  - Yield to Cars (Especially at Entrance Ramps and Lane Changes) – When a car needs to enter from an entrance ramp or is signaling to break into the group, —yield and give them plenty of room.
  - Signal All Turns and Lane Changes with Turn Signal Lights and Hand Signals – The Road Captain will signal for turns and lane changes. You, in turn, make the same signal to pass it back through the group and to signal any other vehicles near you. Normally, lane changes will be completed from back to front, unless the situation dictates otherwise. After signaling for lane change, Tail Gunner will move into new lane in order to allow all other members to make lane change once any traffic has cleared. Before making a turn or lane change and after you have signaled for an appropriate amount of time, Look with your Head, (not in your mirror) to see if you have clear space. If so, then make the turn or lane change. Never move without looking.
  - Fuel stops – Fuel stops will be planned and made according to the smallest fuel tank present within the group.
  - Parking – Riders should pull up to the left of each rider ahead, so that everyone can immediately back into the parking space without waiting. With a little experience, the whole group can get parked quickly, which helps move everyone off the road efficiently. When the group pulls into a parking lot, don't try to be creative. Follow the parking drill with everyone else. Don't ride up behind the next rider, but pull alongside to the left, and immediately roll your machine back into the parking space.
  - Drinking and Driving Never Mix. This is especially true when participating in a group ride.
6. Emergencies – In the event of an emergency requiring a stop, observe the following procedures so that the emergency may be resolved in the safest manner possible.
- Mechanical problem. If a bike or rider problem requires a stop, the rider should signal and stop in as safe a place as possible, preferably well off the road. All other bikes are to pull over, when safely possible, in formation. Following an assessment, Lead may designate trail to remain with the broken bike, appoint a new sweep/trail, and continue with the ride.
  - Accidents – In the event of an accident, the Road Captain will to accomplish the following:

- Ensure everyone stops in a safe location.
  - Notify the authorities by calling 911.
  - Render aid to injured persons. Remember, DO NOT MOVE the injured person or remove their helmet, this should be done by trained emergency response personnel.
  - Maintain the accident scene which includes getting the names, telephone numbers and addresses of witnesses. Take pictures of the scene.
  
- 7. After Action Review - Following the ride a Hot Wash/After Action Review will be conducted .This should be conducted prior to the group breaking for home, i.e.. last fuel stop or rest break area.

## Annex A (Ride Brief):

- Predeparture - fuel top off and safety equipment
- Destination
- Route – including hazardous areas
- Planned breaks
- Speed – drive within speed limits
- Formation – stagger right, 45 degree positioning, no criss-crossing
  - RC will signal for single file on narrow/winding/hazardous roads
  - Side by side (parallel) at stops
- Interval – 2 sec behind rider in front of you, 1 sec with altn lane rider
- Positioning
  - Chapter Officers – front of formation
  - Sweep (Trail) designation – assist and advise RC
  - Trikes – rear of formation, center of lane
  - New riders and guests (behind trail)
- Passing – lead indicates left turn, riders pass signal, trail advises and blocks left. No splitting lanes.
- Breakup
  - Red Light – those thru slow or pull over, re-link after clearing lights
- Commo:
  - CB Channel 23, dispersal within the formation
  - Hand signals (review)
  - Cell phone numbers
- Breakdowns – lead pull over in safe area, trail pull over to assess/assist
  - Tool Kit – location of kit(s)
- Environmental conditions expected, and adjustments required/desired
- Law Enforcement – pull over, RC and Chapter leadership engages
- Emergencies – pull over, render first aid, assess with RC
  - First Aid – location of kit(s), and trained personnel in formation
- Return route and departure from formation
- Questions

Annex B (Hand and Arm 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**