



STAR Touring & Riding Road Safety Guidelines

About 5 minutes before departing on the ride have a pre-ride meeting, discussing your route and safety guidelines. Being sure to go over ride formations and hand signals. Make sure everyone understands them. Let the group know where you will be stopping for rest and/or fuel breaks, also be sure to tell them how long of a ride it will be.

Once the ride has begun the **Road Captain** should initiate the ride formation you will be using. The Road Captain should always ride in the forward left position of the lane the group is traveling in. When riding in any group it is a good rule of thumb to follow the 2 second rule. This rule is followed as such, while in the staggered formation the bike in front of you will be staggered from your position so that they are not directly in front of you, leading you by approximately 1 second. The bike directly in line with your position will then be 2 seconds ahead. This formation will allow ample time for any quick maneuvers or any hard breaking that may be required.

The **Road Captain** should keep the interval between breaks to a reasonable length of time and distance, especially for the passenger or co-rider as they may tire more easily, due to a more restricted area.

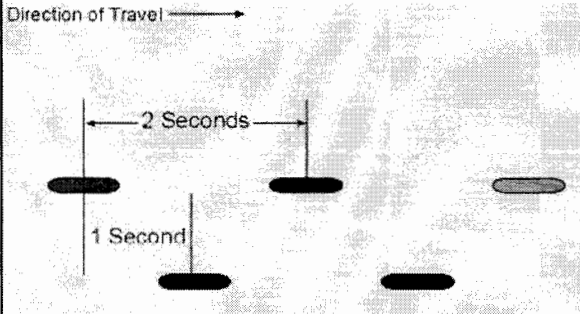
Keep to the right at all times unless conditions warrant being in a different lane or unless you are passing. When doing any passing make certain that there is ample room and only one bike should pass at a time. After The Road Captain has passed they should keep their speed up to assure room for the rest of the group, only after the **Tail Gunner** has passed should the Road Captain reduce his speed to re-group and resume formation, and continue at cruising speed.

If you notice that the group is spreading out or one bike in particular has fallen back, indicate to the group to tighten up. The Tail Gunner has the best view of the group and is just as responsible for the group's safety as the Road Captain is.

When the group needs to pull off the road for whatever reason, find an area large enough for the entire group. Be sure to signal when pulling off and to indicate to the group that you are slowing down and turning. Pull into the area and swing your bike with the front end out. Back into the area and have the other bikes follow suit.

The following pages contain recommended hand signals, and an excerpt from an article by Mark Mauss. Mark's article also has some information concerning hand signals. We have made every attempt to assure they are the same although you may notice slight differences.

STAGGERED FORMATION



- = Road Captain
- = Group Bike
- = Tail Gunner

The typical formation is a Staggered Formation. When riding in the staggered formation the **Road Captain** will be in the left most position and the second bike will be to his right and 1 second behind. This formation creates two rows each rider 2 seconds behind the rider directly ahead and 1 second behind the rider in the staggered position. This formation creates a 2 second “safety cushion” allowing for reaction time. The Tail Gunner will be the last bike.

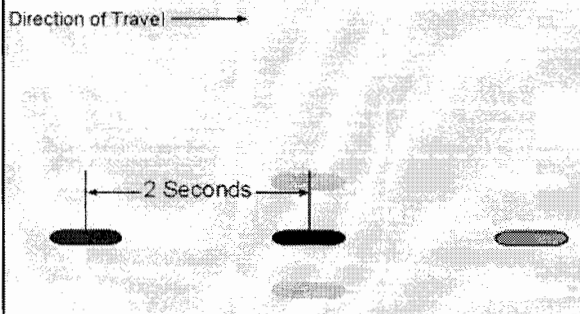
There may come a time when you will need to “tighten up” as a group, due to traffic and/or road conditions. This is signaled by the **Road Captain**, he will extend his arm skyward and opens and closed his hand.

Tighten-Up FORMATION



- = Road Captain
- = Group Bike
- = Tail Gunner







SINGLE FORMATION




- = Road Captain
 - = Group Bike
 - = Tail Gunner
- } Alternate Single File Lane Positions

When road conditions or obstacles warrant it is recommended to go to a single file formation. This is signaled by the **Road Captain** by raising his arm and pointing 1 (one) finger in the skyward. You must maintain a safe two second distance between all bikes. You can return to a staggered formation only after the **Road Captain** raises his arm skyward with his thumb and little finger skyward.



These next two pages contain examples of some of the more common hand signals that your group will be using. When you are involved in a group riding situations you need to make sure that you and your group know and understand these signals. All signals initiated by the Road Captain must be repeated by all riders to ensure that they are received by the Tail Gunner. These signals are designed for your safety and the safety of the entire group.

