

Motorcycle Mentorship Module 7

Introduction to Group Riding









Warning: Incorrect or inaccurate information could lead to tragic results on the road. If a question arises that is not covered in the guide and you don't know the answer from your own experience and training, simply state, "That is a great question, I'll get back to you with the answer."

Your Service Safety Center will help with these types of questions should they arise. Their numbers are as follows:

US Army Driving Directorate: **334.255.3039** USMC Safety Division: **703.604.4459** US Navy Shore Safety: **757.444.3520 x7165** US Air Force Safety Center: **505.846.0728** USCG Safety Division: **202.475.5206**







Preface

About: The Defense Safety Oversight Council (DSOC) Motorcycle Mentorship Modules are a set of thirty six (36) facilitation modules designed for the purpose of increasing rider knowledge on various aspects of riding and providing additional capability for self-policing within peer groups. The modules are intended as a mechanism to further decrease motorcycle related mishaps and fatalities within Department of Defense (DoD) by encouraging riders to talk, live, and think about the topic.

Using the Module: The module content enclosed is intended as a facilitation guide to assist you with discussing the topic. However, it is still critical to use your skills and talent to engage participants and develop "buy-in" on this subject from your group. To maximize this, motivate and moderate your participants, control the accuracy of participant feedback, and be mindful of their time.

Page	Section
2	Facilitation Guide – A brief overview on conducting a facilitated discussion of a topic
3	Module Overview – This section provides the facilitator a synopsis of the topic, learning objectives, and the suggested environment, props, and handouts for conducting the module
4	Module Discussion Introduction – This section provides guidance to the facilitator in opening up the discussion and getting participants talking about the topic and their relevant experiences
5	Discussion Areas – This section provides various discussion topics, sample facilitation questions, and factual information for the facilitator to lead the discussion
11	Wrap-Up – This section provides guidance to the facilitator on wrapping up the topic discussion
12	Feedback Form – A feedback form to be given to all participants for their feedback on the module discussion
13	Resources – Additional resources and definitions to assist the facilitator in preparing for and conducting the topic facilitation
14	Handouts – Figures, pictures, diagrams, etc. to assist the facilitator to better demonstrate a

topic idea

Facilitation Guide for DSOC Mentorship Modules

It is recommended that this Mentorship Module be conducted in a facilitation style. Using the information provided in this Mentorship Module, you, as the facilitator, will lead a discussion on the subject. You should not be conducting a lecture! The facilitator's role is to help with how the discussion is proceeding. Participants will have much more "buy in" and connectivity with the information if they have input. One of your roles as the facilitator is to control the accuracy of the input and control the time. From the Mentorship Module, generate questions which will lead to group discussion. The more you let the group participate, the more success you will have.

Competencies of a Facilitator:

- Prepare prior to the event
- Make sure everyone gets a chance to participate and help members to express themselves
- Ask rather than tell
- Honor the group, display respect for the members, and acknowledge participant contributions
- Ask for others' opinions
- Listen without interrupting
- Demonstrate professionalism and integrity

The key characteristic distinguishing facilitation from other types of leadership, like scripted training, is that the outcomes are never predetermined in a facilitative setting. Although the background information provided with this Module remains the same, the result will depend on the participants, the knowledge and experience they bring, and the information that they feel they need to take away. The group uses the activities provided by the facilitator to unlock expertise, ensure thorough discussion, stay focused and reach decisions that are better than those any individual could come up with alone.

At the beginning of each Mentorship Event, discuss why the participants are there and what they will receive as a result of participating. Adults have limited time and they want to know "What's in it for me?" A facilitator should make training fun. Encourage humor and laughter in your Mentorship Event.

Principles of Adult Learning:

- → Adult Learners want material that is relevant to them. "What's in it for me?" "What will I get out of this that will make a difference to me?"
- -> Adult Learners come to training events with varying amounts of experience. They like to share their experiences. If you have minimal or no motorcycle experience, you can still draw from your group.
- \rightarrow Even if you have motorcycle experience, you should draw from your group because people tend to remember what "they" said longer than what you said. Information that they "own" is more valuable to them.
- -> Facilitators are not always subject matter experts; nor do they need to be. Facilitators may draw on the existing knowledge of the participants and the information provided in these Modules.

