

## **Group Ride Guidelines**

*Adapted and modified for applicability to San Gabriel Valley HOG Chapter by  
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Excerpted from:

### **Southern Cruisers Riding Club: Group Ride Guidelines**

SCRC Group Riding Guidelines [http://www.midtnsrc.org/r\\_guide.html](http://www.midtnsrc.org/r_guide.html)

This Guideline has been compiled using several sources from the Internet and past experience leading group rides.

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### **1. WELCOME!**

The intent of this guideline is to give Ride Leaders and Ride Captains background information to lead group rides safely. Remember this is a Guideline, not a Rulebook.

These guidelines are intended to serve as a basic "primer" for most situations. Each person is encouraged to read, understand, and apply these guidelines, using their best judgment.

While this guideline is focused on the Ride Leader/Captains, all the chapter officers should become intimately familiar with this guide and the safe riding practices.

(Note: Ride Leader may be considered synonymous with Ride Captain)

### **AND CONGRATULATIONS RIDE CAPTAINS!**

You have just volunteered for the most challenging and rewarding position within our club. Once you have been appointed or elected as a Ride Captain, you will have joined a very special team that will help plan, organize, and execute our chapter rides. The following guidelines have been developed to give you a basic understanding of the responsibilities and knowledge expected of our Ride Leaders/Captains, and the methods we employ to help ensure everyone's enjoyable ride experience and safe return home trip.

#### **OBJECTIVES:**

1. Provide for the safety and welfare of all individuals within the group, and any surrounding motorists or pedestrians.
2. Lead the group to its destination and, as necessary, back in a well organized, disciplined, and safe manner.
3. Avoid creating hazardous situations.
4. Be knowledgeable of the state laws and safe riding guidelines.

#### **RIDE CAPTAIN SUGGESTED QUALIFICATIONS:**

1. Maintain a current and valid motorcycle driver's license.
2. Maintain current and valid motorcycle insurance.
3. Recommended: a basic knowledge of First Aid/CPR.
4. Recommended: to have successfully completed a MSF, Experienced Rider Course.
5. Tact & understanding of people should be a high priority. Remember, you were once a new rider; try to deal with problems & issues, as you would want to be treated.

#### RIDE CAPTAIN'S RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. Has full charge of the group until arrival at the destination.
2. Will lead the group in a manner consistent with the objectives and guidelines established by the SGVHOG chapter, and will execute his or her best judgment in situations not specifically covered in these guidelines.
3. Will brief other assigned Ride Captains as to route, responsibilities, and other details pertinent to the ride prior to departure.
4. Will conduct a rider's briefing prior to departure.
5. Will be responsible for the final decision with regard to ride termination due to inclement weather, hazardous conditions, or other difficult or unsafe conditions.
6. Will instruct any rider to ride in a specific position within the group, or leave the group entirely, for reasons of misconduct, disorderly or unsafe riding, or faulty/unsafe equipment. Common sense and tact should be used.
7. If possible be responsible for bringing a well-maintained First Aid kit to the ride.
8. If possible be responsible for bringing a well-stocked tool kit to the ride.
9. If possible, bring a cell phone for 911 purposes and for communication between RCs and Ride Leaders.
10. Will establish and maintain a uniform speed consistent with the ability of the least experienced rider, and with consideration of safe road conditions, traffic, and weather conditions.
11. Will be responsible for initiating all maneuvers within traffic in a "safety first" manner.
12. Will lead the standard formation of a staggered double row, in one traffic lane.
13. Will be at the head of the group, and will ride just to the left of lane center.
14. Will maintain a safe following distance by using the MINIMUM 3-second rule between the group and any vehicle ahead. This distance may be increased at the discretion of the Ride Leader/Captain, but will NOT be decreased.
15. Will command the group to a single file formation when they cannot maintain visual control of the road conditions ahead over a MINIMUM of a 4 second distance, narrow road, mountain/curvy roads, traveling directly adjacent to parked vehicles, or any other condition which may severely restrict the ability of individual group members to perform emergency avoidance maneuvers.

