

**GWRRA Chapter AB-A**  
Calgary, AB, Canada  
**Ride Guidelines**

**Created expressly for riders who wish to  
ride with the Calgary Chapter of the  
Gold Wing Road Riders Association**

**Includes valuable information for Road Captains!**



# “Ride your own Ride”

<u>I.</u>	<u>Introduction:</u> . . . . .	3
<u>II.</u>	<u>Safety:</u> . . . . .	4
<u>III.</u>	<u>Riding Guidelines:</u> . . . . .	5
<u>IV.</u>	<u>Use of Hand and other Signals:</u> . . . . .	8
<u>V.</u>	<u>CB Communication:</u> . . . . .	9
<u>VI.</u>	<u>Parking:</u> . . . . .	11
<u>VII.</u>	<u>Fuel Stops:</u> . . . . .	12
<u>VIII.</u>	<u>Emergencies:</u> . . . . .	13
<u>IX.</u>	<u>Hand Signal Photos</u> . . . . .	15

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Chapter AB-A.

## **I. Introduction:**

This guidebook has been put together to provide information to riders who participate in any of the Calgary GWRRA sponsored rides. As the heading states, **YOU** are responsible for your own ride! You must apply all of your skill and knowledge to your group ride in the same manner that you do when you are riding on your own. In fact, you have more responsibility on a group ride because you are now riding with a group of other motorcyclists in close proximity for extended periods of time.

GWRRA Chapter AB-A assumes no liability for the actions of any rider on Group Rides regardless of said action. Furthermore, Ride Leaders, Ride Captains, Ride Coordinators and all other riders, regardless of where they ride, assume NO liability for any group ride or rider in any fashion. Each Rider is responsible for their own ride as if they were riding by themselves!

In order to increase everyone's enjoyment of the ride and to increase our safety consciousness, we have published these guidelines. These guidelines are just that, a guide to the way we ride. We want everyone, beginner through experienced rider, to understand these guidelines and apply them to the ride circumstances. These things will not be done in all situations but they encompass many safe riding practices and are something to fall back on if in doubt.

Before you even start a ride, if you have any issues that the Ride Captain should know about, please talk to him. If you are not sure who the Road Captain is, please ask anyone else in the group. If in doubt, talk to any of the local Chapter Executive. If you have special dietary needs, medical needs, hygiene needs, motorbike needs or are nervous about the ride or riding with the group, please ask. We don't mind scheduling more stops, stopping at different places or changing the ride around. Most of us have ridden these rides a number of times and we would welcome some changes.

## **II. Safety:**

1. Make sure that you have done a safety check on your bike before setting out on a ride. If you are unsure how to do this, refer to the manual that came with your bike. If you would like to show up early for one of our rides, ask us and we'll show you where things are. At a minimum, you should check:

- Tire Pressure and wear.
- Lights (headlight, signal lights, brake light).
- Brakes.
- Suspension Pressure / Setting

2. We encourage the wearing of safety clothing:

- Fabric protective motorcycling pants or long pants (jeans) plus chaps.
- Leather or Fabric motorcycle specific jacket.
- Helmet (mandatory in Alberta).
- Eye protection.
- Boots that cover your ankles.
- Gloves.

3. Make sure you have enough warm clothing for riding in Alberta where you can suddenly get caught in rain (or snow) and where there can easily be a 15°C or more difference between Calgary temperatures and the mountain passes. Many riders have electric vests.

4. **NO** Alcohol, **NO** drugs. Did you know that some over the counter antihistamines impair your ability to make decisions? Do not ride if you are on medication that states you should not operate machinery.

5. **DO** drink and eat. Drink at every stop to stay hydrated and alert, especially in very cold or very warm weather. Eat regularly to stave off fatigue and keep alert. This should not be a problem with our frequent lunch and picnic stops. Riding season is not the time to start a crash diet.

### **III. Riding Guidelines:**

1. Make sure that you are fully fueled and "relieved" before the start time of the ride.

2. We generally don't go much further than 200 to 250 kilometers between gas stops. If you don't have that much range on your bike, please inform the Ride Captain.

