

Defenders



Tampa Bay Group riding Guidelines

Approved by

Tampa Bay Defenders Executive Board

December 22, 2016



DEFENDERS LAW ENFORCEMENT MOTORCYCLE CLUB



TAMPA BAY CHAPTER

26 December 2016

Greetings Tampa Bay Defenders,

This Riding Procedures Guideline has been a long in the making, and is the composition of many dedicated Defenders, years of riding experience, many with years as a Law Enforcement Motor Officer – or certified Motorcycle Safety Foundation Instructors. I personally, along with the Executive Board, was involved with the creation of this guide, and think it will place our Chapter in the safest possible position for our group rides.

If you have been selected and agreed to be a Road Captain, Congratulations! You have volunteered for one of the most important positions within our chapter. At our Tampa Bay Defenders Chapter, our mission is to "Ride Safe and Have Fun." To fulfill this mission, we need well-qualified and motivated Road Captains to plan and lead safe rides.

This Guideline is not and does not replace "common sense," nor is it considered "etched in stone." Road Captains are the key to any successful ride and I charge each Road Captain to become intimately familiar with this Guide, common State Uniform Traffic Control Laws, and proper motorcycle safety. Above all let's Ride Safe and Have Fun.

Ron "Paladin" Rook
V/r,

Ron "Paladin" Rook
Colonel USMC [Retired]

President

Tampa Bay Chapter

Defenders Law Enforcement Motorcycle Club

Cell: 813.453.6431

Email: rookrp@verizon.net



This document is a guide and not a directive. However, all Road Captains should prepare and perform for rides in the preferred and desired manner. At its simplest this is a guide, the Road Captain leading a specific ride has the latitude and responsibility to ensure safety of all riders is at the forefront of all decisions, procedures, and actions. This does not relieve each individual rider of their personal responsibility for their safety.

ROLES

- **LEAD ROAD CAPTAIN (LRC)** - the leader of a specific ride, as decided by either the Major and/or Head Road Captain. As the leader, he is responsible for setting an example for the group. He must act in the most disciplined and safest manner possible. He must exercise control over his own riding preferences and follow the ride plan while simultaneously provide clear direction to the group; constantly monitor the group for signals passed forward, trouble, or any situation that could result in an unsafe condition.
 - Determines both the direction and lane of travel on a roadway or highway
 - Responsible for signaling in a clearly and timely manner for all changes in speed, lane use, direction, and hazards, such as road debris, construction, broken, or slick pavement, road kill, etc.
 - Must have the ability to pick the safest lane in traffic and to position the group in the appropriate lane for turns, stops, avoidance of road hazards, and when multiple lanes merge down to a single lane
 - May deviate from the ride plan if safety considerations indicate

LRC Responsibilities

- LRC always rides at the **left front position** to have the best view of the route of travel.
- The LRC sets the pace according to the ride plan, which should indicate a comfortable and safe speed within the posted speed limit.
- **LRC will ensure the riders line up and ride in the following order:**
 - National Executive Officers may ride where they choose
 - Executive Board Members
 - Patched Members/Lady Associates
 - Guests
 - Trikes (Trikes will be last but in front of the Sweep)