#### SWEEP'S RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. Will assist the Ride Leader/Captain in the performance of his or her duties.
2. May be required to assume the duties of Ride Leader/Captain in his or her absence.
3. If possible, will be responsible for bringing a First Aid kit to the ride.
4. If possible, will be responsible for bringing a well-stocked tool kit to the ride.
5. Will ride at the rear of the group (except when conditions dictate otherwise) unless required to take on the responsibilities of The Ride Leader/Captain.
6. Will be observant of any hazardous conditions or conduct, take immediate corrective action, and inform the Ride Leader/Captain at the earliest safe opportunity. NOTE: The urgency to inform the Ride Leader/Captain is left to the discretion of the observing Sweep.
7. Will normally ride where they can see the formation the best.
8. Lane protection is the Sweep's added responsibility. On the highway, as the group prepares to make a lane change, the Sweep will make the lane change as soon as is safe to do so, following initiation by the Ride Leader/Captain, then the remainder of the group. In this way, the Sweep protects that lane keeping it clear for the entire group to move into this lane.

#### **Some Common Group Riding Terms**

**Pack:** a number of motorcyclists who ride together, generally without maintaining fixed positions or distances between bikes. Packs are occasionally seen with 50 or more motorcyclists in a single formation.

**Group:** a smaller number of motorcyclists who ride together maintaining a generally fixed distance between bikes and maintaining fixed positions within the formation. On rides in which participation by a large number of motorcyclists occurs, it is common to have riders divided into several smaller groups.

**Road Captain:** a person who devises group riding rules or guidelines for a club or chapter of a motorcycling organization, who communicates these guidelines to the club, and who generally assists with coordination between the Ride Leaders and the Ride Captains. The Road Captain may or may not ride Lead or Sweep for a particular ride.

**Lead Bike:** a person who rides in the most forward position in a group (Ride Leader/Captain) and who relays information to all other riders in the group via hand signals. Many chapters and ride groups use CB communications. The Lead Bike determines the group's direction, speed, choice of lane, and formation. He or she often must make quick navigation decisions in the face of road hazards, changes in road surface conditions, poor signage, construction and other obstacles while maintaining control of his or her bike and communicating to those following. If there are three groups on a ride, there will be three Lead Bikes.

**Sweep:** a person who rides in the last position in a group and who supports the Lead Bike regarding the other riders in the group, traffic patterns, equipment problems, etc. he or she observes.

The Sweep must secure a lane for the rest of the group during lane changes into faster traffic (move first to block oncoming traffic) and close the door (move to block passing traffic) when a lane is lost in a merging lane situation. Usually this is the most experienced rider in a group, for the Sweep is the rider who stops to assist a rider who has mechanical trouble, loses control, or drops out of a ride for some other reason. The Sweep should be prepared to render aid to a downed or disabled rider in a group while communicating the problem to the Lead Bike and others in the group. If there are three groups on a ride, there will be three Sweeps.

**Cage:** any vehicle that is not a motorcycle, but particularly an automobile.

**Four-wheeler:** any vehicle that is not a motorcycle except an 18-wheeler, a hack or a trike.

**Group Parking:** a formation in which all bikes in a group follow the Lead Bike in single file into a parking lot, making a U-turn such that they can all line up next to each other in the space available with the rear of their bikes against the curb or edge of the lot, the front tires pointing outward.

**Parade formation:** a formation in which all the motorcyclists in a group ride two abreast.

**Single file:** a formation in which all the motorcyclists in a group ride in one track of a lane.

**Slot:** any position within a group of riders in the right track of a lane, farthest from oncoming traffic.

**Staggered formation:** a formation of motorcyclists in a group in which the Lead Bike rides in the left track of a lane, the next bike in the right track or slot, and the next bike in the left track, and so on. This is the standard formation for group rides, although there are exceptions. In a staggered formation, a rider still commands and may ride in the entire width of his lane as needed. The Sweep may ride in the left or right track depending on the number of bikes in the group, but it is preferable to ride in the left track, so as to have the same visibility line as the Lead Bike.

