



**COLORADO**

# Colorado High Country Cruisers

## Rider Safety

**Safety** is of paramount concern during any of the **High Country Cruisers** rides or events. Each member is responsible for understanding their individual riding skills and abilities and is responsible for their participation in rides and other events.

If the group you are riding in is operating in any manner you are uncomfortable with it is **YOU'RE** responsibility to either drop out of the group or approach the group leader with your concerns. You and you alone must be the only authority on whether you feel safe and you should act accordingly. High Country Cruisers and/or its officers are not responsible for the actions of any member participating in such events.

On this page you will find some safety information and guidelines for group riding, please review this information for your safety and the safety of others.

It is recommended that a good quality helmet, eye protection, boots, gloves, and protective clothing be worn at all times, by all riders, and that you have verified that your motorcycle is in a safe operating condition. If you elect not to wear a helmet or other protective gear you do so at your own risk.

# Group Riding Guidelines

## Introduction:

If your reading this page as a prospective Colorado High Country Cruisers member or if your already a member, then it is a given that you've come to this web site because of your passion for riding motorcycles and your desire to meet and ride with others that share that same passion.

Riding a motorcycle alone can be an exhilarating experience, allowing you to go when and where you want, change plans instantly, when your ready to stop, you stop. Knowing any decisions you make during the ride affects only one person. But then, you come upon that awesome view and pull off the road into an overlook to gaze at the breathtaking site before you. As you stare at this awesome view you suddenly feel like sharing the experience with others.

The desire to share those awesome views and our passion for motorcycling is exactly what the Colorado High Country Cruisers are all about. The camaraderie of talking riding with others while at a rest stop or lunch break can greatly enhance the overall riding experience. Along with knowing that you have the support of your fellow members should you have a mechanical problem or worst, an accident we hope never happens miles from home.

Just as riding alone can be an exhilarating experience riding with a group of other riders provides its own rewards and experiences. However riding in a group presents its own set of challenges and potential dangers as well. This page will provide you with information on our basic philosophy for group riding, it WILL NOT set forth a set of hard and fast 'rules' with which every ride must absolutely adhere to. But rather provide guidelines that can be used by everyone participating in the ride to ensure the safety and enjoyment of all.

On any given ride there will also be a wide mix of riders with varying abilities, riding styles, and attitudes towards the days ride. Our club was built on the philosophy of riding, friendship, and good times without any formal by-laws, dues, or other structure to distract from the informal club atmosphere. Thus, we want to provide a framework that allows a safe group environment but with the flexibility to allow those riders that prefer to ride more 'aggressive' the opportunity to also join the ride and the experience the camaraderie of spending time with other riders during stops.

Before we get into the details of our group-riding guidelines, stop and read the 'Be Safe' section to your left. Read it again... Did you get the point? Neither the Colorado High Country Cruisers nor any other person on the ride is responsible for YOU! Riding with a group of other riders DOES NOT mean you surrender any decision making for your safety or the safety of others. While the ride leader, which we'll discuss in detail later, will have certain ride responsibilities, you have direct control over your actions and are directly responsible for riding within your capabilities.

We'll focus on specific areas in just a bit, but first it should be noted that the guidelines presented here come from experience and mistakes we've either seen or made in the past. These guidelines are an attempt to police and critique ourselves as a group so that we may have many years of safe and enjoyable riding.

First a general description of our guidelines is in order. While most group rides are usually done using one of two methods, the first method has everyone riding together at a pace that generally '*rides down*' to the least experienced rider, this method is usually used by the '*cruiser*' crowd. The second method has everyone more or less riding at they're own pace and regrouping at various stopping locations throughout the route, a method frequently used by the more sporting riders.

Our guidelines attempt to allow a combination of the two methods, allowing both the sedate and more aggressive rider to participate in the same ride. This is basically accomplished by allowing the more aggressive riders to leave ahead of the main group and placing the responsibility on these riders to stop at some point, wait for the main group, and then assimilate themselves back into the group before the next scheduled stopping point. Of course this would not be possible without the first major ingredient...

### **Communication:**

The main ingredient in any successful group ride is communication and our guidelines are no different. In fact communication is even more critical for us because of the flexibility we attempt to provide during our rides. Before departing on any group ride a pre-ride meeting should always take place. This meeting is normally led by the ride leader and its purpose is to communicate to all riders all aspects of the days ride, so that EVERYONE has a clear understanding of what will take place during the ride and what will be expected of each rider. Including ride route, possible stopping locations for rest, gas and lunch breaks, review of hand signals, expected ride pace, etc. Ride leader guidelines will be discussed in detail a bit later.

It is at this point that any rider that wishes to ride out ahead of the group for a more spirited ride and then regroup with the other riders later makes his or her intentions known, not only to the ride leader, but also to the other members in the group as well. Simply telling the ride leader of your intentions is not good enough. We want everyone on the ride to understand why someone is leaving ahead of the rest of the group and approximately where they intend regroup so as not to startle anyone when they assimilate themselves back into the group. This is especially important if there are inexperienced riders in the group. It is also at this point that you must commit to either '*going solo*' or staying with the group, if you elect to stay with the group you **MUST** be willing to ride with the group and within the guidelines of group until at least the next stop, there must be **no passing or leaving** the group until the next stop.

