



# California District Group Riding Manual

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# Appendix A

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(Continued from page 30)

What to Check    What to Look For    Check-Off

<b><i>Fasteners</i></b>		
Threaded	Tight, missing, bolts, nuts. ....	q
Clips	Broken, missing. ....	q
Cotter Pins	Broken, missing. ....	q

<b><i>Kickstand</i></b>		
Centerstand	Cracks, bent. ....	q
Retention	Springs in place, tension to hold position. ....	q
Sidestand	Cracks, bent, (safety cut-out switch or pad if equipped). ....	q
Retention	Springs in place, tension to hold position. ....	q

Periodically, revisions, updates, and/or deletions will be made to this manual to incorporate new findings and/or clarifications. The changes will be indicated by a broken bar in the inner or outer margins. The revised pages will be re-dated to reflect the date(s) the changes were incorporated. If you have an original manual, dated May 4, 1997, review the old page(s) with the revised pages(s). Then, replace the old page(s) with the new page(s).

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May 4, 1997

Rev. 1 (Page 9)  
July 21, 1997



# Introduction

(Continued from page 3)

techniques must be constantly thought of as “defensive.” When riding in a group, your actions not only affect you, but the other riders as well. Therefore it is important to recognize and remember that group riding is a “group” effort. To be safe, you must rely on the cooperation of all riders in that group. If you are new to this form of riding, study the enclosed techniques before your first group ride. You will find that a group ride can be most enjoyable. If you are an experienced group rider, we hope this handbook will be a refresher on some of the basics.

The group riding procedures set forth in this handbook are developed from years of experience of many MSF (Motorcycle Safety Foundation) instructors and riders like yourself. These procedures have been proven to be effective and safe.

The subject matter of this handbook deals with “Group Riding.” Two other types of riding styles (in groups) are called “Mass Riding” and “Leisure Riding.” Mass Riding is a group going down the road doing its own thing, with no one paying any attention to the

group as a whole. Leisure Riding is traveling with a group of people you know and some ground rules have been set, and everyone agrees to abide by them. It is generally considered a little more safer than Mass Riding because the bikes travel down the road maintaining at least two seconds between each other. But— and this is an important *but*— the individuals are primarily responsible for themselves. There are no “formation” or “group” techniques to Leisure Riding.

Please study the following techniques... talk about them with each other, and practice them on your next group ride. If everyone learns and uses these procedures, you and the rest of us will be safer and more comfortable with any GWRRA group ride.

# Appendix A

(Continued from page 28)

What to Check    What to Look For

Check-Off

## Controls...continued

<b>Hoses</b>	Cuts, cracks, leaks, bulges, chafing deterioration.....	q
Routing	No interference or pulling at steering head, suspension, no sharp angles, wire looms in place. ....	q
<b>Throttle</b>	Operation: moves freely, snaps closed,	

## Lights

Battery	Terminals, clean and tight, electrolyte level, held down securely.....	q
Vent Tube	Not kinked, routed properly, not plugged.....	q
Lenses	Cracked, broken, securely mounted, excessive condensation. ....	q
Reflectors	Cracked, broken securely mounted.....	q
Wiring	Fraying, chafing, insulation.....	q
Routing	Pinched, no interference or pulling at steering head or suspension, wire looms and ties in place, connectors tight, clean.....	q
Headlamp	Cracks, reflector, mounting and adjustment system.....	q

## Oil Levels

Engine Oil	Check warm on centerstand, dipstick, sight glass .....	q
Hypoid Gear Oil - transmission, rear driver, shaft .....		q
Hydraulic Fluid - Brakes, clutch, reservoir or sight glass. ....		q
Coolant	Reservoir and/or coolant recovery tank — cool only.....	q
Fuel	.....	Tank or



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## Preparation and Planning

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*(Continued from page 5)*

4. Everyone should carry essential tools, spares, equipment, and a first aid kit. Also consider special conditions; if traveling in the summer, carry water; if appropriate, carry rainwear; if cold, carry "warmies."
5. Memorize the Group Riding Hand Signals (included elsewhere in this handbook).
6. Everyone should take a minute and study the route so all will know where the group is going. Ask questions if anything is unclear.
7. Know the ride schedule, be on time, fueled up and ready to go.