**Station keeping:** maintaining a fixed position and interval within a group of riders but not riding as Lead Bike or Sweep.

**Track:** the zone of a lane in which a rider maintains his position in a group. A lane of traffic is divided into five zones: the left track is the second zone from the left, the middle of the lane (generally not used) is the third zone, and the right track is the fourth zone from the left. Two zones on the sides of a lane serve as margins. A rider may vary his path of travel from his normal track as is required by a road hazard or by an incursion into the group's lane by other vehicles.

**Two abreast:** a formation in which the members of a group ride adjacent to each other in pairs, used when riding in parade formation. Used after stopping at signs and traffic signals so that riders can get through an intersection quickly and together if possible. When departing from a stop, the rider in the left track normally pulls out before the rider on the right, returning to a staggered formation.

## **2. ALL GROUP RIDERS' RESPONSIBILITIES:**

### **Number One Rule (The 'Prime Directive') In a group ride, the primary job for every rider is to not hit the motorcycle in front of them!**

All group rides should accept the responsibility and:

- a. Will ride in a manner to assure the safety and the welfare of every individual within the group, and any surrounding motorists or pedestrians.
- b. Will follow the instructions of the Ride Leader/Captain in all situations, unless those instructions place the rider or any other individual in an unsafe situation.

- c. Will maintain their motorcycle and other equipment in a safe riding condition.
- d. Will ride with a "safety first" attitude. The safety of all individuals, whether or not they are a part of the group, is of paramount importance.
- e. Will not ride while under the influence of alcohol or drugs that may impair their riding ability.

### **3. RIDING FORMATION AND INDIVIDUAL POSITIONS:**

- a. The standard formation, under good conditions of road, traffic, and weather, will be a double row, staggered, in one traffic lane.
- b. The Ride Leader/Captain will be at the head of the group, and typically will ride just to the left of lane center. The Sweep will ride at the rear of the formation.
- c. New members, guests, and any riders with little experience in group riding should be positioned at the front of the group, just behind the Ride Leader/Captain.
- d. Each rider should maintain his or her starting line up position in the group until arrival at the destination. This allows each rider to become more familiar with the riding style and habits of those nearest him or her in the group, and is particularly important for the new or inexperienced riders.
- e. Under certain conditions the Ride Leader/Captain will signal the group to form a single file formation. The signal is the left arm held overhead with one finger extended. Drop back to a safe following distance from the rider in front of you and move into a single file.
- f. It is recommended that trikes and bikes with sidecars be to the rear of the formation and ride single file at all times ahead of the Sweep.

### **4. SPEED, INTERVALS, AND DISTANCES:**

The Ride Leader/Captain will attempt to establish and maintain a uniform speed; consistent with the ability of the least experienced rider, surrounding conditions, the posted speed limit, the bikes at the ride, and safe riding practices. They should establish before the ride the abilities of the people and the bikes themselves prior to departure. Especially concentrating on new riders, new members and visitors to the ride. The Ride Leader/Captain should continually check his/her mirrors to insure the formation is in good shape.

- a. The Ride Leader/Captains may choose to separate the group of inexperienced riders into a group of their own, consistent with expected or actual conditions, making sure there is an acting, experienced Ride Captain and Sweep to guide them.
- b. All riders will make an effort to maintain the same speed to minimize the effect of irregular speeds on riders at the rear of the group.
- c. All riders will maintain a safe distance and lane positions between themselves and the rider directly ahead to be consistent with existing road, traffic, and weather conditions.

