

# Road Captain Guidelines

Orange Park Florida Chapter #0679  
Harley Owners Group



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## **Introduction**

Congratulations on becoming a Road Captain in the Orange Park Florida H.O.G. Chapter. These requirements are designed to help you understand the duties and responsibilities of a chapter Road Captain. Road Captains are looked up to as Ride Leaders. Your riding skills, judgment, dress, and demeanor are all attributes of a successful Road Captain.

## **Head Road Captain Requirements**

The Head Road Captain is a key member of the chapter staff/officers, and as such, represents the Road Captains at any staff/officer meetings. This person coordinates the Road Captains' activities, chairs all scheduled RC meetings, and works closely with the Safety and Primary Officers to ensure our guidelines are in compliance with the law and best practices as set out by H.O.G., the Motorcycle Safety Foundation, and the Motorcycle Training Institute, Inc. (MTII).

## **Road Captain Requirements**

You have made a commitment to our chapter's Road Captain program. This commitment means you will make a good faith effort to:

1. Lead at least 1 ride in first 6 months of each calendar year, from January 1<sup>st</sup> – June 30<sup>th</sup>
2. Lead at least 1 ride in second 6 months of each calendar year from July 1<sup>st</sup> – December 31<sup>st</sup>
3. Lead or Tail a total of at least five rides per calendar year, January 1<sup>st</sup> – December 31<sup>st</sup>
4. Attend all Road Captain meetings possible
5. Attend all Chapter meetings possible

You must also subscribe to and practice our group riding guidelines and are encouraged to attend an approved MSF Riders Safety course.

## **Road Captain Candidates**

An important part of enhancing our Road Captain program is adding new RCs. All Road Captains are encouraged to talk to other chapter riders about becoming a Road Captain. The primary qualifications are a willingness to commit their time and energy to our program and having enough riding experience to learn to lead rides. Once a chapter member has indicated an interest in becoming a Road Captain, they should be directed to speak to the Head Road Captain who will evaluate the prospective Road Captain's willingness to make a commitment, ability to learn to lead rides, and overall suitability as a Road Captain. The prospect will then be invited to attend a RC meeting, placed on the [roadcaptains@ophog.org](mailto:roadcaptains@ophog.org) list and will be provided a current copy of the Road Captain Guidelines and the Prequalification Checklist for completion. The Director has delegated the approval decision on new Road Captains to the Head Road Captain.

## **Inactive Road Captain Requirements**

### **Part one**

In the event the minimum requirements are not met, Road Captain status will be changed to Inactive. To reactivate Road Captain status, the completion of 1 Qualifying Ride (see Road Captain Qualification Requirements) must be completed; as well as re-establishment of a commitment to meet and maintain the guidelines of the Orange Park H.O.G Road Captains Manual.

### **Part two**

In the event that a Road Captain takes an extended leave of absence and remains as Inactive for a period of 1 year or more, reactivation may require the complete fulfillment of the Road Captains Qualification Requirements as determined by the Head Road Captain, Safety Officer and Director.

## **Safety**

We have a “Safety” section on our chapter web site. Information on Motorcycle Safety is at the URL <http://www.ophog.org>.

## **Planning the ride**

Proper planning plays a very important role to ensure a safe, interesting, and fun ride. If you are new to this or need assistance, please call any of the Road Captains (listed in our newsletter or web site under contact us) for advice and assistance in planning and leading your first ride. The first thing in planning a ride is selecting a destination. For any destination you need to know that the business will be open and can handle the size of our group. If it is a restaurant, you should call to ensure it will be open, provide a head count, and the approximate time of our arrival. It would be a good idea to have a section of their parking set aside for the motorcycles if possible. If a restaurant, check to see if they could make separate checks for the meals. Once we have an exact count at our departure point, it helps to make a final call to the restaurant with updated numbers.

## **Pre-Ride**

The next step is to plan and then pre-ride the route. Pre-rides must be made within 30 days of the ride, but the closer to the actual ride date the better. All Pre-ride details are to be sent via email to [roadcaptains@ophog.org](mailto:roadcaptains@ophog.org) to properly notify all Road Captains/Candidates so anyone needing a qualification ride can have the opportunity to complete it. Try to make it an interesting ride, not just down the interstate or through town. During your pre-ride (which you may make on two or four wheels), you need to check road conditions and determine which lanes you should use while leading the group. During your route check ride, try to find a good rest stop that might have more than one gas pump and rest room to speed up the necessary “pit stops”. You want this to be a fun and safe ride. While pre-riding the route you should note your mileage at each turn point if you plan to use a route sheet (see page 10). It would be helpful to make a map of the route in case the group gets split up. It is strongly recommended, though not required, that the Tail Gunner make the pre-ride with you. It is not uncommon that radio communication is lost at the time of the ride, for this reason, it is essential that Road Captain and Tail Gunner are in sync with the route, lane changes, traffic situations and potential separation.

