

**BAKERSFIELD, CALIFORNIA**

**HARLEY OWNERS GROUP**



**CHAPTER 1580**

**ROAD CAPTAIN  
HAND BOOK**

UPDATED 2/25/2009  
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**NEVER FORGET OUR  
HOG MOTTO:**

**RIDE AND HAVE FUN!!!**

## **Preface**

Road Captains are discretionary officers as defined in the National Charter for Harley Owners Group and are appointed by the Primary Officers of the local Chapter. The official duties and responsibilities of the Road Captain shall include leading, assisting, planning and organizing open and closed Bakersfield H.O.G. rides.

The general qualifications for all Bakersfield California Chapter H.O.G. Road Captain positions include:

1. Be active in both National H.O.G. and the local Chapter for a period of no less than (6) months prior to the nomination,
2. Be able to accept the position responsibilities for at least one calendar year.
3. Shall have at least five (5) years riding experience.
4. Pass Primary Officer Board riding evaluation.

## **Objective**

This handbook is designed to act as a reference guide for the Road Captain objectives, responsibilities, ride position descriptions, and on-going improvements. Please remember we are volunteers committed to furthering the safety and enjoyment of the Bakersfield H.O.G. Chapter during rides. This handbook is a tool to aid us in that commitment. Our commitment to our members is to abide by the HOG motto: RIDE AND HAVE FUN!!!

## **Responsibilities**

- Be proactive
- Plan & pre-ride the route (when possible)
- Meet and communicate before and during the ride
- Be a positive, enthusiastic, helpful mentor to riders
- Create a fun and safe environment
- Look through the eyes of all riders, new and experienced
- Understand that there are different riding styles

## **Primary Officers and Senior Road Captain**

**Rope Color:** Blue/Red combination and Red (respectively)

**Objective:** In conjunction with the Chapter Primary Officers, ensure the Chapter has an adequate number of qualified Road Captains to provide a safe and enjoyable riding environment. Provide leadership and direction to all Road Captains. Maintain open communication with all Road Captains and other Chapter Officers.

**Responsibilities:** Screen all Road Captain applicants for minimum requirements. In conjunction with all Road Captains, evaluate the riding abilities, mental, physical and emotional aptitude of each candidate for Road Captain. Nominate Road Captains. Develop and maintain adequate training tools for all Road Captains. Conduct Road Captain meetings. Attend Primary Officer's meetings, providing input into future rides and events. Coordinate and appoint Lead Road Captains and Sweeps for each Chapter ride or portion thereof.

## **Road Captain**

**Rope Color:** Light Blue

**Objective:** The objective of every Road Captain is to lead, assist, plan and organize open and closed Bakersfield H.O.G. Chapter rides.

**Responsibilities: Pre-ride:** The Road Captains should arrive at the departure location, fully fueled, at least 30 minutes prior to departure. Each Road Captain should be well rested, familiar with the intended destination, knowledgeable of the city roadways and the possible route, attend and actively participate in the pre-ride discussion with the Senior Road Captain, be experienced in the duties of each Road Captain position, and be prepared for any emergency encountered on the ride.

**During the ride:** Perform the duties of the position to the best of their ability while ensuring the safety and welfare of every individual within the group, as well as any surrounding motorists and/or pedestrians. Follow the directions of the

Lead, unless those instructions place you or any member of the group in an unsafe position. Maintain a “Safety First” attitude at all times.

**Post-ride:** Contribute to the continual improvement of all future rides and the effectiveness of the Road Captains by communicating with the Senior Road Captain, Head Road Captain, or Director

**Meetings:** Attend Road Captain meetings.

**Performance Appraisals:** Performance appraisal is an important tool for the continual improvement of each Road Captain as individuals and team participants. It is an on-going process with appraisals occurring at annual nominations and based on individual participation. Performance appraisals will continue during the tenure of a Road Captain.

## **Ride Positions**

### **LEAD**

**Riding Position:** The Lead is positioned at the front of the group on the **left** side. This position is maintained for the duration of the ride.

#### **Specific Objectives:**

1. Lead the group to and from the designated destination.
2. Manage all aspects of the ride.
3. Give direction to all Road Captains in order to maintain a safe and enjoyable ride for everyone.
4. Utilize the Road Captains to anticipate, and adjust accordingly, all adverse changes in traffic, roadways, weather and the individuals of the group.
5. Effectively communicate your intentions to the group with the use of standard hand signals and CB radio.

### **Specific Responsibilities:**

1. Pre-determine (and pre-ride if possible) the intended route for the ride.
2. Immediately after the "Five Minute Call" proceed to the line-up area and take the assigned Position.
3. Signal to the group by raising hand for verification that everyone in the group is prepared for departure.
4. Communicate with the Sweep Road Captain to determine when the group is prepared for departure.
5. After receiving communication from assisting Road Captains move the group onto the roadway. Gradually increase speed to be consistent with the speed limit, making adjustments when dictated by current conditions.
6. As dictated by current conditions determine the riding formation, and after communicating to the Sweep your intentions, signal the formation to the group.
7. With the use of standard hand signals or CB radio, warn the group of any upcoming hazards or emergency conditions.

