

Spartan Motorcycle Club Riding Rules

They are for mutual safety and benefit so that motorcyclists of various clubs riding together have a common and basic set of operating rules and understandings. Following these procedures should prevent inconveniences and insure a safe and pleasurable ride.

You should be thoroughly familiar with these rules and their use. A periodic review is recommended. Persons riding together for the first time should discuss them before departure.

PREPARATIONS BEFORE DEPARTURE

1. Be sure your bike is in good mechanical condition.
2. Dress appropriately. This is defined as DOT approved helmet (even in abate states); shirt or t-shirt and/or leather jacket; long pants and/or chaps; leather boots extending at least above the ankle; eye protection that conforms to state law (eye glasses/goggles and/or helmet face shield and/or wind screen). Gloves and rain gear are suggested but not required.
3. Arrive at the departure point with a full tank of gas and an empty bladder.
4. Be sure luggage is securely strapped down.
5. Arrive on time!

GENERAL RIDING INFORMATION FOR FORMATION RIDES

The formation is to be a staggered formation as recommended by most states.

The lead bike (Ride Captain - RC) rides on the LEFT SIDE of the lane. The second bike rides on the RIGHT SIDE of the lane at a one second count behind the RC. (A one second count is defined as a verbal statement of "one hippopotamus".) The third bike rides on the LEFT SIDE of the lane directly behind the RC at a one second count behind the second bike and a two second count behind the RC. (A two second count is defined as a verbal statement of "one hippopotamus, two hippopotamus".) The fourth bike rides on the RIGHT SIDE of the lane at a one second count behind the third bike and a two second count behind the second bike. Subsequent bikes follow the same pattern. (see diagram of Normal Ranks)

This is referred to as "normal ranks." Try to limit the number of bikes in one group to seven. Five is more manageable. In any case, state law prevails.

The RC will assign positions within the group. The last bike in any group is called the safety man (SM).

<<<<<---DIRECTION OF TRAVEL

-----Right side of lane-----

<--2--

<--4--

<--RC--

<--3--

<--SM--

-----Left side of lane-----

|one second|

|two second interval|

NORMAL RANKS

ROAD SIGNALS

1. LANE CHANGING TO THE LEFT ON A MULTIPLE LANE HIGHWAY (passing):

The RC will flash his left turn signal to prepare the group for a shift to the lane immediately on the left (passing lane). All other bikes flash their left turn signal. When it is safe the SM moves into and "blocks" the lane to the immediate left of the group. Other bikes in the formation do not move from their positions until signaled to do so by the RC.

Once the RC determines that the new lane is safe, he hand signals the group to shift to the new lane. At this signal, all members of the group simultaneously shift to the new lane. The RC shifts from the LEFT SIDE of the old lane to the RIGHT SIDE of the new lane. The second bike shifts entirely across the old lane AND the new lane and positions himself on the LEFT SIDE of the new lane. The third bike shifts to behind the RC. The fourth bike shifts to behind the second bike. All other bikes follow this new reversed position. You will find that a slight increase in speed is needed as you shift to maintain proper intervals, however, the SM must fall back a bit. This new position is called "passing ranks."

<<<<<---DIRECTION OF TRAVEL

-----Right side of original lane----

-----Left side of original lane-----

-----Right side of new lane-----

<--RC--

<--3--

<--SM--

<--2--

<--4--

-----Left side of new lane-----

PASSING RANKS

THE HAND SIGNAL TO SHIFT TO THE NEXT LEFT LANE IS:

The RC's left hand touching the upper part of his helmet and the subsequent extension of his arm pointing horizontally to the left.

2. LANE CHANGING TO THE RIGHT ON A MULTIPLE LANE HIGHWAY FROM PASSING RANKS:

The RC will flash his right turn signal to prepare the group for a shift to the lane immediately on the right. All other bikes flash their right turn signal. When it is safe the SM moves into and "blocks" the lane to the immediate right of the group. Other bikes in the formation do not move from their positions until signaled to do so by the RC. Once the RC determines that the lane to the right is safe, he hand signals the group to shift to that lane. At this signal, all members of the group simultaneously shift to this lane. The RC shifts from the RIGHT SIDE of the lane he was just in to the LEFT SIDE of the lane immediately on the right. The second bike shifts entirely across the lane he was just in AND the lane immediately to the right and positions himself on the RIGHT SIDE of the lane immediately on the right. The third bike shifts to behind the RC. The fourth bike shifts to behind the second bike. All other bikes follow this pattern and now have returned to NORMAL RANKS. You will find that a slight increase in speed is needed as you shift to maintain proper intervals, however, the SM must fall back a bit.