3. We ride within the traffic laws of the Province or State that we are in. We keep to the speed limit. However, for safety sake, we may have to travel slightly faster than the speed limit so as not to act as an impediment to traffic. Note that depending upon your bike, your speedometer may read anywhere up to 10% higher than your actual speed. If you are uncomfortable with the speed we are traveling at, please talk to the Ride Captain. **DO NOT** ride beyond your abilities!

4. We ride in a staggered formation with the lead bike in the left track of the lane, the number two bike in the right track of the same lane, the number three bike in the left track, again in the same lane etc.

When on a curve, each rider should pick their own line and use the entire lane if necessary to avoid sand, tar snakes and other obstacles.

Don't be afraid to move out of your track if you feel it is necessary for any reason.

If the group is split up and finds traffic between bikes then each group should create a small group in staggered formation with the lead bike in the left rack. The front group, when it is safe to do so, should reduce their speed so that the trailing group can catch up at which point the group can reform.

5. The Ride Captain will generally use the cruise control to set the speed that the group will travel at. This makes it easier for bikes behind to maintain even spacing. Only the lead bike should use cruise control. Bikes following the lead should use their throttle to maintain their separation between themselves and the bike in front. We do this because when one bike slows down and then has to accelerate, gaps open up and following riders have to

brake and then accelerate to try to maintain pace. A rubber band effect ensues where the riders at the back are slowing down, then speeding up and the total length of the group increases and decreases in size. This is not safe!

6. In Alberta, based upon the driver's education hand book, the minimum following distance between vehicles is 2 seconds (4 seconds if traveling faster than 80 KPH). For our rides, each bike is separated from the bike **that is in the same track** by 2 to 4 seconds. This means, that in the offset formation we ride in, you are following 1 to 2 seconds behind the bike in the other track! A quick way of determining how close you are following is to look at the bike in front of you in the other track and as it passes a reference point (tar on highway, fence post, shadow etc.), count "one thousand and one, one thousand and two" - you should be able to get at least half way through the count. Another "trick" to use is if you can see the rider in front in their mirror then you are close to where you should be. We ride at this distance because:

- a. It allows you to see what is ahead of you better (a longer line of sight).
- b. If there is any debris in the lane or there is some kind of emergency, all bikes can use the entire lane.
- c. In corners, each rider can pick their own line through that corner. If the rider in front of you moves over, then increase your following distance!

**BUT, DO NOT LEAVE TOO MUCH ROOM!**

If there is more time than the 1 to 2 seconds between bikes then other vehicles will move into that space (often without signaling) endangering the rest of the group.

7. At Stop Lights and Stop Signs, we pull up two abreast (beside one another). **DO NOT** do this if it is not safe. If there is sand or a questionable surface or a sharp corner to negotiate, pick a line that you are comfortable with. We will leave two bikes at a time in a fashion that bikes do **not** overlap (i.e. don't ride beside one another). With the two bikes pulling away, the rider that was in front before stopping must be allowed to immediately pull

ahead of the other rider so that the staggered formation is quickly resumed. We do this so that:

- a. We take up less room.
- b. We can get through a Stop sign with less delay.

**8.** We aim to keep our groups to an optimum size of 5 bikes. However, depending upon the total number of bikes and where we are riding, we may increase or decrease the number of bikes in a single group. If there are more than 6 bikes on a ride, we will break into 2 groups.

**9.** In heavy traffic, it is more important to keep the group size smaller and the spacing tighter.

**10.** When there is more than one group, the groups generally remain in sight of each other but there is a large gap between them. This allows other traffic to pass safely .

**11** Each group of bikes has **2** Ride Captains. There is one at the front (often referred to as the Lead and sometimes referred to as the Ride Captain) plus one at the rear (often referred to as the Tail Gunner or Drag).

**12.** Do **NOT** put yourself in danger at any time. For example, if someone states that the road ahead is clear and you have a double yellow beside you, **DO NOT PASS!**

**13.** Do not put your fellow riders in danger. Ensure that you do not follow too close and that the person in front of you can use the entire lane if necessary. **DO NOT** ride into the rider in front of you!

**14.** Be alert while riding. Alberta's long straight stretches combined with the hum of your bike on the road or the soothing music from your sound system along with the hot sun warming you on a spring afternoon can lull you into a very serene state - **STAY ATTENTIVE.** Be aware of other vehicles around you and vehicles that may suddenly be around you (like that tractor coming in from the field).

