

SCUK Ride Guide

The purpose of this document is to provide existing and new members with guidance as how we arrange our group rides in as safe a way as possible. We are all adults; ultimately everyone is responsible for their own safety and for that of their pillion rider and other road users. It is your responsibility to ride safely, within your own limits and that of your motorcycle. We must ride safely but we ride for fun and must try not to take the fun out of riding.

Road Crew

We have Road Captains and Road Marshals to arrange and assist the club with rideouts. In particular they plan, promote and conduct their own events; encourage participation in other motorcycling events; promote responsible, safe and family-orientated activities that give a positive image of SCUK. Road crew members must have ridden with SCUK for at least 1 year so they understand how we operate; demonstrated they can ride safely, have suitable First Aid training and the knowledge of how to deal with an accident or emergency.

Joining Events

Members should look out for information about rides, events and trips away on the web site, in eTorque, on Face Book and at club nights. Then;

1. Check out the meeting points, route and destination the day before setting out.
2. Before you leave home make sure you've got plenty of fuel and taken care of any maintenance issues, you really don't want to be the reason for holding up the group!

Pre-ride Briefings

Prior to setting off the ride leader will give a briefing which will help you enjoy the ride safely, so;

1. Try to be at the meeting point 15 minutes before the published leaving time.
2. Pay attention to what the ride leader has to say.
3. See who are the back markers, their tabard, type of Harley etc.
4. Note if you will be using the drop off or other system of group travel.
5. Remember the outline of the route, destination and any special instructions eg: motorway procedure.
6. Be ready to leave when the ride leader or back markers give the thumbs up.

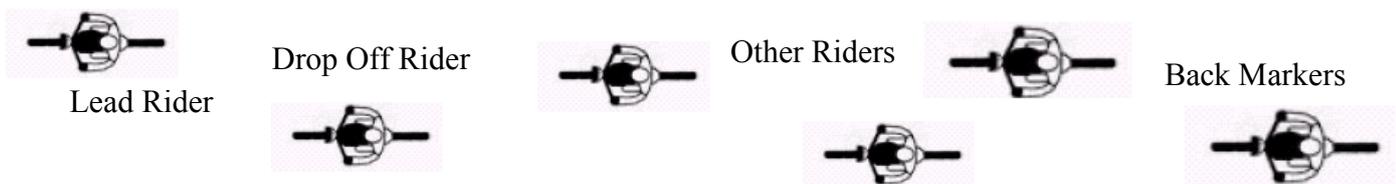
General Riding Guidance

1. Check your mirrors at least every 10 seconds to see what is happening to the riders behind.
2. If a road gets twisty, becomes rough or visibility decreases then slow down and move to a single file formation.
3. If the group has to stop keep to the left and if possible try to get off the road.
4. For the safety of the group please cooperate if a RC signals for you to slow down, move over or drop back.
5. To keep the group together and making progress at junctions, especially at traffic lights, if possible use all the available lanes to the full width of the road.
6. When you make a stop or reach your destination ensure you know what time the group will be leaving.

Staggered Riding And The Drop Off System

Riding in a group: We often ride in two files in staggered formation in one lane. Try not to let a large gap develop in front of you but maintain a safe distance, **at least two seconds**, behind the bike in the **same** file as you. Unless the file ahead changes sides on the lane stay either on the right or left and do not move or weave across the lane thus stealing another riders breaking zone. Do not attempt to use the positioning of the advanced riding system when in staggered formation. Look right up the road to see what's coming up but also check your mirrors at least once every 10 seconds and make space for sports bikes, police vehicles, RCs and other group riders, who want to get passed or move in front of you. Get into single file on narrow twisty roads.

The drop off system: The lead rider will point at a spot where the drop off rider is to pull over and stop next to the kerb to mark the route at junctions, roundabouts etc. At left turns this will usually be **prior to the turn**, stop where indicated with your left indicator flashing. At a right turn it will usually be **just after the turn**. Always stop in a safe position where you are clearly visible to other riders. **You must wait there ready to re-join the group in front of the back marker(s)**. If you do not wait other riders will not know to turn and the system will collapse, but if no-one has passed you for 15 minutes, **(no less please!)**, then you may move off and inform the drop offs you find that they should also proceed. After a drop off the other riders should move across one by one to the next file to take up the vacant position.