THE HAND SIGNAL TO SHIFT TO THE NEXT RIGHT LANE IS:

The RC's left hand held in a position signaling a right turn (arm held up, bent at the elbow with forearm vertical) and then raising and curving his arm in an arc pointing over his helmet to the right.

PLEASE NOTE: The above points #1 & #2 DO NOT apply when entering or leaving a highway via a ramp. The shift from a ramp onto the travel lane or from the travel lane onto a ramp is accomplished with all maintaining position and without changing into or from normal ranks or passing ranks.

3. PERMANENT LANE CHANGE ON A MULTIPLE LANE HIGHWAY or MOVING SEVERAL LANES AT A TIME:

When the RC moves the group from the far right lane of a multiple lane highway to the next left lane, he may decide to travel in that lane for a considerable distance. In that case, it may be safer to travel in normal ranks position.

The RC follows the procedure outlined in #1. Now the group is in passing ranks, but the RC wants the group to return to normal ranks without changing lanes. To accomplish this he hand signals the group to change their position within the lane. When the signal is given, the RC shifts from the side of the lane he is on to the OPPOSITE SIDE of the SAME lane. All other bikes shift simultaneously to the opposite side of the same lane from where they were.

If the RC wishes to return to the lane to the right of the lane the group has been traveling in and he had previously signaled a change within lane, he first signals another change within lane in order to move the group into passing ranks. Then he follows the procedure in #2.

If the RC wishes to move the group several lanes to the left or back several lanes to the right, he moves the group ONE LANE AT A TIME following the combination of #1 and change within lane OR change within lane and #2 in the appropriate sequence.

PLEASE NOTE: if the RC needs to move the group over several lanes from its current travel lane in order to exit the highway, stop, or turn, he MUST ALLOW ENOUGH TIME AND DISTANCE to accomplish the maneuver safely.

In any event, bikes in a column directly behind the RC should always end up in a column directly behind the RC; and bikes in a column directly behind the second bike should always end up in a column directly behind the second bike. The RC and the second bike should ALWAYS BE ON OPPOSITE SIDES OF THE SAME LANE.

THE HAND SIGNAL TO CHANGE SIDES IN SAME LANE:

The RC holds his left hand fully extended above his helmet with thumb and little finger spread apart and pointing up. He then rotates his hand back and forth. At the rotation of his hand, all bikes in the formation simultaneously change to the opposite side of the same lane. The hand signal should be repeated by all members of the formation, if possible. Be careful to maintain proper intervals while accomplishing this.

4. STOP: The RC's left arm is extended downward at about a 60 degree angle to the ground with his palm facing the rear. All bikes should brake as safely and as soon as possible to a full stop. This hand signal should be repeated by all members of the formation, if possible.

5. SLOW DOWN: The RC's left arm is extended and moved up and down from a 90 degree angle to the ground to about a 60 degree angle with his palm facing the ground. All bikes should close their throttles and begin to brake as necessary and safely while maintaining proper intervals. This hand signal should be repeated by all members of the formation, if possible.

6. SPEED UP or CLOSE RANKS: The RC's left arm is held up as if he were signaling a right turn but with his fist clenched. He then moves his whole arm up and down as if he were pulling on a rope. All bikes should then start to increase speed while maintaining proper intervals. This hand signal should be repeated by all members of the formation, if possible.

To close up the formation because too large of an interval has opened between bikes: this same signal is given but the RC does not increase speed as other bikes do increase. All should watch for appropriate intervals and cease the speed increase when the proper intervals are reached. The RC has the option of placing the formation in very tight intervals due to road or traffic conditions. To do this he repeats the signal until the tight intervals are reached by all.

7. SINGLE FILE: The RC's left arm is fully extended above his helmet with his index finger pointing up. When this signal is given, all bikes immediately move to form a single column in the center of the lane being careful to maintain proper intervals. This hand signal should be repeated by all members of the formation. ALL BIKES MAINTAIN SINGLE FILE UNTIL THE RC SIGNALS DOUBLE FILE. Single file is used when the group passes through construction zones and when on narrow lane roads; it is used at other times at the discretion of the RC.