Section I: Module Overview

Time Frame: One 60 minute facilitator-led discussion

Level of Prior Knowledge: Participants should have basic competency in operating a motorcycle and be familiar with motorcycle operations.

Synopsis: The purpose of the discussion is to disseminate information on proper group riding and the introduction, discussion, and reinforcement of safe methods and tactics when traveling with a group of motorcycles.

Learning Objectives:

- → Introduce basic knowledge and participant recognition of group riding responsibilities, methods and techniques.
- → Define and illustrate generally accepted best practices and techniques for group motorcycle riding.
- → Participants discuss and understand the need for rules and discipline among motorcyclists in groups. Recall situation related variables and conditions.
- → Participant should comprehend and recall presented information. Additionally, participant may offer alternative perspectives, contribute to discussions, and share personal experiences.

Suggested Environment/Props/Handouts:

- → Comfortable environment such as classroom or conference room.
- → Module Handouts/illustrations (Attached)
 - Road Captain's Checklist
 - Formation and Interval/Positioning Illustrations
 - Group Passing Illustrations
 - Group Stop in Traffic Illustration
 - Group Exiting Traffic, 'Parking a Group' Illustration
 - Group Riding Hand Signals Handout

Section II: Module Discussion

Introduction: Facilitate discussion: What constitutes a Group Ride?

Definition: Group Rides usually consist of two or more motorcycles with a common start point and an agreed upon destination or end point.

Open discussions with participant-centered activities. Have attendees introduce themselves (or each other) and share their current motorcycle make and model. All activities should encourage participant interaction and develop camaraderie and a willingness to participate in discussions. Ask for and encourage participant sharing of experiences related to the module topic. Sample questions may include:

- ► Have you ever ridden in a group?
- ► Was it organized and well-planned?
- ► What situations could put a group rider at risk?

Facilitator notes: Group riding often involves motorcyclists operating within closer than normal riding distances and the group resembles a large single vehicle or "road train." When group riders operate closer, the distance and available reaction time is decreased and riders must employ strategies that mitigate collisions between the riders. Too, group riders typically follow a lead rider and the lead rider may inadvertently lead the group into a risky environment like fog, smoke, or high wind areas – in these instances a single rider or pair might choose to avoid risk environments whereas a larger group may maintain group integrity and blindly (literally) follow the lead rider.

Rider-skill, within the group, often varies and some more experienced and aggressive riders may not consider novice or less experienced riders within the ranks. For the less experienced rider, the pressure to keep up or perform like others in the group might create an atmosphere of risk taking beyond the novice rider's ability.

► What situations could put several members of the group at risk?

Facilitator notes: Sudden and unexpected meteorological conditions can adversely affect a riding group. Reduced visibility caused by fog, smoke, sand and dust, rain, sleet, and snow immediately increases the potential for collision within the group and the with other roadway users.

A crash by a lead or preceding riders creates an immediate obstacle for all following motorcyclists and creates a high potential for a chain-reaction or multiple following motorcycle collisions.

Riders forming the rear of the group create separation hazards whenever a motorcycle is disabled or crashes. The groups natural tendency is to return and aid the group member - it's easy to understand the dangers and risks associated with many motorcycles making U-turns or traveling on the shoulder opposite of traffic.

► What are some common errors seen in group riding situations?

Facilitator notes: When following a large slower moving vehicle or group of motorcycles, following vehicles tend to move closer – diminishing safety cushion. Motorcycles within a group ride are not impervious to this phenomenon and each group rider must maintain separation discipline. Large and small motorcycle riding groups are also susceptible to stretching and compression of the ride formation, often caused by individual rider changes in speed.

When riding as a group (unless supported by a police escort) the group does not have any special status as roadway users, all riders are bound to traffic code and rules individually. The group is not a single traffic entity. The group mentality may encourage individual riders to violate traffic rules in an attempt to maintain the group formation. This behavior often manifest itself in red-light running, ignoring traffic signage and signals, or speeding.

