



SYDNEY CHAPTER

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Chapter Safety Brief

Introduction

This Chapter Safety Brief contains information that each member is expected to know and observe so that everyone can participate safely and enjoy their time with Sydney HOG Chapter. All members are encouraged to read this brief prior to participating in group rides with Sydney HOG, and review it on a regular basis.

It is our desire to have all riders as competent as they can be. We encourage members to take a H.A.R.T Riding Skills course. Here are some comments from previous attendees:

"I enjoyed it immensely and the instructor was worth every dollar."

"My cornering has improved so much since getting some tips and avoiding some bad habits."

"The course was great and the instructor was exceptional - he made the course well worth doing."

"The involvement for pillions is very good. My wife felt much more comfortable and knowledgeable after the course. The course was a great chance to work the balance and performance of the bike together, and for her to really understand the forces she is feeling (as well as the forces she creates) when on the bike."

Courses are held regularly at the HART track at 451 Mona Vale Rd, St. Ives. If you have an interest in attending for the first time, or as a refresher, see our Safety Officer, a Committee Member or HART directly for more details.

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Chapter Rides

Ride selection and scheduling. Chapter rides are selected and scheduled by the Chapter Activities Officer along with the other Chapter Officers and Road Captains. The rides are normally chosen and scheduled at least 6 months in advance. All members are encouraged to make suggestions for the rides to any Committee Member or Road Captain.

Road Captains (RC's). Road Captains are responsible for conducting individual Chapter rides. Prior to all rides, they select the route, check it for safety conditions, ensure the destination is suitable and make any arrangements necessary for a large group. They also prepare each group by conducting a pre-ride briefing during which they go over a ride checklist, explain the planned route and provide any other information relevant to the ride.

Each ride has a minimum of two allocated Road Captains: A Lead Road Captain at the front and a Sweep Road Captain at the back. There is usually a 3rd official Road Captain called the Shotgun who rides in 2nd position and whose main job it is to point out where 'corners markers' should stop to let everyone else know where the group turned, but more about that later. Other Road Captains may be present and will ride within the group. All ride participants are expected to follow directions, instructions and decisions of the Road Captains. When a large group of bikes is divided into smaller groups, each group will try to have a Lead and a Sweep Road Captain.

For information on becoming a Road Captain (RC), please contact the Head Road Captain or any RC or Chapter Committee member.

Ride Participation. The Chapter expects all riders to ride safely and ride within their individual experience and comfort level at all times. Members and their guests joining a ride must sign the sign-in sheet before departure and have a signed 'Chapter Membership Enrollment Form and Release' (Annual membership) on file with the Chapter before joining a group ride. Each guest rider or pillion must sign both the sign-in sheet and an 'Event Release Form for Adults' prior to the ride. If there is a pillion younger than 16 years of age, a separate 'Chapter Release for MINORS' needs to be signed by the minor's parent or guardian.

New riders should learn the fundamental skills of motorcycle riding and gain some experience before joining a group ride.

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L-Permit and P-Permit Licensed Riders. With the introduction of the Harley-Davidson Street bike, some members hold an L-Permit or P-Permit License. These riders are welcome to join all rides, however please note that we will be riding to the posted legal speed limits which are often over 90km/h. If you are unable to ride at that speed, please let the Sweep know that you will meet us at the destination, alternatively you may wish to organise a 'ride buddy' from the group on the day or someone you know to stay with you once the main group joins the highway above 90km/h..

Group riding. There are four components to safe and enjoyable group rides:

- Personal preparation
- Group preparation
- The ride
- Emergencies

Personal Preparation. You are individually responsible for making sure you and your bike are ready and safe for every ride.

Check yourself. Make sure you are alert, feeling well and appropriately dressed. You should be physically and mentally prepared to make the ride. AVOID alcohol, fatigue and stress prior to riding. If you are tired, not feeling well, or just 'not up to par', it may be wise to stay home and ride another day. It is advisable to wear reflective clothing at night and bring a rain suit whenever there is a possibility of rain.

Any Chapter member operating a motorcycle on a Chapter ride must be properly licensed and insured to operate that motorcycle.

Check your motorcycle and equipment. Any motorcycle used in a Chapter ride event or other activity must be properly registered, inspected and insured. Check your motorcycle operations prior to riding.