## **SWEEPS**

**Riding Position:** The Sweep position is the last position on the left side of the group. This is maintained throughout the ride unless otherwise directed by the Lead. At anytime during the ride, if any motorcycle should join the group, or in the event of Road Captain repositioning, the new rider should take a position in front of the Sweep to ensure the Sweep is the last bike in the group at all times.

**Second Sweep:** Whenever possible, Bakersfield HOG will have dual sweeps to provide a Second Sweep position. The Second Sweep position is to ride on the outside of the travel lane. The responsibilities of the second sweep will mirror the primary sweep until unless a rider in the group pulls to the side. When this occurs, the second sweep will pull to the right with the distressed rider and stop to assist. THE PRIMARY SWEEP WILL NOTIFY THE RIDE LEADER AND CONTINUE WITH THE GROUP. The second sweep will render assistance to the distressed rider in accordance with Bakersfield HOG policy. If possible, the second sweep should make phone contact with the ride leader or Director and provide information regarding the distressed rider.

### **Specific Sweep Responsibilities:**

1. Actively participate in the pre-ride discussion.
2. Communicate with the Lead when it is safe to move the group.
3. Anytime an individual rider in the group must pull out of the group (whether moving down the road or at a gas/rest stop), and gives a thumbs down signal, the Second Sweep will also pull out to make an assessment of the situation, provide aid in any way possible and communicate the situation to the Lead as soon as practical.
4. Protect the group from the rear with all lane changes.

### **GROUP RIDE EVALUATION**

Post-ride discussions and evaluations should include:

1. What went well on this ride?
2. What didn't go well on this ride?
3. What can be done differently to improve the ride?

### **GROUP RIDING RESPONSIBILITIES FOR GENERAL HOG MEMBERS**

Road Captains should strive to help maintain a safe riding environment by encouraging HOG members in the following areas:

#### **IMPORTANT:**

**YOU, THE RIDER, ARE ULTIMATELY RESPONSIBLE FOR YOUR OWN SAFETY AND THAT OF YOUR PASSENGER. WE EMPLORE YOU TO RIDE WITHIN YOUR CAPABILITIES AND THOSE OF YOUR MOTORCYCLE. ENCOURAGE MEMBERS TO RIDE THEIR RIDE IN THE INTEREST OF SAFETY**

## **GENERAL GROUP RIDER RESPONSIBILITIES:**

### **1. Safety First**

- a. All riders are asked to observe these time-proven practices in order to assure the safety and welfare of every person within the group, surrounding motorists, and pedestrians.
- b. Follow the suggestions of the Road Captains in all situations, unless, in your opinion, those instructions place the rider or any other individual in an unsafe condition.
- c. Maintain your motorcycle and equipment in a safe riding condition.

### **2. Meeting Places and departure Times**

- a. Departure times will be reviewed at the Chapter meeting, in the HOGLOG and posted at Bakersfield Harley-Davidson.
- b. ALL MEMBERS ARE ENCOURAGED TO ARRIVE WITH A FULL TANK OF GAS AND AN EMPTY BLADDER.

### **3. Rider Briefing**

- a. Advise riders of intended route
- b. Inform riders of any gas or rest stops
- c. Provide information concerning lead riders and sweeps of each group
- d. Review group riding practices, formations, and procedures

### **4. Riding formations and individual positions**

- a. **Preferred Formation:** The Staggered formation is the preferred formation for group riding under good road conditions, traffic, and weather. This will be a double row, staggered, in one traffic lane. The interval will be no less than one second between staggered riders. (See attached diagram.)
- b. **New members, guests, and any riders with little experience:**  
**NEW MEMBERS, GUESTS AND ANY RIDERS WITH LITTLE EXPERIENCE IN GROUP RIDING ARE ASKED TO MEET WITH A SENIOR OR HEAD ROAD CAPTAIN TO EVALUATE THEIR RIDING EXPERIENCE. THE ROAD CAPTAIN WILL PLACE THE NEW RIDER INTO THE GROUP IN THE MOST APPROPRIATE POSITION CONSIDERING THE EXPERIENCE OF THE RIDER.**