### **5. Minimum Safe Following Distances:**

- a. Within the group, a safe distance is defined as a MINIMUM TWO SECOND DELAY between the rider, and the next rider directly ahead. This means that there is a MINIMUM of a ONE SECOND DELAY between staggered riders. Whenever a **single file formation** is employed, a safe distance remains defined as a MINIMUM of a TWO SECOND DELAY between the rider, and the rider directly ahead.
- b. Too many people get hung up with; "there must be only 2 seconds between bikes". This is a guideline for average highway riding. The gap should be determined by the speed and road conditions. The gap should be established before the ride for the sections of road to be traveled. The faster the speed, the more spacing there should be. With that said, we also do not want huge gaping gaps in the formation where other vehicles will attempt to break into the formation. The gap should be consistent throughout the formation.
- c. With respect to vehicles ahead of the group, a safe distance is defined as an ABSOLUTE MINIMUM of a THREE SECOND DELAY between the Ride Leader/Captain, and any vehicle directly ahead of the group. If a car pulls in front of the formation, make adjustments to keep a good distance.

**NOTE: It's important to keep in mind that a two second interval is a MINIMUM safe requirement in order to react in the event of a potentially hazardous condition, NOT TO STOP. In group riding, a one-second interval between STAGGERED riders is a policy consistent with the recommendations of most traffic and safety agencies. STAGGERED motorcycles are considered to be in a "virtual" lane of their own, that is that there is a two-second interval between motorcycles in a direct line. This group riding technique requires all participants to constantly ANTICIPATE an EMERGENCY.**

## 6. TRAFFIC LANES:

The Ride Leader/Captain will attempt to lead the group in a single lane when:

- a. The traffic flow appears to be most consistent with the speed of the group (using lane changes only when necessary to pass slower traffic or to avoid a hazardous condition); and to avoid blocking faster surrounding traffic.
- b. On highways with two lanes each direction, the group will normally travel in the number two lane, also known as the "SLOW" lane, (ref. Note below) allowing faster traffic to pass to left; except when passing slower traffic on the right.
- c. On highways with three or more lanes in each direction, the group will normally travel in the number two lane keeping the right lane open for other vehicles entering and exiting the highway, and the left lane(s) for traffic to pass.

**NOTE: Lanes are counted from left to right. The left lane is often referred to as the "FAST" or "PASSING" lane, and is counted as lane number one. Remaining traffic lanes are then counted up until the right most, or "SLOW" lane is counted.**

## 7. LANE CHANGES AND PASSING:

- a. On a multi-lane highway, the double row staggered formation will normally be maintained.
- b. The Ride Leader/Captain will hold his or her position and signal intent for a lane change.
- c. All riders will hold their positions and pass the signal to the rear.
- d. The Sweep will change lanes at the first safe opportunity, protecting the lane for the group, and allowing the Ride Leader/Captain to see that the lane is clear and protected. The Ride Leader/Captain should be aware of when the Sweep has changed lanes by using his mirrors. All riders should always make a head check to insure no cars or other vehicles are beside the formation.
- e. The formation will change lanes using the "follow the leader" approach. The Ride Leader/Captain will make a definite hand signal, indicating to the formation he is moving into the other lane & change lanes first followed by all other riders moving from the front to the rear of the group.

**NOTE: NOBODY, except the Sweep, is to change lanes before the Ride Leader/Captain. ALWAYS make a HEAD CHECK before you begin the lane change, and maintain safe distances. There are also times when there will be minimal traffic the Ride Leader/Captain may signal a lane change and move over (after checking to make sure it's clear).**

- f. There are times it will not be possible for the entire group to change lanes as above. When this situation arises, the Ride Leader/Captain will signal for a turn, and signal the group with one finger extended into the air. This indicates that changing lanes as a group is not possible. The Ride Leader/Captain will then change lanes when safe to do so. Everyone signals, head checks, and changes lanes front to back, as individuals, when safe

to do so. Should the group become separated, regroup when it is safe to do so. Please use known good safety practices, INCLUDING HEAD CHECKS.

- g. On a two-lane road with two-way traffic (one lane each way), a single file formation should be used when passing other vehicles. The Ride Leader/Captain should also maintain a steady speed after the slow moving vehicle has been passed allowing the individual riders room to move back into formation ahead of the passed vehicle.

