



Yavapai HOG Ride Guide

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Disclaimer

This document is intended as a guideline only, and should not be construed as a set of requirements for HOG, the Yavapai HOG chapter, any HOG member or officer, Harley-Davidson, or participating rider. This guideline may assist all riders in Yavapai HOG group rides to have a more enjoyable and safe riding experience. In all cases, while riding together with a Yavapai HOG group, the rider is solely responsible for the safe and responsible operation of their motorcycle.

Introduction

Welcome to the Yavapai HOG Chapter group riding guidelines. This document will provide information for all riders participating in the organized Yavapai HOG rides to maintain safety and enjoy a great group riding experience.

Group riding is a unique experience. In a group ride, the responsibilities are somewhat different from a solo ride, or even perhaps a ride with a friend. The group safety is considered first, so some possible modifications to your normal riding style may be needed. In general, however, common sense prevails, and the guidelines herein should never supersede your own personal safety or the safety of others in the group.

The guidelines herein set the framework for a safe, enjoyable, and memorable group ride. All riders are expected to understand and adhere to these guidelines. If you have any questions or concerns about anything in this document, please let your Chapter Director know so they can be addressed.

All Group Riders' Responsibilities

All Yavapai HOG group riders agree to

- follow these guidelines to ensure a safe and enjoyable ride; however, always use your own judgement in applying rules to any situation and never compromise your own or others' safety,
- follow the instructions, commands, and signals of the Road Captains in all situations, for the duration of the ride, unless those instructions, commands, or signals place the rider or any other individual in an unsafe situation,
- assume a specific position in the group, if requested,
- sign a waiver, if requested,
- leave the group, if requested,
- maintain their motorcycle in good working condition so the entire ride can be accomplished without issues.

Useful Information

Each rider is required to know the laws for each state within which we will be riding; these include helmet, exhaust, eyewear, headlight, etc. This link is a useful reference for a number of motorcycle laws by state: <https://www.motorcyclelegalfoundation.com/state-by-state-guide-to-motorcycle-laws/>.



Ride Organization

The ride start location and KSU (Kick-Stands Up) time will be communicated by the Lead Road Captain as early as possible, usually by updating the chapter website calendar. Plan to be at the start location **with a full tank and empty bladder** at least half-hour early and be ready to ride by the KSU time. If you have any questions or concerns about the ride, be sure to ask the Lead Road Captain before the KSU time so as not to delay the ride.

If you have a preference for the inside or outside, near the front or rear, or to be near another rider, now is the time to discuss with the Road Captain. The Road Captain has the discretion to place any rider in any position in the group. Positions within the group should be maintained throughout the ride (un-scheduled and emergency stops excepted, discussed below).

Ride Briefing

About 15 minutes prior to the KSU time, the Lead Road Captain will perform a Ride Briefing for the group. Please be sure to be present for the briefing – your absence will disrupt and possibly delay the ride. This briefing will inform the group of the ride plan, destination, route, planned stops, etc. Any special requests should be brought up here.

Novice or new YHOG Rider Position

During the ride briefing, the Road Captain will typically ask if any riders are novice or uncomfortable with the riding protocol. **No rider should ride above their ability or comfort level**, so this is the time to let the Road Captain know. Novice riders will be placed at the rear of the group, just in front of the trikes and Sweep Road Captain (riding at the end of the group). This will allow the group to stay together and tight, and any separation caused by the novice will not affect the group, plus the novice rider will be under less pressure to maintain group spacing, and better able to observe our particular group riding style.

Trike Position

The Lead Road Captain will position trikes at the rear of the group, typically behind any novices. Trikes are considered to be in single-file formation at all times, so a rider following a trike should leave 2 seconds spacing regardless of the formation of the bikes ahead. If a trike is in the middle of the group, this can cause separation and discontinuity in the group spacing.

Hand Signals

The Road Captain will use certain hand signals to give the group a heads-up on something coming up. Each rider in the group should repeat these signals, so the riders behind them will be aware as well.