## Leading the ride

### Road Captains Meeting

You should arrive at your starting point at least 30 minutes before the ride's departure time to meet with the other Road Captains and Tail Gunner. If the ride is over 20 bikes we will try to split the group and select a second Road Captain and Tail. Maps or the route sheet should be given to all Road Captains at this time so they can study it. Use the briefing checklist to brief the Road Captains, as this prevents forgetting important items.

### Riders Meeting

A briefing should be given to all riders before the ride at a Riders' Meeting. During the briefing introduce yourself, your Tail Gunner, all the other Road Captains on the ride and hand out a route sheet or map, if available. As you brief the route, point out problem areas the group might encounter. Find out if there is anyone riding who is not a member or is a minor and have them sign a release form. The other Tail Gunner and other Road Captains can help with this. You may want to see if you have any new riders in the group and have them ride toward the rear. Any riders who will be dropping out while enroute should ride at the rear of the formation.

Use our Pre-Ride Briefing Guide (see page 7) to review our group riding guidelines and how we ride in a staggered formation. Demonstrate the hand signals. **Remind the riders we will use radios, if available, between the Lead and Tail Gunner and to stay off the channel except for necessary communications.** Even if radios are available, hand signals will be used. Review any other pertinent information and take questions.

### Road Captains Responsibility to the Ride and to the Group

At the time of the ride, you need to be focused on the task at hand of providing a safe and enjoyable ride for the group. As you start the ride, you should be completely aware of your surroundings and all riders, understanding their capabilities. During the ride, you should anticipate every move with the entire group in mind. By not trying to turn right on red lights, minimal lane changes, and using extra caution overall will go far in preventing the need for sudden stops or moves and therefore will help to provide a successful ride. We are not Tour Guides; we are Ride Leaders. Limit all CB chatter to directional instructions between the Road Captain and the Tail Gunner, to keep you both focused.

## Mishaps

### Breakdowns

In case of a breakdown the Tail Gunner is designated to stop and assist. The Tail Gunner should have a cell phone and be able to assist in fixing the bike or call for assistance. It is recommended that all riders carry a cell phone and the chapter list of cell phone numbers.

## **Accidents**

In the event of an accident those behind the accident will stop if possible and render aid. First aid and safety are the immediate concerns. The Tail Gunner will notify the Ride Leader by radio of the incident, if possible. One (or more) person(s) will direct traffic around the accident scene. There are many variables the Ride Leader will consider to determine whether the whole group stops, just the Tail Gunner, or how many riders are necessary for assistance. The accident injury report (see back of manual) should be completed by the Tail Gunner after any injuries are treated. The Tail Gunner shall email the Injury Report to [headroadcaption@ophog.org](mailto:headroadcaption@ophog.org), [safety@ophog.org](mailto:safety@ophog.org) and also [director@ophog.org](mailto:director@ophog.org). The Head Road Captain shall get Signed Release Forms of all persons involved from the Membership Officer. The Head Road Captain shall fax the package to 312-368-9548 within 24 hours of the accident. It is recommended that riders carry a cell phone and the chapter list of cell phone numbers. Remember that 9-1-1 may be available over cellular phone service in the event of a serious injury and \*FHP reaches the Florida Highway Patrol to report dangerous road conditions. The Road Captain and Tail Gunner should carry a first aid kit and accident injury report form.

## **Riding Dress**

Our Road Captains set the example for other riders in our chapter. As such, the Road Captains are expected to wear over the ankle footwear, long pants, shirt, gloves, and an approved helmet. And always wear your colors and name tag.

## **Riding Your Harley**

Our chapter is a H.O.G. chapter and as such, when you are performing your duties as a Road Captain, you should be riding your Harley-Davidson motorcycle. There may be occasions when you ride another marquee in a chapter ride and that is OK, but remember, if you are performing Road Captain duties you will be on your Harley.

## **Riding Guidelines**

Our riding guidelines (see page 8) have been carefully crafted to use the standard group riding techniques developed by the MSF and MTII. The more mobile we become, the more important it is to use a set of standardized riding guidelines. You should thoroughly understand our chapter riding guidelines and practice them. Through attending the Road Captain meetings and participating in the discussions, you will not only know the guidelines, but will also understand their underlying rationale, allowing you to make better decisions when situations develop that are not specifically covered.

## **Rider Education**

Each Road Captain is encouraged to attend an approved rider safety course at least once every two years. We normally receive a discount on our local Rider's Edge courses and H.O.G. reimburses us up to \$50 for the training.

## **Road Captain's Pre-Ride Briefing Guide**

The Ride Leader should be at designated departure point at least 30 minutes before the ride is scheduled to depart. The Leader should ensure that there are release forms for the non-chapter members going on the ride. This includes both rider and co-rider.