- h. If for any reason the group becomes separated, merge safely back into the formation, returning to your original position, using known good safety practices. Don't feel it's necessary to break the world land speed record in trying to catch up. The Ride Leader/Captain will be aware and adjust accordingly once they are clear of the passed vehicle.

**NOTE: Be certain the road is clear, and always make a HEAD CHECK immediately prior to initiating any maneuver that may cause you to cross other road users. The Ride Leader/Captain, your mirror, or what you saw just a second ago are no substitutes for your own eyes and good judgment and common sense!**

## 8. GAS, FOOD, REST STOPS, AND TOLLS:

- a. As necessary, due to the length of the trip, gas, food, and rest stops should be discussed and scheduled

prior to departure. These scheduled stops should be adhered to as much as possible, depending on varying conditions as the trip progresses.

- b. Deviation from the scheduled stops may be required due to varying weather, traffic, and bladder conditions (availability of gas, rider fatigue, and other unforeseen circumstances).
- c. Gas and rest stops should be limited to no more than ten to fifteen minutes, depending on the size of the group. Remember the last rider in the group waits the longest, therefore has the shortest rest period.
- d. If toll stops are included, money should be collected in advance. If available, a riding couple should be positioned in the number two slot. As the group approaches the tollbooth, the Ride Leader/Captain will allow this bike to assume the lead position in order to exchange the toll. The Ride Leader/Captain will assume the lead as soon as it is safe to do so. If a riding couple is not available, it then becomes the Ride Leader/Captain's responsibility to pay at the tollbooth.

**NOTE: Remember to avoid the center of the lane when nearing or passing through a tollbooth. They are usually extremely slick.**

#### **9. UNSCHEDULED OR EMERGENCY STOPS:**

- a. Unscheduled stops for gas, restroom, or rider fatigue can lead to confusion in the group, and confusion can lead to accidents. The Ride Leader/Captain should be informed that a stop is necessary in order to lead the group in an organized fashion to the next convenient and safe place to stop.
- b. Any rider with an equipment problem should inform one of the Officers / Ride Leader/Captain / or Sweep as quickly, and as safely as possible.
- c. When the Ride Leader/Captain is informed, he or she will stop the group at the earliest possible moment, when and where, it is safe.
- d. If the rider must pull over immediately, ONLY the Sweep or assigned formation mechanic will accompany that rider to a stop. If there is an assigned mechanic, they should be at the rear of the formation. The Ride Leader/Captain should constantly check riders following to be aware of this situation. As soon as the Ride Leaders/Captains become aware of a break in the ride group, they should safely bring the remaining group to a stop to communicate with the Sweep to determine the nature of the problem and act accordingly.
- e. Any rider observing a problem with another rider's equipment should inform that rider as quickly and safely as possible. If it appears that a stop is necessary, the Ride Leader/Captain should also be notified.
- f. The Ride Leader/Captain should use good judgment and common sense when choosing a spot to pull over. Try to avoid an area with hazards to motorcycles, such as broken glass, trash, loose sand, gravel, and fresh asphalt.

#### **10. ACCIDENTS:**

- a. In the event the group comes upon the scene of an accident or if someone in the group is involved in an accident, the Ride Leader/Captain will stop the group at the earliest possible moment and safe location. It may be necessary for the group to disperse and park separately to avoid creating additional hazardous conditions.
- b. Members of the group will provide assistance in any practical way possible, including, but not limited to:
  - 1. Slow, divert, or stop traffic in a safe manner, using flares if available.
  - 2. Aid and comfort those involved.
  - 3. Call 911 to notify the Police, Ambulance, and or Fire service as the situation demands.
  - 4. If possible, take photographs. Obtain names and addresses of witnesses if necessary.













#### **11. HAND SIGNALS:**

- a. At all times, standard hand signals will be used for: changing the formation to a single row and back to double staggered, all turns, lane changes, slowing, and stopping. Turn signal lights will also be used at all times.
- b. All signals will be relayed to the rear of the group to allow all riders to take appropriate precautionary measures, and be aware of changes in speed and direction. Once the hand signal is given and the person sees in their mirror that it is being passed on, they may return to gripping their handlebars with both hands. The only one that needs to "hold" the hand signal is the Sweep until he / she reaches the spot of the maneuver, based on following traffic.