Ride leaders normally indicate a drop off at junctions & roundabouts unless:

1. They can see the back markers.
2. "No entry" signs etc leave only one exit.
3. You are following a major road and not taking a minor side turning.
4. They have covered this junction in the pre-ride briefing.
5. There is no safe place for someone to stop.
6. You are on a motorway.

Ride leaders will:

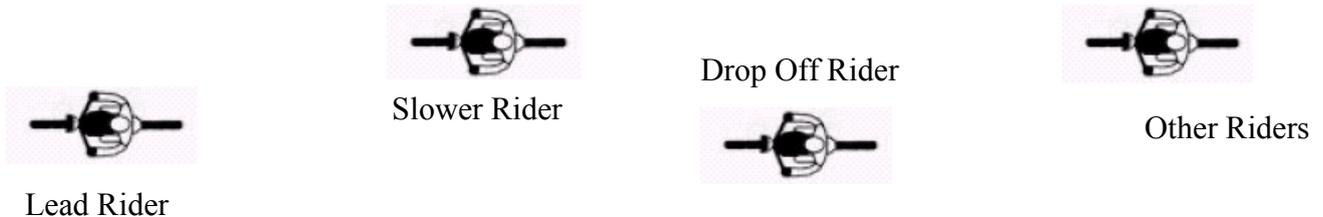
1. Point positively at the position where you wish the drop off rider to stop.
2. Try to indicate a highly visible yet safe position out of the main traffic flow.
3. Sometimes drop off before and after a junction.
4. Drop off after a long or strange section of road to give confidence to those following.

Trikes, sidecars and bikes with trailers:

These use the whole lane, cannot drop off safely, are difficult to pass and have different braking characteristics. Therefore they will usually be behind the back markers who will try to keep an eye on them or they may be used as back markers.

Slower riders:

If there is an inexperienced or slower rider in the group then we may use the following formation. This allows the leader to adjust the pace if necessary and still indicate drop offs. As the rear riders have to go faster than the front to keep up the whole group makes better progress. In some extreme cases it may be safer for the ride leader to ask a slower rider to make their own way.



Back markers:

1. Back Markers wear a tabard and use their horn, lights or wave to send away the waiting drop off riders.
2. A single back marker should ride in the centre of the lane which helps them see what's happening ahead and the leader to see their tabard.
3. With two back markers the first one will normally ride towards the white line and the second one further back and towards the centre of the lane. This provides space for drop offs to rejoin. They do not change over if the group riders swap sides.
4. The first back marker sends away the drop offs and should take over their position if the second back marker is not in sight. If you are not ready to move off in time then backmarkers will continue on past but allow you space to get past and rejoin the group.

Other Group Riding Systems

Small groups:

The lead rider by frequently checking the number of bikes in their mirrors can lead a group of up to 5 riders. It is helpful to the lead rider for the rearmost rider to wear a tabard. If necessary the leader will slow down or stop to keep the back marker in sight.

Large groups:

In larger groups an alternative to the drop off system is to rely on each rider to keep their following rider in sight. If a rider has to stop then the one in front stops to keep them in view and so on until the leader has to stop. However, everyone in the group must understand the importance of checking their mirrors very frequently and especially at road junctions, traffic lights etc to keep the rider behind them always in view.

Another alternative is to tell everyone of a well known meeting point, services or major junction further down the road and let everyone ride at their own pace.

Breakdown procedure

1. The back markers will try to stop and speak with anyone who stops unexpectedly. We never knowingly leave a vulnerable rider alone beside the road.
2. Ensure you, your pillion and bike are in as safe a position as possible.
3. If necessary warn approaching traffic.
4. Try to inform the ride leader of the situation by mobile phone.
5. If possible fix the problem beside the road using the available tools and mechanical knowledge.
6. Once alerted to a problem the leader will consider if they can stop the ride somewhere safe but if a deadline such as a ferry sailing makes it necessary for the group to move on and leave a rider behind then they will try to ensure that a recovery service is dealing with them and ask for a volunteer to stay with them.

Accident procedure

In case of an accident there are many things which have to be done. How many and how quickly they can be accomplished will depend on the resources available. An accident may happen in front of the lead rider or a back marker may be hit from behind. Whoever is available and able should take charge of the incident until professional help arrives.

Secure the scene: to prevent the situation getting worse. Oncoming traffic in both directions should be warned by the use of head lights, hazard warning lights, waved tabards or arms.