**15.** Remember, you are responsible for how you ride. Do **NOT** be a lemming following the person in front of you without thinking of where you are going.

**16.** If you are going to ride with us, you get the wonderful ex-

perience of following the Lead **EVEN IF THEY ARE LOST!** Although we may discuss where in the heck we are going, all riders are expected to follow the Ride Captain as long as such following does not place a rider at risk or cause a rider to exceed their comfort zone or abilities!

**17.** If you find that someone is endangering the group, riding erratically or you just personally do not like to follow or be in front of a particular rider, please talk privately with that rider or the Ride Captain at the next stop.

**18.** If you are uncomfortable following the Lead or riding in our group, we ask you to please inform us on the CB that you will be leaving and going on your own. You can simply state that you would rather ride alone. We understand that group riding or our particular style of group riding may not suit you. If you choose to leave, please contact your local GWRRRA Executive; they always are interested in knowing if there are any issues with the way we ride.

#### **IV. Hand and other Signals:**

**1.** All signals given by the rider in front of you should be passed on to the rider behind. Simply give the same signal.

**2.** When the rider in front of you extends their left hand up and points with 1 finger (no, not that finger), it means to move to a single line formation. After passing on the hand signal, move over behind the rider in front of you. You now need to increase your following distance so that you are a minimum of 2 seconds behind that person.

**3.** When the rider in front of you extends their left hand up and points with 2 fingers (usually the pinky and finger be-side the thumb), it means to resume a staggered formation. Close up any gaps after passing along the hand signal.

**4.** The Lead will signal all turns well in advance with their signal lights. Make sure that you turn on your signal light (in other words, pass on the signal). Remember, on some Wings your signals will self-cancel, often sooner than you want. Turn

them back on again until you have completed the turn.

5. The Lead will flash their brake lights to signal either that they are slowing down or that there is a potential hazard in the road. This means caution! Also, pass this on to the rider behind you.

(See pages 15 & 16 for pictures and descriptions of GWRRA standard hand signals.)

## **V. CB Communication:**

1. We use CB channel 2 during our group rides. All groups of bikes use the same channel.

2. Did you know that with most Gold Wings the CB needs to be "charged" before it will work? When you start up your bike, do a radio check to make sure that you can be heard. You can simply turn on the CB and state "this is George, is anyone receiving me?" (assuming your name is George).

3. Groups are identified as Group "1", Group "2" etc. Group "1" is the first group out and so on.

4. Bikes within a group are identified as Bike "1" (Lead Bike), Bike "2" and so on.

5. It is fine to talk to one another, comment on the scenery, discuss who is writing the ride article etc., EXCEPT when one of the Ride Captains requests a halt to "CB Chatter". Also, when in heavy traffic and in the city, chatter should be kept to a minimum; if an emergency arises we will need to use the CB.

6. When there are multiple groups, you'll hear the group number precede any communications. For example "Group 1 Tail Gunner, is the lane clear?".

7. On a multi-lane road, to change from one lane to the next you'll hear the following: The Lead will say "Secure Right (or Left) Lane".

Once the Tail Gunner has moved over into the lane and is blocking it for everyone, you'll hear him or her state "Lane Secured". You may also hear them say "Lane Secured after XYZ vehicle".

**9.** The Lead then will say "Look Right (or Left)"; hesitate for a second and then "Move Right (or Left)". Note that this command is not always given. Often, once the lane is secured, the riders will move over. Regardless which procedure is used, turn on your signal light in advance to show which way you are going to turn (also lets non-CB users see what is going on). ALWAYS mirror and shoulder check before moving over! Move to the appropriate lane and track.

**10.** On single lane roads, passing a vehicle has to be done one at a time. If the Lead decides to pass a slower moving vehicle, then they will announce that they are going to pass. Each bike needs to move over to the left track of the lane as they come up to the vehicle to be passed (bikes behind may need to increase their following distance). Make sure it is safe to pass and then safely pass, exposing yourself in the oncoming lane for as little time as is reasonable.

**11.** On single lane roads, after a vehicle is passed, when you move back in front of that vehicle make sure that you have put enough room (2 second rule) between the back of your bike and the front of the following vehicle. On multi lane roads, we sometimes move over, in front of another vehicle one bike at a time. Again, make sure there is plenty of room before moving over. REMEMBER, you can stop faster than a four-wheeled vehicle, especially a large one!