<p>Start Engines With your right or left arm extended, move your index finger in a circular motion</p>	
	<p>Left Turn Raise your left arm horizontal with your elbow fully extended</p>
<p>Right Turn Raise your left arm horizontal with your elbow bent 90 degrees vertically</p>	
	<p>Hazard Left Extend your left arm at a 45 degree angle and point towards the hazard</p>
<p>Hazard Right (A) Extend your right arm at a 45 degree angle and point at the Hazard. Extreme Hazard</p>	
	<p>Hazard Right (B) Extend your left arm upward at a 45 degree angle with your elbow bent to 90 degrees and point towards the hazard over your head</p>



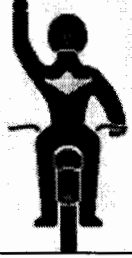

Speed Up
Raise your left arm up and down with your index finger extended upward. This indicates the Road Captain wants to speed up.

Slow Down
Extend your left arm at a 45 degree angle and move your hand up and down.




Stop
Extend your left arm at a 45 degree angle with the palm of your hand facing rearward.

Single File
Position your hand over your head with your fingers extended upwards. This indicates the Road Captain wants the group in a single file formation.



Staggered Formation
Extend your left arm upward at a 45 degree angle with your index and pinkie finger extended. This is to indicate that it is safe to return to staggered formation

Tighten Up
Raise your left arm and repeatedly move up and down in a pulling motion. This means the Road Captain wants the group to tighten up



Rules For Group Riding

Compiled by Marc Mauss

The purpose of riding in an organized group instead of an undisciplined pack is to provide the additional safety that a well-organized group inherently generates. This comes from within the group and from the outside. When a group rides in an orderly fashion, people don't get in each others way, and the organization of the formation itself discourages cars from attempting to cut in. I have seen trucks move to the far side of their lane to minimize wind blast when they see a well-ordered formation "single up" and move as far away from the truck as their lane allows.

Once riding rules have been adopted by a group, **EVERYONE** riding with that group is expected to follow them. Anyone violating the rules and compromising everyone's safety, will be warned, and if their actions continue , will no longer be welcome to ride with the group.

The following rules are compiled from a number of sources. Most groups that ride in orderly formations follow similar rules. Details may vary from one group to another, sometimes because of the style of riding they do, or sometimes because there are a number of reasonable options, so they choose the one they prefer.

Contents

- 1) Formation
- 2) Ride Leader (Road Captain)
- 3) Tail Gunner
- 4) New Riders and Shepherds
- 5) Lane Changes
 - A. Simple Lane Change
 - B. Block Lane Change
 - C. Rear Fill-in
- 6) Emergencies
- 7) Tolls
- 8) Hand Signals

1) Formation

Riding will be in a standard staggered formation unless the **Road Captain** calls for single file. In staggered formation, the bikes form two columns, with the **Road Captain** (ride leader) at the head of the left column. The second bike will head the opposite column, and will ride approximately 1 second behind the **Road Captain** (and in the opposite side of the lane). The other riders will position their bikes 2 seconds behind the bike directly in front of them, which puts them 1 second behind the bike diagonal from them.

This formation allows each rider sufficient safety space, and discourages other vehicles from cutting into the line.

The last rider, or **Tail Gunner**, may ride on whichever side of the lane he prefers. He will wave to change sides during the ride, based on the situation at the moment.

2) Road Captain

The **Road Captain** (ride leader) is responsible for the safety of the entire formation. He must be aware of the length of the columns, and must gauge the passing of merges, highway entrances and exits, ect. to allow for maximum safety and for keeping the group together. He must make sure that he leaves enough time/space for the formation to get into the appropriate before exits or turns.

All directions come from the **Road Captain**. The **Road Captain** makes all decisions regarding lane changes, stops for breaks and fuel, closing of gaps, turning off at exits, any concerns of what lies ahead, accepting/rejection radioed messages from other individuals and so on. **NO** individual will assert himself independently without direction from the **Road Captain** to do so.

3) Tail Gunner

The **Tail Gunner** serves as the eyes of the **Road Captain**. He watches the formation, and informs the Road Captain of any potential problems within the group. He watches other vehicles, and informs the Road Captain (and anyone else with radios) 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. At the Road Captain’s request, the Tail Gunner changes lanes before the group, to secure the lane so the group can move into it.

4) New Riders & Shepherds

The position of new (inexperienced with GROUP riding) riders within the group is significant. New riders should be positioned as close to the front as possible. New riders should be teamed up with an experienced Shepherd. It’s the Shepherd's responsibility to instruct the new rider on all ride signals and rules.

