

RIDE GUIDE

Version 4



Harley-Davidson of Essex ~ Bloomfield, New Jersey 07003 ~ HOG Club #2006

The **ESSEX COUNTY HOG** Chapter 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 participating in group rides 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 rides are planned and scheduled to fulfill this purpose. Please remember that safety is everyone's primary responsibility. By observing the guidelines presented in this guide, group riding with **ESSEX COUNTY HOG** will be safe and enjoyable for everyone. And always remember that our primary objective is to ride safe and have fun.

CHAPTER RIDES



Ride Selection - The Chapter rides are selected and scheduled by the Chapter Officers along with 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. Please don't hesitate as the Chapter is always looking for new ride ideas and places to go. All suggestions are reviewed for suitability and 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 ride suggestion or make the selection within a certain time period.

Ride Schedule - The ride schedule is published in the Chapter Newsletter **H.O.G. TIES** and on the web site www.EssexCountyHOG.com. Reminders of upcoming meetings and rides are e-mailed to all members of our Essex HAWG Yahoo group. To join, go to the MEMBERSHIP section of the web site and click on the "Join Yahoo! Groups" icon. Rides are often cancelled or delayed due to weather. Call the Chapter Hot-Line 973-259-9005 for the latest information on upcoming rides and changes in the schedule. If in doubt, call before coming to the ride meeting spot.

Ride Meeting Location - Chapter rides leave from a location that is posted on the web site under RIDES and posted at the dealership.

Road Captains - Road Captains are responsible for conducting the Chapter Rides. They select the route and check it prior to the ride for safe conditions. They also insure the destination is suitable and make any arrangements necessary for the group. Each ride has at least two Road Captains: a Lead Captain and a Tail Gunner Captain. A Shotgun Road Captain may ride along side of the Leader. Other Road Captains may be present on a ride and will ride within the group. All ride participants shall 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 Tail Gunner Road Captain.

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

HOG Event Categories - Chapter events are conducted primarily for the benefit of HOG Chapter members. There are three categories of events defined by the national HOG:

- 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 HOG members.
- Open Events are chapter events that are open to chapter members, national HOG members and other guests as desired.

All **ESSEX COUNTY HOG** rides are Closed Events unless otherwise specifically stated. This means that you can participate in a chapter rides only if you are a current member and that you can bring one guest per ride.

New Members - The Officers and Road Captains have a responsibility to Harley-Davidson, our sponsoring dealer and the members of our chapter to do all that is in our power to insure the safety of our members. You, as a chapter member and a new rider, have an equal responsibility. For this reason, we must insist that you develop a familiarity with your motorcycle. Loss of control of a motorcycle, in a group ride situation, can jeopardize the safety of other chapter members.

As a new member, you must

- have a valid Motorcycle Drivers License
- be able to safely operate your motorcycle and be capable of keeping up with the flow of traffic in order to participate in chapter sanctioned group rides
- contact the Head Road Captain to attend a "new member ride"
- read and understand the material in this Ride Guide

On your first group ride, you and other first time group riders will be assigned to ride behind the group, just in front of the Tail Gunner Road Captain. You are urged to contact the Safety Officer about Rider's Education courses for both new and experienced riders. Many of our members, and all of our Road Captains, have completed at least one Experienced Rider Course.

Check yourself - You are responsible for making sure you and your bike are ready for the ride. Make sure you are rested, alert, feeling well and dressed appropriately. You should be physically and mentally prepared to make the ride. If you are tired, not feeling well, or just "not up to par", it may be wise to stay home and ride another day. Members operating a motorcycle in a Chapter ride, event or other activity must be properly licensed and insured.

Safety and mechanical checks - T-Clock Inspection Check: T-Tires & Wheels, C-Controls, L-Lights, O-Oil, C-Chassis, K-Kickstand. Check your tire pressure (adjust for a passenger) and for any parts that may have loosened due to vibration.

Dress right - Come prepared for changing temperature and weather conditions. Wear a DOT approved helmet.

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.

