



**Southern Cruisers
Riding Club
Chapter 238 Niagara
Road Captain and
Tail Gunner
Handbook**

March 31, 2015

This handbook was a collaborative effort among all Officers, Road Captains and Tail Gunners.

All parties had the opportunity for comments and input.

Ian “Silent Bob” Pendykoski, 2nd Officer and Safety Officer for Chapter 238 combined numerous SCRC Chapter Handbooks into this one for use by Chapter 238 Niagara.

It is our hope that all Road Captains and Tail Gunners use this as a guide for leading and riding with Chapter 238.

With thanks to all parties from:

Ian “Popeye” Morris 1st Officer

Ian “Silent Bob” Pendykoski 2nd Officer

Penny “Dreamer” Kranz 3rd Officer

Road Captain / Tail Gunner Handbook Chapter 238

Thank you for making the decision to take a more active role in our chapter. As a Road Captain or Tail Gunner you will be part of the team that helps to plan, organize and execute our rides.

Remember, as Road Captains and Tail Gunners, you are looked up to and respected by the other riders as an experienced rider and leader.

The following is meant to be a guideline of the expected duties and responsibilities of these positions.

Road Captains

As a Road Captain you are responsible for leading a group to their destination and back in a safe manner consistent with the rules of the road, and the guidelines of the SCRC and Chapter 238. Often this means you will have to make quick decisions due to road conditions, weather, obstructions, etc. At all times the safety of the group should be your primary goal. You and the Tail Gunner are working together as a team to ensure everyone has a fun and safe time.

Duties and Responsibilities

1. Have proficient knowledge of, and be able to instruct riders in the following areas; hand signals, lane changes, drop back rider, filling the gap.
2. At all times use hand signals, this is your primary means of communication to the group.
3. Carry the list of cell phone numbers of the Road Captains and Tail Gunners with you at all rides (the list of numbers will be provided to you)
4. Carrying an up to date first aid kit is recommended
5. Establish and maintain a uniform speed with consideration to the experience level of the riders in the group, road conditions, weather conditions and traffic. The speed should normally not exceed 10kph above the posted speed limit.
6. Adhere to all traffic laws and initiate all maneuvers in a “safety first” manner
7. Command the group to single file if visual control of the road is restricted. This can be due to narrow or curvy roads, parked cars, pedestrians etc.
8. Maintain a safe following distance (the 2 second rule) between the group and any vehicle ahead.
9. Instruct a rider to leave the group entirely for reasons of unsafe or disorderly riding, faulty/unsafe equipment. Please use common sense and tact in these situations. **Notify one of the Officers immediately should this happen.**

10. Maintain visual contact with the Tail Gunner (you are working as a team)
11. If the group becomes separated be aware of the missing riders and make every attempt to reunite the group as soon as it is safe to do so. **If it is necessary to pull over to wait for the riders, find a safe, off the road location. Do not pull onto the shoulder to wait.**

Tail Gunners

As a Tail Gunner you are also responsible for the safety of the group and conducting yourself within a manner consistent with SCRC and Chapter 238 guidelines. This means that you will have to be aware of any instructions from the Road Captain as well as the conditions ahead and behind the group. As with the Road Captain your primary goal should be the safety of the group. Remember you and the Road Captain are working as a team to ensure that everyone has a fun and safe time.

Duties and Responsibilities

1. Assist the Road Captain in the performance of his or her duties
2. May be required to assume the role of Road Captain should he or she be unable to continue.

3. You may also have to assume the role of Road Captain if the group becomes separated.
4. Carry the list of cell phone numbers of the Road Captains and Tail Gunners with you at all rides (the list of numbers will be provided to you)
5. An up to date first aid kit is recommended
6. Ride where you can see the group best and the Road Captain can see you.
7. Maintain visual contact with the Road Captain (you are working as a team)
8. If a rider leaves the group it is the Tail Gunner who pulls over with the rider and determines the situation. This may mean that you have to call the Road Captain to inform him / her of the situation.
9. Be observant of any hazardous conditions or conduct and take immediate corrective action. Inform the Road Captain as soon as it is safe to do so. **Notify one of the Officers immediately should this happen.**
10. Lane protection. On any multi-lane road, if the Road Captain initiates a lane change it is the responsibility of the Tail Gunner to secure the lane as soon as it is safe to do so.

