

Rochester, NY H.O.G. Ride Guide

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Rochester, NY Chapter Harley Owners Group
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Introduction

The Rochester, NY Harley Owners Group (the "Chapter") is a chartered chapter of Harley Owners Group and conducts group rides for the benefit of its members. This Ride Guide contains information that each member is expected to know and observe so that everyone can participate in safe and enjoyable group rides with the Chapter. New members are encouraged to read this guide prior to participation in a group ride and everyone is encouraged to review this guide on a regular basis.

As stated in the Chapter's Charter, the purpose of the Chapter is:

To engage in and promote responsible motorcycling activities for Harley Owners Group (H.O.G.) members by conducting chapter activities and encouraging participation in other H.O.G. events and other charitable activities. Chapter activities and operations shall be conducted in a manner consistent with a family oriented non-political philosophy.

The Chapter plans, schedules and conducts rides to fulfill this purpose. Please remember that safety is everyone's primary responsibility and that we all share responsibility for the safety of the group. By observing the guidelines

presented in this guide, group riding with the Chapter will be safe and enjoyable for everyone.

And always remember that our primary objective is to:

"Ride Safe and Have Fun"

This guide is organized into sections as follows:

- **Chapter Rides** contains information about the planning and scheduling of Chapter rides.
- **Group Riding** explains the rules and procedures each member is expected to observe to increase the safety and enjoyment of the rides for everyone.
- **Disclaimer and Release Forms** contains legal information and the form requirements for participating in a Chapter ride.
- **Group Riding Checklist** is a two-page summary of the rules and procedures presented in the Group Riding section. This section is designed so that you can easily carry it for reference during a ride.

Chapter Ride Guide

Chapter Rides

Ride Selection and Scheduling

The Chapter rides are selected and scheduled by the Activities Officer along with other Chapter Officers and the Road Captains. The rides are typically chosen and scheduled two months in advance.

Members are encouraged to make ride suggestions to any Officer or Road Captain. Suggestions may also be made through the Chapter's web site. Please don't hesitate to make a ride suggestion; the Chapter is always looking for new ride ideas and places to go.

All suggestions are reviewed for suitability. The destination must qualify with adequate motorcycle parking and the ability to handle a large group. If it is a restaurant, really good food helps. Not all suggestions may be selected and the Chapter is under no obligation to select a suggestion for any ride or make any selection within any time period.

Ride Schedule

The ride schedule is published in the Chapter Newsletter and on the Chapter web site. The Chapter maintains a "Ride Hot-Line" that contains the latest information about upcoming rides and changes in the schedule. See the Chapter newsletter or web site for the "Ride Hot-Line" number.

Whenever practicable, schedule changes are made to the Hot-Line and the web site as soon as possible. The Chapter reserves the right to change the ride schedule without notice and at any time. Rides may be canceled at any time, usually due to adverse weather conditions.

Road Captains

The Road Captains are responsible for conducting the Chapter Rides. Prior to a ride, they select the route, check it for unsafe conditions, insure the destination is suitable and make any arrangements necessary for a large group. They also prepare each group by conducting a pre-ride briefing during which they go over a ride checklist, explain the planned route, and provide any other information pertinent to the ride.

Each ride has at least two Road Captains: a Lead Captain and a Drag Captain. Other Road Captains may be present and will ride within the group. For identification during a ride, the Road Captains conspicuously wear a bright orange cloth (some attach it to their bike). All ride participants are expected to follow the directions, instructions and decisions of the Road Captains. When a large group is divided into smaller groups, each group will have a Lead and a Drag Captain.

Ride Participation

All members are invited to participate in all rides. It is solely a member's choice to participate in a ride. The Chapter expects all riders to ride safely and ride within their experience and comfort level at all times.

New riders should learn the fundamental skills of motorcycle riding and gain some experience before joining a group ride. Taking an MSF approved rider course is highly recommended before joining a group ride.

Ladies of Harley (LOH) rides are open to all riders, male or female. LOH plans, organizes and conducts these rides.

Harley Event Categories

Chapter events are conducted primarily for the benefit of Harley Owners Group Chapter members. There are three categories of events defined by national H.O.G.:

- **CLOSED** events are chapter events that are open to chapter members and one guest per member.
- **MEMBER** events are chapter events that are only open to H.O.G. members.
- **OPEN** events are chapter events that are open to chapter members, national H.O.G. members and other guests as desired.