A helpful guide is to use the T-CLOCS method:

- T - Tires and wheels
- C - Cables and controls
- L - Lights and turn signals
- O - Oil and fuel
- C - Chassis
- S - Side (kick) stand and secure loose nuts and bolts.

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Fill your gas tank and empty your bladder. All members should begin the ride with a full tank of gas. All rides are planned with ample gas stops taking into consideration the smallest tank in the group. The start of a ride will not be delayed waiting for someone to "get a quick fill-up", or relieve themselves. Be considerate of the others in the group and take care of your personal business well before the departure time.

Make sure you arrive for the ride before the designated pre-ride briefing time. Not only is it fun to socialise prior to the ride, the Road Captains will make announcements and give the pre-ride briefing during this time. If you arrive at the last minute, you may miss important information about the ride and may be requested to ride at the back of the group until the first stop.

Group Preparation. Rides will leave promptly at the scheduled departure time in order to arrive at the destination on time. During this time you must sign on for the ride, sign the release forms (if necessary) and listen to the pre-ride briefing.

Guests and release forms. Each member is permitted one guest per ride. Each adult guest must sign an 'Event Release Form' for Adults for the ride. Any Road Captain can provide you with a release form. Every minor participating in a ride, whether a member or guest, must have a 'Chapter Release for MINORS' signed by the minor's parent or guardian on the ride.

The pre-ride briefing. The Lead Road Captain will give a pre-ride briefing covering the route, the Chapter riding rules and any other information concerning the ride. Listen closely and feel free to ask questions.

Headlights to low beam, other 'running lights' off. All riders except the Lead and Sweep Road Captain should set their headlights to low beam and turn off any other 'running lights'. This makes it much easier for the Lead Road Captain to see the Sweep Road Captain and determine if a problem has occurred requiring the Sweep Road Captain to stop.

The ride. Riding with a group can be fun and exciting, but only when everyone in the group observes the same rules. When riding with the Chapter, everyone is expected to observe the following rules:

The Lead Road Captain will leave first from the starting point and is followed by all other bikes, which fall into the staggered formation as soon as possible. The Sweep Road Captain wears a hi-visibility orange

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vest and will ride at the back end of the group positioned in the middle of the lane.

This staggered formation leaves the area beside your motorcycle open for you to swerve into if needed to avoid a hazard. Everyone should be watching out for the safety of other riders, but it is your responsibility to stay out of the 'safety zone' beside the rider staggered in front of you. As we all know...the rear tyre always wins when a rear tyre and a front tyre contact.

If you have to slow quickly, try to maintain your position in the lane, if it is safe to do so, because the staggered rider behind you may not slow as quickly and may need to 'borrow' the lane beside you for a moment. Do not make a habit of using the safety zone beside the staggered rider in front of you. Some riders may run over a hazard instead of swerving because they didn't want to risk clipping the rider behind them - they should feel confident that the 'safety zone' would be clear when they need it.

Fall in line toward the back half of the group if you want to have a greater space between yourself and the bike in front, are unsure of the group riding etiquette or are new to the group. The front 1/3 of the group usually tends to ride more tightly than the back of the group. Ride within your ability and confidence level.

When riding in adverse or limited visibility conditions (such as at night, or in rain, fog, etc.) reduce speed and increase the spacing to 3 or 4 seconds.

If the staggered pattern is disrupted, or when a bike drops out of the ride and creates a gap, the following bikes fill the gap by changing columns moving left or right within the lane after having indicated your intention to do so.

When approaching a tight curve, allow additional space for the bikes in front of you so that all riders can use the full width of the lane to corner safely. On 'twisty' roads, we will revert to single file formation.

Do not 'slide' past any rider in front of you whichever part of the lane they are in and do not ride directly beside another rider, in their 'safety zone'.

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Overtaking other riders will not normally be necessary and you should maintain the same position within the group for that entire leg of the ride. If overtaking is necessary, normal overtaking rules apply. Use indicators and never overtake within the same lane.

Your eyes should be watching a few bikes up the road from you (4 seconds ahead) not fixed on the bike in front of you.

Safety Spacing Guidelines

One second rule: Between you and the bike diagonally in front of you.

Two-second rule: Between you and the bike directly ahead of you.

Four-second rule: Look ahead four seconds at your immediate path of travel to give yourself more time to react to a hazard.

Twelve-second rule: Look ahead at your anticipated path of travel. Twelve seconds is about one city block.

