

North Lancashire and South Cumbria RoSPA Group

Group Riding Protocol

Etiquette to try and ensure a safe and enjoyable group ride

- Riding in a group requires the d'Artagnan philosophy (One for all, All for one), you need to be a team player.
- Please arrive with a full tank of petrol and an empty bladder.
- Petrol stops will be determined on the lowest tank range of participants. You are advised to fill up at these stops. Having sufficient fuel to get between designated stops is your responsibility.
- The leader, relay rider and Tail End Charlie (TEC) will be identified to the rest of the group at the start. The **Relay riders role** is to aid good communications and includes acting like a 3rd official, i.e. become **TEC** or **ride leader** if necessary. Having free range to move up and down the group, all manoeuvres will be carried out without compromising safety. The **Relay Rider** will only be deployed when there is a large group (more than 9 bikes)
- Everyone should keep a safe distance behind the rider in front.
- To avoid unscheduled stops and to be safe please make sure all luggage carried on your machine is secured safely before starting.
- By prior arrangement with the ride leader, riders may join the group en-route using the following procedure

Be at your designated joining point in good time prior to the ETA of the main group

The **Group** will **NOT** stop en-route to wait for late joiners.

Join the **Group** behind the **TEC** (Usually wearing orange HI-VIZ). Signal to the **TEC** that you are joining

Once up to **Group** pace overtake the **TEC** (with **TEC** assistance), you are now a **Group Member** and should follow **Group Riding Protocol**.

The ride **leader** will brief all joining riders at the first stop

- **Safety** is the overriding factor at all times.

All riders are expected to be **Safe, Law abiding and responsible for their own machine and actions at all times**

Ride your own ride, don't allow yourself to be pulled or pushed along. Enjoy yourself at your own pace

Keep the rider behind you in your rear view mirror, the rule is **"Ride to the rider behind you, not the one in front"**

The **Group** will travel within designated speed limits at all times, you should aim to keep the **Group** together by not deliberately falling back.

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- **Drop off System**

When a change of direction is required the **Drop off System** will be deployed.

Understanding the system is important, as every rider needs to do their part to avoid anyone getting lost.

The **leader** is responsible for navigating the route and the tail end Charlie (TEC) to stay at the back in last position to act as a sweeper. These are the only two riders who maintain their position in the group.

At a junction if the **lead rider** signals to do so, the rider immediately behind, stops and **marks** the junction and indicates the route which the other members of the **group** should follow. All other riders pass the **marker** except the **TEC**. The **marker** then re-joins the group in front of **TEC**.

If you become the 2nd rider and do not wish to take part as a drop off marker, indicate to the following rider to overtake when safe to do so, this should be at the earliest opportunity.

This approach involves everyone in the **group**, the **marker** gets rotated from front to back and naturally moves up to the front again. The method works provided everyone makes clear, **safe markings** and doesn't forget they are in the No.2 position, when it is their turn to **mark**. If No.2 does not **mark** then No.3 becomes the **marker**, the responsibility carries on through until a rider becomes the **marker**, the responsibility should not be shirked.

A roundabout should be marked by parking in a safe visible position on the exit.

When going straight through at a crossroads where you don't have right of way, it may be **marked** at the discretion of the **ride leader**, the default action in such a case is to continue straight through. Therefore if there is no **marker** when you arrive, you should proceed straight on. If you are the **marker** at such a junction you should park in a safe visible position on the far side of the crossroads

When you are **marking** a junction make sure you park in a position so as not to obstruct any other road users.

If necessary point in the direction that riders arriving at the junction should proceed in.

When you are the **marker**, wait for the **TEC** to arrive, even if this takes a long time. There may be a breakdown further back, which you are unaware of. If necessary switch off your engine. If you leave your position everyone behind will suffer and the run will fall apart.

There is no need to play "**catch-up**", with **the drop off system** there will be a **marker** waiting for you at the next junction.

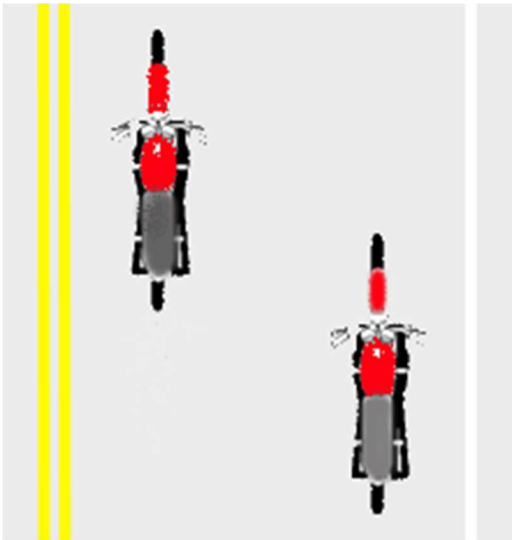
Nobody other than the **TEC** is allowed to ride last. If you want to leave the group you should pull in to the left in a safe, visible position and wave other riders past. When the **TEC** arrives he will stop and you can then inform him/her that you are leaving the group and why. If possible advise the **Ride Leader** and **TEC** at the previous stop that you intend to leave the group, giving approximate location.

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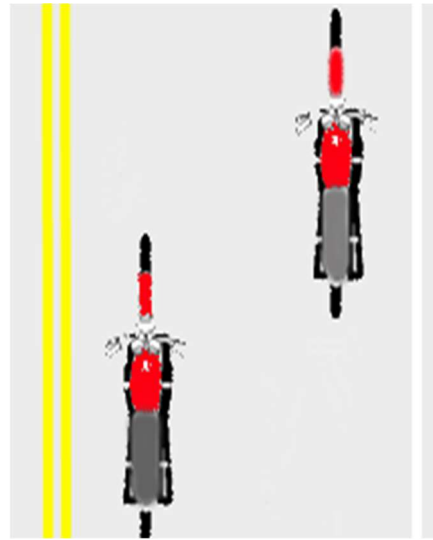
- **When turning at a junction**

Pull up with your **front wheel** no further forward than the **“Rear Foot Peg”** of the bike in front of you. When turning left, pull up on **“the offside”**, when turning right pull up on **“the nearside”**. This does not impair the **“Sight Lines”** of the front rider and gives you the possibility of clearing the junction at the same time and therefore aiding safe progress of the group.

Please study the images below



Left Turn



Right Turn

- **Stagger Formation**

Where road and traffic conditions allow the normal advanced riding lines can be used, however when in congested traffic, speed restricted areas, dual carriageways and motorways we use the **stagger formation**. When done right, it is one of the safest ways to ride. Riding as a group offers a much larger "object" in the road for motorists to see. You are less likely to have a car run up on your back, oncoming traffic turning across in front of you, or even try to lane change into you. **But there is a way to do this right.**

Riding in a group is not only about being visible, but it's also about working together. Whether a group of two or twenty, communication is fundamental, the best way is to have bike to bike, otherwise use hand signals. Either way is fine but direct voice communication is the best.

The **ride leader** and **TEC** coordinate the movements of the group, but it is the responsibility of the individual to pay attention and move as required.

The staggered formation means that the bikes would alternate the sides of the lane that they are on. Each bike would ride 2 seconds behind the bike "directly" in front of them. This allows for proper braking distance. The bike staggered to the right or left would be one second in front.

Please study the image below

