

Women In The Wind, Ladies of Chrome and Leather Chapter

Ride Guidelines (8-6-11)

The following guidelines and riding tips are offered to make you aware of the skills and techniques that our Chapter uses to make our rides safe, fun, and, courteous to the rest of the highway public. Most riding clubs have their own style of group riding. You may use most of these techniques already, but some may be new to you. For everyone's enjoyment, please read and observe these guidelines when riding with Ladies of Chrome and Leather. ***# Indicates that more information is found on the Expanded Ride Guidelines, attached.**

BEFORE THE RIDE:

- Make sure your bike and tires are in good condition.*1
- Start the ride with a full tank of gas.*2
- Be ON TIME so you hear the pre-ride directions.
- Have a copy of the map/directions as a reference in case you become separated..
- Take care of personal necessities well before the ride is to start.
- Pick someone to be your ride Buddy.*3
- Be sure all saddlebags, clothing and helmets are securely fastened.
- **If you are a new or less experienced rider, ask the Road Captain or Safety Officer where you should ride in the group*4.**
- **The Road Captains/Leads and the Safety Officers/Sweeps often use channel '15.5' on the Chatterbox communication system. You are welcome to listen in but not to talk on this channel. If you wish to chat, please use another channel.**

Road Captain (Lead) is in charge of the rides and all riders. She:

- Develops the ride route, gas and lunch stops.
- Distributes ride maps and/or directions.
- Gives a pre-ride overview of the ride, route, and other points for a safe and fun ride.
- Determines the size of the group or groups, riding order, and where newer or less experienced members, trikes, bikes with sidecars, and bikes with trailers are positioned.*5
- Sets the speed, initiates lane changes, passing, or any stops.
- May select an Assistant to lead the whole group or smaller groups.
- Initiates hand signals, electronic, or other types of group communications.
- Makes whatever decisions are best for the welfare of the group.

Safety Officer (Sweep) is in charge of safety issues for all rides. She:

- Assists with lane changes and group management.
- Communicates traffic conditions, group separations, or rider problems to the Road Captain.
- May speak with riders who are having difficulties or engaging in actions that may be dangerous to themselves or others.
- Will stop with a rider who needs help and pulls out of the group.
- Carries a first aid kit, jumper cables, club emergency cards, and other emergency items.

DURING THE RIDE:

Riding your own ride means that you are responsible for your actions and safety even if you are with a group. Ride within your own limits and the limits of your bike. Do not put yourself or others in danger by trying to keep up, catch up, or take chances. If you find that you are not able to ride within the parameters of the group wave the other riders by you and ride in front of the Sweep.*6

The **maximum speed** of any event will be to keep with the flow of traffic or as posted by law!*7

Know the hand signals and pass all signals to the riders behind you. Leave your hand up until you see the rider behind you pass the signal back.*8

Use both **bike turn signals and hand signals**.*9

Point out dangers, like potholes, to riders behind you. (See hand/foot signals.)

If you choose to **leave the ride**, inform the Road Captain or Sweep. Use the “thumbs up” or “thumbs down” signal to communicate on the road.

The law and courtesy to other riders/drivers: If our group is holding up other traffic the Road Captain will have us change lanes on a freeway or find a safe place for us to stop so faster traffic can pass.*10

We use the staggered formation for most situations.*11

- Keep at least two seconds between you and the rider directly in front of you, and at least one second between you and the rider diagonally in front of you. Each rider should command the entire width of the lane so she can move right or left within the lane as necessary to avoid hazards. No overlapping your front tire with the rear tire of the rider who is ahead of you in staggered or single file formation.
- Ride on the left or right 1/3 of the lane.*12
- No passing or changing positions during staggered formation riding.
- If the rider in front of you leaves the group, you move straight ahead and take that slot in the staggered formation. Do not switch sides of the lane or “tracks.”
- Allow cars to cut through the group. Then resume your position.
- Keep the group together by maintaining the 2 second/1 second rule. Simultaneously, keep a safe distance from the bike in front of you. Know the stopping power of your motorcycle. Maintain consistent speed to avoid the “rubber band” effect and to keep cars from staying between sections of the group.*13

Stop signs, lights, and other stopping situations:

- When the group comes to a stop light, stop sign, or stopping in traffic, riders will close up the spaces between bikes and be two abreast. Rider on the left moves out first; the second rider moves out right after the left bike does. Then resume the staggered formation.
- At **stop signs** each rider must stop, but bikes can stop next to each other at the same time rather than having each bike come to a stop separately.*14