- **LRC will be responsible for the following:**
 - Ensure all Riders know our CB Channel is 22, and is primarily used for communication between the LRC and the Push/Sweep
 - Determine the need for a Ride Sheet, if necessary based on complexity of the ride, LRC will print a minimum of ten (10) copies as handouts. The LRC may also send the ride sheet and/or gpx file via email, Facebook, or other medium
 - The Ride Sheet shall consist of the following:
 - The Starting Point
 - Turn by Turn Instructions
 - Ending Point
- **LRC will conduct a Pre-Ride Safety Brief prior to departure.** The minimum components of the Safety Brief are:
 - Verbally describe the route and advising the Riders of any hazards that were noted on the pre-ride, (if one was done), including, where applicable.
 - Road construction
 - Roadways with debris or that are in poor condition
 - Following distance
 - Lane changes
 - Surface appraisal
 - Discuss the need for all of the riders to maintain a safe riding distance using the two or four second rule as a guide – depending on road and weather conditions, explaining what the rule is and the difference between the two.
 - Emphasize that Riders shall ride within their lane, saddlebags and highway pegs should not extend over the lane divider lines.
 - Remind Riders to abide by all traffic laws to include but not limited to running red lights, stop signs, speeding, and improper or unsafe lane changes.
- **Discuss lane changes and turns procedures:**
 - When changing lanes the following steps will/should be taken to ensure a smooth and safe lane change:
 - Notify the Sweep to take the desired lane when it is safe
 - After Sweep secures the lane and notifies the LRC in include any vehicles between them
 - LRC will only activate his turn signal after the Sweep advises it is clear to make the lane change safely. This will indicate his intentions to the group.

- If the lane change is to the left LRC will start a safe lane change followed by the rider in his slot position. If the lane change is to the right, the LRC will signal the lane change, the rider in his slot will begin the lane change followed by the LRC. Each individual rider will follow this pattern consecutively behind the rider in front of them in order from front to rear.
- Changing traffic and road conditions may dictate that the Sweep is unable to secure safely the lane before the LRC must take the lane needed, in this situation the LRC will use his best judgment for the group.
- **Provide the following information to the Riders:**
 - When riding on the Interstate, the group shall ride in the inside (left) lane at the posted speed limit or no more than five miles per hour over the posted speed limit.
 - Although legally authorized, the LRC will observe **NO** turns on a red light.
 - When making a turn or entering the interstate the LRC will not accelerate in such a manner as to cause the back of the group to aggressively accelerate to catch up.
 - The Sweep will notify the LRC if a split in the group exists after going through lighted or signed intersections.
 - If communications between Sweep and LRC is lost, the LRC will find a safe place to pull off the route and wait for the group to catch up.
 - The Sweep will notify the LRC once the group has started moving.
 - It is the responsibility of the first Rider in the group to slow down and allow for the LRC and his group to pull back onto the roadway safely.
 - In the event a Rider pulls out of formation to the roadside, the Sweep will stay with the Rider and the Push will become the Sweep. As soon as possible, the Sweep will inform the LRC of the situation.
- **Cover procedures in the event of an accident:** All Riders will continue to ride to a safe place to pull over, as determined by the LRC (Riders are NOT to stop at the scene, creating a serious safety hazard). The first RC on the scene or the Sweep will immediately pull over to render assistance and keep the LRC informed on the developments of the accident.

RIDERS – should consider their physical limitations. A rider that is uncomfortable or is seriously distracted by any physical condition is not

going to enjoy themselves, and will most probably not be a safe a rider. Everyone on a group ride should remember that it is always better to drop out and go your own way if you feel uncomfortable or unsafe for any reason. **You and you alone must be the only authority on whether you feel safe and you should act accordingly.**

- Riders need to understand the Lead Road Captain (LRC) will continue on to a safe turn around location, should they miss or purposely go past a turn in the interest of safety.
- Do not second-guess the LRC and start making independent decisions that can put both you and other riders in danger.
- Never pass the LRC without prior agreement, and only for a specific reason.
- Any rider that does pass the LRC without prior arrangement or who rides in a manner deemed unsafe by ANY Road Captain (RC) is automatically off the ride, and asked to leave the ride.
- Maintain a safe riding distance using the two or four second rule as a guide – depending on road and weather conditions.
- Abide by all traffic laws to include but not limited to adhering to red lights, stop signs, speeding, and improper or unsafe lane changes.
- Ensure that your bike is in a safe operating condition, gassed, and pre-ride checks are complete.
- Know as much as possible about the route, times, stops, etc.
Arrive at the departure point in time to hear everything discussed at the pre-ride brief and to familiarize themselves with the ride sheets and maps, if provided.

