



## DEVA LEGION, CHESTER

H.O.G #9926

### Group Riding, Second Man Drop Off & Buddy Ride



Riding in a group with the great people who make up our Chapter offers some of the most enjoyable riding you'll ever experience. You'll find yourself in a number of group situations and in different environments, each of which could present a unique problem and these notes are meant to help you and your colleagues contribute to the enjoyment of group rides. So firstly, the basic rules (common to all group rides, regardless of the number of bikes or the riding environment).

### THE BASICS

Preparation in Advance: use the following as a guide when you are going to join a Chapter ride-out or, in fact any ride:

Before leaving home do a **P.O.W.D.E.R.** check on your bike:

- P** Petrol - ensure you have sufficient fuel for the journey.
- O** Oil - check the oil levels.
- W** Water - for any of the liquid or twin cooled models.
- D** Damage/ Drive - check nothing is hanging off or broken and that your belt/ chain is correctly adjusted.
- E** Electrics - check lights, turn signals, horn and brake lights.
- R** Rubber - check tyres, tread, pressure and clear any debris embedded in the tyre.

**Fill-up and empty on the way:** Arrive at the meeting point (the location will be on the Members Facebook Group) with a FULL tank of petrol and an empty bladder. On longer rides fuel stops are made at approximately 60–80-mile intervals to allow for Sportster riders or those with smaller capacity fuel tanks.

**Cover:** Breakdown cover is not provided by the Chapter – it is your responsibility to have cover if you want to. If you do have it (and I would strongly suggest you do when riding abroad) and have their contact number in your phone?

## **GROUP RIDING**

If you have never, or rarely, ridden in a large group it can seem a little daunting, however it is one of the most enjoyable and satisfying aspects of belonging to a Chapter. All official Deva Legion rides will be briefed and led by a Road Captain. The objective of a group ride is for everyone to have fun, but the safety of the group is paramount.

We are fortunate to have a dedicated, well-trained group of Road Captains and Road Crew who strive to offer Chapter Members an extensive ride schedule throughout the year to a variety of locations and they are experienced in planning and participating in group rides.

### **The Ride-Out Briefing**

Make sure you arrive before the designated briefing time; you must be present for the briefing to take part in the ride.

The Road Captain in charge of the ride-out will give the briefing to the group. If you are a new or an inexperienced rider, make sure you make yourself known to them so they can give you a more comprehensive briefing and they may ask you to start the ride towards the rear of the ride.

If you are a guest (i.e., not a member of Deva Legion) you should also make yourself known to the Road Captain and sign the release form before being allowed to participate on the ride.

If you intend to leave the group during the ride, please inform the Road Captain prior to setting off.

### **Safety/ Legal**

At the start of each ride out the Road Captain will read out the Harley-Davidson/ Harley Owners Group legal disclaimer for personal responsibility during rides:

***YOU ARE DEEMED TO BE IN CONTROL OF, AND RESPONSIBLE FOR, YOUR VEHICLE AND YOUR RIDING, AND OWN SAFETY AT ALL TIMES, IRRESPECTIVE OF ANY GUIDANCE OR INSTRUCTION FROM ANY MEMBER OF THE ROAD CREW. YOU MUST AT ALL TIMES RIDE WITHIN THE LAW AND OBEY ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATIONS.***

This Disclaimer is of huge importance to you, the Chapter and H.O.G; you must understand that you are responsible for your ride and safety, not the Road Captain or the Chapter.

All members should identify themselves to the nominated Road Crew and all riders and pillioners **must** sign a release form for Chapter Records, HOG indemnity and Ride Awards.

**You are responsible for your own safety at all times** and will be required to ride in a safe manner, failure to do so may result in you being asked to leave by the Road Captain or Road Crew. You are expected to ensure your bike is in a safe operating condition, that you have a valid driving licence, valid insurance for the bike and the bike has road tax, an MOT if required and is road legal.

## **SECOND MAN DROP-OFF**

Second man drop-off is a riding system used by H.O.G to highlight a route when there are a large number of riders or the group is likely to get stretched out or split due to riding conditions (e.g., towns, high number of traffic lights, etc).