Ride within your ability and comfort level. Riding within your ability and comfort level is very important for the safety of the group. If your preference is to ride at a slower pace or at larger bike-to-bike spacing than the majority of the group, please ride close to the back of the group by waving riders behind you through.

If at any time you feel that the ride has exceeded your riding ability or comfort level, or you have safety concerns, you should consider pulling off to the side of the road at a safe place. The Sweep Road Captain will stop with you. You can then decide whether to continue the ride or not.

Ride consistently. Maintain a consistent and safe gap (a minimum of 2 seconds) to the bike directly in front of you (the bike in your part of the lane). Frequent changes in the distance between you and the rider in front, for no apparent reason, may frustrate both the rider in front and especially the riders behind you. This causes significant variations in the distance and will be exaggerated for the group riders that follow you. This then tends to break up the group continuity. Try and keep the group tight without crowding each other. Stay close enough while in the city and use all available lanes through intersections and traffic lights so the group doesn't become separated.

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Obey all laws (speed limits, stop signs, stop lights, etc). Expect the rider ahead of you to make a FULL stop. Do not block vehicles, which have the right-of-way. It is illegal and dangerous. If you lose sight of the group, trust that there will be a corner marker waiting for you when a turn is required.

Never overtake the Lead Road Captain. Ride in staggered formation with approximately a 2 second spacing. Sydney Chapter rides in the standard staggered formation recommended by the Motorcycle Safety Foundation and HOG. The staggered formation gives you and the riders in front and behind you an extra margin for safety.

The bikes form two columns, with the Lead at the head of the right column. The second bike (Shotgun) will head up the left column and ride approximately one second behind the Lead. The other riders follow the bike directly in front of them by two seconds, which puts them one second behind the bike diagonally in front of them. By using the two-second spacing, the distance of the gap will increase with speed. When riding in adverse or limited visibility conditions (such as night, rain, fog, etc) reduce speed and increase the spacing to 3 or 4 seconds.

Fill gaps by changing column. If the staggered pattern is disrupted, or when a bike drops out of the ride and creates a gap, the following bikes fill the gap by changing columns moving left or right within the lane after having indicated your intention to do so.

Use hand and foot signals. Road Captains will use hand and foot signals to indicate a change of course, hazards or other information to the group. Each rider uses the same signal to pass the information back through the group. If you are new to group riding, only pass the signals back if you are comfortable with taking your hands off the controls. Please review the PDF of common signals used by the Chapter.

Keep the group together without heroics. Often the group will get separated by a stop-light, traffic congestion, etc. It is not necessary or advisable to take heroic or exceptional steps to regroup. In the event the group is separated, the Lead Road Captain will adjust the ride (either by slowing down or stopping at a safe location) until the ride is regrouped. In some circumstances, this may take several miles...BE PATIENT. Do not ride beyond your limits or break any laws while trying to regroup.

Corner marking. Sydney HOG Chapter runs use Corner Marking to ensure the group all arrive at a destination together by indicating every turn for the

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bikes that are following, especially when the group gets split up. The Shotgun (the 2nd Road Captain in the group riding at the head of the left column) assigns the Corner Markers from the front of the group. The Shotgun will indicate exactly where they want the Corner Marker to place themselves by holding up their left arm as the turn approaches to get your attention, then pointing down left or right to the spot where the Corner Marker should stop. If the Shotgun points to the left side, the first bike behind the Shotgun in the left column should stop at the point indicated. If the Shotgun points to the right side, the first bike behind the Shotgun in the right column should stop at the point indicated. Ideally, position your bike: 1) angled in the direction of the turn; 2) off the road in a safe position; 3) with the turn signal indicating the direction of the turn for left hand turns only, do not put your blinker on for right hand turns as it may confuse cars or other vehicles not part of the ride as they may think you are about to pull out from the kerb; 4) pointing your arm to indicate the turn direction for both left hand and right hand turns; and 5) turning your head to look for following bikes and to identify the Sweep.

If the Group becomes separated and there is no one visible behind you and the group makes a turn off the road being travelled, OR a Road Captain signals for you to stop and mark the corner, stop before the turn and wait for the other riders behind you (but only if it is safe to do so). You will become the 'Corner Marker'. As the next group of bikes approach, attract their attention so they can follow your instruction and catch up with the group in front. Do not leave until the Sweep in the orange vest waves you on, and then rejoin the group ahead of the Sweep. If you find yourself leading a separated part of the group, watch for a member of the group (the Corner Marker) stopped at an intersection trying to get your attention. Turn where the Corner Marker indicates (they will stay and wait for the Sweep) and continue along until you rejoin the group or spot more Corner Markers guiding the way for you. If you do not see a Corner Marker when you arrive at a round-about or corner keep going straight ahead on the road being travelled. If you are still not confident of the route, pull over in a safe place. Everyone behind you will pull over and the Sweep Road Captain will either choose someone to lead or lead the group until it catches up with the group ahead.

