



Northampton and Huntingdonshire Chapter

COBBLE STONES CHAPTER

RIDING MANUAL

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1) WELCOME

Hello fellow member and welcome to the Cobble stones chapter. We look forward to you becoming an active member of our riding community.

As I'm sure you are aware we as a chapter take our road safety very seriously as well as the enjoyment of it. We would like you to read though the following pages on the rules and regulations of our chapter, this is to help keep you and everyone around you safe, not to mention other road users and the public.

Within these pages you will find not only how the chapter expects you to conduct yourself with your riding skills but also your temperament and demeanor when on ride outs. Don't forget you will be representing the Cobble Stones Chapter and Freemasonry in general.

So finally, just to say thank you joining Cobble Stones and we hope you enjoy your time with us and look forward in sharing some great memories together.

2) RIDE ETIQUETTE

Ride etiquette is there not only to keep us safe but to portray and show to the general public and other road users that we as a chapter are respectfully in our riding standards as well as our personally.

When riding in our chapter you are responsible for your conduct both on and off your bike, show respect to pedestrians and all road users, slow down when seeing horses and other farm animals.

Passing. Never blindly follow riders ahead of you when they pull out to pass a car. Move over to the left portion of the lane and wait until you have a clear view of the road ahead. That may mean waiting until the rider in front of you is safely back in the lane ahead of the vehicle you're passing. Then *check your mirror* to make sure another speed demon isn't trying to make the pass from behind you.

Being passed. Being passed by a single vehicle is easy: just let them go. There may be times when the vehicle doesn't have the room to get around the whole group in one go. Don't take offense, even if they're obviously just being impatient. Open up a space and let them back in. There's no sense in riding too close and putting yourself and the rest of your group in danger. But what if it's another group of riders passing yours? As the sweep rider, if you see another group approaching from behind, move to the left and wave them past. This lets them know that a) you see them, and b) you're going to maintain your position to the left to safely allow them to pass. As a mid-pack or road captain, keep an eye on your mirrors. If the headlight of the bike behind you moves to the left, look for passing riders and move left as well, waving them by. This can take time as the second group filters past, but just hold your left-side line and give your fellow riders a wave as they move on. If possible, fall back to create a small gap so that the rider from another group can slot in to avoid oncoming traffic. Once all traffic has passed resume your original position within the group.

Awareness. This is something you should be practicing anytime you're on the bike, not just in a group. You're always scanning ahead, checking your mirrors and watching the patterns of other drivers, don't get lazy just because you're surrounded by your "pack!" Watch your road captain or the person Infront. If your group is stuck behind a slow-moving vehicle and the road captain starts to peer around them, you can guess that a pass is imminent. Be ready to change lanes or pass quickly, safely and efficiently, keeping the whole group moving. If you're on a multi-lane highway, the sweeper can move over early and "set a pick" for the riders ahead, keeping the lane open for them to easily slide over.

Look farther than 20 feet ahead of you for road signs or when at traffic lights. Be prepared for the rider in front of you to hit the brakes if the light changes.

Go with the flow. Group riding rules are not always black and white. For example, on long motorway and dual carriageways it's common for the group to spread out as everyone finds their own pace. Just be sure that you follow your group's established procedure for back marking at turns. In areas of heavy traffic and slow speeds, try to keep your formation tight. If your group hits some twisties and you find that you can't keep up, don't worry, just ride at your own pace, this is where the buddy system comes in.

Try to be consistent. It's a lot easier to ride with people who are predictable. Hold your line, be smooth and steady with your speed and pay attention to your surroundings. Your fellow riders will thank you.

Try not to cause a disruption this goes for load exhausts and over reviving (sound pollution), this can be annoying to most people especially in rural settings such as villages, conduct yourself in a manner you would want where you live.