A standard set of hand signals is shown in Figure 1. In addition to these, Yavapai HOG uses the left arm pointing over the head to the right to indicate a hazard coming up on the right side, such as a pedestrian, bicyclist or auto beside the road. Typically, the rider in the right half-lane will temporarily move to the left to add some buffer space to the hazard. The rider should NOT use their turn signal to indicate a change from one half-lane to the other.

One additional hand signal which is **passed forward** rather than backward is the Lost Rider sig-



nal. If you are watching your mirror (as we all should be doing regularly) and notice a rider has dropped off, you should hold your fist in the air until the rider in front of you notices (because they are also watching their mirror regularly) and holds their fist in the air. The rider in front of them will do the same, and so on until the Ride Lead sees the signal. He will then put his fist in the air to acknowledge the signal and will either slow or stop the group at the next safe pullout to determine what happened.

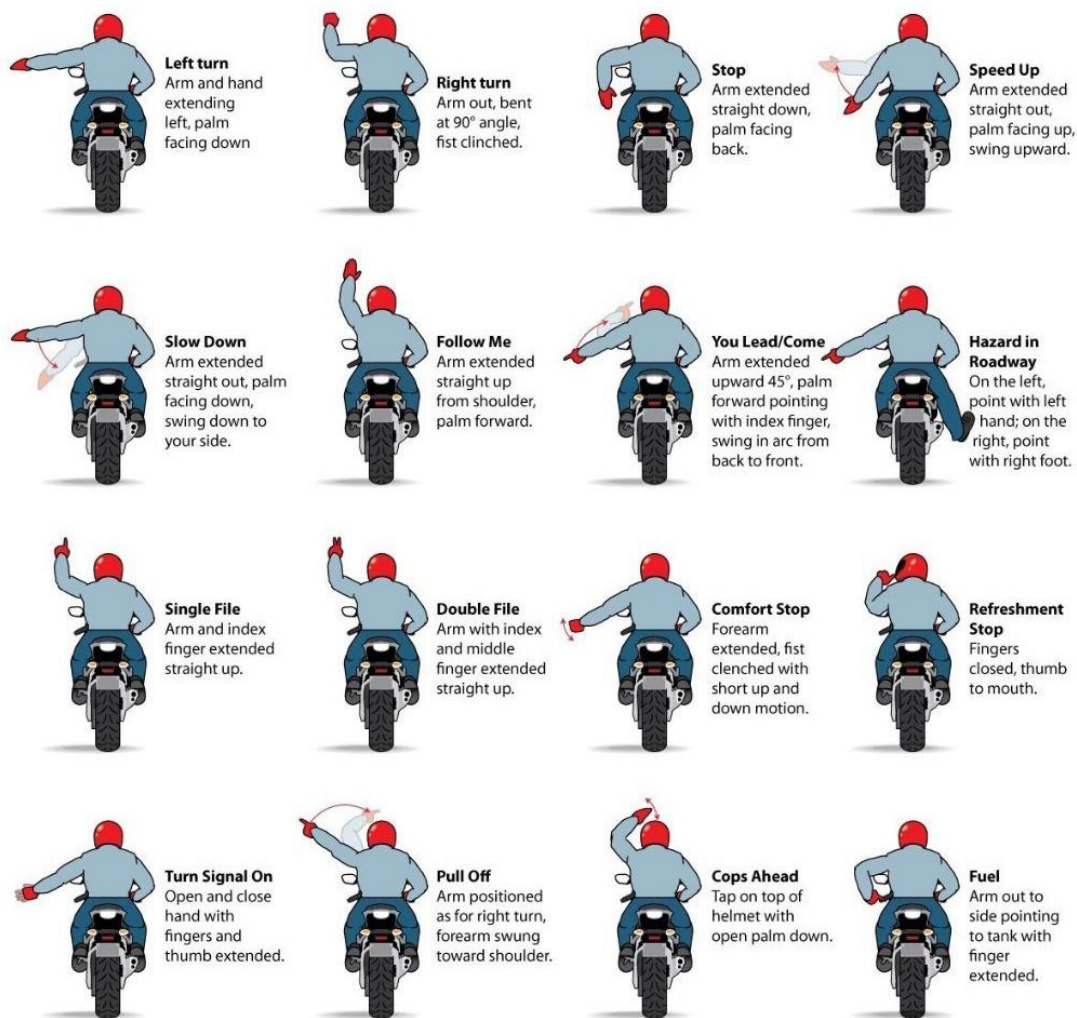


Figure 1. Standard rider hand signals.

Rider Formations and Distances

Riding Speed

The Lead Road Captain will typically set a speed consistent with the local speed limit as well as the abilities of the least experienced rider in the group. All group riders should endeavor to maintain a consistent spacing with as little “rubber-banding” as possible. Try to maintain a consistent 1 second from the rider at your stagger position, which will put 2 seconds to the rider directly in front of you, as described below. Keeping the group together and “tight” is important to minimize dangers of another vehicle attempting to pass or cut in to the group, or from turning across our lanes



after thinking the full group has passed. Note that consistent spacing is nearly impossible with cruise control set. That convenient function maintains a constant speed, but that will allow spacing within the group to vary and cause “rubber-banding.” So, in a group ride, only the Lead Road Captain should use cruise control.