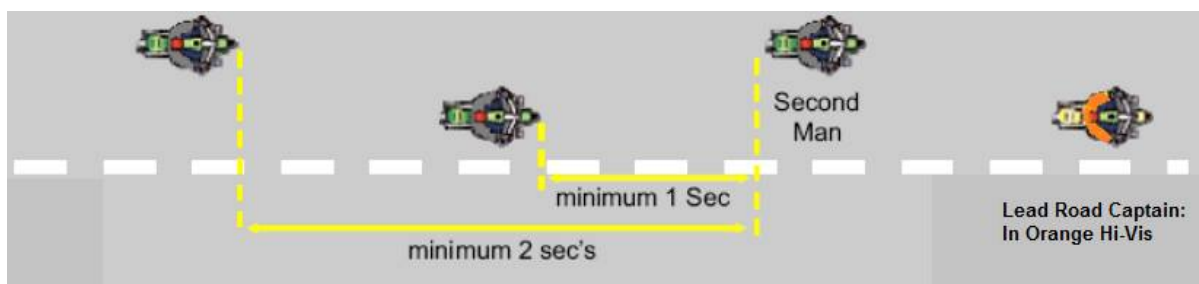
It is used where the direction of the ride is not straight at a junction. It is designed so a group of riders can make progress safely without getting split up, lost and most of all, without putting pressure on the less experienced riders in the group.

The Road Captain will be experienced to lead a large group with the assistance of a Tail End and any Road Crew and will have done a pre-ride of the route before the ride out. They will be highly visible to the group and will wear Hi-Vis vests.

### **'The System'**

On main 'A' roads and motorways the group will generally ride in staggered formation. This allows the ride to close up and dominate the road space as a group, especially on faster flowing roads such as by-passes, motorways etc. It also helps to maintain the 2 second safety rule as this provides riders with a larger margin for error, i.e., the correct stopping distance. Have a careful look at the diagram below, it's 2 seconds from the rider directly in front of you, not the rider making up the staggered file, who may be to the left or right of you. In extreme weather conditions you should consider leaving a longer gap to allow for the stopping distance.

On some 'B' roads and country lanes it is NOT appropriate to ride in staggered formation due to road conditions/ size and single file should be adopted. Remember you are required to ride in a safe manner, ride to the road conditions.



During this formation the Road Captain at the front of the group is the only person who does NOT stay in staggered formation. He/ she will ride in a number of positions across the width of the carriageway to ensure the best view for safe progression of the ride. All other riders should maintain their staggered formation as indicated above.

When the ride sets off it is advisable to fall into the staggered formation if safe to do so. The person directly behind the Road Captain is known as 'Second Man' (hence the name of the routine) and they should assume a position to the left of the Road Captain, e.g., kerbside. All other riders should then be staggered behind the Road Captain as indicated above.

Don't allow a large gap to develop between you and the bike in front; it will cause the group to bunch up behind you.

When the group approaches a fixed hazard (junction, set of traffic lights and major or minor turns) the Road Captain will indicate to the Second Man that he/ she will soon be 'dropped off'. This is done by the Road Captain raising his/ her left arm in the air or tapping their hand on their helmet. The Road Captain will then point to the spot on the side of the road where he would like the Second Man to stop and direct other riders in the group. It is important the rider stops where they feel it is safe to do so, but within the general area indicated by the Road Captain.

As soon as the Second Man has stopped, they should cancel indicators, select neutral gear and clearly point with a raised arm the direction that the Road Captain has gone. All indications should be exaggerated as it is often hard to see arm movements. Please note that for right hand turns this should be done with the left arm indicating over the head towards the right. This is to protect the rider from having their right arm hit by passing traffic and prevent fellow riders from being hit by the indicated arm.

The Second Man should stay in position directing all the subsequent riders in the right direction until they see the Tail End in their mirror approaching. The Tail End will endeavour to leave a significant gap between him/ herself and the last rider so the Second Man can safely re-join the ride. In re-joining the group, the Second Man should assume the next relative staggered position (left or right). This may not be the same as the position they vacated when dropped off. This doesn't matter, the importance is maintaining the staggered formation and 2-second safety rule.

When the Second Man is initially dropped off the rest of the riding group should change position to fill the gap left by the dropped off rider. The next rider behind the Road Captain now becomes Second Man and the system repeats.