If a member has any questions or concerns about a fellow rider within the group for whatever reason they must firstly direct them to the road captain and it is his responsibility to address the situation by firstly observing the concerns if it is the riding that is in question then if they are valid reasons take the rider aside and speak to them in an open way, if after that the member continues to display these concerns then the incident will be brought up at the next offices meeting and a letter drafted to them stating the incident and given a final chance to put their argument across . If once

again they continue in this manner the chapter will have no choice than to act and told to leave the chapter and be stripped of their patches.

When on a scheduled stop be polite to people and try to give off a friendly demeanor. **REMEMBER YOU ARE REPRESENTING NOT ONLY THE COBBLE STONES CHAPTER AND FREEMASONRY BUT THE BADGE. DON'T DISGRACE IT AND IT WONT DISGRACE YOU.**

3) GROUP RIDE RULES AND PREPARATION

This section is to help you prepare for any ride out and will enable the ride to hopefully run smoothly as possible please try and adhere to them.

- 1) PETROL, Arrive at the meeting point of the ride with a full tank of petrol as possible.
- 2) TIME KEEPING, arrive on time to the ride meet and before the designated briefing time so you can take down and understand the rules of the ride, the route that is to be taken and who the road crew are for the day.
- 3) PAYMENT don't forget to bring cash/card and mobile phone.
- 4) PRE-RIDE BREIFING, pay attention, know who your road captain is and other road crew, also make a note of the route and your final destination and other stops on the route.
- 5) WEATHER, Check the weather conditions and pack accordingly as to the kit you may need i.e., wet weather clothing.
- 6) LEGALITY, it is the sole responsibility of each rider to make sure that they have a full and up to date driving license, valid insurance, MOT, and road tax if not exempt. Breakdown cover is best but not essential however the chapter does not have a breakdown cover policy that covers any of its members.
- 7) SAFTEY, all riders and pillions are responsible for their own safety at all times and will be required to ride in a safe manner, riders may be asked by the road captain to leave the ride if they fail to do so.
- 8) LEAVING A RIDE, if you intend to leave a ride at any time you must inform the road captain at the beginning of the ride as to when and where, this is so the group is aware of you leaving and can continue with the remainder of the ride and not worry about you going missing.
- 9) GENERAL BIKE MAINTAINANCE, this is important general maintenance, and is simple to do check that you water (if liquid cooled) and oil levels are

topped up and brake fluid, your chain is oiled or greased and not dry, all your lights are working and checked and know your tyre pressures for your bike. Nobody wants the ride to be held up due to unnecessary breakdowns, also make sure that any luggage is stored and fastened securely before the ride starts. It is also a good idea to help check each other's bikes, i.e., lights and indicators and keep an eye out for any failures on the ride and inform the rider at the first available opportunity.

Below are the Cobble Stone Chapter ride rules they are to be always adhered to with no exceptions, failure to do so may result in being excluded from further rides.

- 1) No ride briefing then no ride, don't turn up late miss the ride briefing and expect to ride the briefing is important and can change from one ride to another.
- 2) Respect and abide by the road laws and bylaws.
- 3) No speeding or dangerous riding.
- 4) Our default riding formation will be the staggered formation position when riding, subject to briefing and changes indicated on the ride.
- 5) Respect other road users regardless of their attitude towards you.
- 6) All motorbikes and trikes must have an engine capacity of no less than 500cc. (this can be changed for special ride outs that the road captain will inform members of when a ride out is specially organised)
- 7) We will not be adopting the blocker formation within the chapter as this is deemed aggressive to other road users and is illegal.
- 8) Trikes to ride at the back of the group just Infront of the sweeper if not the sweeper as they are wide and obstruct the riders view behind and are also unable to ride in staggered formation.
- 9) Any rider can be appointed road crew and this appointment will be the road captain's decision.
- 10) In the event of the group being pulled over by the police it is the responsibility of the road captain to ascertain the reason and deal with the situation, if however, the police pull the group over for the reason of an individual then the person involved will have sole responsibility with the police. If not asked to get involved other riders will not.