Single file: When the road becomes twisty, narrow, rough or otherwise dangerous, the Road Captain will indicate single file by raising her arm and pointing one finger straight up over her helmet. As always, pass this

signal back. Then each rider moves at least 2 seconds behind the bike in front of her and has the entire width of the lane for riding. The Road Captain/Lead will signal to resume staggered formation by raising her arm and pointing two fingers upward.*15

Lane changes: The Road Captain initiates lane changes. She will use her signal light and a hand signal. These should be passed to the bikes behind you so the Sweep knows what is happening. *Do not change lanes until the Road Captain or the Sweep has moved first! ALWAYS check over your shoulder to be sure it is safe for you to change lanes even in a group situation.* *16

Merging onto the freeway: We merge into the freeway traffic in single file! If there is a vehicle coming and you cannot safely merge with the group, merge when it is safe for you. The Road Captain will go as slowly as is safe until all members of the group are on the freeway and catching up to re-form the group. Do not race, dart in front of vehicles, or otherwise rush to catch up if it is unsafe! The Road Captain will wait for the Sweep to signal that the group is together.

If there is heavy traffic and you are not able to catch up to the rest of the group, just follow the ride directions. The Road Captain will pull over to wait at the next safe place to stop. *If the group is making a turn and you cannot see the rider behind you, wait for her in a safe place so she sees where you are turning.*

Passing on a two lane road:

We follow state laws and obey road markings for passing! The Road Captain will try to pass when there is room for the whole group, but that may not be possible.

Before initiating a pass, check both oncoming traffic and traffic behind you. TURN YOUR HEAD!

*Road Captain may motion that the road ahead is clear, but each rider is responsible for judging if it is safe for her to pass.*17*

Once you start to pass move quickly around the vehicle, then maintain passing speed until you can see the entire front of the vehicle. Look over your shoulder to see that you are well ahead of the vehicle, also. Then move back to your lane and staggered formation, Keep up your speed so the next rider has room to pass and move back into staggered formation behind you.

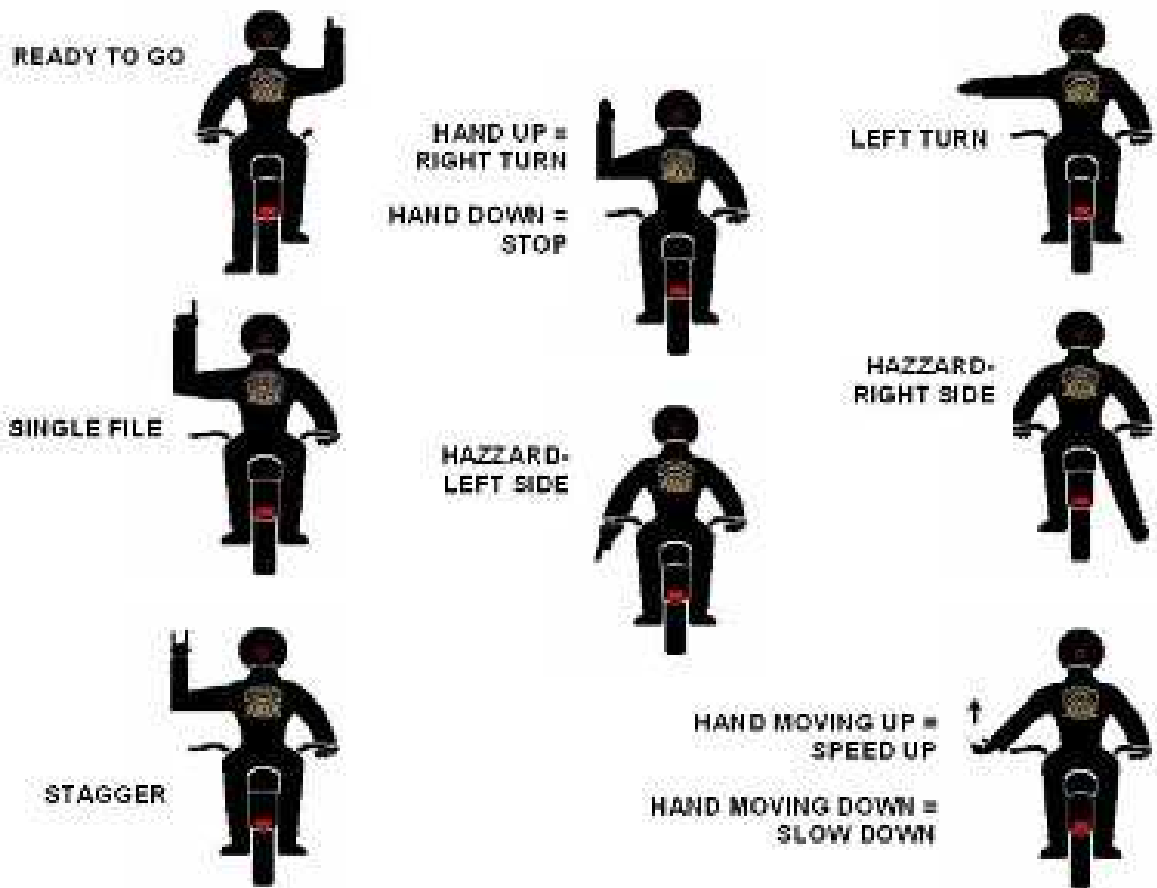
Concern during a ride: If you have a concern, speak to the Road Captain, Safety Officer or one of their Assistants during a stop. If you have a problem while the group is on the road, see attached.* 18