Lane Changes (Multi-Lane Road Including Highways)

Note: All lane changes are initiated by the road captain. The Tail Gunner may be out of position (i.e. an adjoining lane) for reasons of visibility, etc. The rest of the group should not change lanes unless the Road Captain has indicated to do so.

In the following example the group is traveling in the center lane of a three lane highway and is approaching a slower moving vehicle.

The Road Captain puts on his/her left turn signal and hand signal to indicate a change to the left lane. All other riders pass this information back in the group by putting their signals on and hand signal as well. The Tail Gunner then secures the lane when he/she feels it is safe to do so. Once the Tail Gunner has secured the lane the riders move over from the back of the group to the front. The Road Captain is the last to move over. When moving over ALWAYS do a shoulder check and only move over once the rider behind you has moved over and it is safe to do so. Occasionally the Tail Gunner may have let a fast moving vehicle pass before securing the lane, so **ALWAYS LOOK BEFORE MOVING!**

When the Road Captain has passed the slower moving vehicle he will put on his/her right turn signal to indicate a change back to the center lane. The group now moves over from the front to the back. The Road Captain is first to move and the rest of the

group moves over one at a time when they have passed the vehicle at a safe distance. Do not “cut off” any other vehicles.

When executed properly the lane change is a safe and impressive maneuver.

Drop Back Rider

At times the group becomes separated. The drop back rider is our way of ensuring the group is reunited as soon as it is safe to do so.

Although the Road Captain should always be aware when the group has become separated, he/she may not decide to pull the rest of the group over. When the group is separated the last bike in the group with the Road Captain becomes the drop back rider. It is the responsibility of the drop back rider to inform the bikes that were separated if the group has made a turn. As long as the group continues to go straight down the road it was on when it became split, the drop back rider stays with the Road Captain.

If the Road Captain makes a turn the drop back rider stops at the corner (drops back) to let the bikes that were separated know which way the group went. The drop back rider waits here until he/she sees the Tail Gunner. Now this group continues with the drop back rider leading and then rejoins the group with the Tail Gunner.

Now the last bike in the new group with the Road Captain becomes the new drop back rider. This is important because there could be several drop back

riders until the Road Captain can find a safe area to pull the rest of the group over, and re-group.

The lead bike in the group that was separated only needs to continue straight on the road until he/she sees the drop back rider. At that point the drop back rider becomes the temporary Road Captain and leads the group. They then continue straight on the road again until they see another drop back rider or the rest of the group.

It is very important that everyone knows their responsibilities as both the drop back rider and lead bike of the separated group. If performed correctly the group will always be able to safely reunite.

You should never race to catch up to the group, this will only put yourself and any riders with you in danger.

Notes for Road Captains and Tail Gunners

Road Captains

You should always be aware of the bikes in your group and if your group has become separated. It is at your discretion as to when and if you are going to stop to allow the rest of the group to catch up. If you do decide to pull the group over make sure it is safe to do so. When the Tail Gunner rejoins the group make sure all the bikes are accounted for.

Tail Gunners

When the group becomes separate you now become responsible for the bikes that are with you. This may mean you have to assume the lead position in some cases. Make sure you collect all the drop back riders and have them join the group ahead of you (assuming you are not leading). If someone should forget about their responsibility as drop back rider then you should be able to lead your group to the destination. Once you have rejoined the Road Captain make sure all the bikes are accounted for.

Filling the Gap

Sometimes a bike will leave the group for various reasons; they could be going home or have mechanical issues, etc. When this happens a “gap” is created in the staggered formation. It is important to fill this gap as soon as possible because the bikes that are in front of you and behind you are your “blockers”. If there is a space where a bike should be, an unsafe condition is created for the entire group. There are many ways to fill this gap, but Chapter 238 has decided to use the “wave up” method in order to this safely and avoid confusion.

