

# Minnesota Patriot Guard

## Safety Guide lines

1/10/2007

These Guide Lines can be adjusted as needed by the following:  
The MN, P.G.R. Board of Directors, State Captains, Ride Captains and the Safety Officers.

Group motorcycle riding is a great experience when common sense, respect for other riders, and safety prevail. Please review these riding rules and tips for your personal and group riding safety.

### **First Thing First:**

The MN P.G.R. and officer are not responsible for accidents, injuries, thefts, etc. Each individual is responsible for any violation of the law.

Riders ride at their own risk.

If you are not comfortable riding in a large group, plan on meeting at the final staging area.

### **Ride Captains with the assistances of ARC if needed.**

Plan the ride, pre-ride all routes if practical.

Print out detailed map and directions for the Lead Bike, Tail Gunner and Blockers if needed.

### **At the Staging area:**

The size of the group, will you need to split up in to smaller groups?

RC will have a Ride briefing to cover the Mission, Ride Speed, Ride Formation, fuel stops, and Hand Signals (Demonstrate).

Identify riders new to group riding.

The RC will place new riders in the group where they are comfortable with them.

Place experienced riders up front who are willing to be back up Blockers if needed. Identify riders with E.M.T. and First Aid training. These riders should ride in the back of the group.

The RC, ARC or the Safety Captain will assign experienced riders for the Lead and Tail Gunner (With radios if available), Blocker positions if needed. Blockers should not have a passenger.

These riders will need safety vest if available.

Riders who choose to ride in a group must do just that, ride with the group.

Top-off your gas tank before you begin the ride. Do a personal and bike safety check, make sure everything is secure before beginning the ride. You and Your Bike should be in good safe running condition. Riders must wear eye protection (MN state law). Do not mix alcohol and motorcycle riding at anytime, especially when riding in a group. No attitudes while with the group. Motorcyclists are very diverse.

## **Out on the road:**

Lead Bike will maintain a safe riding speed, (Posted speed, weather, traffic and road condition permitting). Using hand signals as needed and keeping in contact with the Tail Gunner, using radios if available.

If blockers are being used, give them room to return in line. Do not follow the blockers!

As in the military, Formation is mandatory. Two-up is the typical ride arrangement (riding staggered) Maintain approximately two bike lengths between bikes (two seconds in front and one second on the side) weather and road condition permitting.

Do not ride with 4-way Flashers on this is distracting to others.

If you join in on the ride in progress, merge in at the back of the group. If you should lose something on the road, do not stop until it is safe to do so, or let the cages pick it up.

## **Ride Captain / Lead bike:**

The Ride Captain is responsible for the entire formation. He/She must be aware of the length of the columns, and must gauge the passing of merges, highway entrances and exits, etc., to allow for maximum safety and keeping the group together. He/She must make sure that he/she leaves enough time/space for the formation to get into the appropriate lanes before exits, etc. All directions come from the Ride Captain. Coordinating with the tail gunner, if a radio is available, the Ride Captain makes all decisions regarding lane changes, stopping for breaks and fuel, closing of gaps, turning off at exits, any concerns of what lies ahead, and so on. No individual will assert himself independently without direction from the Ride Captain to do so.

## **Tail Gunner:**

The tail gunner serves as the eyes of the Ride Captain. He watches the formation, and informs the Ride Captain of any potential problems within the group. He watches other vehicles, and informs the Ride Captain (via radio) of hazardous conditions approaching from the rear, such as vehicles trying to cut into the formation and trucks passing with potentially dangerous wind blasts. He will watch for merging lanes, and will move into a merging lane (or stay in a merging lane just vacated by the group) in order to close the door; on other vehicles that may otherwise find themselves trying to merge into the formation. Working with the "Ride Captain" the "tail gunner" will set the pace for the group. At the "Ride Captain's" request, the "tail gunner" changes lanes before the formation, to secure the lane so the formation can move into it.

## **Blockers:**

Blocking intersections is risky and very often, an unsafe practice.

However, an exception is an escorted ride. The RC will assign experienced riders for blockers if needed. Blockers should wear a brightly colored safety vest to be more visible. Turn headlights toward oncoming traffic when blocking and use 4-way Flashers. Urge riders to tighten up and move as quickly as possible through the Intersection. Have enough blockers so they deploy from a group of riders riding ahead of the group to block the intersections, and then fall in at the rear of the pack. On a long ride when the group stops for gas/rest/warm up, redeploy the blockers to the front again. Do not pass on the shoulder of the road.