**12.** You may hear the Tail Gunner announce "Vehicle moving up on Right (or Left)" or "Fast Mover in Right (or Left) Lane" or "4 wheeler coming". In all cases it means to be careful because there is traffic over-taking the group.

**13.** When the Lead decides to change speed, they will often announce this ahead of time.

"Decelerating (or Slowing Down), speed zone change" as the group approaches an area with a slower speed limit. This is often accompanied by a quick flash or two of the brake lights.

"Accelerating (or Speeding Up)" as the group approaches an area with a faster speed limit or if the Lead decides to go faster due to other circumstances.

**14.** Not everyone has (or needs) a CB. When this is the case, the people without CBs will be placed in the middle of groups. It is vital to pass on all signals (hand, signal light, brake light) so that the non-CB rider following you sees what the group is doing.

## **VI. Parking:**

It is always a major challenge to get everyone parked in a reasonable amount of time without endangering riders at the back of the group. This is made easier by splitting the group up. However, as follows, there is one other thing that can be done to make parking easier for everyone (think of coming into a parking lot with a long curb):

- 1.** The Lead will come into the parking lot and turn close to and ride parallel to the curb.
- 2.** Each rider shall follow the rider in front and turn into the curb at the same point.
- 3.** The Lead will ride close to the curb until they have picked a spot to park.
- 4.** The Lead will then swing the bike out away from the curb until the Bike is at about an 80-degree angle to the curb.
- 5.** The Lead will stop.
- 6.** The next rider will pull up beside the Lead and stop.
- 7.** Once the next rider has stopped (and not before), the Lead will back their bike in against the curb and put it on its side stand.
- 8.** Once the Lead bike has stopped moving and is on the Side Stand AND the third bike has stopped beside the second bike then the second bike will back in against the curb and put their bike on its side stand.
- 9.** This is then repeated for all riders. The reason we do this is that it allows us to quickly get all bikes out of traffic and parked. It makes sure that there is only ONE bike moving backward at a time. Also riders do not get confused by another bike moving backward or forward.

When you only have four or five bikes and/or lots of parking space available, the above isn't necessary.

## **VII. Fuel Stops:**

On our full day trips (or any trip in excess of about 200 kilometers), we'll need fuel stops. Generally, fuel stops are planned in advance. If your bike is unable to travel at least 250 kilometres between Fuel Stops, let the Ride Leader know so that we plan more frequent stops. No one minds extra stops, we just have to know.

### **Some guidelines for Fuel Stops:**

1. For larger groups, if we are in a place with multiple gas stations in close proximity, we will split up with smaller groups going to their favorite gas station and then meeting up at one location. The Ride Leader will indicate where we are meeting.
2. For larger groups and when we stop at a location with only one service station, make sure that you line up and are ready to move forward and get gas. The rider currently getting gas will fill up and quickly move their bike forward and then go in to pay. As soon as the rider moves forward, the next person in line will move up and begin refueling. The first rider, after paying will come out and park their bike off to the side.
3. Make sure that once you have fueled up you have moved your bike off to the side to allow other vehicles to fuel up.
4. Fuel stops are a good spot to take a bathroom break! Even if you aren't getting fuel, park your bike away from the pumps and use the facilities as you need.
5. As we normally plan stops for lunch, snacks, historic sites, humorous pictures, mountain vistas and grand scenery, we want to keep our boring fuel stops to a minimum of time!

## **VIII. Emergencies:**

1. Most riders carry extra tools and emergency first aid supplies. A number also carry cell phones but be aware that when traveling in the mountains, cell phones often don't work. If you

don't carry these items, please consider doing so. A First Aid kit is invaluable regardless of whether you are treating a blister or a major incident. A number of GWRRR riders have taken First Aid and CPR courses and are more than willing to help anyone with a problem. The basic tool kit that comes with your Wing can be used for a lot of repair work but it can't fix a flat tire, jump start a dead battery or siphon fuel.

