

GROUP RIDING

All Salisbury H.O.G. ® rides are led by a **Road Captain (RC)** and are modeled after the guidelines outlined in the Harley-Davidson HOG® Handbook and the *Riders Edge - MSF* video.

Information You Should Know Before a Group Ride:

- **Guest Riders:** Insurance is provided to participants of Chapter rides; therefore, Chapter Members are responsible for ensuring that their guest sign a registration/release form.
- **Minors:** Need a separate release signed by a parent or legal guardian. It is important to note that grandparents are typically not the child's legal guardian and cannot sign for their grandchildren.
- **New Riders or Riders New to Group Riding:** We encourage new group riders to ride next to a RC in either the front or the rear of the ride. Our focus is for each rider to have fun and learn to enjoy riding with a group.
- The Salisbury H.O.G.® Chapter has a **No Alcohol** policy. We do not allow bikers to ride in a group if they have been drinking alcohol either before or during a ride. Our RCs have the responsibility to ask you not to ride in the group if you have been drinking alcoholic beverages. Road Captains have the option to stop a ride if the rider does not leave the group.

Again, the focus is to **ride and have fun**... safely.

Group Rides

Show up for rides 30 minutes before departure. Prior to departure, there will be a pre-ride briefing. Please give the briefing your full attention. Feel free to ask questions! Also:

- Have a full gas tank and an empty bladder.
- **T-CLOCK:** Check your bike before each ride: Tires, Controls, Lights, Oil, Chassis, and Kickstand.
- Have what you will need for the ride with you: rain gear, water, snacks, proper clothing, medications, etc. Come prepared!
- Stay Alert and Ride Safe. Use Common Sense. Be Courteous. Have Fun!
- Inform a RC if you are diabetic, hypersensitive to insects, asthmatic, etc. RC training includes proper response, but we need to know your situation and location of your medical supplies.
- North Carolina law requires the operator and all passengers to wear a helmet when riding a motorcycle. The helmet must be of a type that complies with Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard (FMVSS) 218. Compliant safety helmets will have the symbol "DOT" permanently installed by the manufacturer on the back of the helmet. It will also have a permanently attached label either sewn or glued in the interior of the helmet that has the manufacturer's name or identification.
- Recommended:
 - **Plastic shatter-resistant face shield**, which will help to protect your whole face in the event of a crash. It also protects you from wind, dust, dirt, rain, insects, and pebbles thrown up from cars ahead.
 - **Goggles**, which protect your eyes, though they will not protect the rest of your face like a face shield. A windshield is not a substitute for a face shield or goggles.

Group Riding Maneuvers

When the RCs are ready, the Leader will mount up, pull forward from the parking spot, and wait for the group to get ready. You need to mount up, line up, and get ready to leave. Usually the Lead Bike will not exit a parking lot unless there is room for all or most of the group to follow immediately.

If the group is split, the Lead Bike will take the slow lane until the group can form up in the positions that the riders will keep for the duration of the ride. This may mean traveling slower than surrounding traffic or encouraging cars to pass, allowing the group to reform. Sometimes this cannot be accomplished until the group has made a lane change or has entered a freeway. If the group is too stretched out, the Lead Bike may slow down or pull over in a large parking lot for the group to get back in formation.

Regardless of the Lead Bike's signals, *each rider is responsible for his/her own safety at all times and a group of bikes riding together does not exempt you from the laws of the road.*

Riding Formation

The group will ride in a **staggered formation** starting with the Lead bike in the left side of the lane. Keep a 2 - 3 second distance behind the bike directly in front of you. Staggered formation will continue unless the Lead Bike signals for single file.

Reasons for **single file formation**: passing situation, poor road conditions, and obstacles in the road, approaching a bicyclist or pedestrian, coming to an exit / entrance ramp or tight curves.

Regardless staggered or single file, each rider commands the entire width of their lane and has the right to move left or right as preferred.

Trikes, Sidecars, or Bikes with a Trailer

Ride in the center track. Due to additional weight, allow a longer gap behind these bikes (as if they were a car). The first bike behind a trike/sidecar/trailer returns to staggered formation in the left side of the lane.

Filling the Gap - Cross Over

If a rider drops out of a staggered formation, it is desirable to preserve the integrity of the formation. The bikes that are behind the gap fill it in by crossing right or left into the other column. Do not fill the gap by passing the bike ahead of you.

Stop Signs

Riders are expected to come to a stop side-by-side (two abreast). The riders should proceed through the intersection in pairs when safe to do so. This is the only situation where riders are side-by-side in a traffic lane. Once through the intersection, riders resume their left or right side of the lane. If cars get in-between riders, let them in.

Traffic Lights

Obey traffic laws. Do not 'run' red lights to remain with the group. When safely possible, the Lead RC may pull on the shoulder or a parking lot to allow others to re-join.

Lane Changes

The Lead Bike communicates the lane change with blinker and hand signals. When safe, the Sweep RC will move over early to 'secure' the lane, other bikes hold until Lead Bike moves over. When changing lanes, the group, maintaining a staggered formation, should follow the Lead Bike helping to keep the formation solid and tight. Each rider must make certain the lane is clear by turning his/her head to ensure that there is no other vehicle approaching the group in the new lane.

Two Lane Passing

If the Lead Bike decides to pass a slow moving vehicle, each individual rider must decide if it is safe to follow.

Only pass when you have ample room and visibility to safely complete the pass. Pass one at a time acting as an individual. Never blindly follow another bike in a passing situation. After passing, move far enough forward to allow room for the riders that will come behind you.

Leaving the Group, Unanticipated Stops or Breakdowns

If you plan to leave the group early, notify the RCs. This way they will know that you do not have a problem or need assistance. If you suddenly need to stop or experience a breakdown, signal your intention to pullover and do so safely. At least one of the RCs will stop to assist you. The rest of the group should continue. It is not safe to have dozens of bikes pulled over on the side of the road.

Exceptions to Normal Guidelines

Ride your own ride! Remember that riding in a group does not mean you surrender any decision making when it comes to your safety. This means that any guideline for group riding can and should be ignored when it does not feel right. Determining when this is the case and acting prudently is each rider's individual responsibility at all times.