Not all of our rides will have someone identified ahead of time as the ride leader, however on most of our rides there will be a more experienced club member along who will gladly step up and offer to be the ride leader for the day and will initiate the pre-ride meeting. If you ever find yourself at a ride departure and all of sudden everyone starts preparing to depart without having a pre-ride meeting it is the responsibility of every member to stop the group from departing so that the pre-ride meeting can take place among those attending the ride. Which leads us into our next section...

### **Rider Responsibilities:**

By showing up for a club ride you inheritably imply that you take responsibility for your actions and that you and your motorcycle are ready for the ride. Use the following guidelines to ensure that you are ready for the ride:

1. Read and understand the **Group Riding Tips** and **Hand Signals** presented on this page before attending a club ride.
2. Arrive at least 15 minutes before the scheduled departure time. Earlier if you will need to get a cup of coffee, go to the bathroom, gas up, or if you just want to socialize with your fellow riders before leaving. Arriving 15 minutes before departure will most likely get you to the departure location just in time for the pre-ride meeting. Be considerate of your fellow members and do not make them wait for you.
3. Arrive with a full tank of gas. Most of our rides depart from a gas station so it should not be a problem having a full tank of gas before departure.

4. Check your tires, oil, and other mechanical operation of your motorcycle before arriving for the ride. The ride leader has the right to ask that you not participate in the ride if he feels your motorcycle is not in safe riding condition.
5. Be mentally prepared. Riding while agitated, tired or any other emotionally charged state is dangerous to yourself and the other riders.
6. Know the ride route. We place extensive ride information on the ride calendar for each ride including a high resolution map image of the departure locations and ride route, text route directions, and for some rides there is even a *'route package'* that includes all maps and directions (including turn by turn directions) in a single document file. There is no valid excuse for any rider to not know the ride route or to not have a copy of the route with them.
7. Have appropriate riding gear for the ride. It is not unusual to experience a wide range of temperatures throughout the day or to experience rain or even snow at anytime during the year.
8. Don't be shy. If there are any aspects of the ride that are causing you concern, speak up. Bring it to the attention of the ride leader and other riders at the earliest opportunity. The ride leader will not take it personally and will make every attempt to accommodate your concern.
9. Be willing to abide by any decision made by the ride leader. The ride leader has the ultimate say during the ride. Naturally, if the ride leader makes an unsafe decision that would endanger himself or herself or any other rider you would not be expected to follow that decision. If the ride leader makes a decision that you cannot abide by, then it is your responsibility to inform the leader that you are leaving the ride. The important thing to remember here is that not everyone is also going to agree with every aspect of the ride. DO NOT take it personally! If you can't live with the way the ride is going, then please leave the ride at the earliest opportunity. You only endanger yourself and the other riders by riding in an angry or agitated state.
10. Be prepared to top off your tank at every gas stop initiated by the ride leader. Gas stops are made to accommodate the motorcycle with the least range. Even though your motorcycle *'can go twice as far'* do not rely on that assumption. We have seen many rides where an unscheduled gas stop had to be made because someone *'thought'* they could make it to the next scheduled gas stop.
11. Maintain a proper and comfortable pace. Do not fall back more than 3 or 4 seconds from the rider in front of you unless the

group is running at a pace that you are just not comfortable with. Remember the ideal spacing is to maintain a 2 to 3 second gap between yourself and the rider directly in front of you. The exception to this is whenever the ride leader switches to a single file formation it is ok to increase the distance between yourself and the rider in front but never follow closer than an 2 to 3 second gap. Never pass another rider while in the group regardless of the formation.

12. Maintain an awareness of the rider behind you. If you notice the rider behind you is falling back, then slow your pace to drop back to the following rider. If everyone in the group does this you will actually help the ride leader set the proper pace as everyone in the group will naturally bring the pace to comfortable level for the least experienced rider.
13. Stay with the leader. If the leader misses a turn DO NOT make the turn yourself, stay behind the leader, he will lead the entire group to a safe place to turn around and correct his mistake. Having other rider's make the turn, does nothing but confuse the other riders and puts everyone in a an unsafe situation.

By adhering to the above guidelines you will ensure a safe and enjoyable ride for yourselves and your fellow riders and allow for the ride leader to focus on his or her responsibilities...

#### Lead Rider Responsibilities:

Every ride should have a ride leader, whether this is someone who in advance of the ride has stepped up and volunteered to be the leader for the ride, someone who volunteers the day of ride at the departure location, or someone who informally becomes the ride leader when only 2 or 3 bikes are on the ride. The ride leader should always work with a fellow rider who will act as the trail rider bringing up the rear of the group. The lead and trail riders should have previous experience riding together and have a complete understanding of what is expected of each other. It would also be an ideal situation if both the lead and trail riders have CB's with which to communicate with each other during the ride.