NOTE: All Chapter rides are "Closed" events unless otherwise specifically stated. This means that you can participate in Chapter rides only if you are a current Chapter member. Members are limited to one guest per ride.

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Group Riding

This section explains the rules and procedures used when group riding with the Chapter. Each rider is expected to observe and practice these rules and procedures when participating in a group ride with the Chapter.

There are four components to a safe and enjoyable group ride:

- Personal Preparation
- Group Preparation
- The Ride
- Emergencies

Personal Preparation

You are responsible for making sure you and your bike are ready for the ride.

- **Check the Ride Hot-Line or web site for schedule changes.**

Regardless of the amount of planning done for the rides, a schedule change will occasionally occur. Rides may be changed to a new time, a new place or both. Typically, rides are cancelled due to adverse weather conditions but may be cancelled for other reasons.

- **Check yourself.**

Make sure you are rested, alert, feeling well and dressed in appropriate riding gear. You should be physically and mentally prepared to make the ride. Avoid alcohol, caffeine and stress prior to riding. If you are tired, not feeling well, or just "not up to par", it may be wise to stay home and ride another day. It is advisable to wear reflective clothing at night and bring a rain suit whenever rain is a possibility.

Any Chapter member operating a motorcycle in a Chapter ride, event or other activity must be properly licensed and insured to operate a motorcycle.

- **Perform a safety and mechanical check on your bike.**

Any motorcycle used in a Chapter ride, event or other activity must be properly licensed, inspected and insured.

Check your bike for proper operation including the tire pressure, oil level, turn signals, lights, cables, brakes, etc. Also check for any parts that may have loosened due to vibration (Always check your gearshift and brake levers before each ride).

- **Fill your Gas Tank.**

All members are to begin the ride with a full gas tank. The start of a ride will not be delayed waiting for someone to "get a quick fill-up". All rides are planned with ample gas stops considering the smallest tank in the group and that everyone starts with a full tank.

- **Make sure you arrive for the ride at the designated meeting time.**

Not only is it fun to socialize prior to the ride, the Road Captain will make any announcements and give the pre-ride briefing during this time. If you arrive at the last minute, you may miss important information about the ride.

Group Preparation

Rides are scheduled to meet at a certain time and generally depart 30 minutes later. During this time you are encouraged to socialize with your fellow Chapter Members and listen to the pre-ride briefing.

- **Meet on time.**

All riders should meet at the scheduled meeting time. All rides leave promptly at the scheduled departure time in order to arrive at the destination on time.

- **Fulfill the Event Release Form Requirements.**

Members: Each member participating in a Chapter ride is required to have a signed "Chapter Membership Enrollment Form and Release" on file with the Chapter. Signing this form is required to join the Chapter or renew membership. If, for any reason, you are not sure if you have this form on file with the Chapter, sign an "Event Release Form for Adults" at each ride.

Guests: Each member is allowed one guest per ride. Each adult guest must sign an "Event Release Form for Adults" at the ride.

Minors: Every minor participating in a ride, whether a member or guest, must have a "Chapter Event Release Form for Minors" signed by the minor's parent or guardian. Minors age 12 or older are also required to sign a "Minor's Assumption of Risk Acknowledgement" at each ride. See the Disclaimer and Release Forms section for additional information.

- **Headlights to low beam, other "running" lights off.**

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All riders except the Drag Road Captain should set their Headlights to low beam and turn off any other "running" lights. This makes it much easier for the Lead Road Captain to see the Drag Road Captain and determine if a problem has occurred requiring the Drag Road Captain to stop.

- **The pre-ride briefing.**

The Road Captain will give a pre-ride briefing covering the route, the Chapter riding rules and any other information concerning the ride. Listen closely and feel free to ask questions.

The Ride

Riding with a group can be fun and exciting, but only when everyone in the group observes the same rules. When riding with the Chapter, everyone is expected to observe the following rules so that the rides will be fun, safe and enjoyable.

The Road Captain will leave first from the starting point and is followed by all other bikes, which fall into the staggered formation as soon as possible. The Drag Road Captain will follow the group.

When a large number of bikes are present, the Road Captain may divide them into two or more groups. Each group will have a lead and drag Road Captain.