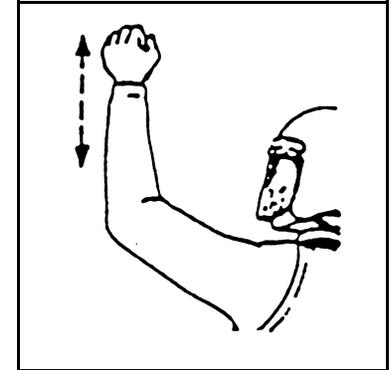
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## Group Riding Hand Signals

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### **COMFORT STOP:**

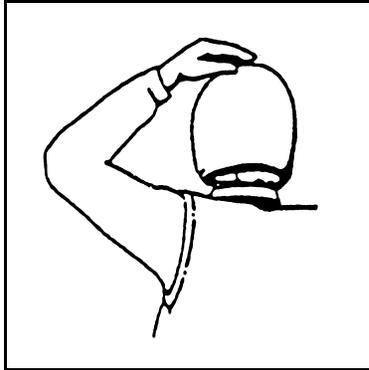
Upper arm extended horizontally, forearm straight up, fist clenched with short up and down motions.



## Group Riding Hand Signals

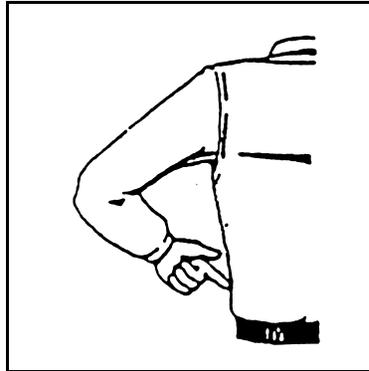
### HEADLIGHT:

Tap on top of head open palm down.



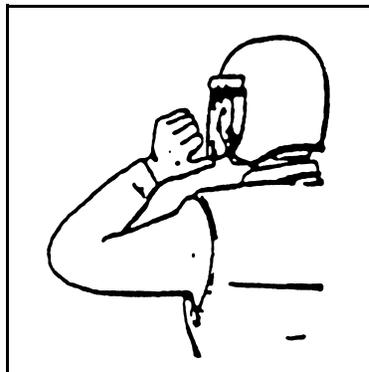
### FUEL:

Arm out to side, upper arm about 45 degrees below horizontal, forearm pointing to tank with forefinger extended.



### FOOD, COFFEE STOP:

Fingers closed, thumb to mouth.



## Group Riding

### Group Riding Techniques and Procedures

Any group with more than 5 motorcycles may have a negative impact on safety and traffic flow. Consequently, it has been found that the safest group ride is one where the group is divided into manageable "groups." Each group rides apart from the other groups. This allows better assimilation of the group(s) into the flow of traffic. Have you ever tried to pass a group of 25 motorcycles? A group consisting of five motorcycles is more easily dealt with by other motorists.

### Group Management

Each group should have a Group Leader and a Back Door. The Group Leader rides in the front of the formation, and the Back Door rides in the back.

They should be equipped with functioning CB radios. Their responsibility is to maneuver the group, in formation, safely through traffic, as a unit. The Group Leader and the Back Door have joint responsibility for the group's safety.

### A Good Group Member...

1. Assumes a responsibility to ride with, and work with, the other group members for the safety and protection of the whole group while on the road, and especially while in traffic.

2. Maintains steady speed and spacing. Yo-Yoing or straggling disrupts the rhythm and efforts of the other group members, destroys the main purpose of riding as a group.
3. Stays alert and announces to the other group members any obstacle, condition, or potential situation which could become hazardous to the group. The lives of other people are in the hands of each group member.
4. Will maintain a safe riding distance, depending on road and traffic conditions.
5. "Holes" left in the formation invite aggressive motorists driving at faster speeds to cut into the formation, tailgating your groupmate in front. This is very dangerous. Each group member must protect the other.

### Solo Riders

Anyone not wishing to Group Ride should separate themselves to a safe distance from the groups and meet at the acknowledged destination or break point.