SWEEP/PUSH – is the secondary Road Captain(s) of a group ride and always rides at the rear of the column.

- The PUSH (not always required) will replace the Sweep in the event the Sweep needs to leave the group to assist another Rider.
- No one should fall behind the Sweep.
- Responsible for determining when the group is ready to leave the start location, and intermediate stops, and notifies the LRC.
- Signals the LRC to proceed and watches for traffic until the entire group is underway.
- Responsible for and assists any rider that encounters problems and has to either slow down or drop out of the ride. No more than one other rider should stop to help the Sweep to provide assistance, as it is generally not safe for a large group to park along the side of the road.

RIDE CONSIDERATIONS

LRC should always let everyone know what type of ride you are planning. An Open Informal Ride such as lunch rides following our Chapter's meeting may occur with none or only a few of the guidelines outlined here. The most important point is to discuss the plan. This will avoid the possible dissatisfaction or unsafe situation that results from riders finding them in over their head. Remember that what may be a medium duration, casual ride to you, may not be to them.

- **Duration** - As best you can, carefully calculate and be sure to announce the total time duration of the ride.
 - It should be broken down into the projected riding times for each of the ride segments. This gives the riders who are not interested or are not able to commit that much time, on that particular day, an opportunity to pass or make other arrangements.
 - They may choose not to go or to only go part way.
The main point is that you will not turn them off from future rides.
- **Destination** - It is your ride and you get to pick the destination. Keep in mind the number of riders going. Will the destination be able to accommodate everyone?
- **Route** - Always carefully plan and then describe the route. Strongly consider handing out route sheets including maps if you will be leading a large group. Should they become separated for any reason, the Rider must also know the entire route, complete with the intermediate stops (and approximate times) so that they can link up.
- **Intermediate Stops** - The number and frequency of the intermediate stops needs to be carefully considered in light of whom you expect to go on the ride; this strongly influences how people enjoy the ride.
 - Consider those Riders who suffer with physical limitations or equipment limitations. A general rule of thumb is to stop every 30-40 minutes for a less experienced group and 60 minutes for the experienced riders. However, there are no hard and fast rules here, so factor in whatever feels right for your group.
 - You should think about the location of the intermediate stops. All

stop locations must have adequate parking space and at least every other stop should have gas (approximately 60 miles on scenic and 100 on expressway rides between gas stops), and restroom facilities available.

- Look for shade in the summer and sun in the winter.
- Plan stops to avoid gravel and loose dirt.
- Right hand turns in and out will help keep the group together and are safer.
- Make sure everyone is going to feel welcomed.
- Call ahead and make reservations or at least tell them you are planning a stop at their location.
- Give some thought as to how the group can/should park at these stops. For example, consider if there is enough room to park in the same formation as when traveling down the road or should the group parallel park. The main thing is to get the group quickly and safely off the road so no one is hit from behind and to be able to reform quickly when it is time to leave.
- **TIMING** - Give a lot of consideration to the experience level and personal preferences of the riders that will be on your ride when setting up the start and end times for the ride.
 - Not everyone likes to get up at dawn and hit the road.
 - Likewise, there are many riders that do not want to wait around all morning or afternoon for the ride to start.
 - Carefully describe the time of the ride will cut down on the misunderstandings.
- **WEATHER AND SEASONAL CONSIDERATIONS** - factor in the weather and season for everyone's enjoyment. For example, avoid as much of the middle part of the day as you can when planning a summer ride, and use as much of the middle part of the day as you can when planning a winter ride.
 - Take into account rain and fog patterns for your intended route.
 - Avoid inadvertently riding into a rising or setting sun if possible, unless you are purposely incorporating the effect for a reason.
 - Think about bug season and the possible effect that might have.
 - Consider the expected temperature and the effect that might have on the riders.
 - Think about these conditions when planning your intermediate stops too.
 - Know what your plan is in the event of bad weather: cancel, reschedule, go as planned, or cancel in the middle of the ride.

