

Blue Knights PA XVI Ride Guidelines

The Blue Knights are a group of Peace Officers and, as such, must represent officers and guests in the best manner to the general public. This ride policy should be followed whenever possible.

Each ride/rev and roll should have a designated **Ride Captain**. It is the Ride Captain's responsibility to be familiar with the ride route and any hazards that may be present.

- All rides should be led at the posted speed limit up to 5 mph over.
- The R.C. should be checking in his/her mirrors to determine if the following riders are keeping pace, and, if not, to adjust the pace accordingly.
- The R.C. should obey all posted signs and traffic lights.
- If there are several riders then the R.C. should look to stop at an upcoming traffic light if it has been green for an extended period of time and he/she suspects that it will soon turn red. That way the chance of the group being split (or even worse, some riders busting the red light in order to keep up with the R.C.) will be reduced.
- A R.C. should never make a right turn on Red unless the group is small enough so that all riders can make the turn. To do otherwise, is to split the group or tempt riders to make the turn in front of oncoming traffic.
- The R.C. should not weave between the right and left lanes of a 4 lane highway, and no rider should pull in front of a motorist and then slow down in order to allow other riders into the pack. Staying in one lane reduces the urge to commit this dangerous blocking method.

Sometimes blockers must be used in order to guard the safety of the group. It is up to the R.C. who is familiar with the route to anticipate those intersections and he/she should point with his hand to the position that he wants the subsequent blocker to post. **REMEMBER: MOTORISTS DO NOT HAVE TO STOP FOR BLOCKERS, IT IS A COURTESY.**

- Blockers should place themselves in as safe a position as possible so that an exit away from traffic is possible for them if there are cars/trucks that look like they will not stop.
- Blockers should not yell at motorists or behave in a manner that reflects poorly on the Blue Knights.
- If a Deputy or LEO is leading the ride in a marked unit then the subsequent blockers are acting in a "deputized" fashion and motorists are then more compelled to stop because the LEO has directed the motorist to stop and to let the riders proceed.
- After blocking, the blocker should take up a position in the back of the ride. The blocker should never accelerate up the side/middle in order to get back to the front of the ride.

Riders should ride in a staggered formation whenever possible. If the road narrows, the R.C. should give the signal with his hand for riders to ride in single file. However, it is recommended that riders tighten the group (stop abreast of each other) at red lights and stop signs so that it will take less time for all to clear the intersection.

- This policy should also be followed when riders are returning home after the ride **AS A GROUP**.

President's Message

The topic of "Blocking"

I have not attended any training on Blocking, but, as a Blue Knight, have observed some good and bad practices over the past several years. In fact I do not think that there is any training available so I thought that it might be beneficial to review some of my thoughts.

We, as the Blue Knights, have been asked by other ride organizers to assist on their runs by blocking at the various intersections. Because we are riders who also work within the criminal justice field, we are assumed to know what we are doing.

First, no one is authorized by law to block or impede traffic merely for the convenience of the riders in the group; however, we can fall under the color of the law to some degree if the ride is being escorted by a police car. When the police car clears the intersection it is the officer/deputy's intent that the cross traffic will remain stopped until the ride is past them. If there is no car to stop, and the police car proceeds through, then a blocker (or two) should proceed to block the intersection. **The rider to the left should block on the left and the rider to right should block on the right.** Riders must be careful if they are going to cross in front of another rider. If it is necessary to cross then they should indicate their planned actions by pointing. Riders who are immediately behind a blocker who has left his position in the ride should move up to that position. As a general rule, riders should not cross over in order to remain in the staggered riding formation.

One of the most dangerous things that I have seen is riders proceeding through a red light or stop sign because the police car has cleared it even though no cars were stopped because no cars were approaching the intersection.

- **Imagine a motorist approaching the intersection and there is a gap in the ride. He gets a cell phone call, looks down momentarily, and enters the intersection just in time to run into any riders who just ran through the red light, etc. Blockers should have been there but were not.**

Too many times riders want to ride in the front but do not want, or are unable to block when required.

- **All riders should slow down and stop if necessary before running through a red light or stop sign that has no blockers or stopped cars.**

Blockers should safely merge into the back of the ride.