- c. **Maintain position:** We ask each rider to maintain his/her starting lineup position in the group until arrival at the destination. Should a rider drop out, other riders in the group should maintain their same starting position.
  - If the group arrives at a controlled stop sign or red light, the group should line up “2 by 2” and fill in the gaps when the lead rider (left front) begins movement. At no time should gaps in the group be filled while the group is moving.
- d. **Change in Road Conditions:** Under certain conditions the lead Road Captain will signal the group to form a single file formation. The signal for this is the left arm held overhead with the index finger extended skyward. Other riders in the group should give the same signal and begin to form a single file line increasing the space between the riders.
  - Road Captains monitoring the CB radio should also give the hand signal to allow all members of the group to make the advised adjustment.
- e. **Smaller groups:** Safety may dictate we form smaller groups due to the large number of riders. ANY ROAD CAPTAIN WHO OBSERVES A SITUATION DICTATING HIS/HER GROUP SHOULD SPLIT UP WILL MAKE THE NECESSARY NOTIFICATION TO OTHER RIDERS TO SPLIT THE GROUP UNTIL THE SITUATION PASSES.

## 5. SPEED, INTERVALS AND DISTANCES

- a. **Safe Speed:** Road Captains will establish and maintain a uniform, safe speed consistent with state law and the ability of the least experienced rider, surrounding road conditions, and safe riding practices based on his/her best judgment.
- b. **Inexperienced Riders:** In the interest of skill development and safety, Road Captains may choose to separate the group of inexperienced riders into a group of their own. Any Road Captain who feels this may be necessary should make his/her concerns know to a Head or Senior Road Captain before the departure time of the scheduled ride.
- c. **Speed Management:** All riders are asked to make an effort to maintain the same speed to minimize the effect of irregular speeds on riders at the rear of the group.

- d. **Rider Separation:** All riders are asked to maintain a safe distance and lane position between themselves and the rider directly ahead; to be consistent with existing road conditions, traffic, and weather conditions.

- **Generally accepted Safe Following Distance**

1. **Position Within the Lane Lines:** A safe lane position is generally accepted as riding immediately to the right or left of lane center. This will keep the riders just off the center oil stain, while maintaining the staggered formation, distance between riders and other obstacles, and providing necessary lane protection.

## 6. TRAFFIC LANES

- a. **Lane Selection:** The front Road Captain will attempt to guide the group in a single lane; where the traffic flow appears to be most consistent with the speed of the group; using lane changes only when necessary to pass slower traffic or to avoid a hazardous condition and avoid blocking faster surrounding traffic.
- b. **Two Lane Highways:** On two lane highways in each direction, the group will generally travel in the number two lane (aka: Slow lane) allowing faster traffic to pass to the left; except when passing slower traffic in the right lane.
- c. **Three Lane Highways:** Highways with three or more lanes in each direction, the group will normally travel in the number two lane keeping the right lane open for other vehicles entering and exiting the highway and the left lane open for faster traffic to pass.

## 7. LANE CHANGES AND PASSING

- a. **Lane Management:** On a multi-lane highway, the double row staggered formation will generally be maintained.
- b. **Lane Change:** The lead Road Captain will communicate to the sweep the need for a lane change and in which direction using the CB radio. The sweep will then, when safe, complete a lane change and notify the lead Road Captain when the lane is clear for the group. The lead Road Captain will then signal his lane change

and move into the appropriate lane after visually checking to ensure the lane is clear.

- c. **Individual Lane Changes:** There may be a time when a rider within a group may need to make a lane change for safety. That rider should signal his turn with a turn indicator, make a visual check to ensure the lane is clear, and make the lane change. When the safety issue no longer exists, that rider can reenter the formation when safe.

## 8. EMERGENCY STOPS

- a. **Emergency Stops:** If a rider must pull over immediately, or has an accident:
  - **ONLY** the rear Second Sweep Road Captain will accompany that rider to a stop.
  - The front Road Captain should be informed if he/she is not aware of the situation.
  - Once the front Road Captain is informed, he/she will pull the remainder of the group over as soon as it is safe to do so.
  - **PLEASE RESIST THE URGE TO PULL OVER IMMEDIATELY TO ASSIST. IT CAN BE VERY HAZARDOUS AND INCREASE THE CHANCE OF ACCIDENTS IF WE BLOCK THE ROAD WITH ADDITIONAL EQUIPMENT AND PEOPLE.**
- b. **EXCEPTIONS:** The only exception to the above would be that trained medical personnel would be expected to pull over and render assistance if there is an accident. Personnel stopping to render assistance should follow safe riding practices when doing so.
- c. **Bike Problems:** Any rider who observes a problem with another rider's motorcycle or equipment should inform that rider as quickly and as safely as possible.

## 9. HAND SIGNALS

- a. **Standard Signals:** At all times, we urge that standard hand signals be used for changing the formation to a single row and back to staggered formation, all turns, lane changes, slowing and stopping. Turn signals should be used at all times also.

- b. **Pass them Back:** All hand signals should be relayed to the rear of the group to allow all riders to take appropriate precautionary measures and be aware of changes in speed and direction.
- c. **Standard Hand Signals:** Bakersfield HOG will use standard hand signals whenever a hand signal is used.

