

CROSSROADS HOG APRIL 2010 SAFETY THOUGHTS

OK it is now officially spring in Michigan. We can be somewhat assured that there will be no more snow; that the rain has washed most of the salt off the streets and highways; and that we can pack enough of a variety of clothing to handle the varying temperatures. So, let's ride!

OH – wait a minute – perhaps it would be a good idea to review just a couple of basics. You know, those few 'rules of the road' that help us to avoid uncomfortable situations? More specifically, since we are all part of CROSSROADS HOG, and we have opportunity to ride in a group, I'm talking about basics of group riding.

Each year we bring our bikes and trikes out of hibernation. Check them over, clean them up, jump on, and go. Some, the smart ones, check their skills too, because they get rusty over the winter. It's the same with our group riding skills. They too, seem to deteriorate over the winter.

In CROSSROADS we ride with a very specific set of procedures, patterns and rules. We teach our Group Riding Course a couple of times early in the year and encourage all our members, new and experienced, to take that course. I offer the following, not as a substitute for taking the course, but, rather, as a reminder of some of the basics.

1. We ride in a stagger formation. Bikes occupy the right and left portions of the lane. Bikes in the same portion of the lane, ride with a 2-second interval of space between them. The first bike in the right portion of the lane, rides with a 1-second interval of space between it and the lead rider (who is in the left portion of the lane). You establish your 2-second interval by watching for the rear tire of the bike in front of you to cross a fixed mark on the road. When it does, you count out loud **"one onethousand two onethousand"** as you finish, your front tire should cross that mark. If you cross before you finish, leave more space.
2. We never pass another bike when riding in our formation. That is so, even if it causes us to leave excess space between bikes.
3. We never change lane position (left or right) when riding in our formation.
4. We always signal with both our lights and our hands. We pass signals back through the formation – always.
5. Only the Road Captain riding in the SWEEP position runs all headlamps.
6. We NEVER drink alcohol when on a ride.
7. We NEVER tolerate horseplay when on a ride.
8. We NEVER block traffic (for the group to pass) on a ride.
9. We always organize our riding groups with at least 2 Trained Road Captains (Lead and Sweep).
10. We ALWAYS have a great time.

When we all ride with the same methods, we ride more safely. Now, let's ride!

Mike Hoffman – the safety guy.