(Continued on page 9)

# Staggered Formation

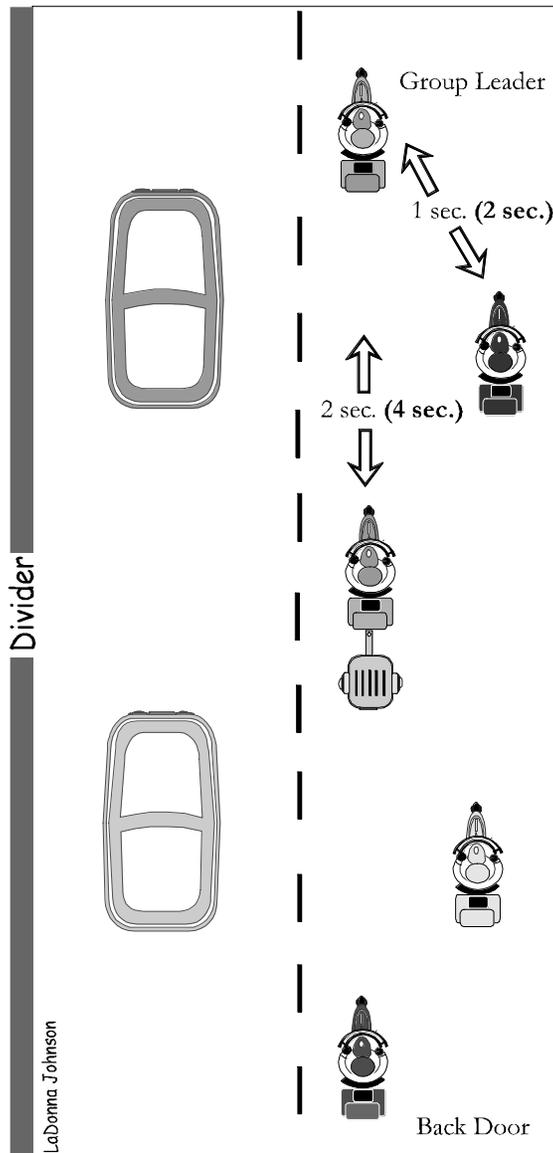
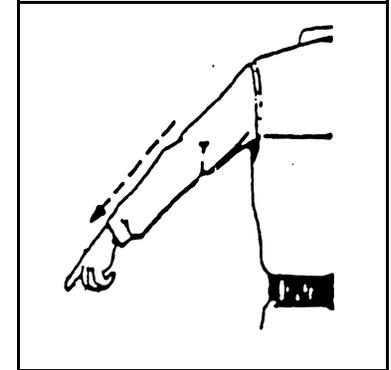


Figure 1. Staggered Formation

# Group Riding Hand Signals

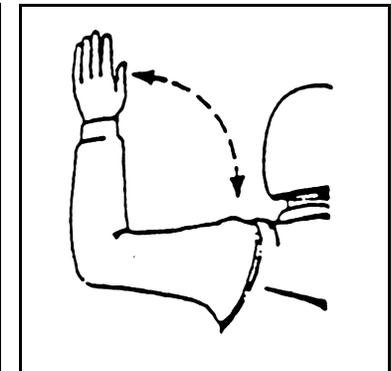
## HAZARD IN ROAD:

Point immediately with emphasis. (Sometimes this must be done with right arm.)



## PULL OFF:

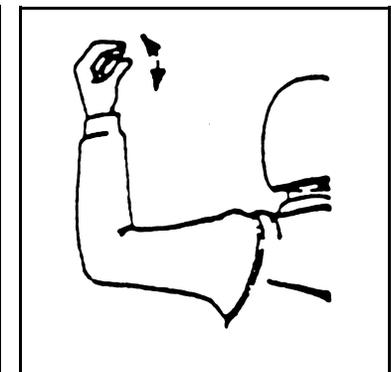
Arm positioned as for right turn, forearm swung toward shoulder.



## TURN SIGNALS

(accidentally left on):

Open and close hand with fingers and thumb extended.



