

# GROUP RIDING

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Greetings, fellow HOG members! This month's article will touch on something sensitive. It is not meant to point fingers at anyone or to lay blame at anyone's feet so please read it with the purpose behind it in mind. Our chapter has recently experienced several significant incidents on group rides so I

thought it might be time to address what is expected of all of us on a group ride.

There appears to be a misconception that the road captains are responsible for our safety when we go on a ride. That is flat out untrue. Each member of the ride is responsible for their own safety. That is one of the things the road captains learn when they attend the Road Captain Orientation put on by our head road captains. In fact, it would not be a bad idea for everyone who goes on a group ride to attend the Road Captain Orientation. In case you missed it, let me say it again, each member of the ride is responsible for their own safety. I have heard complaints from members that a road captain was going too fast. I have been on a lot of HOG rides and at no time did the road captain control my throttle. I was always in control of it. If you think the road captain is going too fast, you do not have to twist your throttle to try to keep up. Ride your own ride. One of the road captain's responsibilities is to keep the group together. If you are not comfortable with how fast the road captain is going, then don't ride that fast! The road captains will see the group is getting separated and make the necessary adjustments. FYI, our road captains are told to ride within 5 mph of the posted speed limit.

Sometimes when we ride in a group, we have a tendency to only pay attention to the motorcycle ahead of us. It is a bad habit to only watch the brake lights of the motorcycle ahead of you. You should be constantly scanning ahead, looking for anything that might impact your ride. I wrote an article recently about reaction time and things that influence it. The first thing that you have to do is recognize a threat before you can react to it, and you cannot do that just watching the bike ahead of you.

In the most recent incident involving a group ride in our chapter, there has been much talk about whether or not the car stopped in the roadway had its turn signal on. While any ve-

hicle turning is supposed to signal its turn, that does not relieve anyone of the responsibility to not run into it. What does our statutes have to say about a situation such as that? 316.1925 Careless driving.—

(1) Any person operating a vehicle upon the streets or highways within the state shall drive the same in a careful and prudent manner, having regard for the width, grade, curves, corners, traffic, and all other attendant circumstances, so as not to endanger the life, limb, or property of any person. Failure to drive in such manner shall constitute careless driving and a violation of this section.

(2) Any person who violates this section shall be cited for a moving violation, punishable as provided in chapter 318.

What if there was a refrigerator in the road ahead of you. It is not supposed to be there but that does not mean that you are not responsible if you run into it. The same is true if it is a stopped vehicle in the road ahead of you. But, Mark, you say, it was in a curve and I could not see it until it was too late. That is where the part about "having regard for the width, grade, curves" etc., comes into play. It is never a good idea to outride your line of sight!

A stopped car in the middle of the roadway would fall under the category of "traffic" or "all other attendant circumstances." Another way to look at this statute, it says just because something is in the road ahead of you does not mean you not without responsibility if you run into it.

There are extremely few crashes on our highways where there was only one factor involved; it usually involves a chain of events. Remove just one link in the chain and the crash could be avoided. Let's look at a crash where a car runs a stop sign and gets hit by oncoming traffic. Yes, the car that ran the stop sign caused the crash. But was there anything that could have been done by the oncoming car? That is not to be confused with saying the oncoming car was in any way at fault, just was there anything they could have done to avoid the crash?

Maybe slow down, anticipate the other driver running the stop sign, honking the horn to alert the stop sign runner just to name a few.

ATTGAT,  
MARK