

Road Captain Training Manual



Ride Safe – Have Fun

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Introduction

Congratulations! By deciding to become a Road Captain you have volunteered for the most important position within the American Legion Riders.

We just want to “Ride and have fun”. In order to have fun riding in a group, we have to be safe. That means having well qualified Road Captains. Your training with this manual will insure that you develop the skills necessary to become a competent and fully qualified Road Captain.

1. Objectives

As Road Captain, you should have three (3) basic objectives:

1. Provide for the safety and welfare of all individuals within the group, and any surrounding motorists, bicyclists or pedestrians. *everyone*
2. Lead the group to its destination in a well organized, disciplined, manner. *Pre-ride Brief*
3. Avoid creating or exacerbating hazardous situations.

2. Road Captain Qualifications

2.1. Road Captain Candidate Prerequisites

Road Captain candidates shall meet the following requirements:

1. Carry current motorcycle liability insurance.
2. Posses a valid *N.M.* driver's license with motorcycle endorsement.
3. Be sponsored by a current Road Captain or a current Chapter officer.

2.2. Road Captain Qualifications

Once an individual has been accepted as a Road Captain Candidate, he or she must:

1. Demonstrate the skills necessary to act as a Road Captain including the following:
 - a. Attend at least one skills class provided by Head Road Captain.
 - b. Follow the sweep during a group ride. *(TAIL GUNNER)*
 - c. Sweep group ride with a Road Captain observing.
 - d. Follow the lead during a group ride.
 - e. Lead group ride with Road Captain observing.
 - f. Notice/discuss unsafe/improper group riding techniques. *RCR Tail gunner*
 - g. Accomplish a lane change from the sweep position.
 - h. Plan the route for one ride and conduct the pre-ride brief. *always.*
 - i. Staging of groups. *officers front*
 - j. Negotiate a group through an urban environment.
 - k. Demonstrate/discuss proper acceleration technique and good speed control.
 - l. Execute proper lane change in both urban and highway environments.
 - m. Demonstrate/discuss the ability to recognize the experience/riding capabilities of the entire group.
 - n. Demonstrate knowledge of the proper use of hand signals.
2. Demonstrate, verbally or in writing, a thorough knowledge of The American Legion Road Captain Training Manual.
3. Have approval of the Head Road Captain and the Director.

3. Road Captain Responsibilities

As an American Legion Road Captain, you may be asked to perform several duties during a chapter ride. These duties include, but are not limited to, pre-ride briefings and inspections, being assigned to lead a ride, to sweep a ride or any mid sweep positions designated by the Head Road Captain.

As an American Legion Road Captain, it is highly recommended that you bring the following items with you to all rides:

- a. First Aid Kit.
- b. Cell phone with numbers of other road captains on the ride.
- c. Tool kit.

- ✱ 3.1. Leading the ride. As a Road Captain assigned to lead a ride, you will:
- 1. Be in charge of group until final destination has been reached.
 - 2. Responsible for ensuring the safety of the group.
 - 3. Conduct a pre-ride brief for all riders.
 - 4. Change route as actual road/weather conditions dictate.
 - 5. Will lead at a pace that is appropriate for the road and traffic conditions.

- ✱ 3.2. Sweeping the ride.
- As a Road Captain assigned to sweep the group or groups, you will:
- 1. Be observant of any hazardous conditions or conduct and will Inform the Lead Road Captain at the earliest safe opportunity.
 - 2. In the event the group becomes split and there are no other Road Captains in the group, the sweep will use his/her best judgment to determine which position (Lead or Sweep) to ride.

- ✱ 3.3. Other Duties.
- If assigned to ride within the group and your section becomes separated from the main group you will assume the lead position of that section until your section rejoins the main body.

4. Safety Equipment

Although a first aid kit is highly recommended for a Road Captain, all riders should be encouraged to carry a first aid kit.

4.1. First Aid Kit should contain:

- a. Sterile gauze squares
- b. Antiseptic wipes for cleaning wounds
- c. Clean water
- d. Rolled gauze, sufficient for administering minor first aid
- e. Anti-Bacterial ointment

4.2. Tool Kit

Although Road Captains may not be mechanics, all Road Captain should carry a basic tool kit to assist others who may need to make minor repairs.

5. Road Captains Pre-ride Briefing

The Head Road Captain, or his/her designee, will hold a Road Captain briefing 30 minutes prior to the departure of each ride.