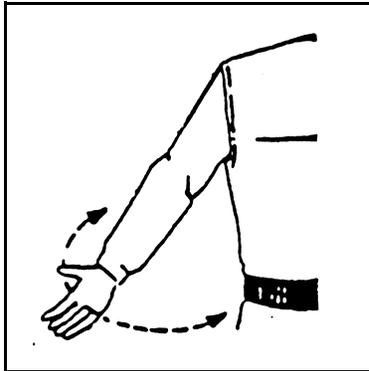
## Group Riding Hand Signals

### YOU LEAD:

Arm extended (palm forward) down. Begin behind hip and swing forward in an arc away from body about 45 degrees from vertical.

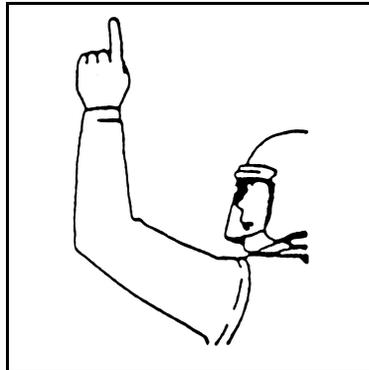
### COME ALONGSIDE:

Same motion, but stop at side and point to position for other cycles.



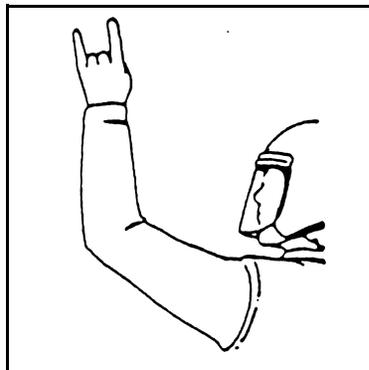
### SINGLE FILE:

Arm and index finger extended straight up.



### DOUBLE FILE:

Arm extended straight up with "rams horn" sign.



## Group Riding

(Continued from page 7)

### Group Separation

Each *group* should be separated on the highway by no less than 200 yards, preferable 400 yards. This will allow sufficient room for other vehicles to pass a group.

### Formation

When riding in multiple groups, the groups should be

referenced by the Group numbers.

Each group member travels in a staggered formation within a car lane. The Group Leader rides in the front of the group, in the left tire track of the lane. The next group member positions his/her bike one second behind and in the right track of the same lane, etc. etc. until all bikes have been positioned. (See Figure 1.)

### Remember:

- Pace yourself, **1 second stagger**, and **2 seconds following distance** behind the bike directly in front of you.
- However, **during darkness or inclement weather**, a **2-second stagger** and a **4-second following distance** should be maintained to provide an extra margin of safety. (See Figure 1.)

numbered consecutively, i.e., 1, 2, 3, etc. These groups should keep these number designations until the Group Leader(s) make a change. All CB transmissions between the Group Leader and the Back Door should be

(Continued on page 11)

# Passing Traffic

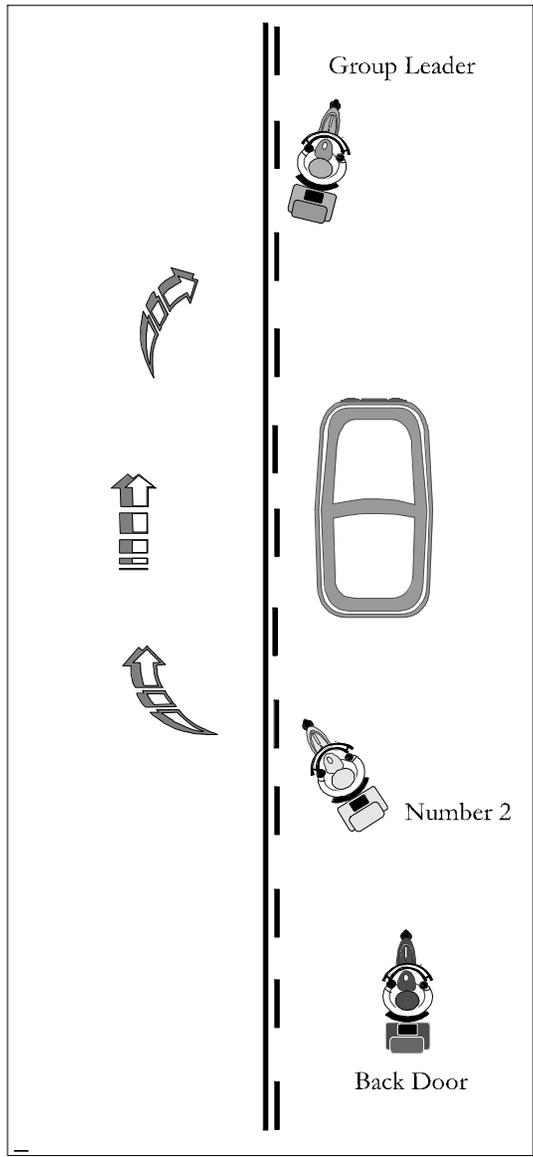
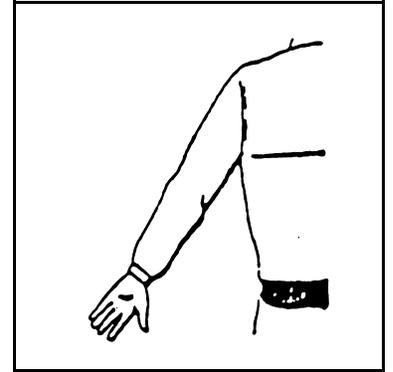