Leading a group ride is much more than just getting out front of the group and saying 'follow me' to the destination. Being a ride leader means to actually 'be a leader' and adhere to the following general conduct at all times:

1. Conduct yourself and your riding style in a manner, which promotes group safety.

2. Provide leadership and supervision to the group, which will ensure that everyone has a safe and enjoyable ride.

In addition to adhering to the above statements at all times, the rider leader must also adhere to the following guidelines as much as possible:

1. Conduct a pre-ride meeting. This meeting should cover at the minimum the following areas but may be expanded upon as determined by the ride leader.
  - a. Introduce yourself and the trail rider to the group. Try to arrive at the ride early and introduce yourself to your fellow riders prior to the pre-ride meeting.
  - b. Explain the route that the ride will take, detailing any specific areas of interest along the route such as tricky intersections, possible stopping locations for rest, to take in the view, gas stops, lunch, etc.
  - c. Get a feel for the riders that will be participating in the ride. Make specific recommendations as to where certain riders should ride within the group if necessary based on riding style and experience. This includes identifying any rider that elects to ride out ahead of the main group and be sure everyone in the group understands what is happening and how we will regroup with these riders later on.
  - d. Explain the basic staggered formation we use in the group and the possible situations we might encounter that will entail deviating from the staggered formation to a single file formation. Construction areas, twisty mountain roads, etc. Note, that most of our rides will entail twisty mountain roads, it is ok for the group spacing to widen during these sections of road. Once through the twisty areas the ride leader will slow the pace while everyone regroups.
  - e. Go over any hand signals that you intend to use during the ride so that everyone is clear on what they mean.
  - f. Review the rider responsibilities listed above as appropriate.
2. Manage the group size. A group of 10 bikes can be managed reasonable well by a single lead and trail rider. However if there are more bikes than that it might be better to break the group up into 2 or smaller groups. Of course each group will then have to have their own lead and trail riders, which need to follow the riding guidelines as well.

3. Set the pace. The pace on any given ride can vary wildly depending on the experience and riding style of the riders in the group. First, avoid quick starts when leaving stops at intersection or leaving the parking area after a stop. Ease out slowly and maintain a slow pace until everyone has gotten rolling and then pick up the pace to cruising speed. If you immediately pull out and quickly accelerate up to 60 mph, how much time will pass before your trail rider gets moving and how fast will those toward the rear have to accelerate to get the group into a proper formation? Once up to cruising speed, you can then monitor the riders behind you, if you're seeing large gaps between bikes, you're most likely setting to quick a pace. If you see that everyone is bunched up you should most likely pick up the pace a bit.
4. Keep the group together. When leaving from a parking area, wait for an opening in traffic large enough for all riders to depart (although this will not always be possible). If you pull out with a limited opening be sure to keep a slow pace until everyone has had a chance to get out into traffic and form up. For certain there will be times when the group will get broken up into smaller groups and it may take several miles for everyone to regroup. Be considerate of the riders who are following.
5. Manage the ride. Clearly indicate all normal actions you intend to take using both CB (if so equipped) and hand signals before initiating the change. This goes for all lane changes, turns, stops, or exits from freeways.
6. Manage the stops. Provide a safe and orderly transition from the road into the parking area. Try to pick parking areas that have enough room for everyone to park in an orderly fashion if possible. If making a gas stop pick one of the larger self-serve stations with at least 6 to 8 pumps if possible. Once stopped take a moment before doing anything else and go to each rider and inform them of approximately how long the stop will be. For example, if stopping for gas let everyone know that the group will leave approximately 15 minutes after the last bike has had a chance to fill their tank. Approximately 5 to 10 minutes before the departure time, honk your horn to get everyone's attention and let them know how much more time is available before the group will leave. Once this announcement has been given, be prepared to leave at that time, by consistently adhering to the departure time announced you will send a message to the group to be ready when asked. However, do not leave anyone behind, before actually pulling out check that everyone is ready to go, communicate with your trail rider to ensure that everyone is ready before leaving.

7. Ride the route. Do not deviate from the published ride route unless it has been discussed with the group beforehand at a previous stop. If the group has developed some large gaps taking a turn that is not part of the published route, it could cause the group to get split apart and confused.

### **Trial Rider Responsibilities:**

The trail rider could be the most misunderstood and underrated job in a group ride, while the lead rider leads the group the trail rider controls the group. The trail rider is normally chosen by the lead rider as someone he is familiar with and knows his riding experience and style. Besides adhering to the general conduct guidelines listed above for the lead rider, the trial rider also has the following responsibilities:

