

# **New Smyrna Beach Chapter** *Harley Owners Group*

## **Rider's Handbook**

### **Director's Message**

Welcome to the New Smyrna Beach chapter of the Harley Owners Group. It is always a pleasure to see new members riding with our group. It is important to us that you have a great time while you are riding with us. The New Smyrna Beach area is one of the nicest motorcycling areas in all of Florida. If you enjoy riding on back roads near the ocean or tree canopied areas this is the area for you. We consider ourselves fortunate to live in one of the best all year around riding states. There are so many great reasons to ride our motorcycles in the New Smyrna Beach area.

Our chapter members share a passion for riding Harley-Davidson motorcycles. Our organized group rides are an excellent way to enjoy your Harley Davidson motorcycle. If you are new to group riding please take a few minutes to read through our group riding document. Additionally if you are new to our chapter please take the time to familiarize yourself with our group riding style, which may have some unique techniques that may be different from what you are familiar with.

# Road Rules

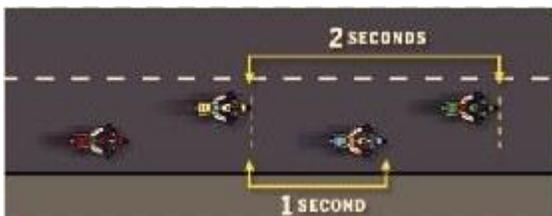
## *Group riding*

New Smyrna Beach HOG rides always use a staggered formation. That is we never ride side-by-side but in a formation that alternates riding in the left and right road tracks in a single lane. This allows riders the full use of the road without concern that another rider may be occupying the space to his or her side. Our lead rider always rides in the left track to assure better visibility of the road which will allow the lead Road Captain to see both the traveled lane as well as the oncoming traffic.

We use a two second following distance from the bike directly in front of you in the same track. You can determine your proper spacing (following distance) by picking a stripe in the road or other stationary landmark and counting two seconds from when the bike in front of you passes this object until when you cross that marker.

One method of counting is to begin counting: “One-thousand-one” when the bike in front of you crosses your marker, “One-thousand-two.” This allows for two seconds after the marker.

The bike in front of you in the opposite track should be one second in front of you and the bike in the opposite track behind you should be one second behind you.



If a rider should leave the group, we will leave a gap where that

rider left the formation until the next stop sign or stop light at which time the group will move together and close the gap. Upon rolling away from a stop, the group will reform into the staggered formation.

Florida law does not allow for riders to pass other riders in the opposite track. You may find this to be different from other groups that you have rode with.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### **Lead Road Captain**

The Lead Road Captain is the leader of the ride. As the leader, he or she is responsible for setting the ride pace, which will be at or below the posted speed limit. The Lead Road Captain must consider many factors when setting the pace for the group such as the rider skill levels, weather conditions, number of bikes in the group and traffic conditions just to name a few.

The Lead Road Captain will set a slow initial pace after any stop to prevent an “accordion” effect of the group. Once the group is rolling in normal staggered formation, the lead Road Captain may increase speed to a safe pace.

The Lead Road Captain determines the lane of travel on a multiple lane road or highway. He or she is responsible for signaling all lane changes. The Lead Road Captain will execute lane changes with the assistance of the Tail Road Captain. When the lead Road Captain signals for a lane change, it does NOT mean to immediately make a move in any direction. This is just the Lead Road Captain signaling his intent such that everyone knows what will occur when he initiates a lane change. The lead Road Captain will initiate the appropriate hand signal and turn signal that are then passed back by the group so that the tail Road Captain receives the signal and initiates securing the desired lane.

The Lead Road Captain will wait until the tail Road Captain has moved into the desired lane securing it for travel by the group.

When the lane is secure the lead Road Captain will initiate his move to the secured lane. It is important that all the riders in the group wait to initiate their move until the bike in the opposite track immediately in front initiates their move first.

