



Group Riding Rules

Group ride-outs are a great way to meet other members, improve your skills and discover some new roads. Do join us - look out for planned rides on the WSAM website and the WSAM Members closed Facebook page.

The primary consideration at all times when riding in a group is safety; at no time may the safety of other riders or any third party be compromised for any reason.

It is the personal responsibility of all riders within the group to exercise their own judgement about each and every course of action that they take. Each rider is deemed to be in control of their machine and is responsible for their own safety, legality, insurance, their own actions and any consequences that those actions may have.

As Advanced Riders we have a responsibility to act as ambassadors for all motorcyclists by behaving legally, responsibly and courteously.

Any rider not doing so may be asked to leave the ride.

Preliminary Requirements for Associates and Non-member Guests

Novice Group

In order to attend a group ride, Associates must have had an observed ride prior to the event with their allocated observer, or been assessed by another observer at one of our regular meetings.

Group rides for novices begin with a full briefing, at which the rules are explained in detail and there is the opportunity to ask questions. The pace of the ride will be steady, with no overtaking others in the group.

Intermediate Group

Open to Full Members and Associates who have joined a novices' ride and who understand the rules. The pace may be a little more progressive; overtaking in the group may be allowed at the leader's discretion.

Advanced Group

The Advanced Group is open to Observers and others by invitation.

Non Members

Guests join a group social ride as a taster if considering becoming a member. They must make themselves known to the ride leader at the briefing to ensure that they understand these rules and that the pace of the ride is likely to suit them.

The Principle

A group ride provides not only a social outing, but also an opportunity to develop riding skills and demonstrate what we have learned – a chance to show off our advanced riding skills. Associate members can also look to full members to see how things are done.

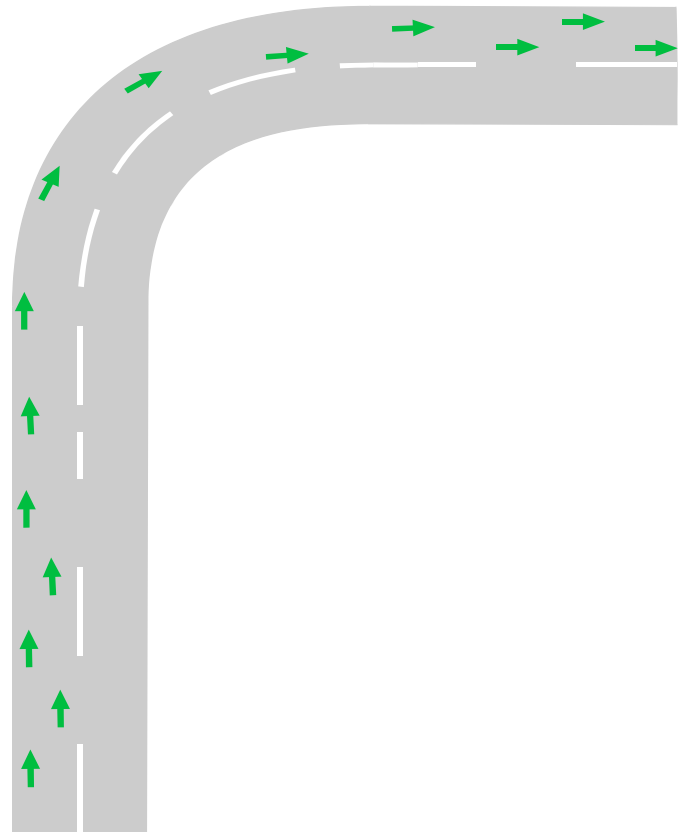
Ideally with a predetermined route, the group should make progress but always with consideration for safety. Before riding with a group an individual must recognise that it requires the utmost concentration and discipline. Please read these notes carefully and if you would like any points clarifying please bring these to the attention of the Ride Leader.

It's the responsibility of each rider to keep an eye on the rider immediately behind and if necessary to slow down or even stop in order to let them catch up. In this way the group should not be separated and the slowest rider will determine the overall pace of the run.

Positioning and Formation

Where practical, the lead rider should adopt a position towards the crown of the road, with the bike immediately behind staggered to the nearside. This formation can then follow on as illustrated. The formation offers benefits over the 'crocodile' as it extends each individual's overall braking distance and view ahead, whilst keeping the group to a manageable length. This becomes particularly important in built up areas and assists 'pairing up' at crossroads and junctions to help keep the group together.