At roundabouts the Second Man will be dropped off at the exit so as not to cause confusion and put riders at risk on the approach to the hazard. Sometimes a rider will be dropped off on the approach where the size of the island and traffic conditions dictate advance warning is required. On long roads the Lead Road Captain may also drop a rider off at the side of a road to give confidence to the group that they are on course.

This routine is then repeated over and over without any of the group stopping. This system takes practice to work effectively and to gain confidence in, as the group may be spread over a few miles but still be able to follow the Road Captain with no problems.

There may be places where it is not safe or legal to drop off, such as motorways. The Road Captain will clearly brief on these before the ride commences.

**Deva Legion has a strict 'No Overtaking Within the Group Rule'**. The only riders that will overtake are the Road Crew, when required.

Be disciplined, observant and adjust your speed to those around you. Riders in front of you may slow down and stop for no apparent reason. Remember that a hand signal may not be possible if they are experiencing mechanical problems. Should the group need to stop in an emergency, please try to slot into single file without blocking the road. The last 2 riders should activate their hazard signals to warn oncoming traffic. Please ensure your pillion dismounts kerbside as you (the rider) are responsible for their safety.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** In heavy traffic or built-up areas, the ride-out may become heavily fragmented and split up. Please have confidence in the Second Man Drop off system, and **under no circumstances** must you re-join the group before you see the Tail End approach as it will split the group as they won't know what direction to take. The Road Captain will eventually stop and wait for the ride-out to regroup. If the ride-out has split, the Road Captain will organise a member of the Road Crew or experienced rider from the group to back-track along the route and pick up.

**Your safety is your responsibility.** The Road Captain will always consider road safety and drop off options, however road conditions are continually changing, and a planned drop-off might not be as originally thought. Always make sure that you stop in a safe position and are well visible to all traffic and the ride-out. If necessary, park up and stand on the pavement and point to oncoming riders to show the direction.

**Never ride beyond your own riding capability** and never ride in excess of the speed limits. The Road Captain will ride within the speed limits. If you find yourself left behind due to traffic conditions, traffic lights, etc, do not panic and use excessive speed to catch up.

If you have a problem, raise your hand at a stop and one of the Road Crew will assist you. Point to your tank if you are low on petrol and to your mouth if you need food or a convenience stop.

If you break down, stay with your bike; the last rider will get word to the Road Captain and ensure that you can arrange your own assistance.

If for any reason you need to leave the ride you should safely pull over to the kerbside, set their indicator/ hazard warning lights and wait for the Tail End or a member of the Road Crew to approach and make it clear what your intention is.

### **Some Pointers**

Everyone should obey speed and traffic laws at all times. Be a courteous rider and give cars and lorries every consideration.

Be especially cautious when there are horses on the road. Depending on the circumstance, the Road Captain will often stop the ride and everybody should turn off their engines and allow the horse to fully pass at their own pace.

When being overtaken, allow other vehicles to pass you safely, if need be, by slowing down and creating a gap so that they can pass the whole group in segments, rather than trying to make it all at one jump. Remember to keep checking your mirrors.

Be aware that other bikers may overtake, give them room. If you don't, they will still pass when it may not be safe to do so. Overtaking or getting overtaken anytime can be hazardous so use common sense and a safe approach.

## **BUDDY RIDE**

This is a system we use with smaller faster groups of riders that are happy with their respective riding buddies.

Basically, you look after the rider behind you. Whilst riding you watch the rider in front to see which direction they take at a diverging junction; remember they will be watching for you too. As you approach this same junction you ensure that the rider behind is familiar with the direction change you are about to make. If the following rider has dropped back, you will have to wait and mark the turn at this point. If you see the rider behind you has dropped back, slow down so you keep in visual contact, the rider in front of you should see you slow and do the same. This now should work up to the front, where it may be necessary for the lead rider to find a place of safety and stop to wait for the other riders to re-join the group.

Remember for this system to work you must watch the rider behind you as well as the one in front.

The Road Captain may still decide to drop a second man off if he/ she thinks it necessary. Overall, this is a system used by friends and small groups out for a ride and it makes for a more progressive type of ride-out.

Thank you for taking the time to read these notes. If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact the Head Road Captain, Road Captains or Chapter Safety Officer for advice.

### **Contact**

If you have any questions, please contact any of the Road Captains or Committee Members.

*Suggs*

**Deva Legion – Head Road Captain**