

GROUP RIDING

17 Tips To Ensure
Everybody Has A
Great Day



STREET RIDING TIPS

HAVE FUN RIDING WITH FRIENDS

Your engine purrs as a string of motorcycles snakes through the hills in front of you. With a quick look in the mirror, you see a friend following close behind with a smile that matches yours. There's nothing like the camaraderie that you feel at this moment.

That's what a group ride is all about. It's an opportunity to share the open road and wonderful scenery with other like-minded people.

But like most motorcycle experiences, this one is best enjoyed by following a few simple guidelines that keep everyone safe. Here are a few tips from our friends at the Motorcycle Safety Foundation.





1. The first thing you want to do is organize the ride. This can be as informal as standing around in a parking lot, or as formal as a special meeting to hand out maps and cell phone numbers.

2. Remember that riding in a group does not mean you surrender any decision-making when it comes to your safety. Ride your own ride, and don't go any faster than you feel comfortable going.

3. When picking your route and the stops you'll make along it, consider the stamina of the group, the experience of all the riders, and the limits of the motorcycles in the group. Remember, these are your friends. If it's going to be a long ride, be sure to take a few breaks along the way.

4. You'll need to communicate while on the ride, so make sure everyone knows the signals you'll use.

5. When creating your formation, it's wise to have your experienced riders at the lead and running sweep. Consider positioning the less-experienced riders immediately behind the leader. This allows the front rider to adjust the pace if necessary.

6. The sweep riders best tool might be a cell phone to call for help if a motorcycle is disabled, or if there has been an accident.

7. If the goal of the ride is to keep the group together, the leader should only go at the pace of the least-experienced rider.



8. While riding, don't fixate on the motorcycle in front of you. Instead, remember your basic training. Look well through the turn to where you want to go.

9. If the group is riding faster than you are comfortable with, let the sweep rider know you're dropping out and ride at your own pace. You may reach your destination a few minutes behind the others, but you will get there, and that's what's important. Keep in mind, it's all about fun.

10. All riders are also responsible for making sure their motorcycles are mechanically up to the task. Before you even meet up with the group, make sure you've got plenty of fuel in the tank, and that you've taken care of all those maintenance issues. Not sure what to check? Use the MSF's T-CLOCS procedure. You really don't want to be stopping the group for a mechanical failure you could have prevented.

11. If it's going to be a large group, consider establishing a buddy system among the riders, or divide the group into smaller five- or seven-rider packs. That way, if something goes wrong, you won't have 25 motorcycles sitting on the side of a busy highway. Also, smaller groups can more easily navigate through city streets.

12. On the road, motorcyclists should have at least a 2-second cushion in front and behind them. If you want to keep the group tight, consider a staggered formation. Leave enough room per lane so each rider can maneuver side-to-side if need be. Avoid side-by-side formations as they shrink your space cushion and may not be legal.

13. Trikes and sidecars should stay in the center of the lane, and should be given the same amount of cushion as if they were cars.

14. As turns get sharper, or as visibility decreases, move back to a single file formation. You'll also want to use single file when entering or exiting a highway, at toll booths, or when roads have a rough or questionable surface.

15. At intersections where you've come to a stop, tighten the formation to side-by-side to take up less space. As the light turns green, or when traffic opens up, the bike on the left proceeds through the intersection first.

16. Remember we share the road with many other vehicles, and it's against the law to block an intersection.

17. When parking, try to get the group off the roadway as quickly as possible. If you can, arrange in advance to have pull-through parking at your destination, or at the very least, make sure there is ample parking for your group.

**Want more group-riding tips for your club or group?
The MSF offers additional tips at www.msf-usa.org.**