Figure 2. Passing Traffic (Two-Way)

# Group Riding Hand Signals

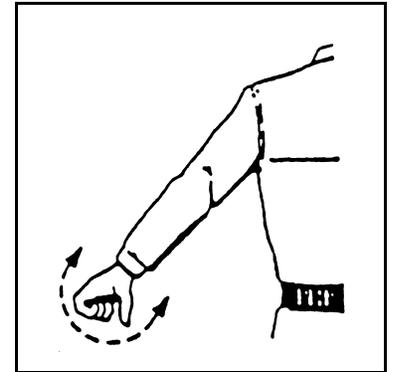
## STOP (SLOW DOWN):

Arm extended straight down, palm back.



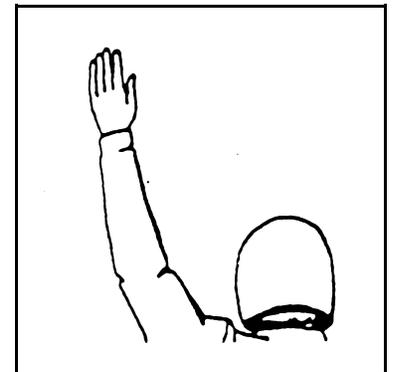
## SPEED UP:

Arm down to side, fist clenched with twisting motion as if turning throttle.



## FOLLOW ME:

Arm extended straight up from shoulder palm forward.



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## Group Riding Hand Signals

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These are the standard signals for use in communication with motorcycles not equipped with CB radios which are following the Group Leader.

- Following bikes should acknowledge comprehension by a head nod or flick of their dimmer switch.
- To gain the attention of the Group Leader, following bikes should flash their headlights. The Group Leader can then nod acknowledgement, or give the "Come Alongside" signal when safe, so the following rider can signal his or her needs.
- Most signals are left-handed so the right hand remains on the throttle and brake controls for safety.

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## Group Riding

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*(Continued from page 9)*

### ***Passing Traffic***

When passing a vehicle on a two-lane "single" road, each group member should pass single file, in order. Allow plenty of space to safely pull in behind the rider in front. The Group Leader will make the decision to pass and will notify all group members by CB and hand signals to assume a single-file formation. The Back Door will reposition to the center of the lane and block following traffic from attempting to move up the right side of the single-file formation. (*See Figure 2.*)

The Group Leader, after passing the vehicle in front, should accelerate far enough ahead to make room for the rest of the group to re-form in the normal staggered configuration. Single file formation prior to passing provides riders minimum maneuverability and maximum visibility of approaching traffic. Using the CB, the Back Door informs the Group Leader when the entire group has safely passed.