Example: A group of eight bikes is traveling together and the third bike (behind the Road Captain) exits the group. The fourth bike sees the gap and looks ahead to ensure the lane is safe for a rider to move up, then

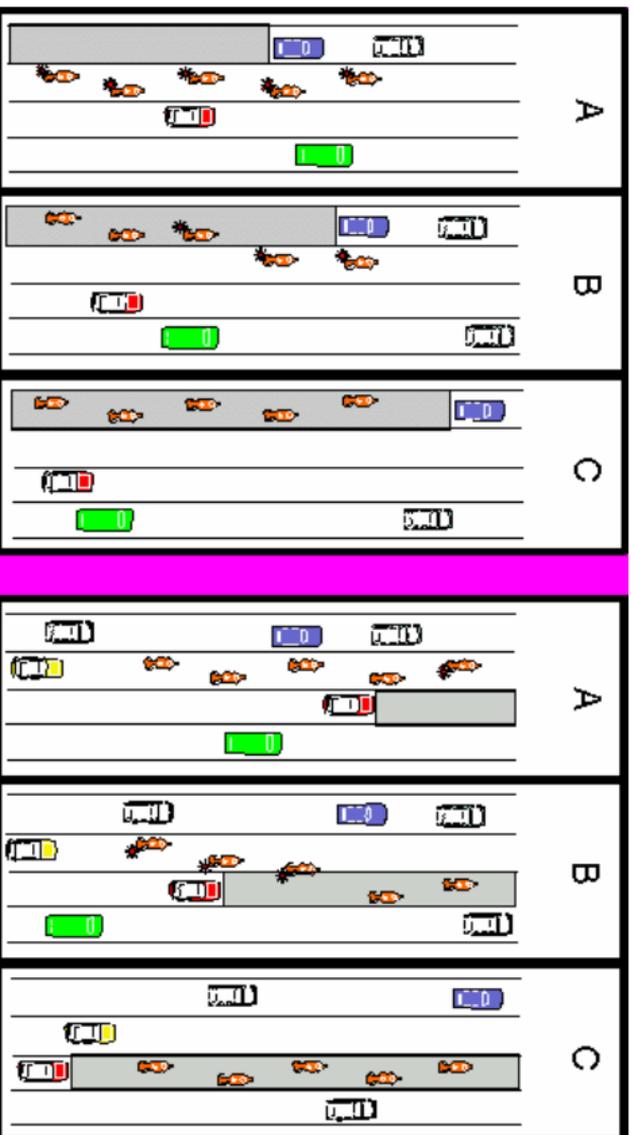
waves up the fifth bike to fill it. The fifth bike, before moving up, looks ahead to ensure it is safe to move up, then moves when clear. This creates another gap to the rear, and the same process continues until the Tail Gunner takes up position accordingly.

The only bike exempt from the wave up is the Tail Gunner because they must remain at the back of the group. If this situation occurs, the bike in front of the Tail Gunner will signal to him/her (by use of their signal lights and pointing) that they intend to move over to fill the gap. Before moving this rider does a shoulder check to make sure the Tail Gunner is aware of her\his intention.

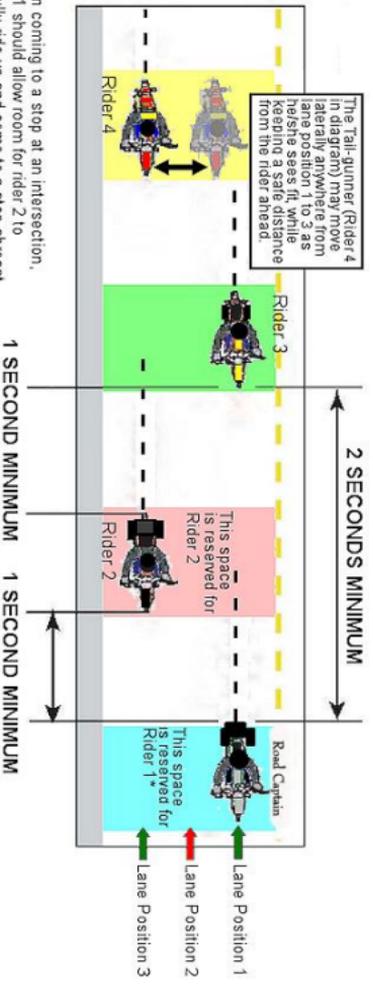
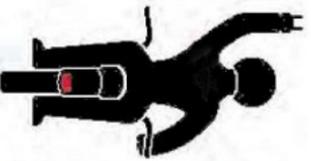
Lane Changes

