

BELFAST CHAPTER NORTHERN IRELAND

Ride-Out Guidelines

It is important you read and understand these Guidelines to help us all have a safe and fun ride-out.

On our group rides, it's important for all involved to understand that an individual's actions can affect the safety of other group members. Group members must be prepared to give some thought and consideration to the safety of others, and enjoyment of all.

On group ride-outs, we would like everyone to ride safely and within their abilities at all time, and avoid the need for anyone to have to ride outside their skill level. Therefore in order to keep up with the bikes in front, we use the "second man drop-off" technique to signpost the route taken.

We also use the "Buddy system" i.e. your speed should be dictated by the motorcycle behind you and not the one in front.

There is a strict no-overtaking protocol within the group on ride-outs, this is for safety reasons.

After setting out from each stop, riders should keep to a fixed running order and a safe distance, no matter how slow the rider in front may be.

Before leaving home do a power check on your bike, don't start it up and rev its brains out – a **P.O.W.E.R.** check

Petrol ensure you have sufficient fuel for the journey

Oil check the oil levels

Water only if you have a V-Rod or you have a real problem

Electrics check lights, turn signals and horn

Rubber you lot are getting worse, check tyres, tread, pressure and for debris
If found not to be roadworthy you will be asked to leave the ride-out.

If the bike is O.K. check the weather forecast, pack what kit you need, always carry waterproof clothing. The Road Captain will decide before leaving what clothing is advised, so as not to stop during the ride to change into waterproofs.

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ead for the assembly point. A good idea is to plan to arrive 20-30 minutes before the set off time to allow you to say hello to everyone, listen to the briefing and still be ready to leave on time.

Ensure you arrive with a full tank of petrol.

New riders, those who have not ridden with our group before or those running in a new bike should speak to the Road Captain or the Safety Officer as it is preferable for them to be in the lead group (a strange but true fact is that the lead group will travel at a much slower speed than those behind)

If you intend to leave the group during the ride, inform the Lead Road Captain prior to setting off.

Setting out

The ride-out will be lead by the Road Captain who has overall control of the group and whose decisions will be based on the safety of the group as a whole.

The Road Captain will be assisted by the Safety Officer and nominated Road Marshals.

You should follow the instructions of the Road Captain as relayed to you by the Road Marshals.

The Road Captain, Safety Officer and Road Marshals will wear Hi Viz Vests and have illuminated passing lamps, if fitted. We will use the second man drop off method to mark all junctions/roundabouts where the group is exiting left or right. A drop off will be signalled by the Road Captain/Marshal as the place to stop. If a junction is not manned then the ride will continue straight on.

The ride will be in Staggered Formation with the Road Captain/Marshal occupying a central position within the lane/road, so that they can see each other along the central gully between the other riders in the column.

If sufficient bikes are in attendance the ride-out may be split into smaller groups for safety and to allow other vehicles to pass if necessary.

Marshals may also take the lead of smaller groups if necessary (for instance if the group is split by traffic)

All riders in addition to Road Captain/Marshals may be required to do and should be capable of doing, second man drop off.

On Route

During the ride-out we will obey all speed limits and traffic regulations
We will maintain the staggered riding formation wherever possible, this allows the group to remain tight but gives enough room for maneuvers where necessary.

Riders should try, as much as possible, to maintain a steady speed, any need for acceleration or slowing down should be carried out as smoothly as possible to reduce any "accordion" effect within the group.

Once you have occupied a position within the group (i.e. near side or offside) this position should not change except when riding on a particularly narrow road or when overtaking vehicles OR If a Road Marshal overtakes, you should not change your position except to let them pass.

Once they have passed, you should resume your previous position. Check your mirrors often for Road Marshals who may have to overtake the group. (if your bike has passing lamps we would appreciate if you do not use them during the ride-out as illuminated passing lamps is a useful way of identifying a Road Marshal .)

Only Road Marshals should overtake other riders in the group.

A First Aid Kit will be carried on all ride-outs by one of the Road Marshals. If you (or your bike) should breakdown during a ride-out a Road Marshal will ensure you have assistance.

If you need to stop during the ride, pull safely into the left when possible and indicate (Thumb down) to the first Marshal you see if you have a problem. They will pull in and assist. If you do not have a problem, indicate with the Thumb up signal. The Marshal will not stop.

On Motor ways and Dual Carriage ways, at times the group will need to overtake. When the Road Captain signals to pull out, this does not mean that the rest of the group has to pull out and do the same at exactly the same time. This is dangerous and also causes congestion.

Wait in the near side lane until you personally encounter the obstruction, then overtake when it is safe for YOU to do so. Then rejoin the main group. Do not pull out before the bike in front to block traffic.

When the group is held up or stops, riders should close up side by side so the group occupies the minimum length of road necessary. This is beneficial in built up areas in getting as many bikes through a junction or traffic lights in as short an interval of time possible.

The group will not stop for bad weather, unless unsafe to carry on, until the next designated stop point.

When slowing down you should indicate to the rider behind you are doing so. i.e. show a brake light with a gentle touch on the back brake.

If you ride a bike that is equipped with a radio/cassette/CD etc please be considerate of the riders around you who may not share your taste in music. When riding in a group switch off the speakers.

If contact with following riders is lost - slow down and/or stop (where it is safe to do so) and wait. The rider in front of you should then also slow/stop until the Road Captain realises there is a problem and will stop at a place where the group can reform safely before continuing.

Maintain a good margin of safety at all time, whether it be the gap between riders, the distance from opposing traffic, keeping within the capabilities of machine, rider and observing all speed limits. Overtaking opportunities should be taken as they are presented but, if in doubt, hold back.

Remember that YOUR safety is ultimately YOUR OWN responsibility.

Be safe but bring with you a sense of humor and aim to have fun.

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