8. DOUBLE FILE: The RC's left arm is fully extended above his helmet with his index and middle fingers pointing up in a "V". When this signal is given, all bikes immediately move to form a double column in NORMAL RANKS being careful to maintain proper intervals. This hand signal should be repeated by all members of the formation, if possible.

9. CHECK LIGHTS: To indicate that someone has a problem with a turn signal left on or with head, tail, or brake light: extend your left arm over your helmet, hold your hand in a "C" shape and then open and close your hand by touching fingers to thumb rapidly then point at

the bike with the problem. Repeat this signal until the driver understands there is a problem and corrects it, if possible.

10. NEED GAS/EMERGENCY STOP: Sound your horn and pat the top of your helmet with your left hand. Bikes in front of you must repeat this signal until the RC responds and begins to halt the formation as quickly as possible and in as safe a manner as possible given the circumstances.

If you need gas, point to your tank as well. Bikes in front of you must repeat this signal. The RC will pull into the next gas station.

11. ALL ROAD HAZARDS/RAILROAD TRACKS:

Extend your left arm downward at about a 60 degree angle to the ground with your index finger extended. Move your arm in a circular motion. This hand signal should be repeated by all members of the formation. Watch carefully for the hazard and move to avoid it being careful of proper interval and all bikes and traffic around you.

GENERAL RULES

12. PASSING ON A TWO LANE ROAD: When passing other vehicles on a two lane road only one bike passes at a time. The RC signals SINGLE FILE. Each bike starts to pass from the left side of the lane and does so when it is safe. REGROUP IN NORMAL RANKS on the other side of the passed vehicle.

13. STOPPING ON THE SHOULDER: The RC signals SINGLE FILE then SLOW DOWN then signals a RIGHT TURN and when a safe speed is attained pulls carefully off the road onto the shoulder and as far to the right as possible and stops. All bikes should form a line behind the RC and should carefully check for stability before parking. If the bike is not stable, carefully move to a safe location.

14. RETURNING TO THE ROAD FROM THE SHOULDER: Maintain SINGLE FILE on the shoulder and all bikes signal a LEFT TURN. As the formation begins to move, the SM pulls onto the pavement when it is safe to do so and "blocks" overtaking traffic. Then the RC returns the formation onto the pavement where each bike resumes NORMAL RANKS and speeds up unless other signals are given.

CAUTION: Try not to pull off the road where there is not a clear view back to see overtaking traffic.

CAUTION: If traffic is heavy, the formation should reenter the road one bike at a time as it is safe to do so and REGROUP IN NORMAL RANKS as soon as it is practical.

15. STOP LIGHTS: If the formation becomes separated by a stop light, the RC will stop the portion of the formation that cleared the light. He will stop on the right shoulder of the road in as safe a manner possible and wait for the remainder of the formation to come through the light. Under NO circumstances should any driver run a red light or speed up unsafely to clear a yellow light.

16. AWARENESS OF BIKES BEHIND YOURS: Each driver should determine whether the bike behind him has become separated, stopped, has trouble, or is signaling a problem. If that is the case, signal an emergency stop as noted in #10.

17. SAFETY MAN: The SM should occupy which ever position in a lane that provides him with the best view of overtaking traffic and the RC. He is to maintain a greater distance behind the bike in front of him than other members of the formation should do.

NOTE: When riding at night, the SM must flash his headlight from low to high beam to indicate he has moved to "block" the lane and in order for the RC to identify which headlight is the SM.

NOTE: The reason for changing position in lane outlined in #3: this always gives the RC a clear view of the SM as well as overtaking and intervening traffic in the lane into which he intends to move the formation.

NOTE: The SM is to be aware of merging traffic conditions and should move to block overtaking traffic when a lane is ending/merging. This helps maintain the safety of the formation by preventing overtaking traffic from cutting in.

18. CARS: If you are driving any vehicle that is not a motorcycle and are following a formation, please DO NOT try to be a part of the formation. The RC will not consider you as the SM. Maintain a safe distance behind the formation as bikes stop more quickly and over a shorter distance than cars traveling at the same speed on dry pavement and more slowly and over a greater distance than cars traveling at the same speed on wet pavement. Also, bikes can rapidly slow down without using brakes so do not rely on brake lights to indicate a slow down.