1. Ride at the rear. Under normal circumstances no one is allowed to fall back behind the trail rider, any rider that is not experiencing difficulties and still cannot maintain the proper pace should leave the ride and continue on their own.
2. Determine when group is ready leave. It is the trail rider's responsibility to determine when the entire group is ready to leave and to signal the lead rider accordingly. The lead rider must not leave any parking area until notified by the trail rider.
3. Monitor the group. Be the eyes and voice of the leader when necessary, if possible, while the group is in motion if both lead and trail are equipped with CB's, otherwise the trail rider should inform the lead rider of how the group was doing when stopped after each ride segment. Specifically, if you notice someone in the group is careless, not following the guidelines, or creating a situation that could endanger the group, discuss this with the ride leader and the rider at the next stop.
4. Assist in lane changes. The trail rider will assist in most, if not all lane changes, securing lanes as necessary, but never blocking traffic to enable the group to change lanes.
5. Keep ride leader up to date. Advise the ride leader if part of the group gets stuck by a light, a vehicle cuts into the group, etc. Notify the ride leader when the group is back in formation again.
6. Watch for hazards. Be aware of any hazards or problems with any of the group's motorcycles.
7. Provide assistance. As trail rider you should be prepared to provide assistance to any rider that pulls off the road during the ride. ONLY the trail rider should stop with the other motorcycle, it is unsafe to have several motorcycles pull off to the side of

most highways. Advise the ride leader if possible that you and another rider are stopping, the ride leader should then find a safe place up ahead to pull the group over. This includes minor mechanical problems, a rider that must stop for personal reasons, an accident or any other reason.

### **Conclusion:**

You're probably thinking by now that that's a lot to absorb for just getting out on a beautiful Colorado day for a ride. But it's really quite simple, use these guidelines to be responsible to yourself and your fellow riders by communicating clearly with your fellow riders, riding in a manner that is both safe and considerate, and be willing to observe the guidelines set forth by your rider leader. And remember not every ride leader will lead a ride in the same way and the guidelines presented on this page are not strict rules that will be used by every ride leader. But if we all strive to follow these guidelines as much as possible and be flexible during our rides, we help guarantee the continuing success of the Colorado High Country Cruisers and the enjoyment of riding together for many years to come.

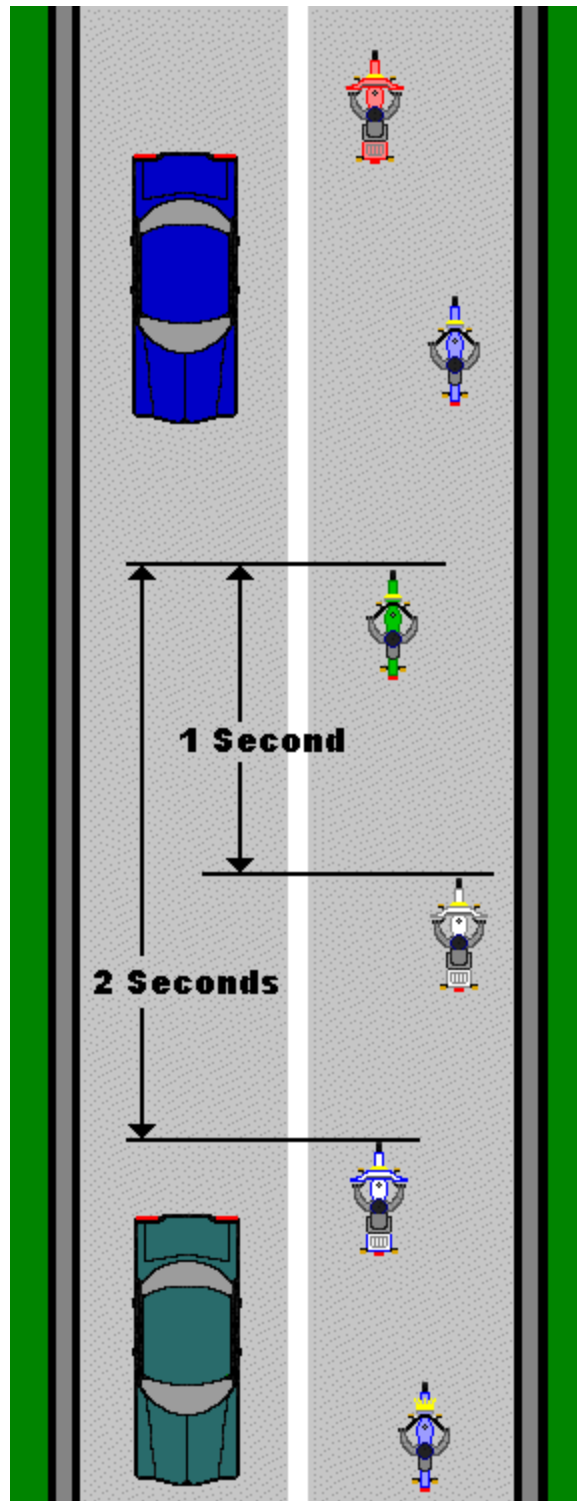
## Group Riding Tips

### RIDING STAGGERED

High Country Cruisers generally ride in a stagger formation for safety reasons. The minimum recommended spacing to the bike directly in front of you should not be less than two seconds (the two second rule). The bike in the lane to your left or right should not be less than one second ahead of you. You will find that two seconds is a long distance when riding at highway speeds. That is it's a long distance when everything is going well. When things go wrong, however, two seconds distance is gone in the time it takes to figure out you are in trouble.

