

THE CHROME DIVA'S GROUP RIDING SAFETY TIPS

General Behavior: though it should go without saying, all federal, state, and local laws and ordinances are to be followed.

Be Prepared to Ride: always know your own capabilities and limits. Be aware that these may change day to day! Don't ride if you are not feeling well or have too much on your mind. You don't want to be distracted or burdened. And "Never ride faster than your angel can fly" (unknown author). Be sure your bike is properly maintained and always arrive for a group ride with a full tank of gas.

Safety Gear: it is recommended that you always wear your safety gear to include a helmet, eye protection, leather jacket, long pants, gloves and ankle high boots.

Destination and Route: we will all be advised of the destination and planned route prior to departure. Depending on the length of the ride a couple of stopping/meeting points may be predetermined.

Formation: we will break down in to groups of about 6 riders, with the buddy system in place (a partner). The lead person will be an experienced rider and will be on the left side of the lane. Two seconds behind on the right side will be the next person (with the lesser experience in group riding) and so on. The lead rider will make all decisions regarding lane changes, turning, passing a vehicle (should be done one bike at a time), stopping for gas, etc. The Tail Gunner (last rider) will serve as the eyes for the leader. At her discretion, she may change lanes before the leader to secure the lane so the formation may move in. Since it is unsafe for a large group to stop on the side of the road, in the event of an emergency, you and your partner will stop. The tail gunner will stop with the problem bike also. The remainder of the group should continue to the next stop. At that time, the group can decide to wait for the missing members or to send two riders back to assist (this is where those cell phones come in handy!). We will have a standing policy to wait 15 minutes so the members left behind know they can catch up.

Hand Signals: each rider duplicate all hand signals given by the rider in front of her so each signal gets to the back of the formation. In addition to the standard right turn, left turn (which should be used in conjunction with your blinkers), slow and stop, are the following basic ones that we will use; **Single Up** - the leader will raise her left arm straight in the air holding up her index finger, **Staggered Formation** - the leader will raise her left hand with thumb and pinky out rotating her wrist back and forth (indicating left-right-left-right), **Tighten Formation** - the leader raises her hand with fingers spread wide and repeatedly closes them in to a fist, **Hazard on the Road** - point to the object with your left hand, **Emergency Comfort Stop** - (gas, bathroom) - tap on the top of your helmet with your left hand and wait for the leader to get the signal, she will then stop the group.

Driving in the rain: be most cautious when it first starts to rain. If possible we will pull off for a soft drink and wait it out for 10-15 minutes. If the rain hasn't stopped yet, at least the roads won't be as slippery.

Animals: slow down well before you reach the animal. Do not kick at it! If the animal looks like he will intercept you, speed up just as you are about to reach it. This will throw his timing off. In the event of a deer, watch out for his/her mate. They tend to travel in pairs.

Equipment failure: If you get a **blow out**, try not to use the brakes. Ease off the throttle and slow down gradually, rapid deceleration could throw the bike out of control. If necessary to use the brake to stop, apply gradual pressure to the brake on the good tire and ease over to a safe spot. Hold the handlebars firmly! A great shuddering may take place as the out of round tire flops against the pavement. Be concerned only with keeping that front wheel pointed ahead until you stop. For a **stuck throttle**, most bikes have a cutoff switch to use. Pull your clutch, cut the switch to the off position and coast to a safe spot. In the event that your **clutch cable breaks**, the bike can be shifted without it (not advisable, but if necessary). Back off the throttle and shift down a gear at a time. Try to gently find (tap it into) neutral. If you cannot find neutral before you come to a stop, prepare for a jerky halt!