AFTER THE RIDE: The LOCAL ride officially ends at the final destination, usually a place for lunch and socializing. The Road Captain will say, "Ride Over." At that point all are free to stay or leave, return home with others or on their own. We do not drink alcohol during a group ride; members are free to do so after the ride is officially over, but this is not encouraged. Some members may choose to return home in a smaller group and use the LOCAL Ride Guidelines, but that is personal choice.

Expanded Ride Guidelines:

- *1. T-CLOCK, (<http://msf-usa.org/downloads/T-CLOCSInspectionChecklist.pdf>) as mentioned in the basic MSF class, is a good way to check the condition of your bike. Be sure to check tire pressure and fluids at least once a week if riding frequently or before each ride if you do not ride regularly.
- *2. Top off your tank just before you arrive at the meeting place. Know the size of your gas tank and how many miles you can ride on your bike tank. The Road Captain takes this into consideration when she designs the ride route and gas stops.
- *3. We use a 'Buddy' system to be sure no one is left at stops, to help each other out, to speed up getting gas, and to develop more friends. You and your Buddy should check each other's bikes for unlatched saddlebags, burned out lights, etc. before a ride. You ride next to each other in the larger group. At gas stops hopefully you two can share a gas pump. If your Buddy is not with you when the Road Captain gives the signal to start your engines, let her know your Buddy is missing. If you or your Buddy has a problem on the road, the Buddy stops with the problem bike as well as the Sweep. And, you may have a new friend!
- *4. The Road Captain may prefer to have the new or less experienced riders in the back of the group with her Buddy. Be sure your Buddy knows where you will be riding so you can go together. If you prefer not to ride in front of or behind a trike, bike with a sidecar, or a bike with a trailer, position yourself where you are comfortable and/or check with the Road Captain or Safety Officer. Give trikes and bikes with sidecar or trailer the same space as a car.
- *5. Trikes, bikes with sidecars, and bikes with trailers may be asked to ride in specific positions as determined by the Road Captain. This decision may be influenced by the route, the size of the group(s), number of experienced/inexperienced riders, etc.
- *6. If you do not feel comfortable with the speed of the group, the terrain (like steep mountains), or other aspects of the group ride, then tell the Sweep. She will stay with you until there is a stop, will have another experienced rider ride with you behind the group, or keep an eye on you if you prefer to follow the group at your own pace. If you want to go on a particular ride, but are concerned about your skill level, the Safety Officer will arrange for a Mentor or two to ride with you at your own speed.
- *7. All riders should be able to ride the speed limit on freeway, surface, country or mountain roads. If you cannot or do not feel comfortable doing this, speak with the Road Captain and/or Safety Officer; accommodations can be made.