The two second rule is a rule of thumb and you should try to adhere to this rule when possible, especially at highway speeds. There are times, however when it is best to squeeze together while on city streets and when slowing for a stop. This will help prevent cars from entering the group.

The last bike should ride in the middle of the two bike lanes with all headlights and running lights on. This will help the lead bike see the last bike. Refer to the image to the right.

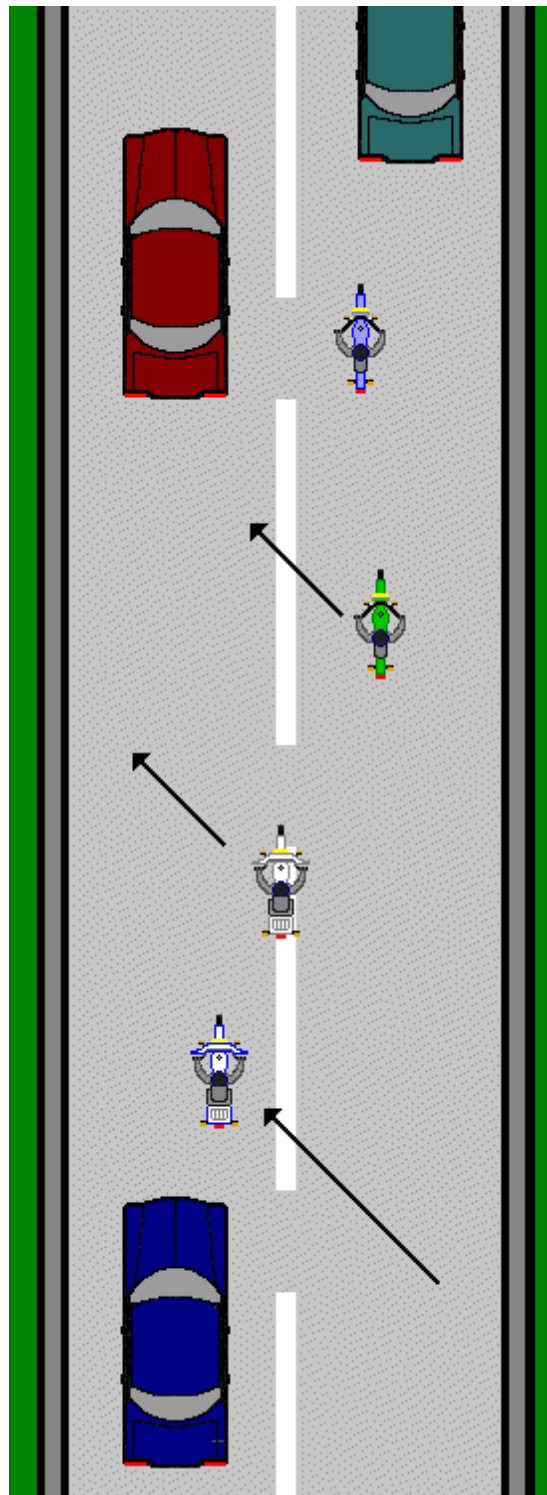


## PASSING ON A FREEWAY INTO A FASTER LANE

As a group, it can be difficult to pass a slow moving car on any road with two or more lanes of same-direction traffic. This is especially true with moderate to heavy traffic. Often there is not enough room for the entire group to get between cars in the faster lane.

The way to accomplish this is for the last bike to pull over one lane to the left and hold his position. Riders should move to the left lane as the cars in front of the rear biker pass them. You can then pass the slow car as a group after the lead rider moves to the left lane.

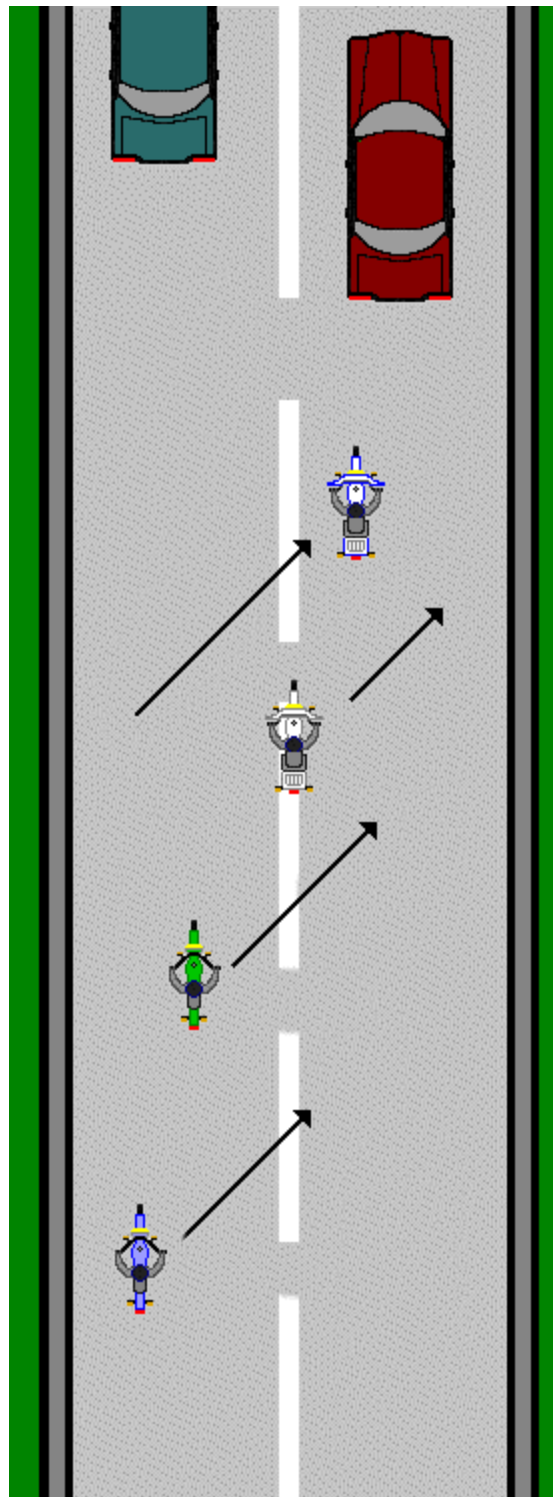
The lead rider should move back into the right lane after passing the slow car by a safe distance. It is very important that the lead rider maintain speed to make room for all the other riders. Each rider should move back to the right lane one at a time once they have safely cleared the slow car. This can be a real slick choreographed move for other motorists to observe.



