

BACK TO BASICS - GROUP RIDING

by Jerry Palladino (MOTORMAN)

Often times I see large groups of motorcycles of 15, 20 or 30 motorcycles or even more. Generally, they are spread out over 1, 2 or 3 lanes. The riders towards the rear find themselves having to at times run red lights to keep up with the group. There is no reason for this. For safety's sake, it's best to keep the group at no more than 6 riders. If you are all going to the same place, what's the difference if one group arrives moments behind the other group. If you have 10 riders, split it up to 2 groups of 5 riders, etc. Always ride in staggered formation and make sure everyone is aware of the route you are going to take.

The lead rider should be experienced and conservative. Hand signals are a good idea, however, they should be held to a minimum. Everyone should do their best to stay together and it should be the rider in the rear's responsibility to keep riders from falling back too far. Allow enough space between the motorcycles for a safe stop, but not so much that a motorist can feel they have enough room to pull out from a side street between the group. It's a good idea to discuss the ride before departing so everyone in the group knows where they should be in the formation. Whenever possible, keep the group in the center lane and try to avoid constant lane changes. Do your best not to block traffic. If you have to move over to the right to allow cars to pass, do so. New riders should avoid group riding till they become familiar with their motorcycles and different traffic situations. All these tips may seem like common sense, but I have found that common sense isn't so common after all. Pay attention and remember, HEAD AND EYES and keep the shiny side up.

<http://www.ridemyown.com/articles/riding/BTB-grouprides.shtml>