- **Ride within your ability and comfort level.**

Riding within your ability and comfort level is very important for the safety of the group. If at any time you feel that the ride has exceeded your riding ability or comfort level, or you have safety concerns, you should consider pulling off to the side at a safe place. The Drag Road Captain will stop with you. You can then decide whether to continue the ride or not.

- **Obey all laws (Speed limits, Stop signs, Stop lights, etc.).**

Obey all laws including traffic regulations and the helmet law. If you do not wear a helmet, you are responsible for doing so legally. **Do not block vehicles that have the right-of-way.** It is illegal and dangerous.

- **Ride in staggered formation with approximately 2-second spacing.**

The Chapter rides in the standard staggered formation recommended by the State Patrol. The bikes form two columns, with the leader at the head of the left column. The second bike will head up the right column and ride approximately one second behind the leader. The other

riders follow the bike directly in front of them by two seconds, which puts them one second behind the diagonal bike in front of them. Use the 2-second spacing regardless of your speed. As your speed increases, the distance of the gap will increase.

When riding in adverse or limited visibility conditions (such as night, rain, fog, etc.), reduce speed and increase the spacing to 3 or 4 seconds.

- **Fill gaps by changing column.**

When a bike drops out of the ride and creates a gap, the following bikes fill the gap by changing columns and moving up into the gap.

- **Use hand signals.**

The Road Captain will use hand signals to indicate a change of course, hazards or other information to the group. Each rider uses the same signal to pass the information back through the group (Form the signal so that it is clearly visible to the riders behind you). The common hand signals used by the Chapter are:

- Left Turn
- Right Turn
- Left Hazard
- Right Hazard
- Single File
- Staggered Formation
- Slow Down
- Stop
- Pull Off

(See last section for hand signal illustrations)

- **Pass with care only when it is safe and you have ample room and visibility.**

On freeways, the group can pass as a unit when not in the lane of the vehicle being passed. When in the same lane, the pass may be made by an individual bike or by several bikes in formation but only when it is safe to change lanes.

On 2-lane roads, PASS ONE AT A TIME ACTING AS AN INDIVIDUAL. Only pass when you have ample room and visibility to safely complete the pass. Never blindly follow another bike in a passing situation.

Once you have finished passing a vehicle, keep your speed up to allow room for the riders behind you to finish their pass.

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- **Keep the group together without heroics.**

Often the group will get separated by a stop light, traffic congestion, etc. It is not necessary or advisable to take heroic or exceptional steps to regroup. In the event the group is separated, the Lead Road Captain will adjust the ride (either by slowing down or stopping at a safe location) until the ride is regrouped. In some circumstances, this may take several miles... BE PATIENT. Do not ride beyond your limits or break any laws when trying to regroup.

If you find yourself leading a separated part of the group and you are not sure of the route, pull over to a safe place. Everyone behind you and the Drag Road Captain will stop so that you can elect a leader and decide whether to try and rejoin the group or meet them at the destination.

- **Pull side-by-side at stops, start together with the left bike accelerating faster.**

This helps move the group through stops quickly and get as many bikes through a stop light as possible. As the two columns come to a stop, the right column will move up even with the left column. On the start, the two bikes leave together with the left bike accelerating faster to reestablish the staggered formation.

- **Negotiate intersections as an individual.**

Act as an individual when proceeding through an intersection. It is your responsibility to insure that you safely have the right-of-way. If it is not safe for you to proceed, then wait until it is... no exceptions. Never blindly follow the bike in front of you through an intersection, especially when making a left turn. The group will reform after the intersection.

When turning in an intersection, use a single file or tight stagger formation, never turn side by side.

- **Yield to cars (especially at entrance ramps and lane changes).**

This is very important. When a car needs to enter from an entrance ramp or is signaling to break into the group, yield and give them plenty of room. Remember the old expression: "All because you have the right-of-way, doesn't mean you are going to get it".

Most drivers (and even bikers when in cars) proceed down entrance ramps assuming that they will be able merge in between two cars. When confronted with a line of motorcycles and no clear space in which to merge, some drivers may become unsure, confused and even intimidated by the situation. You can lessen the

possibility of an unsafe situation by simply giving them plenty of room. Once a car merges into a line of motorcycles, it will generally get out as soon as possible. In almost all cases, you will not need to pass the car to regroup, it will move out of the way. Once the car is gone, close the gap while maintaining a safe speed.