## PASSING ON A FREEWAY INTO A SLOWER LANE

During a lane change into a lane moving slower than the group (usually to the right), the FRONT bike moves over first. Now, what do the rest of the bikes do? Legally, if the whole group moves like a "brick" (everyone changing lanes together in one movement), that is considered to be parading and can cause problems if any emergency arises. Also, if you remember from your MSF classes, you learned that you and you alone are responsible for your own safety. So, if each bike individually changes lanes in order following the first bike to change lanes (whether from the front or the back), you can reduce your risk factor, change lanes legally, and still look REAL GOOD while doing the maneuver!

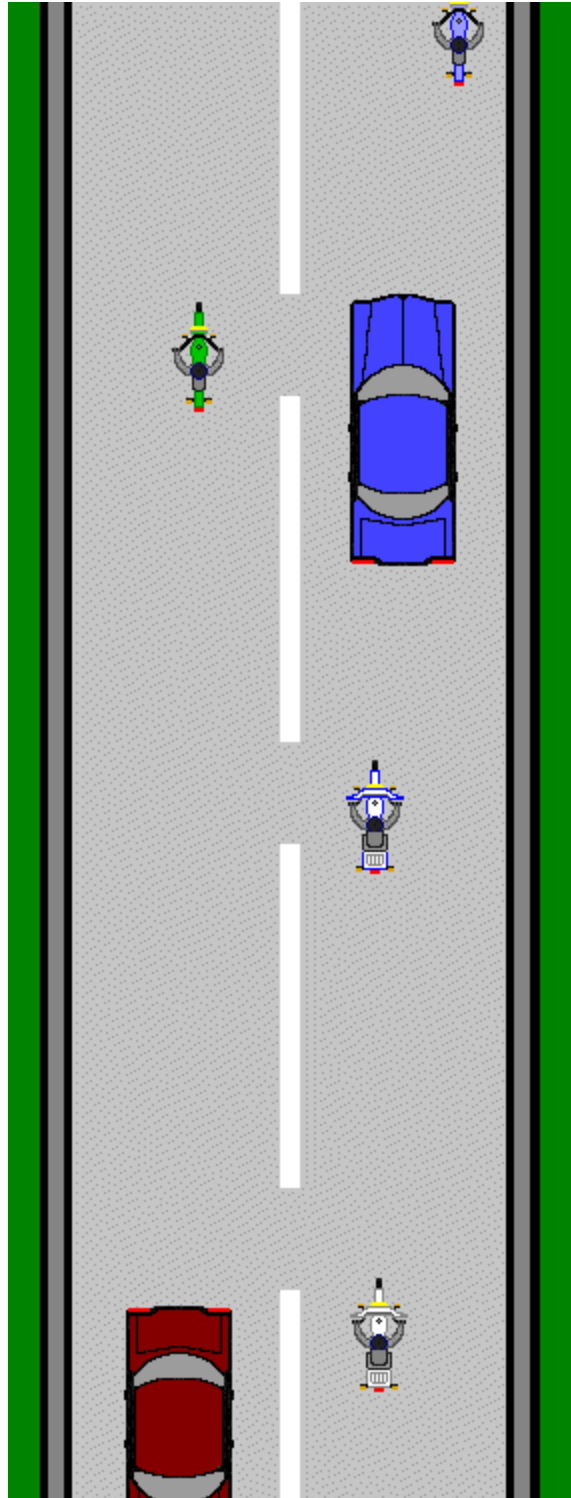
It is important that the lead and tailing bikers talk to each other before the ride and come to an agreement on how they intend to pass cars.



