



The Straight and Narrow

Safety in Numbers



It seems that every Chapter Member has their own idea about group riding. Most Chapter Members get it right away, and practice it at each ride. However some can't grasp the purpose of it, and then there are others that have a hard time getting the gist of why it is important, and an even harder time getting into the habit of following the "rules". Although we do not have any set in stone Rules for group riding there are some universal guidelines that most Chapters in the GWRRA try to follow.

When asked what is the main reason for group riding, almost everyone's first answer will be "Cuz it Looks Cool"! I must agree that there are few things on the highway that are more impressive than a well organized group of Gold Wings, doing their thing. But first and foremost the number one benefit of group riding, and doing it right, is safety. Safety in numbers that is how it works.

So how can the size of a vehicle or group of vehicles be important? It all began when we (the human) were small children. The very first time that a Mom or Dad who was driving us in the car asked the fateful question "Is there anything coming on your side". That is where our conditioning began. From that day on we have been trained to look for large vehicles, with two headlights, a bumper, a windshield, and a grill. Yes I know that the Wing has all of that, the problem is that it is about ¼ the size of what we normally see. As well as "not seeing" the smaller bike, the size of the vehicle will make it more difficult for others to estimate the speed of an oncoming motorcycle.

Unfortunately there are a lot of people who are not tuned in to their surroundings well enough to adapt to the fact that there are motorcycles out there too. The most that they ever recognize about a bike is that it is loud, dangerous, and the riders are hoodlums. (Not mine but some of the public's perception.) These are the ones that we need to protect ourselves from.

So by using the above reasoning, we can add, that by increasing the number of bikes, in an organized formation, we will increase the visibility of the group, thereby increasing the safety factor of all the group.

The key words here being, "Organized Formation". The last thing that we, as motorcyclist need to do is to add to the public's confusion by darting about in traffic like Skittles in a blender. An "Organized Formation" can only be accomplished by having a uniform set of guidelines, and sticking with them.

The GWRRA has come up with a set of guidelines that it encourages all Chapters to use. We will be distributing these guidelines at our Chapter Gatherings, and ask that each member read, understand, and try to adhere to them. There is a lot of information within these guidelines, but once you start to put them into practice it will become second nature to you, and you will see that they really are almost all just common sense.

Hopefully by using these guidelines we will be more organized, safer, and enjoy our rides more. If you have any questions, comments, or concerns please feel free to contact either your Chapter Director, or your Chapter Educator.

There are several things that we as Chapter Members should keep in mind each time we get on our bikes. These are a few simple, yet important things that may or may not be in the "Group Riding Guidelines".

- 1) First and foremost, RIDE YOUR OWN RIDE. Don't get caught up in the mentality that you must push yourself beyond your abilities just to Keep Up. The rest of the group will be at the final destination when you get there, and they will not run off and leave you stranded out on the side of the road.
- 2) Remember that on all Chapter rides, the Leader and the Tail Gunner are in charge of the ride. Participants can offer assistance as needed, but these two are in charge and will make all the final decisions.
- 3) Remember that in any instance where there is an altercation between an automobile and a motorcycle, The automobile **WILL ALWAYS WIN!** Regardless of your abilities or lack of, it is a matter of Physics they will win. Don't try to bully your way into or around traffic, you may not like the outcome.
- 4) Wear proper riding gear, and make sure that it is all in good condition and fits properly. Also, dress for the ride, NOT the crash. You will enjoy the ride much more.
- 5) Keep your vehicle in good working condition. Practice the T-Clock checks regularly, and use a dependable service man (or woman).
- 6) Do not take offense if someone in the group offers constructive criticism. They would not do so if they were not concerned with your well being. Also do not offer it, unless you can do it in a diplomatic manner.
- 7) Remember that from the moment that you put on your Chapter Shirt, cap, vest, etc. you are a representative of our Chapter and the GWRRA. The public will judge all of us by your actions. This is a big responsibility, when you consider how many GWRRA members there are worldwide.

I know that the material in this Newsletter article is pretty vague, and does not go into great detail on the subject. But time and space are an issue here, and it is ALL covered in the Group Riding Guidelines. Take the time to read them and I am sure that you will have a better understanding of what is expected of you on our rides, and you will probably enjoy the ride more knowing that you are doing your part to help keep your riding companions a little safer.

Thank you for your time and support.

Until next time, ride safe and have fun.
Dale and Kathy Compton
G2 Chapter Educators.