Stagger Formation

The normal default riding formation is “staggered.” This position is shown in Figure 2. Each rider will attempt to maintain 2 seconds to the rider directly ahead in their “half-lane.” This will typically place them 1 second behind the rider in the stagger position ahead. Occasionally this spacing will vary to the stagger rider due to slight speed differences; the main point is not to ride up beside that rider. Each rider should always have an “out” to maneuver if needed to avoid a road hazard or as needed. However, each rider should maintain their half-lane if possible. Note that maneuvering to avoid a road hazard is possible because there won’t be anybody beside you. Also, braking to avoid a road hazard is possible because the rider behind will be 2 seconds behind. However, avoid braking and maneuvering at the same time if at all possible! This causes a major disruption in the formation and can be quite dangerous. A single-file formation with a minimum 2-second following distance 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.

If the group has been riding in single-file formation, and the Lead Road Captain wishes to re-form the staggered formation, he will show two fingers in the air. As always, this signal should be passed by each rider to the rear. Also, after each “Kickstands Down,” the default formation will again be staggered. So, after a lunch or gas stop, the group will begin riding in staggered formation. If the Lead Road Captain wishes single-file, he/she will call for it.

The two-finger signal will also be given if the Lead Road Captain sees the formation deviating from this protocol. If the spacing is larger, or if the riders are using more than their half-lane, the Lead may hold two fingers in the air to call for Staggered Formation again. The riders should double-check that they are not deviating from their half-lane, and are no more than 2 seconds behind the rider directly in front of them in their half-lane. This is sometimes called a “tighten up” signal.

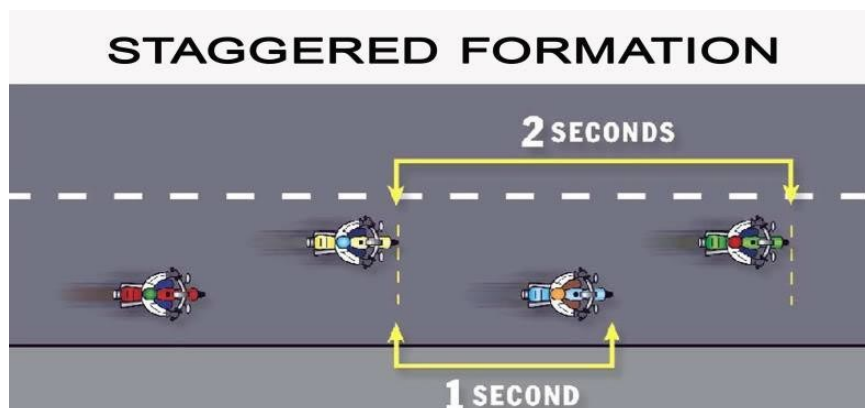


Figure 2. Standard staggered riding formation and spacing.