## **The Safety Captain:**

Will assist the RC in the briefing if needed and do a safety inspection of the bikes and vehicles looking for things that may fall off on the ride.

Conduct a casual walk around to inspect all flag and banner mountings. Things to look for are un-reinforced PVC (with no dowel inside), attachment of flag will not withstand the speed expected due to poor attachment, security of flag staff mounting is questionable (i.e., held on with small bungee cord, or tied on with string, etc.) and if the flag may interfere with mechanicals of vehicle (chain, wheel, steering etc.). Attempt to resolve any difficulties found on the spot, if possible. If group is very large, appoint someone to assist you in the inspection. Should someone have an unsafe condition that cannot or will not be corrected, inform them that they will not be permitted to ride with the group, and why. Should you require support, involve the Ride Captain, or State Captain if available. The intent here is not to prevent anyone from riding with us but to ensure that all riders are safe by using an extra set of eyes. The Safety Captain and Ride Captain must have an agreement on all items relating to safety during the ride.

## **Formation:**

Group riding will follow State Laws. Riding will be in a standard staggered formation unless the Ride Captain or Lead calls for single file. In staggered formation, the bikes form two columns with a 2-second following distance from the front bike and 1 second from the side bike. This formation keeps the group close and permits each rider a safe distance from the others ahead, behind, and to the sides. It also discourages traffic from breaking into the formation. A close group takes up less space on the road, is easier to see and is less likely to separate. The last rider in the group, or tail gunner, brings up the rear and may ride on whichever side of the lane he/she prefers

## **New Riders:**

The positioning of new or inexperienced riders with group riding is very important. This will be up to the Ride Captains. Each Ride Captain has their own opinion on this topic.

Those not comfortable with riding in a large group might wish to choose to ride in a smaller group that will follow at a more laid back pace. They start 4-5 minutes later and travel at the posted speed. the down side is it takes another Road Captain and Tail Gunner for this group, but addresses safety issues with new riders in a large group (50+ bikes or more).

# Hand Signals:

Each rider and passenger should duplicate all hand signals given by the rider in front of him/her, so that the signals will pass all the way to the back of the formation.

**Stop** - arm extended straight down, palm facing back



**Slow Down** - arm extended straight out, palm facing down



**You Lead/Come** - arm extended upward 45 degrees, palm forward pointing with index finger, swing in arc from back to front



**Single File** - arm and index finger extended straight up



**Double File** - arm with index and middle finger extended straight up



**Follow Me** - arm extended straight up from shoulder, palm forward



**Hazard in Roadway** - on the right, point with right foot; on the left, point with left hand



**Pull Off** - arm positioned as for right turn, forearm swung toward shoulder



## **Emergencies:**

If a bike breaks down, let the rider move to the right. **DO NOT STOP.** The tail gunner or cage(s) will stop with the problem bike. The Ride Captain will lead the group to a safe stopping place if needed. The Tail gunner or Cage notifies the RC of the situation either via a rider going ahead to relay the information or calling the RC on a cell phone.

**No one will be left on the side of the road alone.**

## **Accidents:**

In the event of an accident, any person(s) identified as having EMT or First Aid training will be riding at the rear of the pack near the Tail gunner.

The EMT person(s) will give first aid if needed.

Will advise the Tail Gunner to call 911 if there is a need.

They will stay with the downed Rider.

Those witnessing said accident should pull over and wait to talk with LEO.

The rest of the pack proceeds to a safe stopping area.

The Tail gunner call will the RC to report the situation and/or sends a rider ahead to relay the information to the group. Do not allow a tow truck to take the downed bike.

Locate a safe place to park and stay with the motorcycle until a motorcycle hauler can pick it up.

## **Law Enforcement:**

If the police stop the group, the Ride Captain should lead the group to a safe place. Riders should stay in formation. Allow the officer to come to you. The Ride Captain should be the only one who approaches the officer and should promptly identify him/herself.

## **Cages:**

Cages (cars/trucks) will maintain a safe distance from the tail-gunner in the same lane. Do not block traffic in other lanes. They can assist with emergencies if needed.

**Mission is complete after the service.**

**You can ride home in a group or on your own.**

**This will not be an organized ride home.**