Make sure everyone understands what your definition of bad weather.

- Some riders will not leave the garage if it rains two states away, while others are prepared to ride through an arctic storm.
- Let everyone know before the planned ride, so they do not show up for a canceled ride or show up for a ride that is going no matter what.
- **FREQUENCY** - Do not back away from organizing a ride just because there is one planned close to or on the same date. There will always be riders who cannot go or do not want to go on the other ride that will be interested in going on your ride. Do not forget the hard-core group of riders that will ride every day and night if they get the chance. The message is go ahead and set your ride up, even if you end up with only a small group. The enjoyment and not the number of riders is the important thing.

THE RIDE

This section will discuss the effective order that events should take place.

- Pick a date, time, destination, etc., and then let people know that the ride is going to happen. This can be verbally at a meeting, placed on our Chapter Calendar, Facebook, Drop Box, or via a flyer. Not all the detailed plans need be complete at this point, but enough to give a fair representation of what the potential participants can expect. You can then gauge about how many riders you can expect and plan accordingly during the detailed planning stage of the ride.
- Lay out the detailed plans for the ride as discussed in the previous section. Document your plans. You probably want to do a neat job of documenting your plans if you are going to have a large turnout and plan to pass out written information to the participants.
- Be in contact with the appropriate people at the starting location, the intermediate stops, and the final destination. Make any required changes to your ride plan.
- Pick the Road Captains for your Sweep/Push. Remember you need at least a Sweep even for a small group. Brief them prior to the day of the ride. Do not wait until the last minute to do this so you can avoid last minute distractions. If the RC has a GPS and when possible, provide him with a gpx file prior to the day of the ride via Email, to allow those who have GPS devices to pre-program them. This contributes to a safer ride

and adds to the enjoyment.

- Hold a pre-ride brief and hand out any written instruction/details you feel are appropriate. You need to cover both the details of the ride and the rules of the road. This will help ensure that you have both a good time and a safe event.

Riding Formation

The normal riding formation is staggered. This formation provides the best safety margin of reaction time - 2 seconds behind the bike directly in front of you and – 1 second from the bike to your left or right depending on your position, each rider uses only the right or left wheel track of the lane depending on the stagger (figure 1).

- A staggered formation complete with a safe interval should be immediately adopted as soon as conditions allow.
- Everyone is responsible for knowing what all the hand signals mean and for passing all signals from the LRC to the following riders. Discussion of common hand signals are at the end of this guide.
- All riders must clearly signal to the Sweep (Thumbs Up), if they decide to leave the ride for any reason.
- When someone leaves the ride, the rider behind the departing rider shall move forward into the departing rider's position. This will cut down on any confusion and is safer than having people change positions within the lane by moving left or right. The only exception to this rule is when it would place the Sweep ahead of another Rider. In this case, the last Rider and Sweep will crossover positions.
- Riders should not speed up suddenly should a gap develop between them and the bike in front. Rather, they should accelerate slowly until they catch up and are back in position. This will help prevent the riders in back from over reacting and possibly running into the group when they suddenly catch up.
- Parking -Defenders will make every effort to park together in the order of their position in the column.
 - We will back into the parking space facing out when feasible.
 - Each will turn and face out from his parking position far enough for the next bike to have room to make the turn, and the next bike will do the same, and so on, once all Riders have come to a stop, then all bikes will back into their respective positions.
- Remember that it is the Sweep's responsibility to stop and assist any rider dropping out of the ride, and no more than one other rider should

stop to help the Sweep.

COMMON HAND SIGNALS

Keep hand signals simple, easy to learn and understand. As soon as you see a hand signal, you or your passenger should repeat the same signal so the rider behind you can see and have maximum amount time to react. There really are no standard rider hand signals. Tampa Bay Defenders have adopted the following signals in addition to the normal DMV (Department Of Motor Vehicles) approved hand signals.

For safety, use the left hand for all signals to allow the right hand to have full control of the throttle and front brake (figure 2).