Stopping Position at Stop Lights. Occupy all lanes when approaching red traffic lights. After stopping, start together with the right column of bikes accelerating first until the staggered formation can be re-established. This helps move the group through the lights quickly and gets as many bikes through as possible.

Negotiate intersections as an individual. Act as an individual when proceeding through an intersection. It is your responsibility to insure that you

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safely have the right-of-way. If it is not safe for you to proceed, then wait until it is... no exceptions. Never blindly follow the bike in front of you through an intersection, especially when making a right turn. The group will reform after the intersection. When turning at an intersection, use a single file or tight stagger formation, never turn side by side.

Yield to cars (especially at entrance ramps and lane changes). When a car needs to enter from an entrance ramp or is signaling to break into the group, "Yield and give them plenty of room". **Remember:** "Just because you have the right-of-way doesn't mean you are going to get it"! Generally speaking, a car will not want to ride in the middle of a group of motorcycles and will get out of the group as quickly as possible.

Signal all turns and lane changes with signal lights and hand signals; make visual checks before you move. The Road Captains will signal for turns and lane changes. You, in turn, make the same signal to 'pass it back' through the group and to signal any other vehicles near you.

Before making a turn or lane change, and after you have signaled for an appropriate amount of time, look with your head, (not just your mirror) to see if you have clear space. If so, then make the turn or lane change. Never move without looking.

The ride officially ends on arrival at the destination. You can return home at any time and by any route you choose. If you are unsure how to get back home, ask a Road Captain for directions. At least one Road Captain will guide the remaining group back to the metropolitan area and in some cases all the way back to Harley-Heaven Sydney. You will see a lot of riders peel off to go home on the way back. Keep following a Road Captain or feel free to turn off if you need to.

Drinking alcohol and driving never mix. This is especially true when participating in a group ride.

Emergencies. In the event of an emergency requiring a stop, observe the following procedures so that the emergency may be resolved in the safest manner possible. Remember, we do not want a group of motorcycles on the side of the road in an unsafe manner under any circumstances.

There are 2 types of emergency stops: Mechanical or personal (non-life threatening) and accidents.

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Mechanical or personal emergency: Problem bike and Sweep stops - all others continue. If a bike encounters a mechanical or rider problem that requires a stop, it should signal and stop in as safe a place as possible, preferably well off the road. All other bikes continue with the Lead Road Captain to avoid having a group of motorcycles on the side of the road. The Road Captains will have radio communication to ensure they are aware of the problem.

Only the Sweep Road Captain stops to help. It is the Sweep Road Captain's responsibility to stop and assist the problem bike. The Lead Road Captain will lead the group to a safe location, or continue on the planned route. If you are required to mark a corner at this time, be prepared to wait longer until the Sweep is finished assisting the stopped rider. If the Sweep is unable to rejoin the group in a timely manner, they will contact the Lead Road Captain and a Road Captain will be sent back to get you.

The Sweep Road Captain will have a mobile phone or radio and will also carry a First Aid kit. The Road Captains use their mobile phone or radios to communicate when necessary. They also carry a small First Aid kit.

Accidents: All Road Captains attending an accident and the Sweep Road Captain stop, all others continue. The Sweep Road Captain is in charge and will work with the other Road Captains to determine who needs to stay to accomplish the following:

- Ensure everyone stops in a safe location
- Diverts traffic and 'secures' the scene
- Notify the authorities by calling 000 or use the Emergency+ phone app.
- Renders First Aid to injured persons. Remember, except in extreme cases where a rider is not breathing and CPR is required, DO NOT move an injured person's helmet. Only trained Emergency Response personnel should do this.
- Maintain the accident scene and control traffic until the authorities arrive, including getting the names, telephone numbers and addresses of witnesses and taking pictures of the accident scene.

Towing. When you need a tow, call your designated towing option, such as Harley Assist or NRMA. This will be your own responsibility. Also, your motorcycle insurance policy may cover towing expenses.