## **FINAL THOUGHTS**

**ALL ROAD CAPTAINS ARE ASKED TO ABIDE BY AND ENCOURAGE OTHER HOG MEMBERS TO ABIDE BY THE FOLLOWING:**

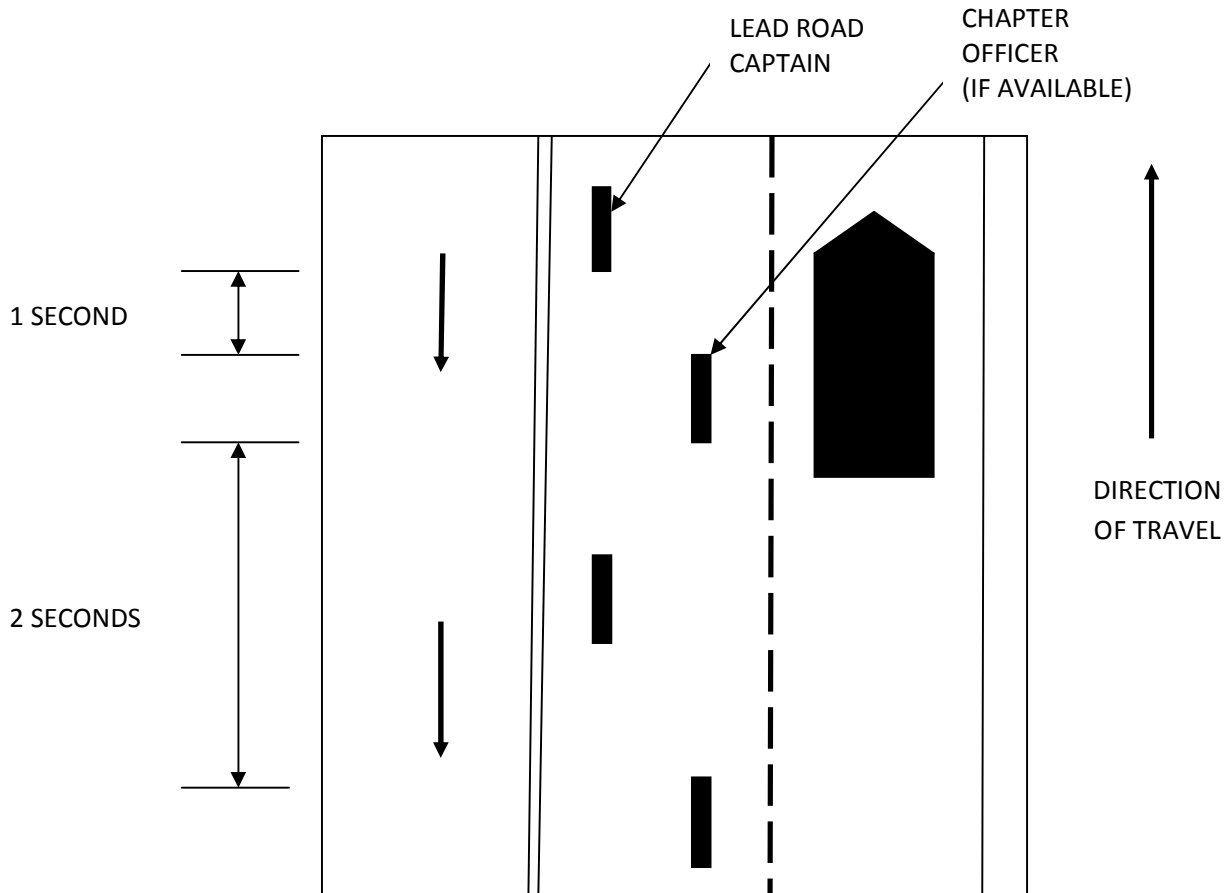
**IF YOU, FOR ANY REASON, ARE UNCOMFORTABLE RIDING AS WE REQUEST, RIDING WITHOUT A VALID CALIFORNIA DRIVER'S LICENSE WITH A "MI" MOTORCYCLE ENDORSEMENT, PROPER INSURANCE COVERAGE, OR ARE UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF ALCOHOL OR A CONTROLLED SUBSTANCE, WE RESPECT YOUR WISHES, BUT ASK THAT YOU NOT RIDE IN OUR GROUP.**

**PLEASE REMEMBER THAT YOU HAVE THE ULTIMATE RESPONSIBILITY FOR YOUR SAFETY, AND ALWAYS RIDE WITHIN YOUR CAPABILITIES AND THAT OF YOUR MACHINE'S.**



# STAGGERED FORMATION

(EXAMPLE DENOTES GROUP PASSING MOTORIST IN #2 LANE)



# **BAKERSFIELD HARLEY OWNERS GROUP**

## **CHAPTER 1580**

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