



Lindum Colonia UK Chapter

GROUP RIDING

Group riding is a social activity. It is not difficult, but it is a little different from riding on your own. We want all our members to enjoy riding with us and to be safe doing so. These notes tell you how we operate and are for existing members as well as new riders and those joining us from other Chapters.

Preparing For The Ride

Before you ride with Lindum Colonia you should be familiar with these notes.

The departure point will have been advertised on the Chapter web site for some time before the ride, with reminders on Facebook. You might want to print out the information given and the map if one has been supplied.

Meeting is usually half an hour before the advertised departure time.

The Pre-Ride Safety Briefing is given **15 minutes** before the advertised departure time. As this briefing is essential for all riders in the group, missing the briefing may delay the start of the ride.

Always arrive with a full tank and an empty bladder.

Please bear in mind that a Ride-Out is not the time to bring an inexperienced passenger or carry a pillion yourself for the first time.

Signing In

Both you and your pillion must sign in to the ride. Anyone on the ride (including pillions) who is not a Lindum Colonia member must sign the Guest and/or Child Release form.

By signing in you will acknowledge that you are deemed to be in control of, and responsible for, your vehicle and your riding at all times, irrespective of any guidance or instructions from any member of the road crew and that you must at all times ride within the law and obey road traffic regulations.

Non-members should read the waiver form carefully before signing.

Road Crew

Each ride will have a Lead Road Captain, a Tail-End Charlie (TEC) and usually a Sweeper. These will be wearing distinctive orange and yellow high-vis jackets.

The Lead Road Captain always rides at the front. The Sweeper always rides last and TEC rides in front of the Sweeper.

As the last rider, it is the Sweeper's job to stop and assist anyone who needs to drop out of the ride for whatever reason. If you need to stop, do so in a safe place and then remember to flag down the Sweeper – otherwise he may not know you are part of the ride and you could well get left behind!

Pre-Ride Safety Briefing

The Lead Road Captain has overall responsibility for the ride and will give a short briefing before the start.

The Pre-Ride Safety Briefing is given **15 minutes** before the advertised departure time. As this briefing is essential for all riders in the group, missing the briefing may delay the start of the ride.

The Lead Road Captain will introduce themselves, the TEC and the Sweeper, provide you with a reminder of what has been advertised plus any other relevant information and give a short safety briefing. If he gives out his mobile number, make a note of it and ask him if he does not.



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The Two Second Rule

This is absolutely fundamental to the safety of the Ride-Out.

In staggered riding, as a guide you should be:

- At least two seconds behind the rider directly in front of you (i.e. on your side of the lane); and
- At least one second behind the rider diagonally in front of you (i.e. on the other side of the lane)

When the group is riding in single file, you should be at least two seconds behind the rider in front of you.

It takes about two seconds to say **“Only a fool breaks the two second rule”**; so, it is easy to work out if you are too close to the bike in front.

These suggestions are the minimum. If you are a new rider, allow a bit more space. You should also allow extra space when conditions require, for example on wet roads or poor road surfaces. In wet weather, it is sensible to allow double the space (i.e. at least four seconds instead of two). Your judgment is paramount on this and you should never ride too close to the bikes in front of you.

Please bear in mind, however, that leaving an excessive gap is also unwise. The ride leader finds it much more difficult – if not impossible – to see the TEC in the distance, and the risk of losing part of the ride increases. Such gaps usually result from a rider failing to match the speed of the riders in front. Remember that we always ride within the speed limit. Riders who leave an excessive gap can expect to be advised by members of the road crew who will offer friendly advice and support.

The second man should try to give the Lead Road Captain a little more space, say a 2 to 4 second gap. Some road captains like this when they are leading.

Second Man Drop Off

You will not always be able to see the Lead Road Captain and so we use the second man drop off procedure at turn-offs or in other places where it is necessary to indicate the correct route to following riders. The procedure involves one rider stopping in a safe position and pointing out the route to the rest of the group.

As a general rule when you get to a junction or a roundabout, you should assume that if there is no drop off then the route is straight ahead. If “straight ahead” is not entirely clear and the ride leader cannot see the tail end of the ride, there should be a drop off. At roundabouts, this will normally be at the exit of the roundabout.

At a drop off point, the Lead Road Captain will raise his left arm upwards and then point to the area for the second man to stop. This is only a guide and it is up to the person being dropped off to ensure they stop in a safe and legal place.

Be aware that the edges of the carriageway can be quite slippery - even on the tarmac surface. A residue of sticky muck often builds up and can form a lethal cocktail. This seems a particular hazard on trunk roads, including dual carriageways, which are not regularly cleaned. On minor roads, the edge of the road can fall away steeply to your left, so check before you put your foot down.

Having stopped safely, turn off your indicators and indicate the direction to go for the rest of the group with a bold arm movement. DO NOT move off until the Sweeper and Tail-End Charlie appear. Even if this appears to be a very long time, do not move off until they arrive.

If it is safe to do so, the Sweeper and Tail-End Charlie will normally slow and allow the second man to re-join the group in front of them. However, this is not always safe. In this situation, the second man should allow Tail-End Charlie and the Sweeper to pass, then pull out behind them.

THE SECOND MAN MUST NOT PULL OUT IN FRONT OF THE SWEEPER AND TAIL-END CHARLIE UNLESS THEY ARE CLEARLY GIVING WAY TO ENABLE HIM TO DO SO.



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He should only move off when it is safe and then catch the ride up as and when conditions permit. The Sweeper and Tail-End Charlie will normally slow down to make overtaking easier, and the second man takes his place immediately in front of Tail-End Charlie.

