

**BMW Motorcycle Club
Ottawa**



Guided Ride – Rules

Definitions

- **Group** - two or more motorcycles riding together.
- **Guided Ride (or Club Ride)** - a group organized and led by a Ride Leader.
- **Packet** - a sub-group within a group ride led by a Ride Leader.
- **Open Formation** – a loose formation where riders leave more space (a minimum of two second intervals) between bikes.
- **Staggered Formation** – a tighter formation in which riders ride in alternating left and right tracks.
- **Track(s)** – tracks in a motor lane made by cars (i.e. left and right tire tracks, and includes a third “centre” track).
- **Sweeper** - A Ride Leader that acts as sweep - the last rider in a packet.

General Goals

- Club Rides exist to share in our passion for riding and comradeship.
- Our goal is to organize and lead rides on scenic and interesting routes.
- The Club’s responsibility is to manage risks resulting in fun, safe and “uneventful” rides.
- Safety is everyone’s responsibility, leaders and followers.
- Riders will always observe all traffic laws.
- Consumption of alcohol (or use of any drugs or medication) that could impair the rider’s judgement or bike handling skills, are explicitly forbidden on Club Guided Rides.

Safety Through Situational Awareness

- Situational awareness is essential to safe riding (Reference: the Club’s Advanced Rider Training Student Handbook, Part II).
- When riding solo, situational awareness includes factors such as your mental and physical state, the condition of your bike, riding gear, road conditions, weather and traffic.
- When riding in a group, you must add an awareness of factors such as the group’s riding formation; your position relative to the motorcycles immediately in front and behind you; the pace of the group; and group communications (i.e., the need to pass on hand or other signals).
- Maintaining situational awareness also means avoiding mistakes such as **group-think** (e.g., blindly following the rider in front of you without looking to see if it is safe); **pressing on regardless** (e.g., keeping up with the group even when the speed is outside your comfort zone); or allowing yourself to become **distracted** when the group’s pace is slow.

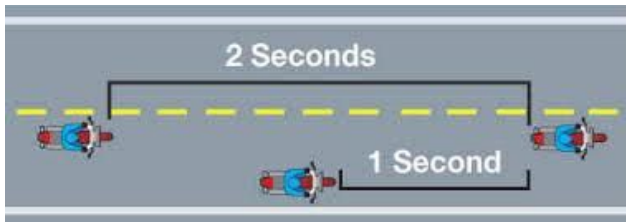
Ride Protocols

The club generally uses two ride formations; *Staggered* and *Open*.

Staggered Formation



Club rides will use the staggered formation in many situations. It is the normal formation for group riding. The staggered formation allows the packet leader to retain better control of the group, it also allows the group to stay close together without reducing following distance and without having riders drive alongside one another at speed. Even in staggered formation, riders can shift tracks as required. When stopped, riders should come alongside (pair up) with one another (1+2, 3+4, 5+6 etc.). The staggered formation resumes immediately once underway.



In the staggered formation, an individual rider will ride in the left or right tire track within a lane, two seconds behind the rider ahead and one second behind the rider in the other tire track. Riders will adjust their choice of tire track to conform to the riders ahead.

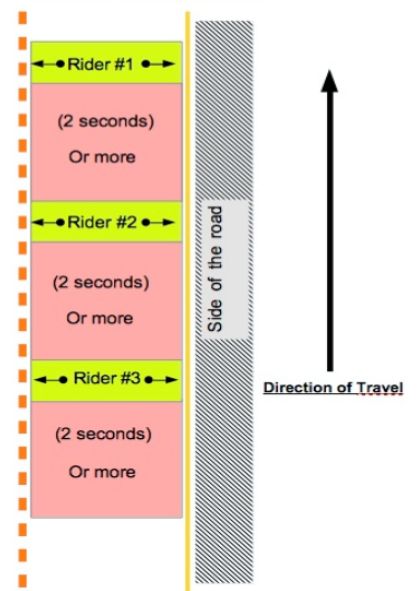
Open Formation

Following the signal by the Ride Leader, riders will create a buffer (a no riding zone) of two seconds or more between his or her bike and the rider ahead.



The interval will be dictated by the nature of the road condition (twisties, construction, road surface, etc.). When in "open formation," riders "own" the entire width of a lane and indeed should choose a lane position (left-center-right) appropriate for the road, conditions and their preferred "line".

Under no circumstance should a rider encroach on the buffer zone of the rider ahead when underway! Do not tailgate!



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The Ride Leader will keep an average speed that will be at or below the posted speed limit.

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If the group ride leader decides to pass a vehicle (e.g. a tractor), each rider will ~~pass the vehicle~~ pass the vehicle when it is safe to do so. When passing, each rider will accelerate beyond the passed vehicle ensuring there is ample room for the following rider.

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It is hard for drivers to judge distances when passing a group of motorcycles because the distance between the first and last rider fluctuates. When a vehicle is passing a group on a two lane road, where the line of sight may be limited, the driver could be forced to merge back into the driving lane unexpectedly.

In order to prepare for this possibility, as the vehicle passes each rider, they should reduce their speed, allowing the vehicle to pass. This minimizes the time the passing vehicle is beside the rider. Changes in speed should be done gradually to ensure the following rider has time to adjust.

