

CROSSROAD HOG
SAFETY THOUGHT
OCTOBER 2007

It's time to review ! It's time to be reminded !

This month, I had an opportunity to ride in the back of a group. I should do that more often as it gives me a chance to watch how we are riding as a group. Admittedly I saw only one group of 10 bikes but I'll interpret it as a sample of what is occurring in the larger group. I also had the advantage of talking with virtually all of the riders about their experience that weekend.

We all, in many facets of life, have a tendency to drift away from the particulars of what we know to "short cuts" we can "get away with" as proven by experience. This is true of our motorcycling activities as well. We find that we don't have to look over our shoulder every time we change lanes, we find that we don't have to do both signal lights and hand signals every time, etc. Because, we did it and didn't end up in an accident. Right? I'm confident you know what I'm talking about.

Here are a couple of few elements in the Group Riding methodology that Crossroads HOG employs that I saw we are getting a little "lax" on.

1. Formation – we ride in a 2-second Staggered formation. The distance to be maintained between you and the bike directly in front of you is 2 seconds. The bike that is "staggered" ahead of you is 1-second away; however, you need not work to maintain that distance. You only need to refrain from passing that bike.

You establish that 2-second interval by counting. As the rear tire of the bike ahead of you crosses a fixed mark in the road you count (out loud) one one-thousand two one-thousand. As you finish saying that, your front tire should cross the same mark. If it crosses sooner, you are too close; later you are too distant.

2. Signals – we use a specific set of hand signals that are posted on our website and taught in our group riding seminar. They are also reviewed before every ride. Our signals do not include pointing at anything with a foot.

We also make it standard practice to use both signal lights and hand signals and all signals are passed back through the group – all the way back – by everyone.

3. Passing and lane changing on multiple-lane highways is lead from the front. No bike is to change lanes until the bike ahead of it has done so. The steps to a lane change are as follows:

- a. Lead requests that the Sweep secure the lane.
- b. Sweep secures the lane and advises the Lead.
- c. Lead signals with light, does a head check, signals with hand, changes lane.
- d. Wing rider does the same.
- e. Each bike duplicates in succession – signals, head check et al.
- f. Sweep advises Lead when all bikes have completed the maneuver.

This is the way we do it in Crossroads HOG. It is not the only right way but it is critical that we all ride by the same rules as that minimizes our risk.

That's it for this month. There's still some good riding weather here in Michigan. I hope you can get out and enjoy it. Enjoy it safely.

Mike – *the safety guy*.