

Mind the gap when riding in groups



The guide every motorcyclist needs

Hold a pre-ride meeting

Before you set off, there are a few things you should discuss:

- Agree on a route, fuel and rest stops and make sure everyone's aware of the itinerary. It's also a good idea to agree on a plan of action in case someone gets separated from the group.
- Choose someone to take the lead and another to be the tail rider. These should both be experienced group riders and it's important the leader sets a pace that's safe for everyone.
- Decide what hand signals to use while riding and train the less experienced how to use and understand them.

Split yourself into smaller riding groups if traveling in a large crowd

Ideally a group should be between 5-7 riders. Slower riders should ride at the front so no one gets separated or has to ride beyond their ability to keep up.

Preparation is key

Check that your fuel tank is filled up and your bike is in good riding condition. At least one person in the group should carry a first-aid kit and some basic tools for any emergency (preferably not the same person) and everyone should have a mobile phone.

Follow a staggered formation

One rider takes the right-hand third of the lane, with the second rider in the left-hand third and the one behind in the right-hand third again. Maintain a two-second gap between you and the rider directly in front of you, and roughly a one-second gap between you and the next rider in the formation.

But there are a few exceptions: on curves, national speed limit roads or where visibility is poor, the MSF recommends using a single line formation. You should also increase the following distance between riders to at least two seconds.



Pass other vehicles safely, one motorcycle at a time

Never blindly follow riders pulling out ahead of you. Move over to the left-hand third of the lane and wait until you have a clear view of the road ahead. It's important to keep the pace up and allow a gap for the next rider to re-join the lane safely.

Look after the group

Without jeopardizing your own safety, regularly check the riders following using your rear-view mirrors - if you see someone falling behind, slow down so they can catch up. When everyone does this, it helps keep the group together and maintain a steady pace where no one is over-stretching themselves.

BE PREPARED | RIDING IN GROUPS

Hand signals

Hand signals are the best way to communicate while riding in groups – it keeps everyone informed and reduces the risk of accidents.

These are a few of the most popular:



Signal left

Left arm and hand extended, palm facing down



Signal right

Left arm raised, bent at 90° angle, fist closed



Stop

Arm bent downward at the elbow, palm facing back



Hazard in roadway

Point it with your right foot or left hand



Fuel stop

Arm extended outwards, with finger pointing to tank



Follow me

Arm extended upwards, with palm open facing forward