



## 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.

Safety is the primary consideration when riding in a group; the safety of other riders or any third party must not be compromised for any reason.

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 can act as ambassadors for all motorcyclists by behaving legally, responsibly and courteously.

### Requirements for new Associates and Non-member Guests

New associates must have read these rules and are advised to have an Observed Ride before joining a group ride. If that's not possible, they must attend the pre-ride briefing and make themselves known to the ride leader. These rules will be explained and there will be an opportunity to ask questions..

#### Novice Group

Shorter rides suitable for novices, at a steady pace

#### Mixed Group

Open to all members and guests.

#### Advanced Group

Advanced Group rides are open to Observers and others by invitation.

#### Non Members

Guests can be invited by a current member to join a mixed group 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 our riding and show off our advanced riding skills. Associate members can also look to full members to see how things are done.

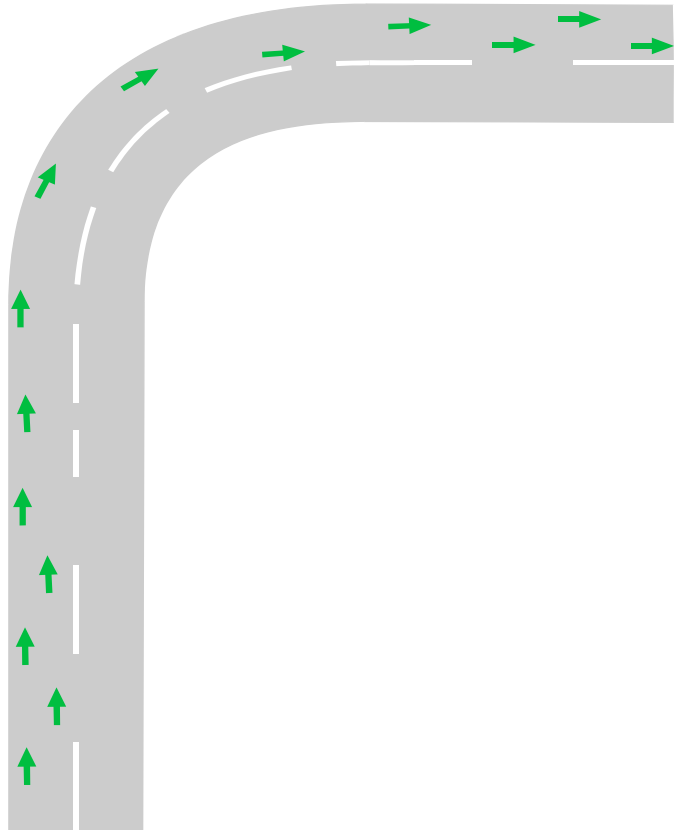
The group should make progress but always with consideration for safety. Before riding with a group an individual must recognise that it does requires concentration and discipline. Do read these notes carefully and if you would like any points clarifying please bring these to the attention of the Ride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

It is 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 ride.

## Positioning and Formation

On straight roads lead rider will 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.

Riders towards the rear may suffer a degree of reduced visibility and they will need to have extra concentration. It is important that a safe but not excessive distance is maintained at all times. There will be circumstances where the formation must be temporarily sacrificed for bends, junctions and other hazards, but it can always be re-adopted once clear.



## Overtaking

Overtaking other vehicles is an important aspect of group riding; all riders have to make individual decisions with consideration given to their own safety and that of other riders and road users. As experience develops, it may be possible to overtake 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 them out'.

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

Avoid overtaking other bikes within the group unless the rider requests that you do so. If you are unhappy with the pace, slow down and wave other riders past. 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 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, Leader indicates to Marker to drop off to a safe but conspicuous position. It is the duty of Marker to direct the riders behind, using arm signals not indicators. When all except Backdoor have past the Marker, then Marker will re-join the group and take up a position immediately in front of Backdoor. This means that each rider will be Marker in turn and also means that everyone gets 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

Ride-outs are the aspect of our group that most members enjoy most. All members must be aware of these 'group riding rules. They have been devised for the safety of members and of other road users.

All start times are published on the [website \(www.wsam.org.uk\)](http://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 there are any planned stops.

### In summary

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- Although riding in a group, it is important that each rider makes their own riding plan for each hazard. 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 must comply with the law.
- Be punctual – arrive in good time with sufficient fuel. 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 you want to leave the group or need to stop, make sure that Backdoor is aware of you.
- Group rides are not about fast riding - large groups need discipline to stay together. All riding should be fun, but if you want to go fast please don't do so during a mixed group ride.
- To keep good grouping on straights whilst maintaining safety, riders should stagger left/right, with the leader taking a 'normal' position towards the crown of the road. The mantra of 'never sacrifice safety for position' must be observed so if you need to break the staggering for safety or view, then ease back a bit but try not to be the one who leaves a large enough gap for other vehicles to split up the group..
- If the group does become split up, e.g. in town or at traffic lights, the last rider across the cause of the split should take it on themselves 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.
- Notice the appearance of the rider and bike behind you. if you can't see them, slow down until you can – those ahead of you will do the same for you and the group will keep together.
- For good discipline & safety, don't overtake other riders within the group unless invited.
- Look out for other riders who aren't part of the group. They may be overtaking us, working their way through gradually or otherwise.

The thought of attending a group ride can seem a little daunting, but please don't let this put you off. If you have any questions or concerns please ask your Observer or one of the committee members.