## PASSING ON A TWO LANE ROAD

It is usually very difficult for a group to pass a slow moving car on a two-lane road. Generally High Country Cruisers will not pass a car on a two-lane road, particularly on local rides, unless it is going very slow. If the lead biker decides to pass the car, each biker must decide on his own if it is safe for him or her. DO NOT follow the bike in front of you unless you are certain that it is safe for you too.

**IMPORTANT:** After passing the car, keep going. You must make room for all the bikes behind you.

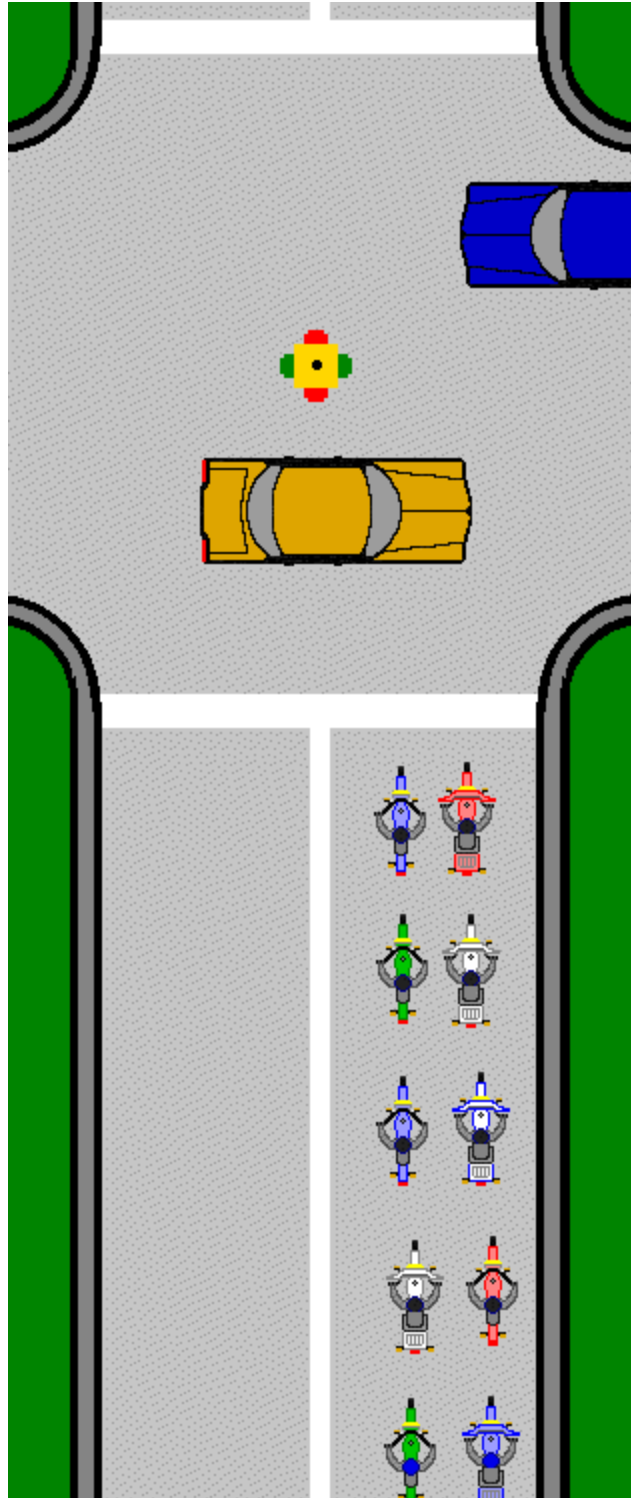


## STOPPING AS A GROUP AT AN INTERSECTION

When stopping as a group at an intersection, break stagger formation and pull up beside the bike in the adjacent lane. This will reduce the length of the group by half.

Stay in this formation until you are through the intersection. Because the group is half as long it will take half the time to clear the intersection and increase the odds of keeping the group intact.

If you don't make it through the intersection with the group, don't worry. Don't take a chance and run a red light. The leader will know that you are not with the group and will slow down, or wait for you down the road.