*(Continued on page 13)*

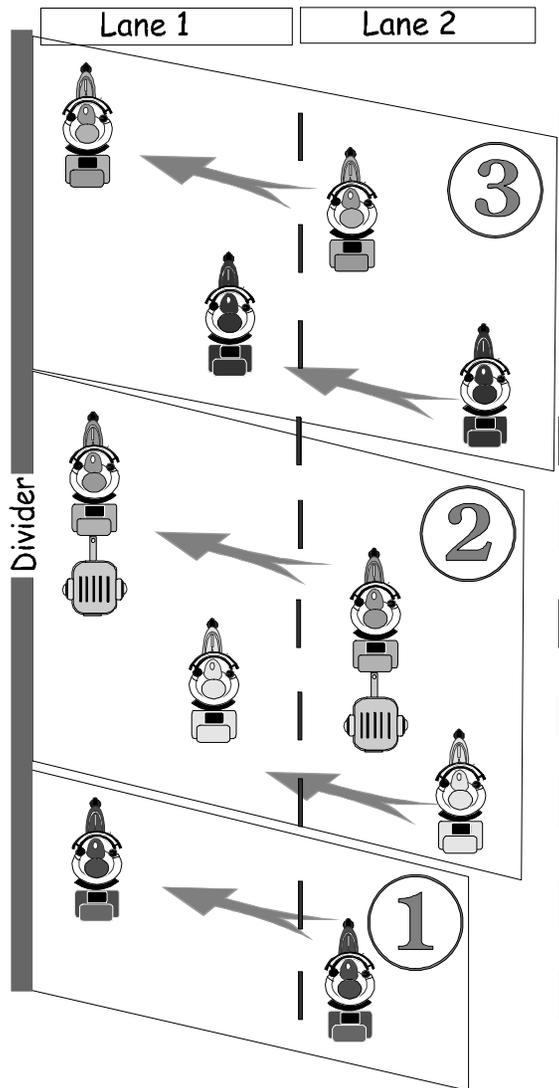


Figure 3. Multi-Lane Highway Lane Change  
(Back-to-Front)

(Continued from page 20)

## **Consideration**

Finally, an important part of any group riding is consideration. Have consideration for all members of all groups. Always give consideration to the other vehicles on the road. Even more important, have consideration

for your own safety and the group. Have consideration for your own capabilities, skills, health, physical fitness, and feelings. *Never drive beyond your comfort level! Enjoy your Group Riding... and be careful!*

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## Emergencies

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*(Continued from page 19)*

### **Emergencies**

If an accident or emergency should occur, consider all options and priorities. First, treat the injured (you have had first aid, right?). Attempt to contact help, by CB, cellular phone, pay phone, or send someone for help.

Stay with the injured. If no one is hurt, try to clear the roadway and make sure everyone knows what is going on. Additionally, on an accident scene, someone should monitor oncoming traffic, in both directions. Every group should work out in advance a

procedural plan to be followed in case of an emergency. If someone disappears from a formation, gets injured or sick, the entire group may choose (depending upon the "Plan for Emergency") to continue to an appropriate place, stop and wait until that rider and bike is taken care of. The Back Door will stop with the bike in trouble and communicate with the Group Leader.

*(Continued on page 21)*

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## Group Riding

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*(Continued from page 11)*

### **Lane Changes**

For group riding purposes, traffic lanes on multi-lane highways are numbered from your bike's position, left to right. The Number One lane is to your extreme left... the lane closest to the divider and closest to oncoming traffic. The lane adjoining it, on its right, is the Number Two lane, the next is Number Three, etc. The Group Leader and the Back Door will refer to lane number when change is necessary for the group. (See Figure 3.)

Lane changes by the group on highways with two or more lanes going in the same direction should be made as a unit. Using the CB, the *Group Leader* informs the Back Door of the need to move the group into another lane, and the number of the lane into which the group should move. **Only** the *Back Door* should acknowledge the transmission. The *Back Door's* response should be clear and concise, ex:

GL: **Group 1 Back Door, please SECURE Lane 1.**

BD: **STANDBY!**

*After Back Door has secured Lane 1, BD responds (if Lane 1 is free/clear of traffic) —*

BD: **Lane 1, SECURED!**

*If Lane 1 has traffic, BD responds —*

BD: **Your traffic is the red Toyota truck.**

Riders without CBs should be alert and observe the signals of the other group members.