By reducing speed, riders that have been passed give the passing vehicle the necessary space it needs to move safely back into the driving lane at any time. As the passing vehicle overtakes each rider, the rider should look ahead in the passing lane for oncoming traffic which might force the passing vehicle to suddenly enter the driving lane. When being overtaken, riders can also look at the driver to acknowledge that you are aware of them - all forms of communication help mitigate risk.

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When one of our groups comes up behind a large, slower motorcycle group on a two lane road, the Ride Leader should not attempt to pass. The packet leader should find a good and safe resting area and give the other group a healthy head start.

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When a group is waiting at intersections (i.e., stop signs or signal lights), they should do so in pairs. Riders should come alongside (pair up) with one another (1+2, 3+4, 5+6 etc.) when stopped and resume the formation as they pull away in sequence. Riders always cross intersections on their own time. Riders should never feel pressure to cross or enter into flowing traffic.

If a group becomes separated at an intersection, the last rider in the forward group becomes the temporary sweeper; and, the first rider in the separated group becomes the temporary group leader. The forward group will stop at a safe and convenient place and let the following group re-join them as soon as practical.

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In case of an unscheduled event during a ride, riders ahead of the event should continue to follow the Ride Leader until he/she brings the group to a safe area to stop. Riders behind the event should safely stop on the side of the road, park and proceed to render assistance and/or call the appropriate emergency services. The Sweeper should, when appropriate, contact the Ride Leader to inform him/her of the event and its possible effect on the scheduled ride.

GS Rides

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Prior to ride day, the ride leader may suggest a certain type of tire. Most rides will be easily done on 80/20 tires but some more aggressive rides may require 50/50 tires.

If you have adjustable suspension, ensure that your motorcycle is set to the highest setting for improved ground clearance. If you have compression and rebound adjustments, talk to the ride leader for recommended settings, as this may depend somewhat on the proposed terrain and current conditions.

If your motorcycle is fitted with on/off road foot pegs (most GS versions have them), you may want to consider removing the rubber portion before the ride.

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Full and proper protective gear is highly recommended on GS Rides. In addition to jacket and pants, you should also wear a full face helmet and gloves with knuckle protection.

Offroad boots are also recommended, however not mandatory for some of the less technical rides.

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Spacing between riders must be extended on gravel due to stones, dust, speed, terrain and the skill level of the rider in front of you. Veteran off roaders will always keep a safe distance back. A minimum of five seconds between riders is safe in some areas, much longer spacing is required in many cases. You may not see the riders in front of you while on this type of ride. When there is a split or intersection, the ride leader will stop and wait for everyone to regroup, you will not be left behind so do not travel too close!

There is NO PASSING while on the move. When we stop to regroup, this is your chance to rearrange the packet order, if you see that you are much faster than the person in front of you. Simply pull up beside the person in front of you and politely ask if you can go in front. Regroup stops will happen approximately every 5 to 10 minutes. NEVER try to go faster than your comfort level. If you feel like the pace is too fast, simply slow down and on the next regroup stop, let others pass in front.

Like on any group ride, if you are experiencing any difficulties, stop and the sweeper will assist you.



Responsibilities

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- If you are new to group rides, advise the Ride Leader.
- Obey the Highway Traffic Act and exercise good judgement at all times.
- Wear appropriate protective riding gear (ATGATT); helmet, suit, pants, gloves, boots.
- Ensure that your motorcycle is in good mechanical condition before arriving at the meeting by performing the pre-ride motorcycle checklist:
 - Tires
 - Pressure - check the pressure when tires are cold, before starting your ride
 - Tread - check for worn and/or uneven wear
 - Damage - check for cuts or nails stuck in the tread
 - Fuel and oil levels
 - Do a visual check of oil levels and arrive with a full tank ready to ride
- Familiarize yourself with the route, directions, hazards and ultimate destination of the ride.
- Don't let "trying to keep up" exceed your riding skills - this is dangerous to both the individual rider and the group.
- Check your mirrors frequently (every 5-8 seconds). Know what is happening behind you.
- Instruct pillion passenger on proper riding techniques and ensure that they wear protective gear.
- Notify the Ride Leader or the Sweeper of your intention to leave the Guided Ride midstream.

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- Plan and pre-ride the route in order to offer the most pleasant experience for all.
- Based on the pre-ride, prepare a GPX file for distribution to Club members.
- Notify the lunch stop restaurant owner/staff of the ride plans and confirm numbers with a morning phone call on the day of the ride.
- At the ride briefing, provide a route map and/or description to riders. If the attendance is large enough, separate the group into levels of ability and create a number of smaller groups of five to eight riders (commonly called packets), if possible. Each packet to be led by a Ride Leader.
- Coordinate the packet Leaders and Sweepers and exchange contact information (cell phone) if applicable.
- Ensure that any participant in a Club Ride who is not a Club member signs a waiver before the ride commences.

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- Follow at the back of the group.
- Stop to assist any rider from the group who is pulled over on the side of the road.
- Report to the packet Ride Leader on rider(s) who have dropped out.Á
- Report to the packet Ride Leader the general performance and pace of the group, at the rest stops.

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- Stop in a safe spot clear of the accident and the roadway
- Make sure the scene is safe before approaching
- Check if the casualty is conscious or unconscious
- Call 911
- Perform First Aid/CPR
- If able, ask someone to manage traffic