Another case of needing to yield happens when an inattentive driver pulls alongside the group and then realizes that they have to take an upcoming exit. **If a driver signals to break in, LET THEM IN.** In a lot of ways, this is an even more dangerous situation than the entrance ramp. People will go completely crazy when they think they may miss their exit. Think about it... it's much easier to just back off and let them in. They will be out of the way shortly and you can close the gap.

- **Signal all turns and lane changes with signal lights and hand signals; Make visual checks before you move.**

The Road Captain will signal for turns and lane changes. You, in turn, make the same signal to pass it back through the group and to signal any other vehicles near you.

Before making a turn or changing lanes and after you have signaled for an appropriate amount of time, look with your head (not in your mirror) to see if you have clear space. If so, then make the turn or lane change. NEVER MOVE WITHOUT LOOKING!

It is not always possible for the Road Captain to make lane changes when the entire group has a clear lane, If there is a car in the way, simply break the group around the car. If you are near the car, do not try to "get ahead" if it will crowd the car. Simply slow down and change lanes in back of the car. The car will soon be out of the way and you can close the gap.

- **Park as a group whenever possible.**

When the group stops for a break, park as a group whenever possible so that the ride can be smoothly resumed. Don't park with the front of your bike facing downhill. Don't park where you will have to back up over slippery gravel. You can back in if necessary.

NEVER back up while your bike is running. If you slip and accidentally pull the throttle, you can injure yourself, your bike and other people and bikes near you.

- **The ride officially ends on arrival at the destination.**

You can return home at any time and by any route you choose. If you are not sure how to get home, ask a Road Captain for directions.

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Emergencies

In the event of an emergency requiring a stop, observe the following procedures so that the emergency may be resolved in the safest manner possible. Remember, we do not want a group of motorcycles on the side of the road in an unsafe manner under any circumstances.

- **Problem bike stops - All others continue.**

If a bike encounters a mechanical or rider problem that requires a stop, it should signal and stop in as safe a place as possible, preferably well off of the road. All other bikes are to continue with the Lead Road Captain to avoid having a group of motorcycles on the side of the road. To insure that the Lead Road Captain is aware of the problem, pass a signal to the front of the group by flashing your high beam and sounding the horn.

- **Only the Drag Road Captain stops to help.**

It is the Drag Road Captain's responsibility to stop and assist the problem bike.

- **Lead Road Captain leads the group to a safe location.**

If the Road Captain deems it necessary to check on the problem, he will stop the group at a safe place and call the drag Road Captain to determine what action to take.

- **Road Captains have mobile phones and first aid kits.**

The Road Captains use their mobile phones to communicate when necessary. They also carry small first aid kits.

- **Towing**

As an active full or full life H.O.G. member, you are covered by the H.O.G. Roadside Assistance Program. See your H.O.G. membership manual for details. When you need a tow, call the Roadside Assistance number (toll free) on the back of your H.O.G. membership card to arrange for a tow. There is no reimbursement if you choose another towing option.

- **Accidents**

In the event of an accident, the group should work together to accomplish the following:

- Insure everyone stops in a safe location,
- Notify the authorities by calling 911,
- Render aid to injured persons,

Remember, **Do not move an injured person or remove their helmet**, this should be done by trained emergency response personnel.

- Maintain the accident scene, and
- Get the names and addresses of witnesses whenever possible.

The Road Captains are responsible for completing and submitting an Injury Report to the Chapter Secretary. Injury reports are filed in accordance with Harley Owners Group requirements.

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Disclaimer and Release Forms

Chapter Ride Disclaimer

The Officers of the Chapter hereby advise that any and all rides, runs, events and activities sponsored by this Chapter are solely intended for the benefit and participation of our current members and guests (limit one guest per member). Members are responsible for insuring that their guest has a properly executed release form on file with the Chapter. Nothing contained in any publications of this Chapter should be construed to mean that non-current, former members and/or members of the general public are invited to participate in these activities and/or ride motorcycles with this Chapter unless it is specifically so stated. No Chapter member may operate a motorcycle at a Chapter event or activity unless that member is legally licensed to do so and that motorcycle is properly licensed, inspected and insured. Members participate in any and all published activities and meetings at their own risk. The Chapter, its Officers and Sponsor assume no liability or responsibility for any persons, Chapter member or otherwise, at any ride or function.

Release Forms

The Chapter uses the following forms to fulfill the release requirements for participation in Chapter events. These forms are available from the Chapter Secretary and from the sponsoring dealer.