Arrive for the rides at the designated time - Rides are scheduled to meet at a certain time and generally depart 30 minutes later. This is a time to socialize with your fellow Chapter Members. 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.

Sign the Event Release Forms - All non-members must sign the Event Release Form before each ride. You must legibly print your name and sign your signature. Each member is allowed one guest who must also sign the Event Release Form. All minors must complete a Minor's Assumption of Risk Acknowledgment which must be signed by both the minor and a parent or guardian.



ROAD RULES

Riding with a group can be challenging so it is critical that everyone in the group observes the same rules. The Lead Road Captain will leave first from a left starting position (for better visibility by cars in front) followed by all other bikes in a staggered formation. Road Captains may be positioned throughout the group. A Tail Gunner Road Captain will follow the group.

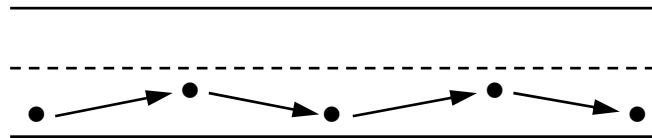
Ride within your ability and comfort level - Riding within your ability and comfort level is very important for the safety of the group. If at any time you feel that the ride has exceeded your riding ability or comfort level, or you have safety concerns, you should consider pulling off to the side at a safe place. The Tail Gunner 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.

Ride in staggered formation with approximately 2-second spacing - The Chapter rides in the standard staggered formation recommended by the Motorcycle Safety Foundation. The bikes form two

columns, with the leader at the head of the left column. The second bike will be a Road Captain that will head up the right column and ride approximately one second behind the leader. New riders or inexperienced riders will follow the road Captain. The other riders will follow the bike directly in front of them by two seconds, which puts them one second behind the diagonal bike in front of them. Using the 2-second spacing, the distance of the gap will increase with speed.

Fill gaps by changing column - When a bike drops out of the ride and creates a gap, the following bikes fill the gap, in turn, by moving left or right 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 well and clearly visible to the riders in back of you. The common hand signals used by the Chapter are:

Left Turn ~ Left arm and hand straight out.



Right turn ~ Left arm straight out with forearm and hand pointing up.



Road Hazard ~ Left arm angled down with index finger pointing at the hazard. You can also use the right or left foot toe point.



Slow Down ~ Left arm angled down waving back and forth with open palm.



Single File Riding ~ Left arm straight up with index finger pointing up.



Staggered Riding ~ Left arm straight up with two fingers forming a "V".



Keep the group together without heroics - Often the group will get separated by a stoplight or 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**. If you find yourself leading part of the group due to a break

and you are not sure of the route, pull over at a safe place. Everyone behind you and the Tail Gunner Road Captain will stop so that you can elect a leader who will rejoin you with the group.

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.

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. Just because you have the right-of-way, doesn't mean you are going to get it. Most drivers proceed up 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 most 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 to take an upcoming exit. If they signal to break in to the group, let them in. This can be 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 let them in. They will be out of the way shortly and you can close the gap. Signal all turns and lane changes with turn 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. Always do a head check. Do not move without looking!

It is not always possible for the Road Captains to wait for 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 and 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.

Maintain a minimum but safe riding distance - Adjust for conditions. "Holes" in the pack invite motorists driving at faster speeds to cut in and tailgate the bike in front. However, if a car must cut through the pack either from the left or right, be courteous, signal to the riders behind you to slow down, then wave the driver through. Close the hole as quickly as possible.

Maintain a steady speed and spacing - Do not speed up and slow down or shift your position from side to side, this disrupts the efforts of others to regulate their speed and destroys the main purpose of riding as a group.