Each member of the group, after making a head check (physically turning the head and looking to the side and behind) to confirm the lane is indeed secured, moves in pairs, BACK-TO-FRONT, following the Back Door's lead. It is extremely important that you never cut across the path of a bike behind you while making lane changes. The pair containing the Group Leader is the last to move into the new lane thereby keeping the

*(Continued on page 15)*

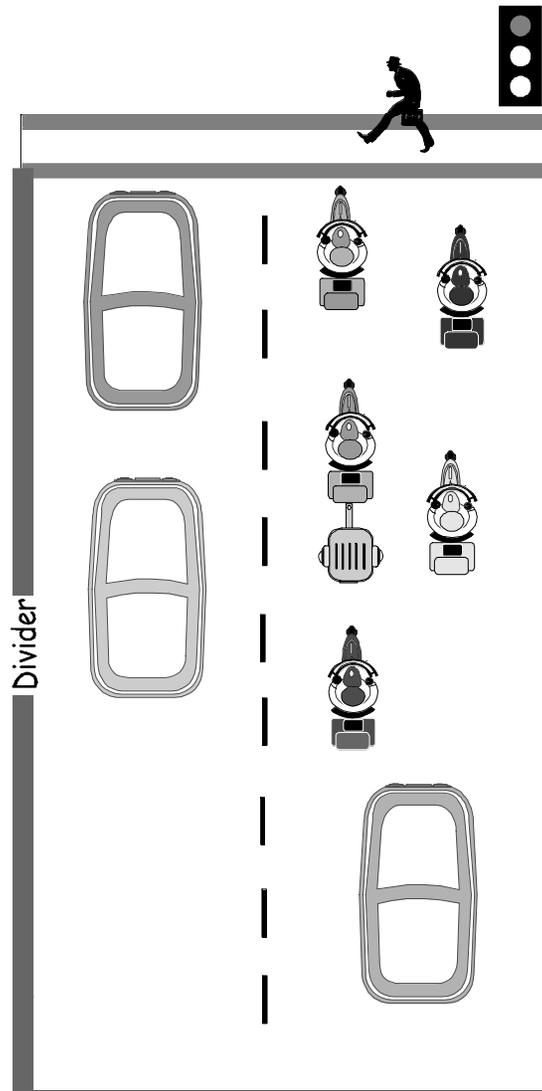


Figure 4. Stopping at a Traffic Light

*(Continued from page 18)*

position to another qualified rider. A bad CB transmitter is worse than none at all.

### **CB Courtesy**

Much can be said for courtesy on the radio. Simple courtesy, like refraining from the use of profanity on the CB, is appreciated by everyone. Contrary to popular opinion, it is OK to use your name and bike position when you communicate on the radio. Those in your group who are not frequent group riders may not recognize your voice.

### **Bikes Without CB's**

Bikes without CB radios should be put in the Number 2 position. The Back Door should brief all riders without a CB on group riding hand signals. The Group Leader and Back Door, in addition to using the CB for information and instruction, will also use hand signals for the benefit of bikes without CBs and to provide visual confirmation.

*(Continued on page 20)*

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## CB Radio

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*(Continued from page 17)*

### **CB Radios**

CB radio channel utilization for motorcycles varies state by state throughout the country. The entire group should be briefed on what channel will be used, and any alternatives, before a ride begins. The CB is a very useful and important tool in group rides. In addition to information regarding road surfaces, hazards, pit stops, etc., the CB provides effective group coordination between the groups, and communications between all Group Leaders and Back Doors.

For your information, GWRRA National suggests operating on Channel 1. Some chapters regularly use another channel.

Anytime you are “off the radio,” it is best to inform the Group Leader and Back Door ... BE ALERT FOR HAND SIGNALS. Group members should refrain from monopolizing the radio channels or excessive idle chatter. There should be no chatter while in a single file formation, while entering or exiting a freeway or while making lane changes.

### **Transmitting**

Listen before you push that transmitter button. Don’t “step on” and block another rider’s transmission. Important group safety information could be blocked in this manner. Always remember to hold the talk key down for 1-2 seconds before transmitting so as not to cut off the beginning of your transmission.

### **Voice Technique**

Some CB radio installations, radio signal propagation, and certain microphones can distort voices. Some CB operators seem to think that if they yell, their transmission will be heard better, and farther! That is absolutely not true.

In fact, yelling into the microphone will cause further distortion of the voice and make it almost impossible to understand. Speak into the microphone slowly and distinctly with normal volume.