6. Riders Pre-ride Briefing

Prior to each ride, the lead Rider or designee will conduct a briefing for the entire group. During this briefing the Lead Rider will review the route to the final destination and any pertinent road conditions. This should be done as expeditiously as possible. The following talking points shall be covered prior to every ride:

1. Staggered Riding – Alternating lane positions, 2 second interval to the rider in front of you, 1 second to the rider in the alternate track.
2. Stop Signs – Double up, proceed through as pairs and then separate back into staggered position.
3. Stop Lights – Stop if light turns red, regardless of position in the group, proceed on green or when safe.
- * 4. Lane Changes – Pass signal back, do not move, sweep will move to block lane, once the lane is secured, Lead Road Captain will move. Move only after the rider in front of you does.
5. Passing Traffic – Single up while passing, use your own judgment. Return to your own lane as soon as possible, leaving room for the rider behind you to get in.
6. Filling in a gap – if a gap occurs in the group while riding in staggered formation fill the position by changing track do not pass another rider.
7. Hand Signals

ALL HAND SIGNALS ARE TO BE PASSED BACK QUICKLY

- a. Single file.
- b. Staggered.
- c. Slow down.
- d. Speed up.
- e. Left turn.
- f. Right turn.
- g. Obstacle left.
- h. Obstacle right.

8. Emergency / Breakdown Events Procedure – If you are behind the event and can pass safely, keep moving cautiously. The sweep rider will stop and determine what is needed.

7. Riding Formations

The basic formation for all riders is the staggered formation. Road conditions will dictate when the Lead Road Captain will place the group in a single file formation. In some instances, the group may ride in a parade (side by side) formation. These instances must be clearly identified during the pre-ride brief.

8. Traffic Lanes

~~A~~ The group will stay in a single traffic lane whenever possible. In an urban environment, the Lead Road Captain should consider the distance to the next turn on the ride route and the direction of that turn when deciding which lane to utilize.

9. Lane Changes

A lane change refers to maneuvering the group into a new travel lane where the direction of traffic in the new lane is the same direction of travel of the group. Lane changes may be preformed for a wide variety of reasons including passing slower traffic, maneuvering the group into a lane where the traffic speed is the same as the group wishes to travel or for preparation for turning onto an intersection roadway or exiting a freeway. Lane changes should be kept to a minimum and, whenever possible, should be thought out in advance. Lane changes – pass signal back, do not move, sweep will move to block lane. Once the lane is secured, lead rider will move, move only after the rider in front of you does.

10. Passing

Passing refers to a maneuvering the group into a traffic lane where the direction of travel is in the opposite direction the group is riding. Passing will only be done on two lane roads which have a single travel lane in each direction.

Warning: passing may only be done where safe and legal to do so!!!!

When the group encounters slower moving traffic and the Lead Road Captain determines there is sufficient room for the group to start passing safely, the Lead Road Captain shall maneuver into the oncoming traffic lane and accelerate past the slower traffic. Each subsequent rider, in turn, should also maneuver into the oncoming traffic lane and accelerate past the slower traffic, then return to the initial traffic lane. Make sure there is sufficient room for the rider behind them to move into the lane.



QUICK TIPS: MSF's Guide to Group Riding

Motorcycling is primarily a solo activity, but for many, riding as a group -- whether with friends on a Sunday morning ride or with an organized motorcycle rally -- is the epitome of the motorcycling experience. Here are some tips to help ensure a fun and safe group ride:

Arrive prepared. Arrive on time with a full gas tank. *EMPTY BLADDER*

Hold a riders' meeting. Discuss things like the route, rest and fuel stops, and hand signals (see diagrams on next page). Assign a lead and sweep (tail) rider. Both should be experienced riders who are well-versed in group riding procedures. The leader should assess everyone's riding skills and the group's riding style.

Keep the group to a manageable size, ideally five to seven riders. If necessary, break the group into smaller sub-groups, each with a lead and sweep rider.

Ride prepared. At least one rider in each group should pack a cell phone, first-aid kit, and full tool kit, so the group is prepared for any problem that they might encounter.

