

Oakley Motorcycle Clubs guide to group riding



Introduction

- It's great fun getting together with club mates and going on a ride out for an evening, a day or a weekend. Whether it's a short pub run or a day at the coast the enjoyment is the same – but are we always aware of how easily it can end in tears?
- In the past few years there have been an increasing number of accidents (including fatal accidents) involving people riding in groups. Quite often the victim is either a newcomer to biking, or someone who has only recently joined the group. Sometimes the group itself is new or had only got together for one ride.
- Whatever the cause, with a few simple precautions and some common sense rules, the run is not only safer but much more fun for all concerned. We have prepared the following to help club members, some of whom may be new to motorcycling in general and group riding in particular, to take part in ride outs with confidence and enjoyment.

General Principles

- There are 3 Ride-out Levels (Appendix A), and 2 Internal Group Overtaking Protocols (Appendix B)
- Please be sure, in advance, that you know and accept the ride-out level and overtaking protocol for any ride-out you are going to take part in.
- A suitably experienced Leader and Tail End Charlie (TEC) control all ride outs.
- **You are in charge of your motorcycle at all times and responsible for your own safety.**

- **Neither Oakley Motorcycle Club nor the Leader or TEC can accept any responsibility for actions you take or any incident that might occur.**
- **Always ride for yourself and within your own capabilities.**
- Group riding is a skill, developed through preparation, planning, and practice.

The Drop-Off System

- Oakley MC always uses the Drop Off System.
- At the front we have the **LEADER / NAVIGATOR** who is familiar with the route and has the riding skills and the bike for the job.
- At the back we have **TAIL END CHARLIE (TEC)** - an experienced member of the team who also has the riding skills and the bike for the job.
- The job of the TEC is to look out for stragglers or break-downs and to make sure no-one gets left behind or has an accident without being noticed.
- Between the Leader and Tail End Charlie is the rest of the group.

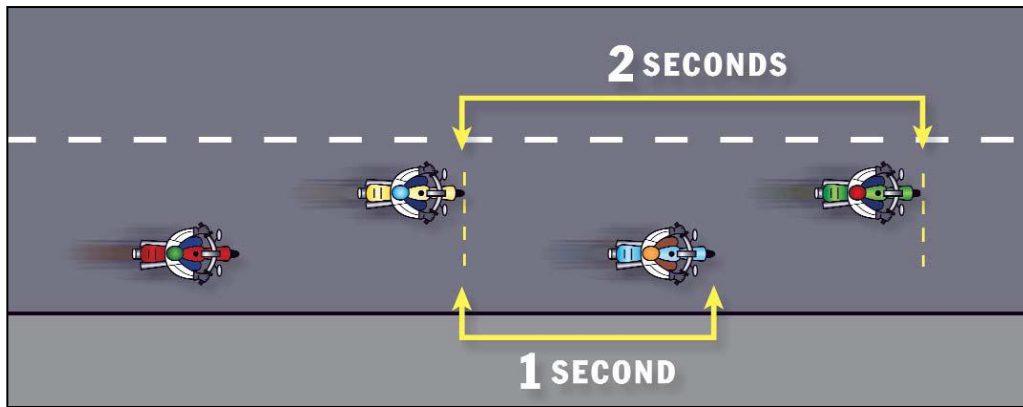
HOW DOES THE DROP-OFF SYSTEM WORK?

- The 'Second Man Drop-Off' system is a means of indicating the route that the ride out is following. One rider remains at a junction to point the way for the rest of the group. The sequence is very simple.
- The rider behind the Leader (Number 2) will be dropped off at a junction as indicated by the Leader.
- The Leader will then point to the exact spot that they want the 'Second Man' to stop.
- The only time that Number 2 should move on further than the indicated spot is when an element of danger arises and there is need to away from it for personal safety reasons.
- If you should have to do this, then remember that you still have to be seen by the rest of the riders coming from behind or the system will not be effective.
- **YOU MUST REMAIN AT THE APPOINTED SPOT UNTIL 'TEC' ARRIVES.** He will indicate to you that you may re-join the main group (usually a 'thumbs up' sign). The 'TEC' will either slow slightly to let you move off in front of him or will move to the inside of the carriageway enabling you to overtake and slot in at the rear of the group.
- At the next junction, the new number 2 drops off to point the way, and in turn is relegated to the back.
- **IT IS CRUCIAL that at EVERY junction, roundabout or turn – the current Number 2 rider drops off – UNLESS IT IS DANGEROUS TO STOP THERE.**
- One of the main causes of accidents is when the riders in the group play “follow my leader” and constantly try to keep up with the bike in front. But there’s no need to! The Drop-Off system means that even if you lose sight of the bike in front of you, there should always be a bike waiting for you at the next junction. If you still feel a bit lost, just slow down and soon enough, another rider or Tail End Charlie will ease up behind you.



MOTORWAYS, DUAL CARRIAGEWAYS and STRAIGHT MAIN ROADS

- Staying together, or at least in sight of one another is quite important on motorways, dual carriageways and long straight main roads so that the group can take an exit safely.
- Remember, stopping on the hard shoulder or turn off exit ramp to let the rest of your group catch up is illegal, can be dangerous and can get you booked.
- The group should compress by riding in staggered formation.



RULES OF THE ROAD

1. **ALWAYS DROP OFF** if you are the current Number 2 in a SAFE and VISIBLE position.
2. **ONLY** go as fast as YOU feel comfortable with.
3. **NEVER** hassle a slower rider in front of you.
4. **NEVER RIDE BEYOND YOUR LIMITS TO CATCH UP** – the Drop Off system will mean that there is a Marker Bike at the next junction, and TEC is somewhere behind you anyway. You won't get lost.
5. **Always tell TEC if you are going to drop out of a ride BEFORE you do it.**

We sometimes see riders towards the back of a group doing stupid things like overtaking on double white lines, flying into blind bends, speeding in the most inappropriate places and even jumping red lights in an effort to catch up. It is not necessary, it is dangerous and it gives us a bad name.

Please have a very enjoyable and safe ride with your group.