Heads up -

- When passing a vehicle on a two-lane, two-way road, each rider should pass in order, preferably in single file. Obviously this only applies when riding in small groups. One of the most dangerous situations I have observed occurs when one or more riders tries to force the issue of keeping up and passes blind or without allowing a safe margin regarding oncoming traffic. The Road Captain will slow the pack down and wait for you to pass safely. Never sacrifice safety to the ideal of keeping the pack together.
- When turning at an intersection maintain your position in the formation.
- When entering a parking area or gas station enter in single file. The Road Captain should "loop" the area to allow all riders to get out of traffic.
- When entering traffic from a parking lot, gas station, or leaving a traffic signal, each rider should move out quickly and get in position in formation.
- When riding on narrow, twisting roads, move into single file, while maintaining a safe distance between bikes. The Road Captain will signal this formation by holding up a single finger. Each rider will pass the signal back, as they must with all signals.
- When stopping at a signal or stop sign, pull up to two abreast. Maintain this formation if you will be going through a series of closely spaced stops
- When entering a toll plaza, avoid the center (grease build-up area) and leave slowly.

Riding with the pack -

- Anyone not wishing to ride with the pack should inform both the Road Captain and the Tail gunner before departing. If this is not possible, fall back behind the last bike and inform the Tail gunner that you are OK.
- Be sure to inform the Road Captain and Tail gunner if you will be breaking off from the pack along the way. Otherwise, any bike that pulls over or exits the highway will be considered to be in trouble. The Tail gunner will follow to help.

End of ride - The ride officially ends at a designated point on the return home. You will be informed of the entire route during the morning briefing. You can return home by any route you choose or with the group. If you are not sure how to get home, ask for directions.

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. If there is a mechanical or other problem that requires a stop, it should signal and stop in as safe a place as possible, preferably well off 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. Only the Tail Gunner Road Captain stops to help. It is the Tail Gunner Road Captain's responsibility to stop and assist the problem bike. The Lead Road Captain guides the group to a safe location. If the Road Captain deems it necessary to check on the problem, the group will be stopped at a safe place and he will call the Tail Gunner Road Captain to determine the action to be taken.

Accidents - In the event of an accident, the group should work together to insure everyone stops in a safe location, notifies the authorities by calling 911, renders aid (Do not move an injured person or remove their helmet – this should be done by trained emergency response personnel), maintains the accident scene, and gets the names and addresses of witnesses whenever possible.

Towing - The Standard H.O.G. Roadside Assistance Program is now included as a National H.O.G. benefit. Deluxe and Ultra packages are available.

DISCLAIMER AND RELEASE FORMS



Chapter Ride Disclaimer

The Officers of the **ESSEX COUNTY HOG** 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 published in the Chapter newsletter 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 **ESSEX COUNTY HOG** Chapter, its Officers and Sponsor assume no liability or responsibility for any persons, Chapter member or otherwise, at any ride or function.

Release Forms

Each member signs a Chapter Event Release form when joining the Chapter. A completed Minor's Assumption of Risk form is required for each minor participating in a ride. A new form must be completed for each ride. A copy of these forms is available at Essex Harley-Davidson or from the Chapter secretary.



Ride Safe ~ Live Long

T-CLOCK INSPECTION CHECK LIST



- T-Tires & Wheels: Condition, Air Pressure, Spokes, Casting Cracks, Rims, Bearings, Seals
- C-Controls: Levers, Cables, Hoses, Throttle
- L-Lights: Battery, Lenses, Reflectors, Wiring, Headlamp
- O-Oil: Levels, Leaks
- C-Chassis: Frame, Suspension, Fasteners, Drive Belt
- K-Kickstand: Cracks, Spring, Operation

GROUP RIDING CHECK LIST



Each rider is expected to observe and practice the following when preparing for and participating in group rides with the Chapter.

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
- Proper attire for weather conditions
- Wear a DOT approved helmet
- Fill your Gas Tank

Group Preparation

- Meet at the designated time
- Guests and minors sign the Event Release form
- 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
- Staggered Formation (2 second spacing)
- Fill gaps by changing column
- Keep group together without heroics
- Pull to side-by-side at stops; left bike out accelerates faster
- Yield to cars (especially at entrance ramps)
- Signal all turns and lane changes with turn signal lights and hand signals; Make visual checks before you move
- The ride officially ends at a designated point on the return home. You will be informed of the entire route during the morning briefing. You can return home by any route you choose or with the group. If you are not sure how to get home, ask for directions.