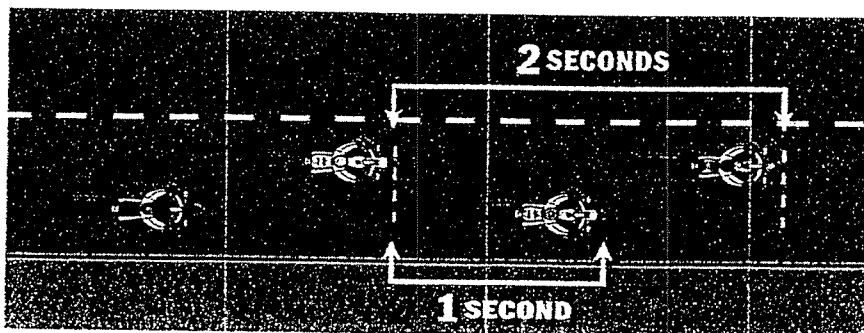
Ride in formation. The staggered riding formation (see diagram below) allows a proper space cushion between motorcycles so that each rider has enough time and space to maneuver and to react to hazards. The leader rides in the left third of the lane, while the next rider stays at least one second behind in the right third of the lane; the rest of the group follows the same pattern. A single-file formation is preferred on a curvy road, under conditions of poor visibility or poor road surfaces, entering/leaving highways, or other situations where an increased space cushion or maneuvering room is needed.

~~✱~~ Avoid side-by-side formations, as they reduce the space cushion. If you suddenly needed to swerve to avoid a hazard, you would not have room to do so. You don't want handlebars to get entangled.

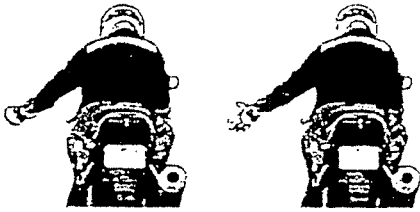
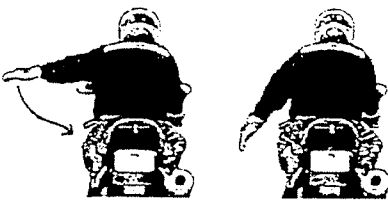
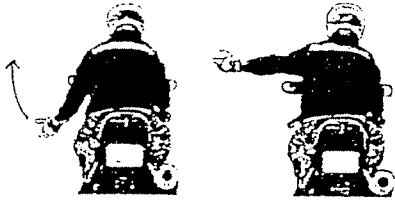
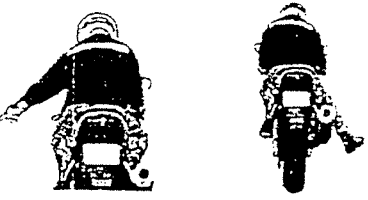
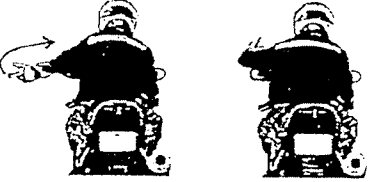
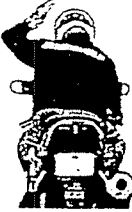
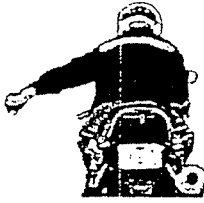
Periodically check the riders following in your rear view mirror. If you see a rider falling behind, slow down so they may catch up. If all the riders in the group use this technique, the group should be able to maintain a fairly steady speed without pressure to ride too fast to catch up.

If you're separated from the group, don't panic. Your group should have a pre-planned procedure in place to regroup. Don't break the law or ride beyond your skills to catch up.

For mechanical or medical problems, use a cell phone to call for assistance as the situation warrants.



MSF's Guide to Group Riding: Hand Signals

Stop - arm extended straight down, palm facing back 	Single File - arm and index finger extended straight up 	Turn Signal On - open and close hand with fingers and thumb extended 
Slow Down - arm extended straight out, palm facing down 	Double File - arm with index and middle finger extended straight up 	Fuel - arm out to side pointing to tank with finger extended 
Speed Up - arm extended straight out, palm facing up 	Hazard in Roadway - on the right, point with right foot; on the left, point with left hand 	Refreshment Stop - fingers closed, thumb to mouth 
You Lead/Come - arm extended upward 45 degrees, palm forward pointing with index finger, swing in arc from back to front 	Highbeam - tap on top of helmet with open palm down 	Comfort Stop - forearm extended, fist clenched with short up and down motion 
Follow Me - arm extended straight up from shoulder, palm forward 	Pull Off - arm positioned as for right turn, forearm swung toward shoulder 