Get assistance: arrange or make a 999 call, (Mainland Europe Dial 112 and ask for an English speaking operator), call for the attendance of fire, police or ambulance crews. It is imperative that the person making the 999 call is near the casualty as the operator may ask for updates on the condition of the injured person. It is important to be able to say **exactly** where you are.

First aid: Breathing and bleeding are the first consideration. First aid training will indicate the steps to be taken. Usually a casualty is kept still, however, in some circumstances such as fire or an acid spill it may be necessary to move them to prevent a serious injury to them or those tending them. If someone is injured and has to go to hospital then, if possible, get a volunteer to follow on their own motorcycle. Get the name and if possible the telephone number of the hospital.

The police may arrange for a damaged motorcycle to be removed. If not then contact the rider's breakdown assistance providers or as a last resort the local HD dealership for help.

Once the emergency has been resolved it may be treated as a breakdown.

Motorways

On motorways it is safer for us to ride at similar speeds to other traffic and above that of large and heavy vehicles. Therefore a whole group should not be slowed down significantly to cater for one slower rider. If someone cannot make progress at speeds approaching the national limit they should not expect others to endanger themselves and should make their own way.

Please note the following new procedure applies only to Blue Signed Motorways such as M1 and A1(M) – at present we are not proposing to apply it to dual carriageways etc.

Pre-ride briefing:

1. Except for emergencies we should not stop or use the drop off system on a motorway as it can be dangerous and illegal; if seen by a police patrol or CCTV it can cost 3 penalty points. So it is very important during the briefing to tell everyone about the exit numbers, roads numbers and meeting up points. If the route is complicated the ride leader may provide notes as written information is easier to remember than verbal.
2. The ride leader will ask if everyone is prepared to 'filter' between stationary traffic. If not then they will only filter in extreme circumstances. If you choose not to follow you will need to make your own way to the destination.
3. **We no longer use the staggered formation on Motorways. We ride independently in single file in the centre of our lane, (as if we are driving a car).** This allows us to be further away from large vehicles; gives us more space in windy conditions; improves our view of the road ahead; gives us more time and space to avoid road debris; prevents other riders from moving into our braking space; is a pattern better understood by other road users; and allows us more safety space when other road users decide to move into our lane despite our presence.
4. Everyone rides independently while trying not to lose sight of the rider(s) in front. If you cannot see the rider in front then don't hurtle off up the motorway, instead just increase your speed a little and remember the next exit number or meeting up point given in the briefing. Don't ride excessively fast to catch up or you may miss the exit. Remember we will be waiting as agreed at the pre-ride briefing.
5. Riders should keep an eye on their mirrors and if necessary slow down a little so as not to completely outpace those following them.
6. If traffic causes another rider to go passed allow space for them to rejoin the group in front of you.

Entry procedure:

1. If there are two entry lanes try to use the left one so you only have to deal with traffic approaching on your offside.
2. Accelerate along the entry lane to increase the distance between the riders, thus facilitating their joining the traffic, after a mile or two slow a little so as not to outpace those behind.

Once on the motorway:

1. The ride leader will set a pace everyone should be able to manage depending on the traffic and weather conditions.
2. Check your mirrors regularly to see you are not completely outpacing the other riders for some reason.
3. Changing lanes on a motorway is more dangerous than staying in a lane. So read the road and traffic ahead and when possible avoid lane changes.
4. Remember it is safer to ride in single file and allow space in front of you for vehicles leaving and entering the motorway.
5. If you are in the first lane and traffic is going to enter the motorway either slow a little to give them space if it is safe, signal and move into the next lane.
6. If there is an accident or breakdown then a minimum of riders should stay with those left behind. The main group should use the next exit or services to wait for the other riders.

Exit procedure:

1. The exit number and subsequent road to take or meeting point should be included in the briefing.
2. The ride leader will plan ahead and move into the appropriate exit lane of choice **in good time** slowing down just **a little** to allow others to catch up.
3. At the 1 mile and ½ mile signs the ride leader will slow **a little** more and indicate for a few seconds to inform following riders of the impending exit, (other riders should also indicate briefly to warn those further behind).
4. At the 300 metre sign the ride leader will slow **a little** more and start to indicate continuously, (other riders should also indicate).
5. If it becomes necessary for some reason to reform the group but an obvious meeting point was not included in the pre-ride briefing then the ride leader will pause for a couple of minutes on the hard shoulder where the motorway slip road ends, usually at a roundabout.