5) Lane Changes

All lane changing starts with a radio request from the Road Captain to the Tail Gunner. The Tail Gunner will (when it is safe to do so) move into the requested lane and will inform the Road Captain when the lane is clear.

At this point the Road Captain has three options.

A) Simple Lane Change. This is an ordinary lane change, and can be used in most situations.

After the tail gunner has secured the new lane, the Road Captain will put on his directional signal as an indication that he is about to order a lane change. As each rider sees the

directional signal, he also turns his on, so the riders following him get the signal. The Road Captain then initiates the change. All other riders change lanes too. The important concept is that NO ONE moves until the bike in front of him has started moving.

B) Block Lane Change. This can be used interchangeably with the Simple Lane Change. It requires a little more work, but it is well worth the effort. It's quiet impressive to watch, and gives the riders a tremendous feeling of "togetherness". This sounds a little complicated, but is actually very simple to do. After The Tail Gunner has secured the new lane, the Road Captain will put on his directional signal as an indication that he is about to order a lane change. As each rider sees the directional signal, he also turns his on, so the riders following him get the signal. The Road Captain then raises his left arm straight up. Each rider repeats the signal. Then, as the leader lowers his arm to point to the lane into which he's moving, he actually initiates the change. All other riders lower their arms at the same time and change lanes too. This allows the entire formation to move from one lane to another as a single block.

C) Rear Fill-in. This is sometimes necessary if a long enough gap cannot be maintained in the new lane, for example when trying to move from the right lane to the center and vehicles from the left lane keep cutting into the opening.

After the Tail Gunner has secured the new lane, the Road Captain (usually at the suggestion of the Tail Gunner) will call for the group to fill in the space from the rear. He signals this by raising his hand and "pushing" it towards the new lane. All riders repeat the signal, and the last bikes move into the space in the new lane ahead of the Tail Gunner, then the next bikes move in ahead of those, and so on until the Road Captain finally moves into the space ahead of the entire formation.

6) Emergencies

In the unlikely event of an emergency condition, the Road Captain will make every attempt to move the formation to the shoulder in an orderly manner. If a bike breaks down, let the rider move to the right. DO NOT STOP. The Tail Gunner will stop with the problem bike. The road Captain will lead the group to a safe stopping place.

7) Tolls

The Road Captain should be aware of tolls and collect money from all riders in advance. When the formation arrives at the toll booth, the Road Captain pays for all bikes, and the bikes proceed through the toll booth. Many toll booths have counters that count the number of vehicles coming through. To accommodate these, ride through the toll booth one at a time.

If some people in the group are using EZ pass, they will split out from the group, and they will regroup on the other side of the toll booth. Make sure the Road Captain know in advance how many bikes he is paying for.

8) Hand Signals

Each rider and passenger should duplicate all hand signals given by the rider in front of them, so that the signals get passed all the way to the back of the formation. The following signals are used in addition to the standard (right, left turn, slow/stop) hand signals

Block Lane Change

The Road Captain (after having the Tail Gunner secure the lane) Raises his left arm straight up. Each rider repeats this signal. Then as the Road Captain lowers his arm to point to the lane into which

he's moving, he actually initiates the change. All other riders lower their arms at the same time and change lanes too.

Fill In From Rear

After having the Tail Gunner secure the lane and putting on his directional signal (which is repeated by each rider), the Road Captain raises his left hand to his shoulder and "pushes" his open hand toward the lane into which he wants to move. This signal is repeated by all riders, and each rider in turn, rearmost first, moves into the space ahead of the riders behind them.

Single Up

When conditions warrant single file (narrow road, anticipated wind blast from trucks, obstructions, pedestrians, ect..) the Road Captain will raise his left hand straight up, holding up just his index finger. All other riders will repeat this, and the two columns will merge into one.

Staggered Formation

After Singling Up, when single file is no longer necessary, the Road Captain will raise his left hand with the thumb and pinky out, other fingers closed, rotating his wrist back and forth (indicating left, right, left, right). All other riders will repeat this and resume staggered formation.

Tighten Formation

When the Road Captain feels that the formation should be tighter (bikes closer together) (Usually after being informed by the Tail Gunner), he raises his left hand with fingers spread wide and repeatedly closes them into a fist. All other riders repeat this and close up all unnecessary space in the formation.

Road Hazard

This is one signal that can be initiated by ANYONE. Anyone seeing a hazardous condition on the road surface (road kill, oil, gravel, significant pot hole, ect..) will point at it. All following riders will repeat this, and all riders will avoid the hazard.