

Group Riding – *there's nothing tricky about it!!*

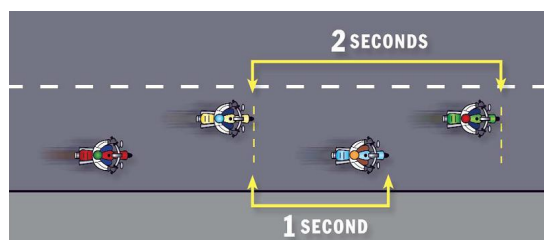
For anyone who has ever ridden the "drag" position for Chapter Z, you know how good we are at group riding. There's nothing more moving than watching a motorcycle group change lanes when all the bikes are in the proper formation.



For new riders, here is a brief breakdown of group riding:

- Each lane of the roadway is divided into three tracks... the left track, the center track and the right track. We don't pay a lot of attention to the center track unless there is debris in it which will cause the group leader to radio or signal to the group... "debris in the center track." Almost all of our riding is done in either the left track or the right track.
- Each group is normally made up of five bikes/trikes. However, there will be times where there are more or less than five bikes/trikes in a group, depending on the situation.
- The lead bike/trike will take the first position in the left track. The second bike/trike will be in the opposite track – the right track – behind the first bike, and the other bikes will follow in a "staggered" position.
- When the group needs to change lanes, the leader will radio the drag and ask them to secure either the left or right lane. When traffic is clear, the drag will secure the lane by moving onto it thus preventing traffic in the rear from moving up in the lane.
- The drag will radio the lead that the lane is secure. The lead will radio or signal the group to change lanes... IMPORTANT: no one should change lanes until the leader asks them to do so, and even then, they should double-check that there isn't any other traffic in the lane before making the change.

Okay, so far, so good... Chapter Z excels at this. But, there is one area that needs attention and that is the spacing between the bikes/trikes. The rule is this... the second bike/trike should travel one second behind the first bike/trike. The third bike/trike will travel one second behind the second bike/trike, etc. This will cause the bikes/trikes in the left track to be two seconds apart and the same for the bikes/trikes in the right track. Below is an example of what we're talking about:



There can be consequences if we don't keep the proper spacing... (1) it allows other vehicles to cut into our group, and (2) it can cause a "slingshot" effect in the group. Okay... you might be asking... what is a "slingshot" effect? It is when a bike/trike gets further and further behind (not following the one-second rule) and suddenly realizes... "whoops... I'm too

far behind." Then they quickly increase their speed to catch up to their proper position. Well... what do you think happens to the bikes/trikes behind them... they are all doing the same thing! So, that one bike/trike is not only causing unsafe riding for themselves, but they are putting the entire group in harm's way.

Note: Your eyes should "watch" 2-6 seconds ahead of your position. The faster you are moving, the farther ahead you should look.

And lastly... cruise control... is it for group riding? The answer is definitely "NO." The lead bike may use cruise control to help set and keep a steady pace for the group, but it's definitely a "no-no" for the other riders in the group.

So, in addition to the great group riding skills that Chapter Z already possesses, if we can maintain the proper spacing between the bikes/trikes in our groups, and heed the cruise control suggestion, it will not only make our rides safer, but more pleasurable as well.

As always, we welcome and encourage your questions and comments. Please don't ever hesitate to contact us.

Ride safe, have fun and always take the long way home.

Gene and Carolyn Tice

ATGATT Master Tour Riders #5088 & #5089