**2.** In the event that you have an emergency while riding, we request that you announce what the situation is before pulling over if you can do so safely. Obviously, with a sudden flat tire or defective piece of equipment that endangers your riding, this isn't possible. In which case, you should pull over as soon as you can safely do so. Once stopped, please use the CB (if you have one) to inform the Ride Leader what has happened. In either case, the Tail Gunner will stop with you! If you don't have a CB, the Tail Gunner will inform the rest of the group.

**3.** Dress for the ride! Both Hypothermia and Hyperthermia can be life threatening. With the large temperature changes between the plains and mountains, Hypothermia is more of a concern in our riding area. Make sure you are wearing what you need for the next segment of the ride. Are your gloves warm enough or too warm, are your sunglasses clean, is your electric vest plugged in, etc. Remember, 100KPH, even with a Gold Wing's protection is a lot cooler than at a stand still! If you do need to add or remove clothing, use your CB to inform other riders that you need to stop. You may well find them wanting to do the same thing. If you don't have a CB, simply signal and pull over when it is safe. The Tail Gunner will stay with you and inform the others of what has happened.

**4.** If you see another rider pull over, do NOT pull over behind them (unless you are the Tail Gunner). Having a bunch of bikes at the side of a road juggling for parking spaces while traffic is whizzing by is not safe. The Tail Gunner's job is to stop and help that person out. If some other member of the group is required, the Tail Gunner will make a request. Note that there are times where a small group may be able to safely stop in a non-emergency situation (like trying to "help" the Leader find out

where they are). However, this needs to be done in a safe location. If there is any doubt, let the Tail Gunner deal with the emergency and continue on until it is safe to pull over.

5. With the Tail Gunner having stopped, a new Tail Gunner will be required. The Lead will assign the new Tail Gunner.

6. If it is feasible for the rest of the group to ride to an exit and wait for the disabled rider then that will be done.

7. If there is not an exit close by, the group will maintain formation (with the new Tail Gunner).

8. If conditions warrant it, the group will slow down to allow the disabled rider and original Tail Gunner to catch up (if the problem is quickly rectified).

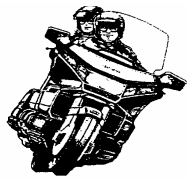
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Thank you for your interest in riding with us and contributing to making our outings safe and fun for all!

Remember,  
Getting there **IS** the fun!

**For the latest on what we are doing and where we are going, check our website:**

**[www.goldwingcalgary.com](http://www.goldwingcalgary.com)**



**“Friends for Fun, Safety, and Knowledge**

**Come ride with us....  
Everyone Welcome!**

**GWRRRA TOLL FREE NUMBER (US & CANADA) 1-800-843-9460**

## GWRRR Group Riding Hand Signals (NOT to be confused with Traffic Signals!)

These are standard signals for use when non-CB equipped riders are following a lead.

Signals should be acknowledged with a head nod or a flick of the dimmer switch.

To gain the attention of the lead, a follower should flash their headlights. The lead will acknowledge and, when safe, will give the "Come Alongside" signal where the follower can signal his or her needs.

**NOTE:** Almost all signals are given left-handed so the right hand remains on the throttle and brake controls for safety.

### Stop or Slow



Arm up. Palm back.

### Single File



Arm and index finger up.

### Follow Me



Arm up. Palm forward.

### You Lead



Arm down. Palm forward. Swing forward from hip in arc.

### Double File



Arm up. First and fourth finger form "ram's horn" sign.

### Speed Up



Arm down. Make fist. Twist as if turning throttle.

### Hazard in Road



Point immediately with emphasis. Done with right if required.

### Check Headlight



Tap on top of head with hand open and palm down.

*(Continued on page 16)*

(Continued from page 15)

### Need Fuel Stop



Arm out to side.  
Point to Fuel tank.

### Need Food, Coffee Stop



Arm out to side.  
Make Fist. Thumb to  
mouth..

### Turn Signals Left On



Open and close hand  
with thumb and fin-  
gers extended.

### Come Alongside



Same as "You Lead"  
but ending with  
alongside pointing  
motion.

### Pull Off



Arm as for "Right  
Turn". Forearm then  
swung toward shoul-  
der.

### Comfort Stop



Arm as for "Right  
Turn". Make fist.  
Move arm in short  
up-and-down motion  
(like pulling a toilet  
chain).

Hand signal material extracted from the GWRRA Gold Book.