***8. Hand signals**



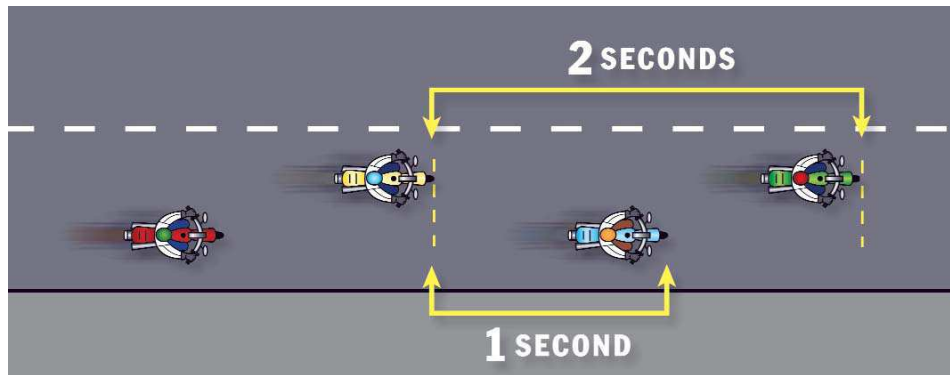
Turn Signal On - open and close hand with fingers and thumb extended



*9. On a busy freeway most car drivers are almost blind to electric turn signals. If you use the hand signal, you will get their attention better as it is a move they do not expect.

*10. Laws and codes in many states, including California, require that a slow moving vehicle move over if 5 or more cars/vehicles are following it. If the group is holding up traffic (5 or more vehicles), the Road Captain/Lead will pull over at the safest spot to let the faster traffic pass.

*11. Staggered formation



*12. Motorcycle position in staggered riding is in the outside left or outside right third of the lane. This allows the Road Captain to see all the riders and the Sweep. It also gives each rider more maneuver space in case of potholes or other dangers. However, also make sure that no part of your bike or body is immediately next to or over the lane line. Especially on narrower lanes, like in older parts of Los Angeles, cars and trucks often hug the lane lines and larger trucks may also hang over the lane lines.

*13. The “rubber band” effect is a cause of many accidents. It generally occurs in larger groups when the front bikes are increasing in speed while the last bikes are still waiting to get moving. As a result, large gaps occur between riders and the end of the group starts riding faster than the speed limit to catch up. If the lead bikes need to stop, the later bikes may be going too fast to stop safely. Leaving large gaps in the group is not fair to the last bikes as they may be caught by stop lights, get lost, or have to ride too fast to stay with the group. It also invites other vehicles to take that space, especially on a freeway.

*14. At stop signs each rider must stop, but stop two abreast. The left bike leaves first and the second bike leaves immediately afterwards. After getting through the intersection resume staggered formation. This allows the group to get through the intersection faster, prevents the group from getting strung out along the road, and lets other traffic get through the intersection quicker, too.

*15. On twisty, narrow, or rough roads each rider needs more space to ride safely. Leave at least two seconds between you and the bike in front of you. You have the right to use the whole lane for maneuvering to avoid dangers or to navigate tight corners.

*16. The Road Captain OR the Sweep may be the first to move into the new lane. Riders wait until the Road Captain moves into the new lane; then riders move into the new lane from front to back. If the Sweep takes the lane first, the riders move into the new lane from back to front. Move into the same lane position you were in before the lane change. (Examples of changing lanes front to back and back to front will be attached here.)

*17. On two lane roads which may be hilly or curvy the Lead or earlier rider can usually see if the road is clear farther than a rider wanting to pass. Some chapters use this method of passing. If the Lead has passed a vehicle and returned to her lane, she may well see that the oncoming lane is still clear enough for others to pass. She may raise her left hand and keep it in the air to indicate that it is clear for riders to pass. If she sees any indication that it is no longer completely safe for those behind her to pass the slower vehicle, her arm drops. Dropping her arm indicates that it is probably not safe

for others behind her to pass. Again, each rider must make the decision to pass for herself. You need to know the passing ability of your bike and your own comfort level in passing.

*18. **Problem Solving:** (Here is where we will put problem solving situations and, hopefully, answer a lot of questions.)

- If you have a concern while riding and feel it needs attention right away get the attention of the Road Captain, Safety Officer, or Sweep. If the situation is life threatening, motion for them to pull off the road so you can communicate the issue and have them help deal with it.
- If you do not feel comfortable with the speed of the group, wave the other riders to move ahead of you and tell the Sweep. She will ride with you, have someone else ride with you, or have you follow the group.
- If someone is following you too closely, use the hand signal to ask them to stay farther behind you.
- If the person in front of you is lagging significantly behind the group, see if she seems to be alright. If not, drop back or signal the Sweep. If she seems fine, try to get her attention and have her speed up. If that does not work you may pass her on the left in the same manner you would in regular traffic. The Sweep will talk with any rider who is having difficulty staying with the group and try to safely resolve the situation.
- If you have a concern about any rider's behavior or safety, speak to or gesture to an officer or the Sweep. You have the right to speak with the rider yourself as long as it is in a polite manner.