To Left Lane

To Right Lane



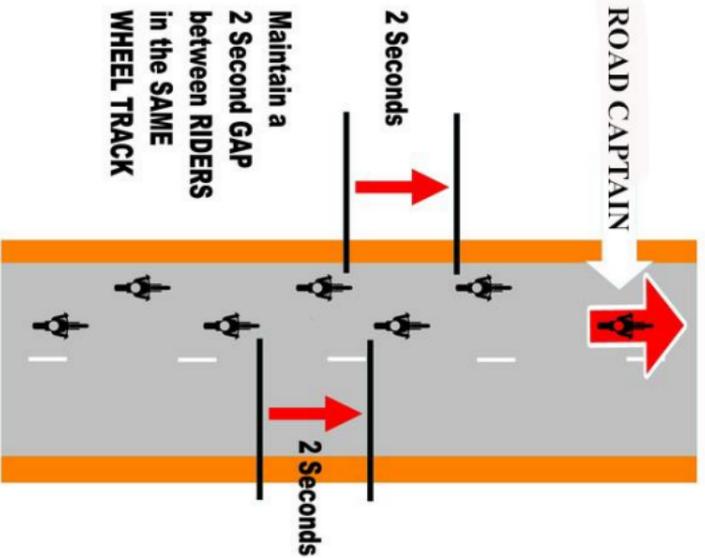
Staggered Riding Formation



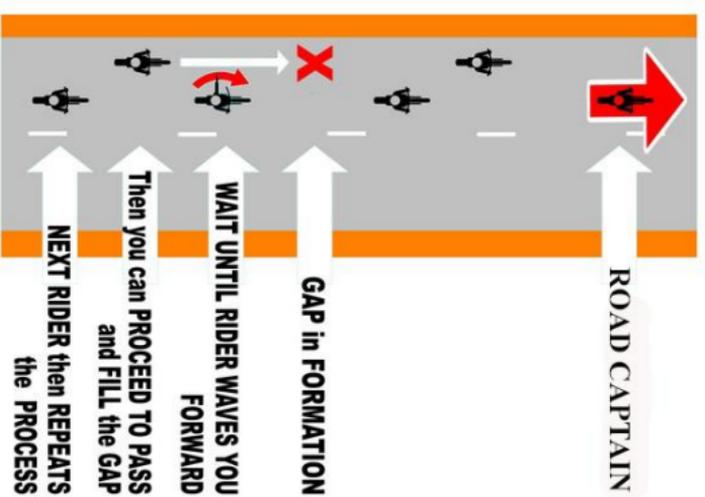
*When coming to a stop at an intersection, rider 1 should allow room for rider 2 to carefully ride up and come to a stop abreast of rider 1. Riders 3 & 4 should then come to a stop abreast of each other at a distance of one bike-length behind riders 1 & 2.

A WORD ABOUT LATERAL SPACE The lateral space beside any rider (ie. the light-blue, pink, green & yellow areas as illustrated in this diagram) is space reserved for that rider to use momentarily should it be required (to avoid a road hazard for instance). All riders within the group must ensure that they do not encroach on other riders space.

RIDER SEPARATION



MAINTAINING FORMATION



Hand Signals

1.



1. Left Turn

Left arm extended straight out with pointing hand.

2.



2. Right Turn

Left arm bent upwards at elbow with a clenched fist.

3.



3. Slowing

Left arm at a downward 45 degree angle with open hand and spread fingers.

4.



4. Stop

Left arm bent downwards at elbow with a closed fist.

5.



5. Debris to Left
Left arm (or left foot) with hand pointing at obstacle on road.

6.



6. Debris to Right
Right foot (or right arm) extended to point at obstacle on road.

7.



7. Single File
Left arm extended above head with finger pointing skyward

8.



8. Return to Staggered Formation
Left arm extended above head with small finger and thumb spread apart.

9.



9. Sand/Gravel on Road

Right arm at downward 45 degree angle with palm down and moving in circular motion.

10.



10. Need To Stop

Left hand/fist held on top of helmet. This signals to others possible mechanical or emergency problem.

11.



11. Close Formation

Left arm bent upwards with hand fully opened then closed (fist), this will be repeated several times.

12.



12. Close Formation

Picture shows closed hand, #11 shows open hand.