- Unless you are an on duty police motorcyclist then you should not throttle up, driving on the left, in order to get back to the front of the line. It is too dangerous, not only for you, but also for the startled riders in the group who are not expecting someone to pass them like that.

On a small ride, like a chapter rev and roll, blockers should be considerate to motorists. We will only be detaining them for a minute or two and I always make a point of nodding my head in gratitude, waving at them in a friendly gesture, etc. Courtesy is easy and motorists do not want to feel bullied. Remember, we are the Blue Knights—not an OMG.

If the ride has a rest point then the blockers who are now at the end of the ride should stage back to the front to reassume their blocking duties.

The ride is usually led by a ride captain, president, etc. **He or she will usually designate where blockers are needed. One finger up means one blocker going to the position that the RC is pointing to. Two**

fingers up mean 2 blockers going to the positions that the RC points to. Sometimes if no one has assumed the duties of the RC, (or the ride is too small) then blocking should be done as necessary by the riders immediately behind the first bike—usually at a major stop sign or traffic light (but not at a sparsely travelled stop sign). It will be a judgment thing.

Other considerations:

- Using a blocker on a downhill decreasing radius turn (some riders may tend to drift into oncoming traffic). A blocker positioned in the left lane down from the turn can stop oncoming traffic **to mitigate the chance of a rider drifting into the left lane and getting hit.**
- Using a blocker on an uphill tight turn by placing the blocker in the oncoming lane past the apex of the hill so that riders will have more room to make the turn and not be concerned about drifting into the other lane.
- Another example would be to stage a blocker on the exit side of a one lane bridge.

A very dangerous situation:

- **The ride captain makes a serious error in judgment** when he merges onto a 4 lane highway, gets stuck behind a truck, throttles up and passes the truck, has 40 or more bikes behind him, and has to get off the 4 lane at the next right side exit which is 2 miles down the road. Now you will have bikes scrambling to exit, attempting to merge with cars that were in front of the truck, etc. This is one of the most dangerous situations that I have been part of and the responsibility lies with the RC. He should have just tucked in behind the truck and been patient. **Now a blocker may move in front of traffic and slow down in order to correct the problem by stopping or really slowing down the cars so that the bikes can move over and exit. This is very dangerous and a motorist with road rage may bump the bike, etc. This type of blocking should really not be done.** It is safer for the riders who cannot safely reach the exit to proceed down the road until the next exit. Next year, do not return or support such a poorly led ride.

Should a blocker always stay in position until the last rider is through or is it ok to rejoin the ride as soon as a car is stopped?

- The answer is maybe.

If the ride is well attended and a blocker stops a car and then rejoins the group, and there is a gap in the ride, cars will proceed through and endanger those riders who have not been able to keep up for whatever reason. On the other side of the coin, can a blocker stop traffic and expect motorists to cooperate when there is a 5 minute (or more) gap between riders. I don't think so. Perhaps the blocker, if he knows there is a large gap, should roll his bike to the side and allow the motorists to proceed through. Then, upon hearing the upcoming riders, he can reengage his blocking duties—(just an idea to consider.)

Blocking can be a science by following certain basic safety principles, but it is also a learned art. An experience, resourceful blocker can really make a ride fun. An inexperienced blocker can create a hazard. No matter how much machismo you may have, no matter how large and powerful a bike you have, you will lose when even a small car is involved in a crash with you.

I am sure that I have not covered all the possibilities, but I just wanted to post my thoughts for your consideration, especially since I have not seen them written down anywhere else.



QUICK TIPS: MSF's Guide to Group Riding

Motorcycling is primarily a solo activity, but for many, riding as a group – whether with friends on a Sunday morning ride or with an organized motorcycle rally – is the epitome of the motorcycling experience. Here are some tips to help ensure a fun and safe group ride:

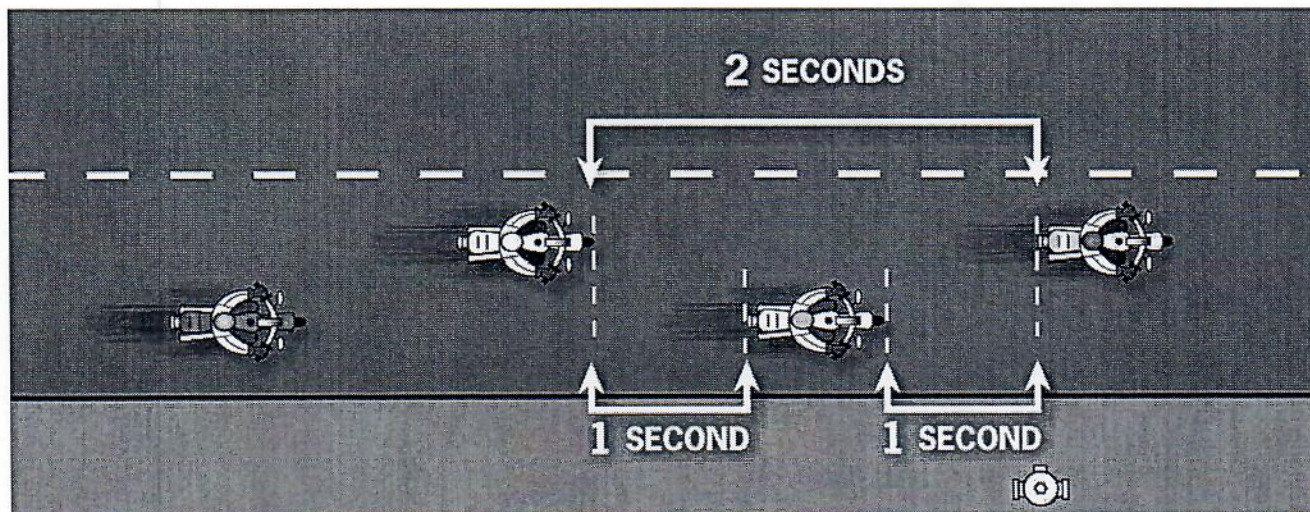
Arrive prepared. Arrive on time with a full gas tank.

Hold a riders' meeting. Discuss things like the route, rest and fuel stops, and hand signals (see diagrams on page 3). Assign a lead and sweep (tail) rider. Both should be experienced riders who are well-versed in group riding procedures. The leader should be aware of each rider's skill level before the ride and monitor the riders during the ride.

Keep the group to a manageable size, ideally five to seven riders. If necessary, break the group into smaller sub-groups, separated by a few seconds, each with a lead and sweep rider.

Ride prepared. At least one rider in each group should have a first-aid kit and full tool kit, and all riders should carry a cell phone, so the group is prepared for any problem that they might encounter.

Ride in formation. The staggered riding formation (see diagram below) allows a proper space cushion between motorcycles so that each rider has enough time and space to maneuver and to react to hazards. The leader rides in the left third of the lane, while the next rider stays at least one second behind in the right third of the lane; the rest of the group follows the same pattern. A single-file formation with a minimum 2-second following distance is preferred on a curvy road, under conditions of poor visibility or poor road surfaces, entering/leaving highways, or other situations where an increased space cushion or maneuvering room is needed.



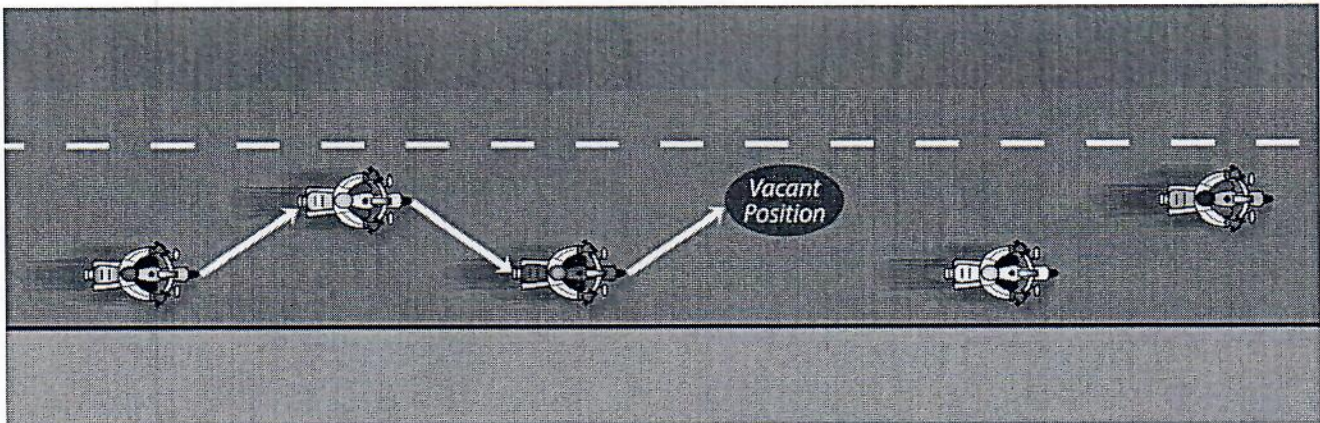
Avoid side-by-side formations, as they reduce the space cushion. If you suddenly needed to swerve to avoid a hazard, you would not have room to do so. You don't want handlebars to get entangled.