Chapter Membership Enrollment Form and Release

Every member is required to sign this release form when joining the Chapter and when renewing their membership.

Chapter Event Release Form for Adults

All adult participants in a ride must sign this release form at the ride if the individual

- 1) Is not a Chapter member (i.e., a guest), or
- 2) Is a Chapter member and is not sure if they have a signed "Chapter Membership Enrollment Form and Release" on file with the Chapter.

A new form must be completed for each ride.

Chapter Event Release Form for Minors

A minor's parent or guardian must sign this release form whenever a minor participates in any chapter event other than a chapter meeting. A new form must be completed for each event. If the minor is aged 12 or above, the minor must also sign the "Minor's Assumption of Risk Acknowledgement."

Minor's Assumption of Risk Acknowledgement

A minor, aged 12 or above, must sign this form when participating in any chapter event other than a chapter meeting. A new form must be completed for each event. The minor's parent or guardian must also sign the "Chapter Event Release Form for Minors."

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Group Riding Checklist

Each rider is expected to observe and practice the following items when preparing for and participating in group rides with the Chapter. This section is a two page checklist of the rules and procedures presented in the Group Riding section. This section is designed so that you can easily carry it for reference during a ride.

A ride consists of four components:

1. Personal Preparation
2. Group Preparation
3. The Ride
4. Emergencies

Personal Preparation

- Check the Ride Hot Line or web site for schedule changes.
- Check yourself. Are you ready for this ride?
- Perform a Safety/Mechanical Check.
- Fill your Gas Tank.
- Meet on time.

Group Preparation

- All riders meet at the designated time.
- Fulfill the Event Release Form requirements.
- Headlights to Low beam, other "running" lights off.
- The pre-ride briefing

The Ride









- Ride within your ability and comfort level.
- Obey all laws (Speed limits, Stop signs, Stop lights, etc.).
- Use hand signals (See next page for illustrations).
- Ride in staggered formation with approximately 2-second spacing.
- Fill gaps by changing column.
- Use hand signals and pass to the rear.
- Pass with care only when it is safe and you have ample distance and visibility.
- Keep group together without heroics.
- Pull to side-by-side at stops; left bike out accelerates faster.
- Negotiate intersections as an individual.
- Yield to cars (especially at entrance ramps).
- Signal all turns and lane changes with signal lights and hand signals. Make visual checks before you move.
- Park as a group if possible.
- Ride ends on arrival at the destination.

Emergencies


- Problem bike stops; All others continue.
- Only the Drag Road Captain stops to help.
- Lead Road Captain leads group to a safe location.
- Road Captains have mobile phones and first aid kits.
- Use a towing company with experience towing motorcycles.
- Accidents: Group stops in a safe location - Call 911 – Render aid (Do not move an injured person or remove their helmet – this should be done by trained emergency response personnel) - Get the names and addresses of witnesses whenever possible.

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Hand Signals

<p>Left Turn</p> <p>Left arm and hand straight out.</p> <p>Back of hand to rear.</p> <p>Fingers together and straight out.</p>		<p>Right Turn</p> <p>Left arm straight out with forearm and hand pointing up.</p> <p>Back of hand to rear.</p> <p>Fingers together and straight up.</p>	
<p>Left Hazard</p> <p>Left arm angled down.</p> <p>Index finger pointing at hazard.</p> <p>Back of hand to rear.</p> <p>Arm remains still.</p>		<p>Right Hazard</p> <p>Right leg extended out at an angle pointing at hazard.</p> <p>Both hands remain on handlebars.</p>	
<p>Single File</p> <p>Left arm straight up,</p> <p>Index finger pointing up,</p> <p>Back of hand to rear.</p>		<p>Staggered Formation</p> <p>Left arm straight up,</p> <p>Index and little fingers pointing up,</p> <p><u>Twist wrist back and forth.</u></p>	
<p>Slow Down</p> <p>Left arm angled down <u>with up and down motion.</u></p> <p>Back of hand angled slightly to the rear.</p>		<p>Stop</p> <p>Left arm out with forearm and hand pointing down.</p> <p>Palm of hand to the rear.</p>	

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<p>Pull Off</p> <p>Start by pointing with left arm straight out and move arm to point forward, then return to starting position. Repeat.</p> <p>Point with index finger.</p>		
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