Larger groups need more time to move from a full stop and the lead rider must understand the relationship between his speed and the time each rider, within the group, needs to move out. If the lead rider accelerates at a normal rate to the speed limit, the latter portion of the group will need to travel faster than the posted speed limit to catch up with the leading ride formation.

- ► What is the worst mistake you've seen in a group riding situation?
- ➤ What group riding skills make for a good or lasting impression?

Facilitator notes: Some police departments have motor units with highly trained and skilled pursuit motorcyclists. These police motorcyclists are well practiced in low and high speed motorcycle riding and sometimes have specially modified units with higher performance capabilities. The most common elements among police motor units are precision and control. Many police motorcyclists operate their motorcycles from a perfectly balanced and upright stop, to parade walking speeds, and to high speed pursuits.

Riding demonstration teams are also highly skilled and practiced teams. Synchronized riding is one description and hallmark of these teams. Rider finesse, balance, and overall control seem easy for these well practiced riders. Many of the demonstrations were borne from the police units and some are the result of the creative talents of demonstration team captains. Demonstration teams seem to glide effortlessly, in very close quarters, and the riders appear to know every move of the other riders by avoiding any collisions, bumps, or appearance of panic and fear.

Suggested Discussion Areas:

Discussion Area 1: Responsibilities (Handout 1 – Road Captain's Pre-Ride Meeting Checklist)

- In previous group ride experience, did the Ride Captain/Leader hold a rider meeting and let everyone know what was expected of them?
- What are the three primary areas of responsibility (Ride Leader, Group Members, and Sweep Rider)?
- Were the duties and responsibilities of each defined?
- What are the most important duties of the Ride Captain and Sweep Rider?
- 1. *Ride Captain/Lead Rider* should be an experienced rider who is familiar with the dynamics of group riding. A pre-ride meeting is necessary so that all members of the group are aware of their duties/responsibilities (See handout for discussion points). The Ride Captain's duties include: Planning the time, distance and route of the ride, to include the time/distance between fuel and rest stops. No distance should be longer than the motorcycle with the shortest range can travel without refueling. Similarly, distance between stops may need to take into account medical issues, such as frequent restroom breaks for older members, or numbness of the extremities for those with a history of certain kinds of injuries or nerve damage. The Ride Captain needs strong people and communication skills. Overreacting and raising one's voice toward group members or becoming tense over minor rule infractions will only sour the atmosphere for the rest of the riders.
- 2. *Group Members* should be aware of their responsibilities to other group members and maintaining appropriate group formation. Group members should know: proper formations, hand signals, the group's destination, and how traffic laws affect individual members of the group.

3. 'Sweep Rider,' or 'Tail Gunner' (referred to herein as 'Sweep Rider') should be introduced and the duties of that position outlined. The Sweep Rider should be equipped with various 'emergency' items (First-Aid kit, cell phone, air pump, duct tape, wire, possibly a CB radio and small fire extinguisher, etc.) and is typically the ONLY rider to stop and assist the unfortunate rider who experiences electrical or mechanical failure. All other members are to follow the Ride Captain to a safe place for the group to pull over and wait. Sometimes the Ride Captain may dispatch a reliable rider to go and get a situation report from the Sweep Rider to ascertain whether any assistance is needed from any other members of the group.

Discussion Area 2: Group Behavior in Traffic (Handout 2 – Figure 1-A, Figure 1-B)

I: Group Riding Formation

Facilitation Questions:

- What is the recommended formation for group riding?
- What are the usual spacing intervals between riders?
- On which side of the lane does the Ride Captain position himself or herself?
- When should the group switch to single file formation?
- What are some problems shown in **Figure 1-B**?
- Recommended formation for most group rides is the Standard Stagger. The Ride Captain will be at the front of the group and to the left side of the lane. Spacing is as shown in **Fig.1-A**.
- Single file is preferred on curvy roads, and when passing pedestrians and bicyclists who are sharing the roadway. Single file is normally signaled by the Ride Captain holding his or her left arm straight up with only the index finger extended. (See **Handout 3 Hand Signals**).
- Riders should be careful to observe spacing and approximate following times.