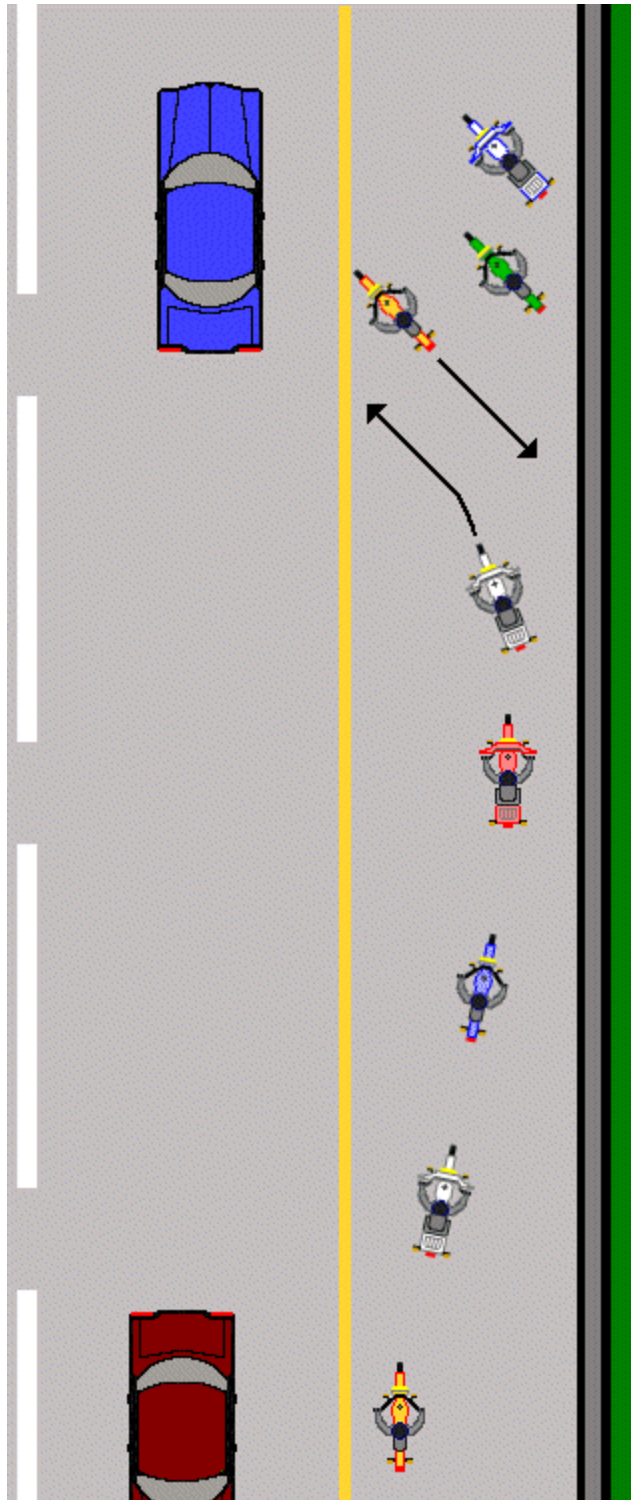
## GROUP PARKING

Parking in an orderly method substantially reduces the time for all to get off the road and out of traffic. There is risk of injury for the last bikes that may be blocking the road in an attempt to stay with the group.

A good way to park, if there is room, is for each bike to pull ahead of the intended parking place and then back up into your spot. You can see how this is done on the image to the right. This can be done very fast because you don't have to wait for the bike ahead of you to finish the job.





If you find yourself at the end of the group and can't get off the road while waiting for others to park, GO AROUND. Come back a minute or two later when things have settled down and take your time.

For you bagger riders, don't forget your pipes. Everything is cool when you back up to the curb until you lean your bike over on the kickstand and you bend and scratch your left pipe on the curb.



# Hand Signals

We suggest that the following hand signals be used on all group rides. However, it is up to the discretion of the ride captain as to whether hand signals will be used or not. Special thanks to Ann Arbor American H.O.G. for safety information and graphics.

 A silhouette of a motorcyclist on a motorcycle, viewed from the rear. The motorcyclist's right arm is extended upwards, with the index finger pointing up.	<p><b>START ENGINES</b> With your right or left arm extended, move your index finger in a circular motion.</p>
<p><b>LEFT TURN</b> Raise your left arm horizontal with your elbow fully extended.</p>	 A silhouette of a motorcyclist on a motorcycle, viewed from the rear. The motorcyclist's left arm is extended horizontally to the left, with the elbow fully extended.
 A silhouette of a motorcyclist on a motorcycle, viewed from the rear. The motorcyclist's left arm is extended horizontally to the left, with the elbow bent 90 degrees vertically.	<p><b>RIGHT TURN</b> Raise your left arm horizontal with your elbow bent 90 degrees vertically.</p>
<p><b>HAZARD LEFT</b> Extend your left arm at a 45 degree angle and point towards the hazard.</p>	 A silhouette of a motorcyclist on a motorcycle, viewed from the rear. The motorcyclist's left arm is extended downwards and to the left at a 45-degree angle.



**HAZARD RIGHT A**  
Extend your right arm at a 45 degree angle and point towards the hazard.

**HAZARD RIGHT B**  
Extend your left arm upward at a 45 degree angle with your elbow bent to 90 degrees and point towards the hazard over your helmet.



**SPEED UP**  
Raise your left arm up and down with your index finger extended upward. This indicates the leader wants to speed up.

**SLOW DOWN**  
Extend your left arm at a 45 degree angle and move your hand up and down.





**STOP**  
Extend your left arm at a 45 degree angle with the palm of your hand facing rearward.

**SINGLE FILE**  
Position your left hand over your helmet with your fingers extended upward. This indicates the leader wants the group in a single file formation. Usually this is done for safety reasons.



**STAGGERED FORMATION**  
Extend your left arm upward at a 45 degree angle with your index and pinkie finger extended. This indicates that it is safe to return to staggered formation.

**TIGHTEN UP**  
Raise your left arm and repeatedly move and down in a pulling motion. This indicates the leader wants the group to close ranks.

