



## Group Riding Guidelines

### Introduction

The objective of this document is to communicate the Gat 7even's practices for safer and more enjoyable group rides. Please keep in mind as you read through this document that each rider is ultimately responsible for their own safety, and they should never ride beyond their own riding capabilities or that of their motorcycle. These are basic guidelines for common circumstances and in no way cover every situation we may encounter. Please learn these guidelines and use your best judgment when applying them to various situations.

Every rider wishing to participate in a Gat 7even group ride should commit to...

- Ride and act with safety as their top priority.
- Ride and act in a manner consistent with these guidelines.
- Always follow the instructions of the Ride Captain except in the event where those instructions place the rider or any other individual in an unsafe situation.
- Maintain their motorcycle and other equipment in a safe riding condition.
- Ride with headlights on.
- Ride following all applicable laws including any applicable helmet laws.
- Never ride while under the influence of alcohol or drugs that could impair their riding ability or judgment.
- Share the responsibility of ensuring the safety and welfare of yourself, other riders, surrounding motorists, pedestrians, and property.

Following these guidelines will help insure safe and enjoyable group rides. Together with a passion for riding and a commitment to the objectives in these guidelines we can all share the enjoyment of group riding to many memorable places and events.

### Ride Information

[www.Gat7even.com](http://www.Gat7even.com)

To disseminate information pertaining to scheduled rides, The Gat 7 utilizes their web page. Information about all scheduled rides and tours will be posted on the "Rides & Events" page. This page will contain as much information as possible about each ride, and will always contain at least the minimum requirement of a Meeting place and departure time (KSU). Longer rides and tours will always have a link to a Ride or Tour Document that can be downloaded and printed. It usually contains routes, itineraries, destinations, hotels, phone numbers, and other pertinent information about the ride.

## Meeting, Staging, KSU

All scheduled Gat 7 rides will be posted on the site identifying a meeting place and the departure time - referred to as KSU (Kick Stands Up). All riders need to allow time to stage and prepare, we recommend you meet at the designated place a minimum of 30 minutes in advance. You should make all preparations in order to be on your bike ready to go at KSU time.

Preparations should include the following;

- Knowing the routes, stops, distances.
- Know who the Ride Captain is
- Know who the Tail Gunner is
- Know the Ride Captain's instructions
- Full tank of gas
- Obtain any ride documents from organizer or web site
- Insure possession of any necessary tickets, reservations, etc.
- Bike packed and ready to roll

## Group Riding Formations

### Double Row Staggered Formation

Riding in staggered formation requires all riders to constantly anticipate an emergency. Remember SIPDE from the MSF course... Scan, Identify, Predict, Decide, Execute.

Motorcycles traveling in the Staggered Formation are operating in 2 virtual lanes of a single lane of road. We will identify these 2 virtual lanes as "Left Row" and "Right Row" and are the rows left and right of the center of the actual lane respectively.

Each rider in the staggered formation should maintain a minimum two-second interval between motorcycles in the same row. Additionally, a minimum one-second interval between staggered riders (riders in the alternate row) is considered Best Practice by most traffic and safety agencies. This practice also ensures a minimum safe distance between riders if a rider encroaches upon the alternate row.

- The Ride Captain will ride in the 1<sup>st</sup> position (in the front position of the group) and will usually operate in the left row. The 2<sup>nd</sup> position will operate in the alternate row of the 1<sup>st</sup> position rider maintaining a 1 second interval behind the 1<sup>st</sup> position. The 3<sup>rd</sup> position rider will operate in the alternate row of the 2<sup>nd</sup> position and will maintain a minimum 2 seconds behind the 1<sup>st</sup> position and a minimum 1 second interval behind the 2<sup>nd</sup> position, and so on all the way back to the Tail Gunner.
- New members and riders with the least experience should be positioned just behind the Ride Captain in the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, etc. positions. More experienced riders should take positions behind the lesser experienced riders.
- Every rider should maintain his/her position in the group at all times during the ride. This allows each rider to become more familiar with the riding style and habits of those nearest him or her in the group. When making gas or stops of any kind riders should return to their original positions when the ride resumes.

### Single Row Formation

At any time and at the Ride Captain's discretion, the Ride Captain can signal the group to fall into a Single Row Formation. The signal is the left arm up with the index finger extended upwards. All riders should make sure to allow a minimum 2 second interval from the rider in front of them and then move into a single file. This formation gives each rider the entire actual lane to maneuver.

### Traveling Speed

The Ride Captain will establish and attempt to maintain a uniform speed consistent with the ability of the riders, surrounding conditions, and the posted speed limit. Ride Captains will inventory the abilities of the riders concentrating on new riders, new members and visitors to the ride. The Ride Captain will continually insure the formation is in good shape and make adjustments accordingly.

### Minimum Distances Between Riders

A safe distance is defined as a minimum of 2 seconds between in line riders, and a minimum of a one second between staggered riders. In a single row formation a safe distance of a minimum of 2 seconds between inline riders.

Remember, with large gaps in the formation vehicles can break into the formation causing a very serious safety concern. Large gaps cause ride management problems for the Ride Captains as well.

### Lane Changes & Passing

On a two-lane dual direction road the Single Row Formation will normally be used when passing vehicles.

On a Multilane Highway the Double Row Staggered Formation will normally be maintained while executing a lane change.