II. Consideration of Others

- How can you be considerate of others in a motorcycle group ride?
- Is it okay to pass others within the group while underway?
- What is a good sign the group is preparing to leave?
- What concerns do you have with respect to other riders in a group ride?
- Participants in a group ride should arrive on time, well-fed and hydrated, motorcycle fully fueled, have restroom needs taken care of and be ready to travel. Respect the spacing and speeds established at the pre-ride briefing.
- Once in formation and underway, do not pass others or change places within the group. Be ready to leave when the group is ready to go when the Ride Captain starts to put on his or her riding gear, that's a good sign everyone else should do so as well.

Discussion Area 3: Lane Changes and Passing (Handout 2 – Figure 2-A, Figure 2-B)

Facilitation Questions:

- How are group passes accomplished?
- On a multi-lane highway, is it acceptable for the Sweep Rider to 'protect' the passing lane so that the entire group may pass intact?
- How accurate are motorcycle speedometers?
- In a single lane highway situation, what happens if traffic does not allow more than one rider to pass at a time?
- Should you allow cars to merge into your formation?
- When passing, follow the leader when it is safe to do so using the 'Snake Pass' technique. (Figure 2-A)
- On multi-lane highways, it is acceptable for the Sweep Rider to move into and protect the passing lane so that the entire group may pass quickly and efficiently. (Figure 2-B)
- Due to the surprising number of motorcycles with speedometer errors as great as 10%, motorcycle groups often are traveling slower than they think, and should always keep right except to pass or turn left. Refusal to yield the passing lane is a leading cause of road rage in the United States.
- Group riders must always keep in mind that even though they are riding with a group, each motorcycle is a separate motor vehicle and each must individually obey all traffic laws. Passing and allowing others to pass you is done one vehicle at-a-time.
- Legally you must allow cars into your formation if they signal intent to move over. Make room and the car will go its own way soon.

Discussion Area 4: Traffic Signals and Stop Signs (Handout 2 – Figure 3)

- What is an appropriate formation for a group of motorcycles stopped for a traffic signal?
- Should you ever "run" the red light in order to avoid becoming separated from the group?
- Is it okay for a lead rider to block the intersection so the group may proceed intact?
- Can the entire group proceed through a stop sign if the Ride Captain stopped and nothing is coming?
- Figure 3 provides a depiction of an appropriate rider formation with little or no stagger at traffic signals and stop signs. The riders should resume the normal Stagger upon moving out. As noted before, each motorcycle is a separate motor vehicle and may NOT run a red light or stop sign for any reason.

- While it is often done, "Blocking" lanes or intersections by using your vehicle as a stationary barrier to stop and hold-up traffic is dangerous and illegal and can only be legally performed by duly authorized law enforcement officers. This is normally only done for group motorcycle rides that are organized and coordinated in advance with the appropriate escort provided by law enforcement agencies.
- If/when the group becomes separated, the Ride Captain and the group will keep right and go slow or pull over until everyone catches up. If a turn is involved before the separated group catches up, *the lead group (or last rider thereof) will wait at the turn until the lagging group catches up.*

Discussion Area 5: Group Entrance to/Exit from Roadway (Handout 2 - Figure 4)

