

## CROSSROADS HOG

### SAFETY THOUGHT

JUNE 2011

We are well into the riding season here in Michigan and Crossroads HOG is offering a great selection of Group Riding opportunities. I think it would be a good thing to review one of our 'group riding techniques' as this month's Safety Thought. Let's talk about passing – passing on a multilane highway.

Executing a pass properly as a group is a multi-stepped process that, when done correctly, maximizes our safety and minimizes our risk. Here are the steps:

1. The Lead Road Captain (RC) decides if it is necessary to pass. It is his/her responsibility to make that decision based on a number of variables.
2. Assuming the pass is necessary, the Lead RC will notify the Sweep Road Captain (RC) either via radio contact or by giving the hand signal for a left turn (briefly). If the hand signal is used, the group passes the signal (as we do for all hand signals) back so that the Sweep RC learns that the group needs to execute a pass.
3. The Sweep (SRC) checks the next lane to the left to assure it is available and, when it is, signals and moves into that lane. If he is in radio contact with the Lead (LRC) he will advise that he has secured the lane or that the lane is secure after a particular vehicle passes the LRC. Otherwise the communication is visual (Lead RC's mirror).

**NOTE that NO ONE has changed lanes other than the Sweep RC yet!**

4. Next, the Lead RC executes a proper lane change – turn signal, head check, hand signal, move left.
5. Now each rider, in succession, executes a proper lane change.

**NOTE that nobody changes lanes until the bikes in front of him/her have done so.!**

6. After everyone has moved into the intended lane (the stagger formation is maintained), the Sweep RC advises the Lead RC that the maneuver is complete – if he has radio contact. If not, the Lead RC will check via mirrors.

Returning to the original lane is handled in exactly the same manner – moving right instead of left.

**Here are a couple more tips to enhance the safety of passing on a multilane roadway.**

Because our formation is a Stagger, each rider has the complete lane available. While passing a 'semi,' riders on the right (closest to the truck and trailer) are wise to use that stagger space and move to their left while next to the vehicle being passed. They should move back to their normal position as soon as they have cleared the vehicle. This is a brief time period (less than 15 seconds) so re-spacing is not necessary. However, alert levels should be high.

Be aware of keeping your speed constant when making the lane change. For some reason, we all have a tendency to accelerate when moving left and to decelerate when moving right. Such inconsistency makes it difficult for riders behind you to maintain proper spacing. And, in the case of moving right (back to the original lane) can 'eat up' the cushion of space between the group and the passed vehicle. (Traps the Sweep RC!)

*That's our method for multilane roadways – not roadways with only 2 opposing lanes. We'll talk about that at another time.*

Mike Hoffman "the safety guy"