Periodically check the riders following using your rear view mirrors. If you see a rider falling behind, slow down so they may catch up. If all the riders in the group use this procedure, the group should be able to maintain a fairly steady speed without pressure to ride too fast to catch up.



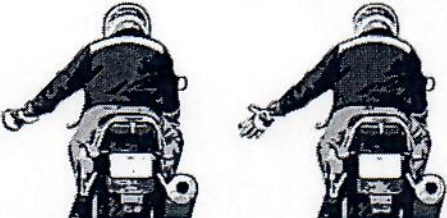
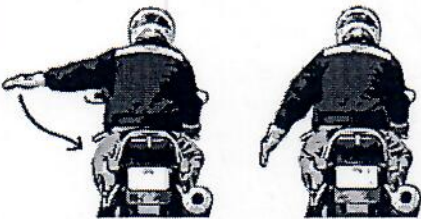


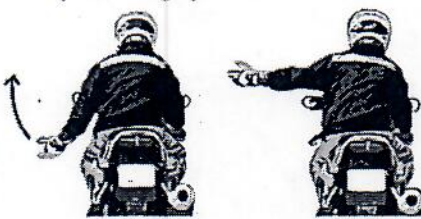
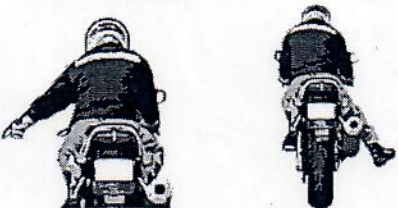

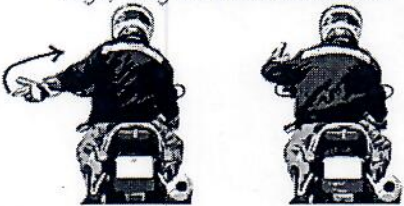



If you're separated from the group, don't panic. Your group should have a pre-planned procedure in place to regroup. Don't break the law or ride beyond your skills to catch up.

For mechanical or medical problems, use a cell phone to call for assistance as the situation warrants.

If a rider leaves during the ride, the rest of the group should re-form the staggered formation by criss-crossing into the next vacant position. Although it would seem more efficient for the column directly behind the missing rider to move up, we do not recommend it because passing another rider within a lane can be risky.



MSF's Guide to Group Riding: Hand Signals

<p>Stop - arm extended straight down, palm facing back</p> 	<p>Single File - arm and index finger extended straight up</p> 	<p>Turn Signal On - open and close hand with fingers and thumb extended</p> 
<p>Slow Down - arm extended straight out, palm facing down</p> 	<p>Double File - arm with index and middle finger extended straight up</p> 	<p>Fuel - arm out to side pointing to tank with finger extended</p> 
<p>Speed Up - arm extended straight out, palm facing up</p> 	<p>Hazard in Roadway - on the right, point with right foot; on the left, point with left hand</p> 	<p>Refreshment Stop - fingers closed, thumb to mouth</p> 
<p>You Lead/Come - arm extended upward 45 degrees, palm forward pointing with index finger, swing in arc from back to front</p> 	<p>Highbeam - tap on top of helmet with open palm down</p> 	<p>Comfort Stop - forearm extended, fist clenched with short up and down motion</p> 
<p>Follow Me - arm extended straight up from shoulder, palm forward</p> 	<p>Pull Off - arm positioned as for right turn, forearm swung toward shoulder</p> 