- c. Hand signals will be used at all times, to point out road hazards to following riders by pointing.
- d. Left arm held high, one finger extended overhead indicates single file, and extended following distance.
- e. Left arm held high, one finger extended over head, followed by the Ride Leader/Captain signaling and changing lanes indicates:
  1. The Ride Leader/Captain will move as an individual, to whatever maneuver or position is required.
  2. The group will follow as individuals, in a "follow the leader" approach, signaling and following the Ride Leader/Captain as appropriate and safe.
- f. Left arm held high with two fingers extended overhead indicates the standard staggered formation.
- g. Left arm held low & to the side - palm facing backwards, indicates slow and or stop.

RIDE GUIDE

## Hand Signals

<p><b>Stop</b></p> 	<p><b>Slow down</b> move hand up and down</p> 	<p><b>Speed up</b> move hand up and down</p> 
<p><b>Turn signal on</b> open/close thumb + finger</p> 	<p><b>You lead</b> point directly in front</p> 	<p><b>Start engines</b> move finger in a circular motion</p> 
<p><b>Single file</b></p> 	<p><b>Staggered formation</b> twist back and forth</p> 	<p><b>Double file</b></p> 
<p><b>Pull off road</b></p> 	<p><b>Hazard on road</b> right side</p> 	<p><b>Hazard on road</b> left side</p> 

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### 13. TIPS & Considerations...

#### **Nothing can replace Good Judgment and Common Sense!!!!**

1. It is recommended for the Ride Leader/Captains to have scouted the route prior to conducting the ride.
2. Be aware of places you may have to stop. Watch for loose gravel or sand.
3. The arrows painted on the lanes indicating the lane traffic flow become slick when wet.
4. Watch for oil slicks around stoplights, stop signs or around areas where cars may have to sit for a period of time.
5. When pulling out from a stop sign or stoplight and after making a turn, an even, steady acceleration is highly recommended. This will keep the formation together better than speeding up & having to slow back down. Do not slow to make sure the formation is following. This will cause a back up & may actually prevent the rear bikes from making it through the light. If the formation is broken by whatever reason, keep the speed limit to 5-10 miles below the posted speed limit to allow the rest of the formation to catch up. You do not need to stop, (this is a judgment call based on the road & the traffic flow).
6. If the formation is broken, and there is a turn in the route, the formation does need to stop as close to the turn as possible, allowing the trailing group to see where you turned. You may also instruct (prior to the ride in the pre-ride brief) that the last person in line wait at the corner to guide the rest back up to the formation. This is the Ride Leader/Captain's decision based on what they know of the route, the traffic, and safe riding practices.
7. Summer time & asphalt do not mix well, kickstands will sink in & the bike may fall over. Be aware of where you park. (A small 4-6" metal plate will prevent a tip-over)
8. All riders need to pay attention to the bikes and traffic around them !!!! Nothing worse than a bike hitting another bike in formation because they were not paying attention.
9. If you need to speed to get to your destination - you should have made better plans & started earlier. Chapter group rides are supposed to be enjoyable experiences and not racing events.
10. Riders..... So what if the Ride Leader/Captain makes a wrong turn, sometimes that's how you find that hidden special road!!!!!! Follow the Ride Leader/Captain!
11. If you think you need to burn a whole tank of gas before you stop for a 5 minute break, you are missing half the fun of riding with a group. The BS sessions at stops are all part of the experience.
12. If you know the trip will take 3 hours, plan on it taking 4. Something will always happen to cause a delay. The larger the group, the more time you should allow for rest stops, gas breaks, food breaks, etc.
13. The MSF used to teach that you stop with your RIGHT foot on the ground and the other on the peg. That was changed to LEFT foot down so that you could keep your right foot on the brake. In either case, by definition, your bike is not vertical with only one foot on the ground. If you must make a fast departure (to get out of somebody's way, for example), it takes more time to do so with one foot down rather than two. This, because you must straighten the bike as you depart, you have a more erratic start, and you must first take your right foot OFF the brake - all time consuming. Finally, you can probably rather easily handle a smaller bike with one leg, but a large touring bike is another case entirely; BOTH feet down are strongly recommended. [There are always exceptions to the rule, of course. If you are stopped at a light on a severe incline, your right foot belongs on the brake pedal. Similarly, in a panic stop situation you want to stop with your foot still on the rear brake.]
14. REMEMBER! Too much following distance can be just as bad as, and frequently is WORSE than too little following distance. If the formation lacks uniformity in what we appear to be doing, then we don't "look" like we are "together" as group. And we become regarded as random individual vehicles in the traffic pattern, and not like a group or unit trying to function as one vehicle. Too much following distance INVITES cars into the formation, splitting it up in traffic. And if we don't control our lane space the cars WILL take it away from us. Be prepared! Non-motorcycling car drivers really do NOT understand what we do when we ride as a group or why. So, if a car starts to blindly move into or through the group - LET THEM IN. We can always re-form the group a little later down the road.