- 11) In the event of a rider breaking down they must raise their left hand briefly and indicate, if possible, to the left and pull up safety, where the sweeper will pull up behind with their hazard lights on and try and ascertain the problem and if possible, together fix the problem the sweeper is to contact the road captain via phone to explain situation. The group will continue until the road captain can find a safe place to stop with the rest of the group. If the problem, cannot be sorted roadside then it is the riders (who has broken down) to sort alternative transport for getting home either breakdown service or someone to come and pick them and their vehicle up. The road captain is the final decision maker on all ride out matters on the day.

4) RIDE OUT BRIEFING

The road captain in charge of the ride will hold a briefing to the group ensuring everybody is aware as to what will be happening with and during the ride out on that day.

The road captain is to.

- 1) Welcome and introduce himself to the group and point out and introduce the sweeper and any other road crew.
- 2) Give an overview of the rides route and destination as well as any scheduled stops such as fuel toilet and refreshment stop.
- 3) Explain the riding position that is to be adopted for the ride i.e., staggered, single file etc.
- 4) Ask that any new or inexperienced riders ride in the middle of the group with (if possible) an experienced rider riding to the right of them.
- 5) All riders to identify themselves to the road captain so that a list of emergency names, numbers and contacts can be held by the road captain in case of any emergency this also includes any pillion riders. All contacts will be erased at the end of all rides if requested.
- 6) If the ride out is to join another chapter, then all riders will be informed but cobble stones chapter will ride together within the larger group this is to maintain continuity within the rides so that there is no miss understanding or communications.
- 7) Explain what will happen in the event of a breakdown by a rider in the group.
- 8) Ask if there are any questions or concerns about the days ride ahead.

5) RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE ROAD CAPTAIN

The responsibilities of the road captain are as follows.

- 1) To organise all ride outs and routes
- 2) To inform members of all ride outs including times, meeting points, dates and destination of upcoming rides on chapters social media page on Facebook and WhatsApp group.
- 3) To announce 24hrs before planned ride out on social media as members reminder also of any last-minute changes to ride.
- 4) The road captain is responsible for the safety of the ride.
- 5) To appoint a sweeper and any road crew for the ride on that day and make the group aware of these.
- 6) To make sure the ride always has a medical kit with it and to indicate as to where or whom has possession of it/them.
- 7) To have with them a list of emergency names and contact numbers for all ride members including pillion passengers.
- 8) To oversee discipline while on rides and to inform officers of any infringements by a rider.

6) EXPLANATION OF ROAD POSITIONING

There are several riding formations, we will be adopting the staggered position on our rides, here is an explanation of the ones we will be using.

