

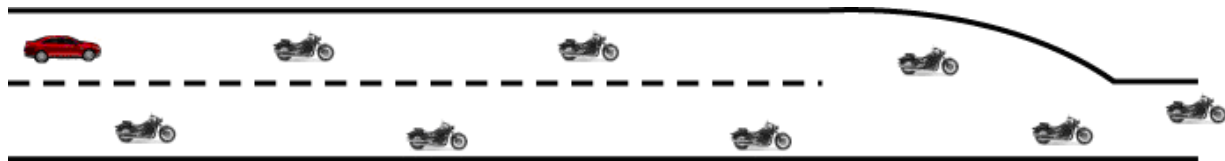
Closing the Door

As just one more example of how an experienced tail gunner can add considerably to the safety of a group ride, take the case of your group riding along and seeing a sign that shows that either the right or left lane is about to be lost.

Normally, the lead bike will position the group so that they are in the remaining lane well before the other lane merges. The danger, of course, comes when some vehicle tries to sneak ahead of the group by racing along that merging lane and runs out of road. He has no alternative then but to jam his way into the middle of the group.

We would like to see the merges be treated in the following manner.

The tail gunner will signal and move into the lane to ensure space for the group. Once the lead bike has seen that the lane has been secured by the tail gunner, the lead bike will signal to make a lane change. NO ONE should move until the lead bike has indicated to do so and started to move. At this time, only the one file will move in, and fill the lane that is being merged into. When the merge in the road occurs, the bikes moving into the single lane will signal and fall into the original staggered formation.



When riding in a group the riders should ride in what is called "Staggered Formation".

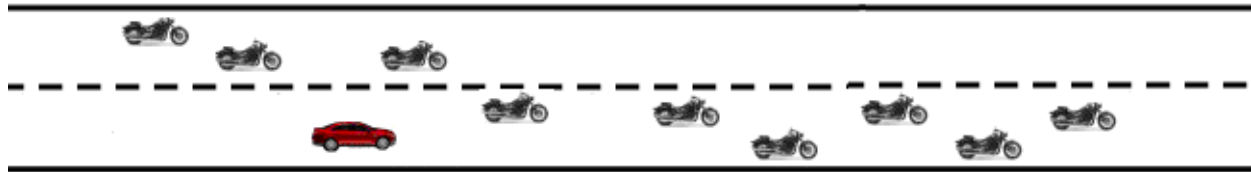
Lane Change

In most jurisdictions traffic laws prescribe that, on a road in which there are two lanes of traffic moving in the same direction, the lane on the right will be the slower lane. If a group of motorcyclists is going to move into the slower lane from the faster one, the first bike in a group which moves is responsible for creating a gap into which all the following bikes can fit. This is accomplished by maintaining a constant speed in order to enlarge the gap after the first bike moves. Each bike moving in succession should also be aware of this dynamic. Thus, the group moves from first to last. An exception is the tail gunner.

The first bike to indicate a move under these conditions will be the Lead Bike. The maneuver is accomplished in this way: the Lead Bike signals for the lane change and announces to the group via hand signals that the group is moving to the right, front to back. Then, after checking by actually turning the head to see that the new lane is cleared of traffic sufficient for one bike to safely enter it, the bike in the right track behind the lead rider moves across taking up a position

in the right track of the new lane where they usually ride. Once the lead bike sees they have / are moving across the lane, they know that they can safely move over without crossing paths. Each (pair) Left and Right bike will move into the new lane in the same manner when they have cleared the obstacle they are passing .By maintaining the maximum speed which the traffic in that lane will allow, the next bike in the group can insert, moving into the right track there. Each succeeding bike follows this pattern: signal right, move right in your own lane, head-check, enter new lane, maintain speed to create gap, and take up regular position (left or right track) in the new lane.

The tail gunner in this pattern is normally the last to enter the new lane, unless “closing the door” was possible. As the bikes move quickly and re-form their group, it is rare that a four-wheeler will move up into the gap in the new lane. If a cage moves into the gap, the next bike to move must tuck in behind it and wait for the group ahead to slow up, encouraging the cage to pass. When the cage passes the slower forward group, the whole group can re-form into a normal riding configuration.



How to Leave the Group only at the End of a Ride

Tapping Out

Nobody is allowed to leave the group without the tail gunner knowing about it.

Nobody other than the person designated by the road captain is ALLOWED to ride 'last' for any reason whatever. Among other things, this insures that we never lose anyone or leave a straggler unintentionally at a rest stop. Most importantly, this insures that the Road Captain has eyes at the rear of the pack and can be kept appraised about how the group is doing (speed-wise, cornering ability, etc.) in order to make adjustments in behalf of the group.

If we are returning from a day of riding and the end location is a bit out of the way for you, there is always the option of Tapping Out. At the last stop, before you intend to drop from the ride, you need to make sure you have talked to the tail gunner for that ride. Let them know where you intend to leave, and you should think about positioning yourself in the ride so that you are not crossing the path of another rider to leave.

Just before your intended turn, you will indicate your turn with your turn signal and take two fingers together with your left hand and tap the side of your helmet, just above your left ear, and then point over top your helmet. This indicates you are leaving the group (tapping out) and that you are not suffering from any kind of mechanical distress. This method of tapping out will ensure that the rest of the group continues on in the smoothest manner possible.

Filling the Hole or Not

If for some reason a rider no longer fills a position in the staggered formation, we will have a gap. The group should try to remain as tight as possible. There are several thoughts on what to do about the vacant spot.

Crossing is not a safe solution. Putting yourself in a cross path of another cyclist should only be done in an emergency situation when no other action but this is possible. Intentionally having 6 or more motorcycles perform this maneuver on the highway is not a safe idea.

Next option would be for the rider directly behind to pull into that vacant location. Problems with this are *1- you are not allowed to pass another vehicle and occupy the same lane*, *2- you are not allowed to pass on the right*. Both these options are ticket-able offences under the highway traffic act.

We would like you to do nothing. Ride along maintain that gap as though there was a bike and rider there. Keep your distance as you did when they were there.

When the group reaches the next stop in traffic, such as a light or a stop sign or a flag person in a construction area, the group at that time will close up the gap that occurred without anyone having to cross the path of another rider or be put in a situation that may cause them to get a ticket.