Single File Formation

Lane Changes, Passing, Urban riding

Yavapai HOG does not endorse lane splitting or lane filtering, or riding between lanes of traffic, while on a HOG ride. It is illegal in most states, but lane splitting is legal in California. Arizona, Montana, Utah, and Hawaii have lane filtering laws, which allow riding between lanes of stopped traffic under certain conditions. Other states may follow with versions of this law as well. **Yavapai HOG also does not endorse lane sharing**, or riding side-by-side. This reduces the ability of either rider to maneuver to avoid road hazards, and can cause accidents.

Lane Changes (aka “follow the leader”)

On a road with multiple lanes in the direction of travel, lane changes are initiated by the Road Captains. The Lead Road Captain will use his turn signal to indicate he wishes to change lanes. All riders should use their turn signal as well (follow the leader), but **do not change lanes** until the Lead Road Captain changes lanes. The Sweep Road Captain will see the signals and will move into the new lane to protect it, then the Lead Road Captain will move into that lane, followed by the rest of the group (follow the leader). As a group rider, your responsibility is to wait for the Lead Road Captain to change lanes before changing yourself. Try to make all lane changes smoothly, without abrupt maneuvers. The lane change should be from front to back, so wait until the rider in front of you changes before changing. Always use the head-check to ensure the lane is clear for you to maneuver.

The Lead Road Captain may designate another Road Captain as his “wingman” during the pre-ride briefing. The wingman is the second rider in the group, and will be riding in the right half-lane. The wingman decides when to change lanes to the right. Since he is in the right half-lane, he is better able to see the traffic in the right lane, or see the sweep capturing the lane, prior to moving back after making the pass. As with the left-hand lane change, the group should always wait for the lead to change lanes to the right before changing lanes.

The Sweep Road Captain may capture a lane “opportunistically.” If he believes the Lead Road Captain may need to make an upcoming lane change, he may capture the lane before the Lead Road Captain uses his turn signal. All riders in the group should remain in position until the Lead Road Captain changes lanes, as described above. Likewise, at his discretion, the Lead Road Captain may initiate a lane change prior to having the sweep capture the lane. All group riders follow the same “follow the leader” protocol, and change lanes from front to back after the Lead changes lanes, regardless of where the sweep is.

Passing

On a road with a single lane in the direction of travel, which includes many of our back roads in Arizona, passing another vehicle is done individually, not as a group. The Lead Road Captain will attempt to initiate the pass with as much room as possible for the group; however, it is vital that each rider evaluate the passing situation and act accordingly. **DO NOT “follow the leader”** in this situation. There are many cases where there is room for multiple riders to pass at the same time – be sure to leave room after moving back into the right lane. **Keep your speed up** after making the pass to leave room for those passing behind you to move over as well. Don’t move over in front of the passed vehicle with-



out leaving space for the others – you may trap them in the passing lane.

The Lead Road Captain may remain in the passing lane as long as possible to allow following riders to more easily see that the way is clear for them to pass. This is an aid; however, it is always the individual rider's responsibility to ensure it is safe to pass.

City Riding

In town, the biggest risk is allowing space between riders which can let traffic or traffic lights separate the group. When this happens, the rider in front of the second group effectively becomes a Lead, but without full knowledge of the route or procedures. This can be a difficult situation.