STAGGERED

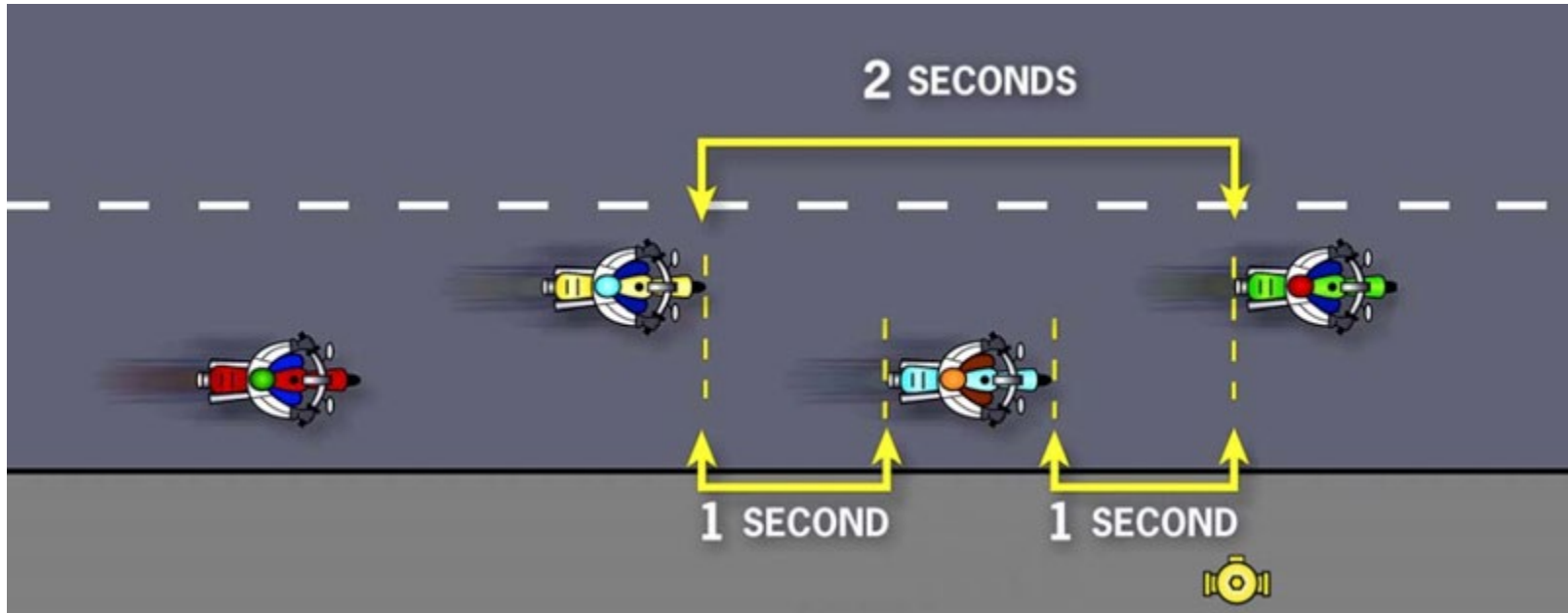
The staggered formation provides the best safety margin of reaction time and space.

The road captain will not be part of the staggered formation and will take up the best available position on the road to give a greater view of the road ahead.

The purpose is to allow each rider a clear view ahead, along with space to the side for any quick or sudden manoeuvring in the case of road hazards such as potholes and debris etc. The rider 1st after the road captain shall take up the first

right hand position the 2nd the left hand position within the lane the 3rd to the right and so on. The sweeper to take up position best for view of road and group.

Spacing will be the favourite 2 second rule, you maintain a 2 second gap between you and the person directly in front of you not the person at the side please see below.



As speeds increase, that means a longer distance, and at slow speeds (especially in heavy traffic areas) that means closing ranks and tightening up the formation.

THE BUDDY SYSTEM

The buddy system is there to enable the riding group to stay together, it works by a rider keeping an eye in their mirrors on the rider directly behind them and if they see the person behind falling back then the rider in front is to slow down and allow the rider to catch up in their own time, if everyone does this then the group stays together in a safe as possible manner.

SINGLE FILE

This is self-explanatory, and will be used when road conditions are not possible or deemed dangerous for staggered riding, this will be indicated by the single file hand sign from the road captain (this sign as well as others can be found in hand signalling)

MIRROR MAN OR SIDE BY SIDE

The mirror man or side by side formation is when you ride in 2 abreast on your side of the road and is used for ceremonies by this chapter only and never on a ride out in any circumstances.

T-junctions. When turning at a T-junction to enable the group to move more efficiently out onto the main road, you can exist the junction 2 abreast if you feel that it is safe to do so, but don't feel pressured into it and give the other rider enough space to complete their turn without you or them having to move over into the opposite lane meant for oncoming traffic. Once the turn has been completed return to your original positions within the group. (staggered formation).

Curves. When the road gets twisty, throw the staggered formation out the window. Forming a single file line gives you the space you need to lean and adjust your line if necessary. Remember this might also mean giving the rider ahead of you some extra space. (look for hand signals from the road captain).