- How does the group pull into traffic?
- Is lane blocking acceptable to allow the entire group to enter traffic together?
- Do you have to pull out in the same order each time the group re-enters traffic?
- When leaving the roadway for a group stop, how should the group park?
- At a toll booth, what is the correct procedure for approaching the toll collector and the gates?
- Group movement into traffic should always be done with safety in mind. The Ride Captain should wait until an opening in traffic allows for all riders to move out with him or her.
- Remember that although it is fairly common, lane blocking is not legal.
- If a rider wishes to change their place within the group, they should discuss it with the either the Ride Captain or Sweep Rider and the person who will be displaced by the move. If you move forward, then every rider behind you will be shifted to the other side of the lane from the position they have become accustomed to. It can take several blocks before riders sort themselves out in the new positions, particularly if they have no idea a change was made.
- Stops at toll booths should be done using the same formation shown in Figure 3, but prior to the gate/ toll collection area, all riders should stop before the gate and proceed through the gate one-at-a-time and in single-file. Only one rider at a time should enter the area bounded by the gates and others riders should wait for the rider ahead to clear the gate just as if he were in a car. If the ride includes a toll road, the Ride Captain is responsible for informing all riders before the ride that there are tolls and the dollar amount of those tolls.
- Exiting the roadway must be done with quick and smooth efficiency. Any problems in the parking area can leave motorcyclists at the back of the group stuck in the traffic lane. The parking area must be large enough to handle the entire group and parking should be done as shown in **Figure 4**.

Discussion Area 6: Stops: Planned, Unplanned; and Emergencies or Breakdowns

- Where does a group member find out about planned stops?
- How does a rider communicate the need to make an unplanned stop?
- What are legitimate causes to stop the entire group unexpectedly?
- In the event of an emergency or breakdown, what are the group members supposed to do?
- Each planned stop should be briefed at the rider meeting before the ride begins.
- All members should have a good idea of their motorcycle's range on a full tank of fuel, and make it known to the Ride Captain if they cannot make the distance between stops.
- An unplanned stop can be accomplished by leaving formation, passing other riders and riding beside the Ride Captain, in a safe and lawful manner, while indicating with a signal (see Hand Signals handout) that you need to stop. For small groups of 2 to 4 riders, unplanned stops are not usually an issue unless time is a factor. However, with the time and logistics involved in getting larger groups stopped and started, this sort of unplanned stop of the entire group should be reserved for serious reasons such as fuel, equipment, or restroom emergencies.
- For roadside emergencies, such as crashes or motorcycle breakdowns, all remaining riders should follow the Ride Captain to a safe spot for the group to pull over. The Sweep Rider will stop and help the rider in distress. The Ride Captain may choose a reliable rider to go back for a situation report from the Sweep Rider as to whether addition help is needed.
- At the pre-ride meeting the Ride Captain will have identified personnel with emergency response training and those people may be asked to help in the event of a crash or mishap. All other riders should follow the Ride Captain!

Discussion Area 7: Hand Signals (Handout 3 – Hand Signal Handout)

Facilitation Questions:

- How do you signal a right turn?
- What is the signal for slow down?
- How do you indicate a hazard in the road to make sure the people behind you see it?
- Is the signal the same for a road hazard on the right as it is for one on the left?
- How do you ask for an unplanned stop?
- What is the hand signal for letting the rider behind you know his turn signal is still on?
- What is the signal for 'pull over' to the right?
- The most common way to communicate with moving riders is hand signals. Basic or common signals are used for stop, left and right turns, turn signal on, speed up and slow down and stop. These are almost universal and simple enough that even people who have not seen them before will usually understand them.
- More advanced signals, mostly unique to motorcycling are shown along with the basic signals on the Hand Signal handout. These include: Single and double file, fuel required, hazard in roadway, refreshment stop, and others.

Discussion Area 8: Safety Equipment

- What are some common safety items you might need for a group ride?
- Who should carry that equipment?
- Are there items that would be nice to have beyond the common ones?
- Who is the most logical person to be the designated 911 Caller?
- Most motorcycle group rides should include a First-Aid kit, common tools, a cell phone, air pump, tubeless tire patch kit, duct tape and some 'baling' or safety wire, at a minimum.
- A small fire extinguisher, emergency blankets (the tiny silver pack ones), bottled water, energy bars, and two-way radios are excellent to have on hand in an emergency. The Sweep Rider is usually the rider who will need these items first.
- On longer and larger rides often a maintenance trailer will follow the group and support any motorcycles that may have a disabling mechanical problem during the ride.



Suggested Wrap up discussion: Ask the participants how they would apply the knowledge they gained from today's discussion to their lives.