It is inevitable that riders towards the rear will suffer a degree of reduced visibility and they will need to have extra concentration. It is important that a safe distance is maintained at all times. There will be circumstances where the formation should be temporarily sacrificed because of individual riders positioning for bends, junctions or other hazards, but it can always be re-adopted once clear.



Overtaking

Overtaking is an important aspect of group riding; all riders have to make individual decisions with consideration given to what they can see, their own safety, the safety of the other riders and other road users. As experience develops, or circumstances present themselves, it may be possible to overtake either in pairs or more in one movement. Always remember that having completed your own overtake, the rider behind may be coming through as well, so don't 'shut him out'.

If you cannot safely overtake, and get left behind, don't worry - if the system is working the group will adjust its speed and wait for you.

Avoid overtaking others within the group unless a rider requests that you do so. If you are uncomfortable with the pace, slow down and let other riders pass. Continue at a pace that you are comfortable with in front of the tail rider or "backdoor".

Roles and Responsibilities

There are two riders whose planned position in the group should remain the same throughout the ride - these are the lead rider (Leader) and the rear rider (Backdoor). Backdoor can, in certain circumstances, maintain safety by effectively blocking other traffic coming from behind.

Whoever is riding immediately behind Leader becomes Marker. At any junction, roundabout or deviation where the group might become split-up, or the route needs confirming, Leader indicates to Marker to drop off to a safe but conspicuous position. It is the duty of Marker to direct the riders behind. When all except Backdoor have cleared past Marker, then Marker should re-join the group and take up a position immediately in front of Backdoor. This means that each rider may be Marker and also means that riders have a change of position, perspective and pace. TAKE NOTE of who is the BACKDOOR – HELMET/JACKET/BIKE COLOURS!

If you ride off before you see Backdoor you will split up the group and may spoil the ride.

Etiquette

One of the aspects of our group that members enjoy is the regular ride outs that we organise. Most people are aware of the 'group ride' rules by now. They have been devised both for the safety of members going on that particular ride and for the safety of all other road users that they come into contact with. All start times are published on the *website* (www.wsam.org.uk). Please make sure that you are there at least 15 minutes beforehand. You will then have all relevant information relating to that ride explained to you including who is the Leader, the Backdoor and whether and where we are stopping en-route to pick up others.

Points to Note

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- Associates and non-members must have had an initial riding assessment from either your allocated observer or another observer before you can attend a group ride out.
- Although riding in a group, it is important that each rider makes their own riding plans. When conditions allow, follow the position & formation guide as above. A group ride is not a race - it can be progressive but should be disciplined and should comply with the law.
- Be punctual – at the start of each group ride there will be a short but important briefing to ensure that all riders know who is Leader, who is Backdoor, where the destination is, refuelling/tea stops and any other information relative to the ride – if you miss the briefing, you may have missed something important, and you could end up being a danger to yourself and others in the group.
- If for some reason you want to leave the group or need to stop, make sure that Backdoor knows.
- Group riding is NOT about fast riding - large groups need discipline to stay together. All riding should be fun, but if you want to go fast don't try it whilst in a group ride!
- To give good grouping on straights whilst maintaining safe separation, riders should stagger left/right, with the leader taking a 'normal' position towards the crown of the road. Obviously the adage of 'never sacrifice safety for position' must be observed - if you need to break the staggering, for example to position for safety or view, then ease back a bit to increase the separation from the bike ahead.
- If the group becomes split up, as may well happen in town or at traffic lights for example, the last rider across the cause of the split should take it on him/herself to wait at a safe and conspicuous place until the next part of the group catches up. – This will ensure that those ahead don't plough on regardless and cause the group to become terminally split.
- Remember – if you can't see the rider behind you, then slow down until you can see them – those ahead of you will do the same for you.
- For good discipline & safety, no overtaking of other riders within the group. Watch out for other road users (especially riders) who aren't part of the group ride, they may be overtaking the group, working their way through the riders. Gradually or otherwise!

Footnote

The thought of attending a ride out can seem a little daunting but please don't let this put you off. If you have any questions about group riding please ask your Observer or one of the committee members to discuss matters, make comments or even complaints. Feedback is important and allows these rules to be more clearly understood or improved upon.