**Footnote: If you are new to group riding or are uncomfortable riding in a group, please let the Ride Leader/Captain know. Excessive following distance defeats the purpose of maintaining an equally spaced stagger formation. It is much better for your safety and the safety of the group that you ride individually 1/4 mile behind the group. And we want to encourage you to be comfortable about making that choice.**

15. If you need to leave the ride early, please notify the Ride Leader/Captain AND the Sweep where you plan on leaving the group. If possible be at the rear of the formation (ahead of the Sweep) prior to leaving the group. Any bikes following should move up into the standard group riding positions.

16. Blocking - Remember, the cars on the road have the right of way and blocking is considered illegal. Blocking should only be done with prior arraignment with the local law enforcement officials. It may take a few extra moments to wait for the traffic to clear, this will keep the formation together and Safer. If the formation does get split up - refer to the section on rejoining the formation.

17. TUNNELS... Numerous tunnels exist on the roadways. Some are quite long. There may be no lighting in tunnels. Cars are required to turn on lights, but some don't. On a cycle, the instant of going from Sunlight to Darkness is disorientating. Your eyes are not used to the dark. The first thing you do is instinctively brake a little. The eyes of car drivers as well do not adjust to darkness instantly. They may not even see the yellow line on the road in a tunnel. In addition, bicyclists may be encountered in tunnels as well. **SO, WHEN APPROACHING TUNNELS, SLOW FAR AHEAD OF TIME, ALLOW MORE SPACE BETWEEN RIDERS, GET INTO SINGLE FILE. STAY AWAY FROM THE YELLOW LINE.** You may encounter one tunnel after another so maintain this safe riding posture as long as you are in "Tunnel areas" of the parkway.

18. CURVES... Many roads in the mountain are switchbacks, with non-stop sharp curves. You are riding along at 40 mph, come into the curve and you are down to 15. With a tight curve, riders behind you cannot see that you braked, or have little room to brake and slow, so it is easy to get bunched up. **STAY IN SINGLE FILE ALWAYS, MAINTAIN GREATER SPACING BETWEEN RIDERS, PAY ATTENTION.** Also be aware that after heavy rains on these kinds of roads in the mountains, that sand and mud will be washed down onto the road & can make the curves & corners very dangerous. There are many opinions on curves. A lot depends on how sharp the curve is. This is one of the many reasons to ride in a good even single formation. This allows riders to be able to shift in the lane to take a curve better. Several organizations have established signals to spread out the gap & this works well before going into curves to allow more freedom for the individual riders to have more space to work with. If the RC sees that the curve may be a little sharp for the group, he/she can anticipate by signaling to slow down before going into the curve. If they are sharp curves, many recommend single file spaced at least 3-4 seconds apart. A pre-ride of the route is always recommended.

**The biggest thing to remember is to always use good judgment & common sense.**

**Ride Safe and Have Fun!**