Call Road Captain's Meeting (20 minutes before departure)

Brief: Handout detailed route instructions to Tail Gunner and other Road Captains

Departure from \_\_\_\_\_

Radio Channel – ride information only on this channel

Route to destination with any caution areas

Fuel stop location

Destination

Breakdown procedures (cell phone list for all Road Captains)

Determine if you will run one or two groups of riders

Questions

Call Riders' Meeting (15 minutes before departure)

(Refer to RC Checklist.doc)

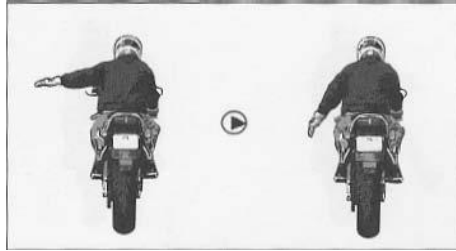
## Group Riding Guidelines

1. Everyone on the group ride is responsible for their own safety and will be required to ride in a safe manner. There is never any use of alcohol or drugs during any H.O.G. ride.
2. Speed and traffic laws must be obeyed at all times. Be courteous and give other vehicles every consideration. You represent everyone on two wheels when on a group ride.
3. On arriving for a ride, be mentally and physically prepared to ride. You should have a full tank of gas and have performed a pre-ride check of your bike (T-CLOCK): Tires, Controls, Lights, Oil, Chassis, and Kickstand. Arrive for the ride about 30 minutes early so you don't miss the riders meeting. At the meeting, the Ride Leader will introduce the Tail Gunner, all Road Captains, and all Road Captain Candidates. You may be offered a map or list of directions in the event you become separated from the group. You will know where the rest stops will be located. If you become separated from the group, don't panic. Try to catch up, staying within the speed limits. The Ride Leader will, if possible, slow the group to allow you to catch up.
4. We ride in a staggered formation. This keeps the group close and still maintains a cushion of space in which to maneuver.
  - The Ride Leader will ride in the left third of the lane. The second rider will follow in the right third of the lane with a minimum interval of one second between them. The third rider will be directly behind the Ride Leader with a two second minimum interval. The rest of the group will follow in that order. The Tail Gunner will be the last bike and ride in the middle third of the lane.
  - As you are responsible for your bike and your own safety, ride your bike at a safe pace in the formation that you feel comfortable.
5. Radio communication, when available, is very important. Radio communication should be between the Lead and Tail Gunner. Communication should be short and to the point, with no chatter. Other members of the group that have radios may listen in on the designated channel, but if they want to carry on conversations they should change to another channel so they will not disturb the Ride Leader and Tail Gunner.
6. Hand signals are important to a group ride and provide a way to communicate without stopping. Our chapter uses standard Rider's Edge/MSF hand signals. All hand signals should be passed back by all riders to ensure all riders will know what is going on.
7. Do not "rubber band" (speed up and slow down). If a gap develops, do not speed up suddenly. You should accelerate slowly until you are in your proper position. If a bike drops out of the formation, the riders behind will balance the formation by moving forward to fill the gap. Always check your mirrors and scan the area around you so you will know what is going on at all times.
8. Please notify the Ride Lead and Tail Gunner if you will be leaving the group while enroute, and ride at the back of the formation.
9. **Remember that you are responsible for your own safety and the safety of the others in the group.**

## Hand Signals



**Stop**  
arm extended  
straight down palm  
facing back



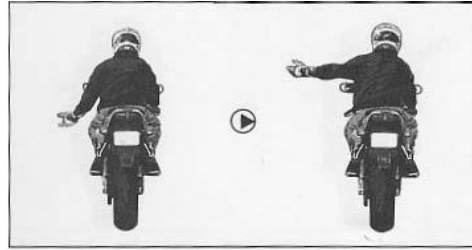
**Slow Down**  
arm extended straight  
down, palm facing back  
palm facing back



**Follow Me**  
arm extended  
straight up from shoulder  
palm



**Single File**  
arm straight up  
pointing up with finger



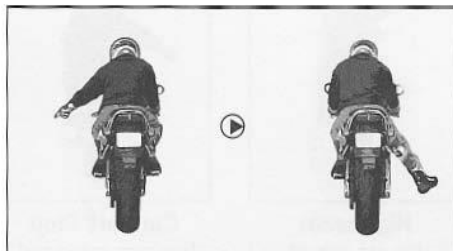
**Speed Up**  
Arm extended, Palm facing  
Moving arm from back  
toward front motion



**Staggered File**  
arm straight up  
pointing up with 2 fingers



**Fuel**  
Arm out to side pointing  
to tank with finger  
extended



**Hazard in Roadway**  
On the right, point with right foot  
On the left, point with the left foot



**Refreshment Stop**  
Fingers closed  
Thumb to mouth

## Route Sheet

(Road Captains may use either this route sheet or a map from a Web-based map program for directions to the destination)

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Road Captain \_\_\_\_\_ Tail Gunner \_\_\_\_\_

Ride Location \_\_\_\_\_ Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

Total Miles	Leg Miles	Directions

Copy and use this Route Sheet; it gives a way to display your route on a handout to the other Road Captains and riders.

It need not be typed or computer generated.

Handwritten routes are just fine.