1. If the group becomes split, or separated, and the front group is not in sight, the best thing to do (if the first group is not in sight and the first rider in the separated group does not know the route) is find a safe place to pull over (a parking lot, or someplace off the travel lanes) and let the Sweep Road Captain assume the lead. The first group will slow or stop ahead, and wait for the second group to catch up. There is no need to hurry.
2. In town, the best practice is to tighten the group as much as possible, while maintaining a safe separation. Maintain the stagger formation, but at slower speeds, the 2-second separation is a closer formation. This will typically keep traffic from splitting the group, but be sure to maintain awareness.
3. At stop signs or stop lights, we typically stop in a side-by-side formation, then as we take off from the stop, the stagger formation is formed again. This is the best way to keep the group together.
4. If you are at the back of the first group and the separated group is obviously well behind, use the "Lost Rider" signal (fist in the air) to pass that information forward to the Lead Road Captain. He may slow the group, or he may find a place to pull the group over to wait.

Gas, Food, Rest Stops, and Tolls

The Lead Road Captain will plan stops for gas, food, bio-breaks, scenic stops, etc. These should be discussed at the pre-ride briefing. Feel free to use the restroom, purchase food, water, etc., but try to be with the group when preparing to leave again.

Unscheduled and/or Emergency Stops

Emergencies occur; they may be a flat tire, a poorly running engine, or just an urgent need for a bio break. If a rider needs to stop, he should slow and pull to the side of the road (hopefully in a safe location off the road), letting the rest of the group pass. The rest of the group should NOT slow or stop behind him; they should pass and keep up with the main group. The Sweep Road Captain will stop with the ailing rider and work out whatever help is needed. At some point ahead, the Lead Road Captain will pull off in a safe location with the group to wait for a report.

Accidents

If an accident occurs, the unaffected riders in the group should continue ahead and pull over in a safe location off the road. The Sweep Road Captain will stop to deal with the accident. This minimizes the

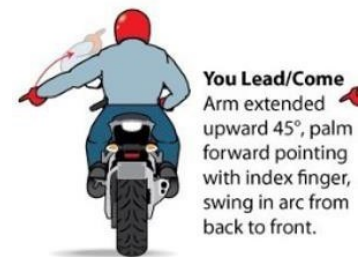


congestion and potential for additional accidents to occur. Wait for a Road Captain to assign duties, if needed, such as flagging traffic, calling for assistance, providing medical attention, etc.

Departing the group ride

We will usually all meet at the beginning of the ride at the meeting place denoted by the Lead Road Captain when he submits the plan to the group. At the end of the ride, however, each member may split off as desired to go home rather than congregating back at the meeting place. Be sure to coordinate with the Road Captains, so they don't think you've fallen behind and waste time waiting for you to catch up. Always "wave off" when leaving the group – this is a big overhead wave to indicate an intentional departure from the group. If you don't do this, the Sweep Road Captain will follow you to help with whatever caused you to depart the group.

Ideally, a rider who plans to depart the group early should ride at the rear, just ahead of the Sweep. Sometime, however, an unplanned exit may occur or multiple riders will depart at the end of the ride. When a rider leaves the group, the formation is disrupted. Yavapai HOG recommends maintaining your half-lane, and the rider with the "hole" in the forward stagger position to motion for the next rider to pass in their half-lane. This is the only time when side-by-side is acceptable, and in this case it will only be for a pass which both parties are well aware is occurring. Then, the next rider back should motion the other rider to pass, and after that rider moves forward, then the next rider in series will motion for the next rider to pass, and so on. Only one pass should occur at any one time, and they should cascade backwards as described. This will keep everybody's riding position (inside or outside half-lane) consistent. As a reminder, the motion for passing is shown here.



Summary

Yavapai HOG is dedicated to providing a fun and exciting riding experience for its members. By following the guidelines within this document, our rides will be safe and enjoyable for everybody. If anybody in the group has any concerns with any aspect of the Yavapai HOG Ride Guidelines, let your Chapter Director know and they will be addressed. The Chapter Director, and all officers, can be found on the Yavapai HOG website at www.yavapaihog.com, or by contacting Legends Harley-Davidson in Mayer, AZ.

Now come out and ride!