### **Tail Road Captain**

The tail Road Captain will be the last rider in the group. They, like the lead Road Captain, will be easily visible by their bright orange safety vests. The tail Road Captain may use any portion of the lane in order to be the most visible to the lead Road Captain. The lead Road Captain waits for the tail Road Captain to place his feet on the ground prior to moving away from all stop signs.

The tail Road Captain is responsible for and will provide assistance to any rider that encounters problems and has to either slow or stop. The tail Road Captain will have a cellular phone and first aid kit to assist with any emergency.

## **Participating in the Ride**

- All riders are responsible for their own safety and will need to ride in a safe manner. Always perform a head check before changing lanes, passing, turning etc.
- Everyone must obey all speed and traffic laws at all times.
- Everyone is responsible for knowing all of the hand signals and for passing all signals back to the bike/s behind them.
- All riders are expected to insure that their bike is in a safe operating condition, has a FULL tank of gas, and is ready to go. Performing a T-Clock inspection helps determine bike condition; “Tires, Controls, Lights, Oil, Chassis and Kickstand”.
- All riders are responsible to clearly signal the tail Road Captain if they decide to leave the ride for any reason.

Example: waving good-bye to indicate you are just leaving and are not in trouble.

- Turn off all spot lights except tail Road Captain
- Consuming alcohol beverages before arriving at destination is a no no.
- All rides end at destination.
- Let a Road Captain know if you need assistance getting back. No one will be left stranded and have to fend for themselves.
- Rest stops will be approximately every 75-80 miles. If you have special needs let the Road Captain know.

## **Hand Signals**

### **SLOW DOWN**

The lead Road Captain will extend his arm straight with his palm side facing down and swing it down to his side lifting and lowering hand like patting something to signal to lower the group's speed without coming to a stop. This generally is done to prepare the group for an area that is marked for a lower speed than the group is traveling or for another safety reason such as negotiating a slow curve.

### **SPEED UP**

The lead Road Captain will extend his arm straight out with his palm facing up and swing it forward to signal to speed up the pace of the group. Riders should accelerate smoothly up to the pace set by the lead Road Captain while maintain the one second two second interval.

### **STOP**

The lead Road Captain will signal the group to come to a stop by extending the left arm downward with the palm of his/her hand facing the group. The lead Road Captain will use this signal in sufficient time to allow the group to

make a smooth stop. Generally, this signal will be used at traffic lights, stop signs, or flag persons.

## **SINGLE FILE**

When the lead Road Captain extends the left arm straight up with the index finger pointing upwards, this indicates that there is some potential hazard in the path of travel that would be unsafe to pass in staggered formation. It is imperative that the group falls in *directly behind, and follows* the lead Road Captain in a single file. The group should *remain* in single file until directed otherwise by the lead Road Captain. While riding in the same track as the bike in front of you don't forget to maintain the two second spacing.

## **STAGGERED FORMATION**

This signal indicates that it is safe for the group to resume riding in staggered formation after being in single file. When making this transition, be sure to allow the proper following distances and spacing. One and two second rule. This signal is made by lifting the left arm straight up and lifting index and pinky fingers straight up.

## **LEFT TURN**

When approaching a left turn the lead Road Captain will extend the left arm straight out, and will also signal with the bikes left turn signal.

## **RIGHT TURN**

When approaching a right turn the lead Road Captain will extend the left arm out with the forearm pointing upwards at a 90-degree at the elbow. It will be done with a closed hand such that it is not confused for the single file signal, and will also signal with the bikes right turn signal.

## **ROAD HAZARD**

When approaching a hazard in the road you should point the object out using your hand pointed downward in the direction of the hazard at a 45 degree angle. Never use your foot to identify an object as this could potentially destabilize your motorcycle.



**Left Turn**



**Right Turn**



**Hazard on Left**



**Hazard on Right**



**Slow Down**



**Speed Up**



**Staggered Formation**



**Single File**



**Stop**