Distribute copies of the DSOC Motorcycle Mentorship Module Evaluation form to all participants and request that they deliver or mail the completed form to the Command or Command Safety Office for processing.

Remind everyone to ride safe and see you at the next Mentorship Meeting.

DSOC Motorcycle Mentorship Feedback Form			
Presenter Name:	Date:		
Topic/Title:	Unit Number:		
Please review each statement below and check the response that closely matches your experience in the Mentorship Module today:			
1. Please rate the presenter's performance:			
Prepared Not Prepared Engaging Not Engaging	Led Discussion Lectured		
Comments:			
2. I was given opportunities to participate in the module's discussion			
Never Only Once 2-4 Times Many Times Throughout Discussion			
Comments:			
3. With regard to my personal riding experiences, this discussion was:			
□ Relevant □ Not Relevant □ Interesting	□ Not Interesting		
Comments:			
4. This discussion topic has provided me with specific learning points that I can use to be a safer, better informed rider			
None One Idea or Fact 2-4 Learning Points 5 or More			
Comments:			
5. I would be interested in participating in other Motorcycle Mentorship Module discussion topics			
Never Again Willing to Try Another Module Would Like to Do Modules Regularly			
Comments:			
Thank you for your participation. Please make note of any other suggestions or comments below (continue on the back if needed):			

Deliver or mail this completed form to the Command or Command Safety Office for processing. Please do not return this form directly to the Module Presenter.

Resources

Continued Reading:

- **Code, Keith** (1983). *A Twist of the Wrist* (Vol. I.) Glendale, CA: California Superbike School, Inc.
- Motorcycle Safety Foundation, (2005). The Motorcycle Safety Foundation's Guide to Motorcycling Excellence, 2nd Edition. Irvine CA: Whitehorse Press
- **Condon, Ken** (2009). *Riding in the Zone*. Conway, New Hampshire: Whitehorse Press
- **Pridmore, Reg** (2003). *Smooth Riding the Pridmore Way*. Santa Barbara, CA: Whitehorse Press
- **Spiegel, B.** (2010). *The Upper Half of the Motorcycle*. Stuttgart, Germany: Whitehorse Press

Definitions: (As defined for purposes of this module.)

- **Blocking:** Using one's motorcycle to prevent other vehicles from occupying a lane of the roadway
- **Group:** Two or more motorcyclists traveling together
- **Ride Captain:** The one who plans, briefs and leads a group ride. Often, one of the most experienced riders in any given group.
- **Roadway:** Any lane or lanes of a highway or other government owned/maintained public thoroughfare subject to police jurisdiction
- **Sweep rider:** The last rider in line during a group ride. Usually a rider of considerable experience who is familiar with basic mechanical function of a motorcycle and often riding a motorcycle with some storage capacity for emergency response items.



Handout 1 - Road Captain's Pre-Ride Meeting Checklist

- □ Welcome riders and introduce Road Captain and Sweep Rider
- □ Outline itinerary and return plans
- Determine gas stop requirements (longest distance traveled non-stop is determined by smallest gas tank
- □ High-beams and headlight modulators should be turned off
- □ Review riding standards and procedures:
 - \Box Staggered formation and safe distances
 - □ Entrance and exit strategies from traffic
 - □ Parking technique
 - □ Lane changes (head check blind spots!)
 - □ Situations calling for single file procedures
 - □ Hand signal review
 - □ Broken bike procedure
- □ Procedures for when the group is separated by traffic or signals
- □ Locate cell phones and first aid kits (Ask about any trained emergency responders)
- Designate a single individual to be 911 dialer in case of emergency
- Determine riding group by size, skill level, & cruising speed
- □ Check with riders individually regarding skill level and any concerns
- □ Inspect bikes for obvious flaws or mechanical failures
- □ Verify riders are ready to go:
 - □ Full tanks
 - □ Empty bladders
- \Box Remind everyone to have fun, and to ride safely







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Figure 2-B: Protected Lane Passing









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Some of the principal contributors to this effort include the following:

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