Lane changes. Riders should be watching their mirrors and will wait until there is a large enough space for the whole group to move over. Sometimes that's just not possible, in which case the riders make individual lane changes, returning to their positions within the new lane. *Maintain your speed when changing lanes!* Remember that there are riders behind you who need to move over as well. This is for motorway and dual carriageway riding.

The drop off system will be deployed when there are times when the group could be broken up, when going through a town for instance, this is where the road captain will indicate to an experienced road crew member already designated before the ride to drop out of the ride and wait on turn off for the rest of the group and indicating to the following riders which way to go to catch up with the following group, when seeing the drop off

member go in the direction they have indicated and don't stop with them . Once the drop off has been passed by the sweeper he/she shall catch up with the group and get back in their original position, this is the only time that there will be any overtaking within the group.

7) SAFTEY NOTES

Ride your ride, don't try and keep up with the rider in front they might be more experienced than you. Individual riders must stick to a speed that they are comfortable and safe with. (The buddy system).

Less experienced riders will be placed in the middle of the pack on the left of the lane next to a more experienced rider, the more experienced rider where their riding can be accessed and after can help with their riding and when the ride is over advise them on their riding.

Ultimately, we are all responsible for ourselves and only ourselves. Even though you're in a group of other riders, you alone are in control of your bike and are therefore on a solo ride. If the group is doing stuff that makes you uncomfortable, don't do it. Ride your own pace, don't run the red light even though the two riders ahead of you did, and if you need to take a break, signal to your group and pull over. And don't attempt an unsafe pass — your group won't leave you behind.

Safety wear is very important though the legal requirements is that you only need to wear a crash helmet it is always advisable that you have the appropriate footwear trousers or leathers and a padded jacket not forgetting your gloves.

Remember to have fun and enjoy yourself you are going to be riding with the Cobble Stone Chapter the best bunch of people ever to sit on a motorbike and you are in great company.

8) HAND SIGNALS

Communication. This is especially important in a group. The road captain will often activate his or her turn signals early; following riders should also use their signals, essentially passing the message back. Some groups also like to use hand signals for upcoming turns: left arm straight out to the side for a left turn, left arm raised at a 90-degree angle for a right turn. There are a few other "universal" hand signals: extending a hand down and

opening and closing your fist tells another rider their turn signal is still on, and sticking a foot or hand out indicates a hazard in the road on either the left or right side. Below is a chart from the Motorcycle Safety Foundation showing some other common hand signals, though we will not be using all of these signals other groups that we ride with might so have been incorporated into our riding manual.

When the rider Infront of you makes a hand signal it is your responsibility to copy so that the rider behind understands and can pass the information own the group.

<p>Stop - arm extended straight down, palm facing back</p> 	<p>Single File - arm and index finger extended straight up</p> 	<p>Turn Signal On - open and close hand with fingers and thumb extended</p> 
<p>Slow Down - arm extended straight out, palm facing down</p> 	<p>Double File - arm with index and middle finger extended straight up</p> 	<p>Fuel - arm out to side pointing to tank with finger extended</p> 
<p>Speed Up - arm extended straight out, palm facing up</p> 	<p>Hazard in Roadway - on the right, point with right foot; on the left, point with left hand</p> 	<p>Refreshment Stop - fingers closed, thumb to mouth</p> 
<p>You Lead/Come - arm extended upward 45 degrees, palm forward pointing with index finger, swing in arc from back to front</p> 	<p>Highbeam - tap on top of helmet with open palm down</p> 	<p>Comfort Stop - forearm extended, fist clenched with short up and down motion</p> 
<p>Follow Me - arm extended straight up from shoulder, palm forward</p> 	<p>Pull Off - arm positioned as for right turn, forearm swung toward shoulder</p> 	

This manual was compiled and written by:
Bro Marcus (PUDDING) Hill, Road Captain.

With the help and guidance of:
Bro Stuart (HUNDRED%) Dean, Secretary.

For the Cobble Stones Chapter. For our Brothers.
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