### **Malfunctioning CB**

If your CB is malfunctioning, do not transmit. If you are the Group Leader or the Back Door, give up that

*(Continued on page 19)*

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## Group Riding

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*(Continued from page 13)*

group’s integrity. This will protect the group during heavy traffic where vehicles could break up and/or endanger the formation. Each group member may have to drop back a little from the group to maintain a safe time and space cushion. (See Figure 1.)

With practice and experience, the group will be able to transition from one lane to another as a group, demonstrating superb Gold Wing handling.

### **Stopping At a Traffic Light**

When it is necessary for the group to stop at an intersection or a traffic signal, all group members should assume a position of almost two abreast. Each rider should still have a slight “space” safety advantage of the staggered formation. This “compressed” staggered formation will permit each rider to have full view to the right and left and it will help keep the line of traffic behind the group as short as possible. While waiting for the signal to change, each rider in the compressed formation should wait directly behind the rider in front. (See Figure 4.)

### **Leaving A Traffic Light**

When the group leaves the

“compressed” formation at a traffic light, the #2 bike, which is stopped slightly behind and to the right of the Group Leader, will move out only after the Group Leader has traveled far enough forward so that any sudden sideways movement will not result in a collision.

The other group members start, in turn, and in the same manner, leaving the Back Door the last to move. When the group moves from a stopped position, the Group Leader should accelerate at a rate that will allow all group members to get re-grouped as soon as possible. Each group member should do so quickly but safely. The Back Door will inform the Group Leader when all bikes are through the light, so riding speed can be attained. No rider should accelerate next to, or pass a group member who is in front, either while traveling or while stopped. This can lead to a very dangerous situation.

### **Turning At An Intersection**

Each group member stays in their respective lane position throughout the arc of the turn unless a single-file formation has been signaled by the Group Leader.

*(Continued on page 16)*

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## Group Riding

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*(Continued from page 15)*

### **Narrowing Highway**

When approaching a narrow portion of the highway, such as a construction zone or bridge, the Group Leader will announce "single file" on the CB in addition to giving the appropriate hand signal. All bikes in the group should, after individual signaling to the riders behind, transition from the staggered formation to single file.

### **Hills**

If a hill is encountered such that it is impossible to see oncoming traffic, the Group Leader will give CB and hand signal for single file. Starting with the Group Leader, each rider will transition to the center of the lane, until the group reaches the top of the hill and can see the oncoming traffic. The Group Leader will then give the signals to resume staggered formation.

### **Curves**

When a group enters a curve, the entire group will automatically transition into a single-file-pick-your-own-lane for three reasons:

1. Increased visibility through the curve.

2. Provide a safe area to the right of the center lane for avoidance of any oncoming vehicle which may stray across the road.
3. Most debris is along the "outside" edge of the road.

### **Change of Speed**

When it becomes necessary to slow or accelerate the group's speed, the Group Leader will call for and give the appropriate hand signal. This signal, and all other hand signals, should be passed on by every member of the group.

*(Continued on page 17)*

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## Group Riding

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*(Continued from page 16)*

### **Obstacle**

Any group member who observes a pothole or other obstacle in the road should use the appropriate hand signal to alert the following group members of the obstacle.

### **Parked Cars**

When entering a town where cars are parked along the side of the street, the Group Leader may signal for single-file. The group should then transition to the left portion of the lane and proceed very carefully, being alert for children, "toys," or animals that may appear from between parked cars.

Also, watch vehicle tail lights, front wheels, and drivers for "hints" that a vehicle is going to back up, stop, or its driver might be opening his door to get out of his vehicle.

### **Entering a Parking Lot**

The group should assume a single-file formation behind the Group Leader. If necessary, the Group Leader will "loop" the parking lot seeking an area large enough for the whole group to park side by side. All group members should remain in single file at or near the entrance until the Group Leader locates suitable space for all.

If the Group Leader determines there is insufficient space for all group members to park at one location, each group member should seek their own parking spot.

### **Be Informed**

Members of the group can never be "over informed." *Group Leaders* and *Back Doors* should always keep their groups informed about the destination, routes, possible problems, change in plans, etc.

*(Continued on page 18)*