1. The Ride Captain will hold his or her position and signal for a lane change.
2. All riders will hold their positions and pass the signal to the rear.
3. While riding in the Double Row Staggered formation the tail gunner will change lanes first (whenever possible). This will allow the Captain to see that the lane is clear and will prevent other vehicles from passing while the group switches lanes.
4. The Ride Captain will check the lane, and then change lanes and select the row he/she will follow.
  - While riding in the Double Row Staggered formation the Ride Captain may chose to either maintain the same row when changing from 1 lane to the other, or may chose to switch to the alternate row when changing lanes. This technique allows the Ride Captain to be in the row closest to left passing traffic while riding in the traveling lane, and in the row closest to the right traffic being passed while riding in the passing lane.
5. Riders will check the lane and then change lanes following the leader, one at a time, from the front of the pack to the rear, in sequence.

- Riders will move to the row necessary to maintain a consistent relation to the Ride Captain's row from lane to lane.

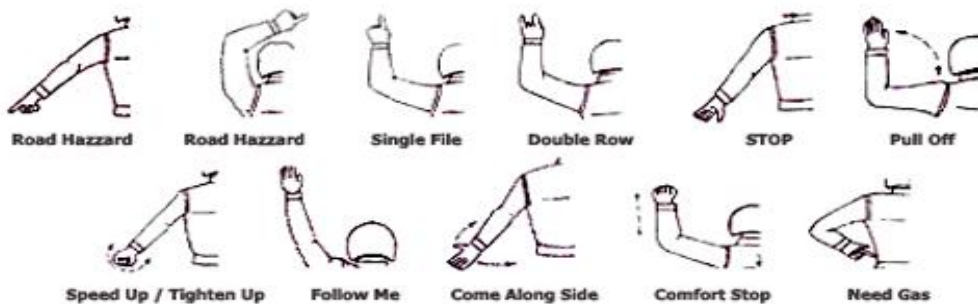
Only the tail gunner should change lanes before the Ride Captain. There are also times when there will be minimal traffic the Ride Captain may signal a lane change and move over without having the Tail Gunner execute the lane change first.

If for any reason the group becomes separated, merge safely back into the formation, returning to your original position. Don't feel it's necessary to break the world land speed record in trying to catch up. The Ride Captain will be aware and adjust accordingly once the passed vehicle is cleared.

- **Always** be certain the road is clear
- **Always** make a head check immediately prior to initiating any maneuver, you, and only you, are responsible for your safety
- **Never** assume the lane is clear just because others have made the lane change ahead of you
- **Never** assume the lane is clear because you checked a few moments earlier, accidents can occur because hazardous situations develop in the blink of an eye
- **Never** change lanes without a head check immediately prior to initiating any maneuver
- You and only you are responsible for your safety

## Hand Signals

Hand signals will be used whenever appropriate. Ride Captain initiated signals will be relayed from the front to the rear allowing all riders to be made aware of changes in speed, direction, and formation. The hand signal should be given and held until you confirm the signal has been relayed to the next rider. Rider initiated signals such as "Need Gas" or "Comfort Stop" should be relayed forward to the Ride Captain.



## **Stops & Tolls**

Gas, food, rest, and comfort stops should normally be discussed and pre-scheduled. These scheduled stops should be adhered to as much as possible, however deviation from the scheduled stops may become necessary for a variety of reasons. Once stopped please adhere to the scheduled time allotted for the stop, try to accomplish everything necessary within the time in order to not cause a delay.

When traveling on toll roads money will be collected in advance and a Toll Captain will be designated. As the group approaches the tollbooth, the Ride Captain will allow the Toll Captain to assume the lead position in order to exchange the toll. The Ride Captain will assume the lead as soon as it is safe to do so.

**Always** avoid the center of the lane when passing through a tollbooth. They are usually extremely slick.

## **Unscheduled & Emergency Stops**

Unscheduled stops can lead to confusion in the group and should be kept to an absolute minimum. The Ride Captain should be informed when a stop is necessary and the Captain will initiate a stop at the appropriate place and time.

Riders noticing an equipment problem (with their own or other's equipment) should inform the Ride Captain or Tail Gunner as quickly and as safely as possible. Once informed, the Ride Captain will stop the group when and where it is safe at the earliest possible moment.

If a situation occurs where it is necessary for a rider to pull over immediately, the tail gunner will accompany that rider to a stop. The Ride Captain will pull the group over as soon as it is safe to do so.

## **Accidents**

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 Captain will stop the group at the earliest possible moment (keeping with known good safety practices). It may be necessary for the group to disperse and park separately to avoid creating additional hazardous conditions.

Members of the group will provide assistance in any practical way possible, including, but not limited to:

- Slow, divert, or stop traffic in a safe manner, using flares if available.
- Aid and comfort those involved.
- Call 911 to notify the police, ambulance, and or fire service as the situation demands.
- Maintain order and preserve the accident scene for police investigation.
- If possible, take photographs.
- If possible, obtain license plate numbers and vehicle descriptions, including driver descriptions in the event of a hit and run violation.
- Obtain names and addresses of witnesses if necessary.

If possible maintain overall control of the situation until relieved by the proper authorities.

## **Safety Equipment**

- As mentioned previously, it is assumed that all riders will come to the ride with a well-maintained motorcycle.
- All riders should show up with appropriate riding apparel for the weather conditions.
- All group riders are encouraged to bring a well-stocked tool kit to all club rides.
- All group riders are encouraged to bring a well-maintained first aid kit to all club rides.
- The Ride Captain should bring the following to the ride:
  - First aid kit.
  - Route maps.
  - Run information.
  - Cell phone.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, these guidelines should not vary in any large measure from most other club's or safety agency's guidelines. They are intended to promote safe riding and should not conflict with any known standard safety practices. In the event that advice in this document does conflict with what you know to be safety standards, please inform [Greg@Gat7even.com](mailto:Greg@Gat7even.com). This document is merely a guideline and in no way should the it's author, the club, or it's members be held liable for it's content. Always use your best judgment and remember, you and only you are responsible for your own safety.

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