- **Slow Down.** - Left arm pointing down towards the ground Move your hand up and down as if patting the ground
- **Speed Up / Tighten Up** - Left arm at 90 degrees with fist, pump up and down
- **Hazard In The Road** - If hazard is on the left side, point with left hand. If hazard is on the right side, point with right foot
- **Turn** - Use your turn signals in addition to the hand signals.
- **Need Gas** - Point at gas tank
- **Need Food/Drink** - Point at your mouth
- **Comfort Stop** - Pat the top of your head
- **Forms Single File** - Left hand over helmet arm extended and hold up one finger
- **Form Double File** - Left hand over helmet arm extended hold up little and index fingers
- **Danger** - Point at danger with index finger with thumb pointing down

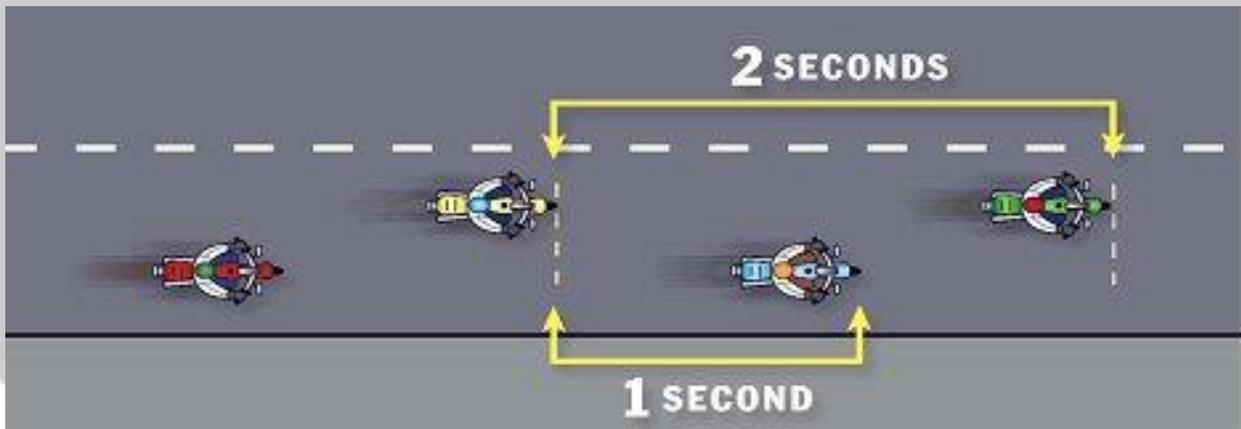


Figure 1 Staggered Formation

<p>Left turn Arm and hand extending left, palm facing down</p>	<p>Right turn Arm out, bent at 90° angle, fist clenched.</p>	<p>Stop Arm extended straight down, palm facing back.</p>	<p>Speed Up Arm extended straight out, palm facing up, swing upward.</p>
<p>Slow Down Arm extended straight out, palm facing down, swing down to your side.</p>	<p>Follow Me Arm extended straight up from shoulder, palm forward.</p>	<p>You Lead/Come Arm extended upward 45°, palm forward pointing with index finger, swing in arc from back to front.</p>	<p>Hazard in Roadway On the left, point with left hand; on the right, point with right foot.</p>
<p>Single File Arm and index finger extended straight up.</p>	<p>Double File Arm with index and middle finger extended straight up.</p>	<p>Comfort Stop Forearm extended, fist clenched with thumb up and down motion.</p>	<p>Refreshment Stop Fingers closed, thumb to mouth.</p>
<p>Turn Signal On Open and close hand with fingers and thumb extended.</p>	<p>Pull Off Arm positioned as for right turn, forearm swung toward shoulder.</p>	<p>Cops Ahead Tap on top of helmet with open palm down.</p>	<p>Fuel Arm out to side pointing to tank with index finger extended.</p>

Figure 2 Common Hand Signals