

Bridgwater Chapter 9087 - Group Riding Guide

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Statutory HOG and Bridgwater Chapter information

- **You (the rider):**
 - **Are deemed to be in control of and responsible for your vehicle and riding at all times, irrespective of any guidance or instruction from any member of the Road Crew.**
 - **You must at all times ride within the law and obey road traffic regulations.**
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Bridgwater Chapter Group Riding Guide by topic area.

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Arrive at the Meeting Point

- **Always arrive with a FULL tank of petrol and an empty bladder**
 - Mobile Phones, Cash/credit cards & waterproofs are useful as most rides will occupy most of the day with planned stops for food, fuel and fun.
 - If you are new to the club: Ask for the Road Captain organising the ride to brief you on the staggered formation & 2nd man drop.
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Pre-ride brief

- Always note the Final Destination, and any other significant points that are provided in the brief (e.g. wee and refuelling arrangements). It is very rare that we lose anyone on a ride, but it is important to have an idea where we will end up just in case!
- You will be briefed on the route; any re-grouping points, and where appropriate which Junction to leave a Motorway. This is important since we can't "mark" a motorway junction.
- You will be told who is leading and who are riding at the back.
- Whenever possible we use 3 Road Crew, a Lead Road Captain, Rear Road Captain & a Road Marshall following at the back. Road Captains and Marshalls will wear Hi-Viz jackets,
- It is important that the Road Captains are easily recognised when implementing the 2nd man drop system, as explained below.

Riding in a group

- Bridgwater HOG in common with most HOG chapters ride two bikes abreast in a staggered formation, keeping constant Left & Right columns which do not swop over (see 2nd man drop), 4 seconds behind the Lead Road Captain. Leave two bike lengths (2 second gap at motorway speeds) between you and the bike in front. In poor weather conditions, Wet, or Poor Visibility, increase the distance to 4 bike lengths, (4 seconds).
 - Look ahead as far down the group as possible to avoid the risk of panic braking.
 - Constantly check in your rear view mirrors and always use the 'lifesaver' check before changing direction.
 - On country roads don't allow a large gap to develop between you and the bike in front. This will provide "opportunist" gaps for other road users who can fragment the ride.
 - If a ride comes to a halt, the riders should close up gaps to compact the ride as much as possible, re-establishing the gaps immediately upon moving off. This will facilitate maximum numbers through traffic lights etc. and cause less frustration to following motorists.
 - In built up areas, be particularly aware of other powered two wheelers and bicycles who may pass on either side in slow or stationary traffic.
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Single File

- Manoeuvre into a single file on narrow and twisty roads and when passing hazards.
- An absolute minimum of two seconds must be maintained between motorcycles and a full width of the lane used to best advantage. **Variations of Formation**

- Formations will often vary at:
 - Junctions and Stops
 - On motorways and Dual Carriageways
 - On narrow roads and progressive bends

Arrival

- Remember wherever possible, to Ride up and park straight in, rather than swing around, and reverse.
- Parking forward is quicker for a Group; it reduces the risk for the rest of the Group bunching up back onto the road.

Second Man Drop

- If you are the bike behind the leader, be prepared, you will be expected to 'drop off' at the next junction to mark the route.
- 2nd rider is to leave a 4 second gap between themselves and the lead rider
- Drop offs will be indicated precisely but only stop if you feel it is safe and you are happy to do so.
- Cancel indicator and give a clear hand and arm signal to indicate direction to all following riders.
- Remember, when riding within a close formation one of the safety benefits is the fact that your fellow riders will generally be more aware of your presence. **Riders do not need to change columns as folk are dropped off.** This will cause a domino effect throughout the ride. Riders who start in a left column will generally remain in the left column throughout the ride.
- If the Road Captain turns left he will clearly point sharply at the kerb prior to the turn. Pull over with your left indicator flashing, cancel, indicate the Route with an arm signal and wait until you see the tail end riders.

- Engage first gear, and swiftly, pull away when the Rear Road Captain clearly signals you to re-join the group, in front of the Rear Road Captain. Take up the next position of the stagger and adjust yourself for the correct spacing. The only time the Rear Road captain will pass you is where road traffic is deemed too dangerous to slow down in. In these circumstances, re-join the ride and overtake the Rear Road Captain when he signals it is safe to do so.
- If the Road Captain turns right he will point sharply at the nearside kerb as you enter the right turning or just after turning according to junction layout. Stop as closely as you consider safe from the junction, cancel your right indicator, and indicate the Route with an arm signal. There are times when it is actually safer to drop off in the middle of the road, and the Road Captains will clearly indicate the suggested position, probably with the right, rather than left hand.
- You should be clearly visible to riders behind you as they approach the right turn.
- Again wait until you see Rear Road Captain and try to re-join the group just in front of them.
- Same rules apply to roundabouts etc.
- Always use your own judgement to be safe at these points.
- Do not leave your Drop Off position, until signalled by the Rear Road Captain.
- It may be 20mins to 30mins or longer, but it is your task to wait or the ride will break down!!!!

Motorway Riding

- You should ride in normal staggered formation.
 - Overtake other vehicles as you would do independently, resuming back to your normal position when safe to do so.
 - Do not Mass overtake, as this is considered dangerous to the Group, and to other road users. It is often noted that the group will all pull out to overtake at the same time, leaving a very long time before the last bike is at the point of overtaking. This can be very frustrating to other road users, and should be avoided.
 - It is very frustrating to cars joining or leaving at a junction to be confronted with an impenetrable stream of bikes. Leave a gap every 6 or so bikes in the ride to allow traffic to join or leave the motorway at junctions, and be prepared for car drivers to cut in quickly. It is far more important to ride safely, than together especially at high speed!
 - 2 man drop is not possible on slip roads or services, but the Lead RC will safely reduce speed before these manoeuvres to try and keep the group together.
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Leaving the Ride

- If you wish to leave the Rideout, please notify the Road Crew of your intentions, prior to leaving.
 - If you reach a point where you may want to leave, whilst riding, pull over, wave the group past, and indicate to the Rear Road Captain, by raising your hand to the chin, palm down, and then moving it from left to right several times, this shows them that you are ok and have finished.
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Problem stops

- Riders in front of you may slow down and stop for no apparent reason! If they are experiencing mechanical problems a hand signal may not be possible.
 - If there is a problem on the ride the Marshals role is to stop, evaluate the situation, help and inform the Road Captains if necessary. If it is a Breakdown, they will ensure you are safe, have a phone, & can organise breakdown recovery before continuing.
 - Should the group need to stop in an emergency please try to slot into single file without blocking the road. The last two riders should activate their hazard signals to warn oncoming traffic. Please ensure your pillions dismount kerb side.
 - Await the Rear Road Captain and Marshall who are trained for problem situations. Do not take it on yourself to overtake riders ahead to catch up with the lead Road Captain to stop the ride, this could cause another situation.
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Road Captain List

- At Bridgwater we take Rider safety seriously. If you have any queries regarding our Group Riding, please feel free to ring one of the Road Captains below. All of our Road Captains & Road Marshals are Experienced Group Riders. We will be happy to help.
- All the Road Captains details can be found on our website:
www.bridgwaterhog.co.uk