When you are dropped off:

- NEVER leave before you see Tail-End Charlie
- Keep your engine running so that you are ready to move off
- ALWAYS cancel your indicator

Remember that very occasionally there may be new riders between Tail-End Charlie and the Sweeper.

Back at the front of the group the original third rider has now become second man and moves to the near side of the lane. Everyone else will then readjust their road position, working backwards from the front. Remember the two-second rule and maintain a safe distance.

If There Is A Trike On The Ride

If there is a Trike on the ride, the rider will not usually want to do second man drop off. This also applies to a bike with a side-car.

In this situation, the Trike will always ride immediately behind the Lead Road Captain. When there is to be a drop off the Trike will NOT drop off. The rider behind the Trike (i.e. the third bike) rides on the near side of the lane when we are staggered. The Trike does NOT drop off. The bike which drops off is the third bike.

If there is more than one Trike the Lead Road Captain will decide what to do depending on the circumstances.

The “Ad Hoc” Drop Off

Sometimes the Lead Road Captain will make a mistake and not put a drop off down where he should have done. We are all human and this is hopefully rare. If it is obvious to you that a drop off is needed, you may “drop yourself off” and indicate the route to those behind you.

Be careful. While the rider behind you should be paying attention, he might not be expecting you to pull over. Make sure you signal and slow down carefully.

Anyone on the ride can help in this way but off duty members of the road crew should always be on the alert in case an ad hoc drop off is needed.

Sometimes it may be sufficient for a rider in this situation to slow slightly, just enough so he can be seen by Tail-End Charlie. If Tail-End Charlie can see that the ride is turning, everything should be fine.

If You Are Lost

The best laid plans sometimes go wrong, and you may find yourself alone or among a group of riders who have become separated from the main group and lost the route. What to do depends on the circumstances. The best thing is normally to wait and see if Tail-End Charlie and the Sweeper arrive. They should know the route. They should also have the mobile number of the Lead Road Captain (and so should you).

If they do not arrive after about 15 minutes, you or the group will have to decide what to do, perhaps proceed to the destination or abandon the ride. If a map of the route was published and you are among the wise virgins who printed this out, you will be in a much better position.

The No Overtaking Rule

Group riding is a social activity. There is **NO OVERTAKING OF OTHER MEMBERS WITHIN THE GROUP.**



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However, overtaking of other vehicles is perfectly acceptable when it is safe and legal to do so.

Overtaking On Dual Carriageways – The Snake

This section applies where there are two or more lanes in the direction of travel. Normally the group will then be in staggered formation.

If the Lead Road Captain decides to overtake he will move into the lane to his right, complete the overtake and then normally pull back into the left-hand lane. He must then maintain overtaking speed until all riders have overtaken. The riders behind will see this. The correct procedure is that as each rider approaches the slower vehicle(s), he will move out to the right to pass and then pull back in if the Lead Road Captain has pulled in. Overtaking speed should be maintained by everyone until all riders have completed the overtaking manoeuvre.

What should not happen is for the whole group, or a single well-intentioned rider, to pull out to the right as soon as they see the Lead Road Captain pull out. All this does is create a queue in the right lane and irritate car drivers, encouraging them to overtake us on the left-hand side and then cut us up when moving to the right.

To put it another way, we pass the slower vehicle a bit like a snake slithering round an obstacle. It is quite elegant when done well.

Signals

There are various special signals which are occasionally used in group riding, in addition to the normal use of indicators, brake lights etc. These are optional, but you should be aware of them.

Horses

We ride in a mainly rural area and horses may be frightened by motorcycles. Good practice when horses are on the road is to roll-off the throttle, reduce speed / coast past; give the horse a wide berth. Unless the group stops do not stop your engine—restarting while moving is dangerous. If the horse is agitated and the group stops, turn off your motor and ensure that the horse can see your full face by whatever means appropriate for your helmet type.

Accidents

Accidents are thankfully rare but can happen. We have produced a separate document on what to do in an accident.

Breakdown Insurance

Breakdowns are rare due to legendary Harley Davidson reliability. However, if someone breaks down we cannot normally hold up the whole ride until their bike is fixed.

You are strongly advised to take out breakdown insurance and make sure you have the contact numbers with you. This may come with your insurance or you can buy HOG Assistance or some other form of cover.



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Other Points

- On a Ride-Out all traffic laws apply, and that includes speed limits
- Although you are riding in a group, you must maintain your concentration as if you were riding alone, following your normal techniques to ensure you and your colleagues arrive safely
- Please ride with just a single headlight on. This helps the Lead Road Captain see back down the ride
- Make sure your bike is roadworthy, taxed and insured
- Wear the right gear for the conditions
- We do not formally ban alcohol on our rides, but we do not encourage it either and if you are under the influence you will be asked to leave the ride for the safety of other members
- If you are planning to leave the ride before the official finishing point, please let the Lead Road Captain or Tail-End Charlie know before departure
- If other bikes want to overtake us, let them do so – allowing them the space they need without compromising your own safety, to clear them through the ride as soon as possible

And Finally

If you are new to H.O.G. or riding in a large group, all this might seem a bit daunting. However, read it through a couple of times and see it operating on a Ride-Out. You will soon get the hang of it and it becomes second nature.

We hope you will find these guidelines helpful, but if you do have a difficulty, please remember that the answer to any problem is only a question away – “What is ...?” / “How do I ...?” If you need to ask something, please do.

Remember:

- These notes do not override the law or any provision of the Highway Code
- You should ride safely and sensibly, irrespective of anything in these notes or any instructions and advice from road crew and others
- Never ride faster than you feel you should
- You are ultimately responsible for your own safety
- Please remember that you are deemed to be in control of, and responsible for, your vehicle and your riding at all times irrespective of any guidance or instructions from any member of the road crew. You must at all times ride within the law and obey road traffic regulations