

RIDER EDUCATION

TOPIC: Team Riding Responsibilities

In GWRRA we are always doing things in groups. We meet our fellow chapter members and ride together for a weekly dinner run. Or we join each other for a weekend breakfast before going on a ride. Or we make an ice cream run together on a weekly basis. Most chapters have this kind of camaraderie and fellowship in one form or another. Then there are the monthly gatherings where we meet and eat and have fun. And the rides to visit other chapters and support them at their Fun Run or Anniversary Party or Pig Out, and various other events that chapters put on. Much of the time we ride together in groups traveling to and from our various destinations.

Whenever we ride in groups, someone is in the Lead position.

- Hopefully, it is one of our GWRRA-trained Road Captains.
- It needs to be someone we trust, respect and have confidence in.
- It needs to be someone with good judgment who is prepared to lead the group from the starting point all the way to our destination.
- It needs to be someone who has a planned route and shares it with all who join the ride.
- Our Lead holds pre-ride meetings with all participants to tell us the route, advise us of any stops along the way, and discuss our speed on the road.
- Our Lead may ask questions about who is on medication, who may need to stop at shorter intervals (perhaps due to a smaller gas tank), who has a CB radio and who does not, etc.
- Our Lead covers hand signals for riders who are new to our group or do not have a CB radio.

We will always arrive safely if we follow a trained Road Captain.

We also have another GWRRA trained Road Captain to bring up the rear of the group. This is our **Drag bike**, or **Tail Gunner**.

- These two (Lead & Drag) work together. The Drag seems to know what the Lead is thinking, such as securing the lane almost as the thought passes through the mind of our Lead.
- They communicate well with each other and with the rest of the *team*.
- They let the group know what is going on around us.
- They inform us about things, like telling us we will be turning – in advance of the turn; when a car is attempting to pass the group on a 2-lane road; or when a car is passing on the right when we are on the highway.
- Our Lead and Drag always keep us aware of hazards on the road and all around us. We know they are looking out for the safety of the group.

With Road Captains of this caliber, we feel very safe. We know we can enjoy the ride and watch the scenery with these two in charge.

Wait! Stop right there! We *all* need to remember that even those of us in the middle of the formation have responsibilities. We are responsible to pass on the hand signals from the Lead, such as for single file, stagger formation, pointing out potholes and road kill, sand in the corners, and other hazards. We need to be aware of the other group members. The burden is not all on the Road Captains. We cannot ignore safety just because we ride in the middle of the pack. We need to maintain safe spacing with the other bikes around us. We *must* stay alert. Hazards don't always appear in front of the Lead bike. Sometimes they come at the riders in the middle of the group. We need to be aware of our surroundings and always be prepared to react to the unexpected at all times. We must remember that, just because our Road Captain is leading us, **we are each responsible for our own safety at all times**. *Never* give that responsibility away. It is nice to have someone willing to help look out for your safety, but ultimately, it is your life. Guard it wisely! Be sure to ride your own ride, even while Team Riding!