

FT. WASHINGTON CHAPTER
Harley Owners Group®

R O A D
C A P T A I N
M A N U A L



Table of Contents

1.0	Introduction.....	1
2.0	Responsibilities of a Road Captain.....	2
2.1	Basic Responsibilities of all Road Captains.....	2
2.2	Responsibilities of a Lead Road Captain.....	2
2.3	Responsibilities of a Tail Road Captain.....	3
2.4	Equipment.....	3
2.4.1	First Aid Kit.....	3
2.4.2	Tool Kit.....	3
2.4.3	Documents.....	3
2.5	Qualifying as a Road Captain.....	4
2.5.1	Road Captain Prerequisites.....	4
2.5.2	Qualifying Process.....	4
2.5.3	Presentation of Road Captain Rocker.....	5
3.0	The Ride.....	6
3.1	Meeting Place & Time.....	6
3.1.1	Communication.....	6
3.1.2	Ride Cancellation.....	6
3.2	Event Release Forms.....	6
3.3	Pre-Ride Briefing.....	7
3.4	Riding Guidelines.....	8
3.5	Riding Formations.....	8
3.5.1	Environmental Conditions.....	8
3.5.2	Staggered Formation.....	8
3.5.3	Split Staggered Formation.....	9
3.5.4	Single File.....	9
3.6	Hand Signals.....	9
3.7	Traffic Lanes.....	9
3.7.1	Lane Changes in Detail.....	9
3.7.2	Passing in Detail.....	10
3.8	Breakdown / Accidents.....	11
4.0	Mentoring.....	12

1.0 Introduction

Congratulations on your decision to become a Ft. Washington H.O.G.® Road Captain (RC). As a Road Captain, you will make an important contribution to the success of our Chapter's safe riding program. In order to have fun riding in a group, we have to be safe and have well qualified Road Captains. By volunteering, you have already demonstrated you have the best interests of our Chapter at heart. This manual is a guide to the rules and procedures followed by Fort Washington H.O.G. Road Captains and lists the qualification requirements to become a fully qualified Road Captain.

2.0 Responsibilities of a Road Captain

Every Road Captain has certain basic responsibilities. Lead Road Captains (LRC) and Tail Road Captains (TRC) have responsibilities specific to their duties including Pre- ride planning and preparation and road safety. This section details the responsibilities of all Road Captains and specific responsibilities of Lead and Tail Road Captains.

2.1 Basic Responsibilities of all Road Captains

As a Road Captain, you will:

- Assist in planning routes for Chapter rides
- Assist in keeping the chapter informed of all H.O.G. programs
- Educate Chapter members about group riding techniques
- Inform Chapter members of hand signals used by the chapter on group rides
- Assist in obtaining signed release and attendance forms for Chapter rides
- Act as a Lead Road Captain, i.e. guide, for organized Chapter rides
- Act as a Tail Road Captain, i.e. sweep, for organized Chapter rides
- Lead at least the minimum required number of rides as agreed upon by the Head Road Captain (HRC) and the RCs during the first RC meeting of the Year
- Find a replacement if unable to fulfill any ride commitment. If the assigned RC and HRC are unable to find a replacement, the ride may be cancelled or turned into a Pickup Ride
- Ensure all needed RC forms and material, including a current listing of all Chapter RCs and their phone numbers are available

2.2 Responsibilities of a Lead Road Captain

The Lead Road Captain will:

- Prepare and have written route directions for distribution to other RCs on the ride
- Conduct a Pre-Ride brief for all riders
- Ensure appropriate event release forms are completed and signed
- Ensure all Chapter Member's names are recorded on the Loyalty Rewards Points Attendance List and emailed or given to the Head Road Captain as soon after the ride as possible. The Head Road Captain will then send the list to the Membership Officer
- Take charge of the group until the final destination has been reached
- Plan enough time into your ride schedule have a proper Pre-Ride brief and time to get to your destination while considering the possibility of traffic and ride delays
- If road conditions or weather dictate, the LRC may alter the ride route or destination. The LRC may also cancel the ride upon notifying the HRC/Assistant Head Road Captain (AHRC)
- Separate large groups into smaller groups if possible. Group size should be kept to 12 bikes or less including the ride leaders. The LRC will make any judgment calls needed to place riders with needs in specified groups and or positions within the group
- Position new riders within group, ideally at the end in front of the TRC, or where the new rider designates a preference

- If needed, instruct any rider to ride in a specific position within the group, or to leave the group entirely, for reasons of misconduct, disorderly or unsafe riding, or faulty/unsafe equipment
- Lead the group in a safe manner and execute sound judgment in situations not specifically covered in these guidelines
- Forward a ride report to the HRC at the end of the ride indicating the Ride Name, LRC, TRC, number of bikes, number of participants, total miles per rider, total miles and any significant problems

2.3 Responsibilities of a Tail Road Captain

The Tail Road Captain will:

- Be observant of any hazardous conditions or conduct, take immediate corrective action as appropriate, and inform the LRC at the earliest safe opportunity
- In the event the group becomes separated either: a) move to the lead position of the rear group, or b) remain in the TRC position and appoint another RC/rider to take the lead
- Respond to directions from the LRC

2.4 Equipment

At a minimum, all RCs should carry or ensure that they have access to a cell phone, a well-stocked first aid kit, and a basic tool kit.

2.4.1 First Aid Kit

RCs should carry a first aid kit consisting of the following: sterile gauze squares; antibacterial spray or ointment; clean water; and rolled gauze, sufficient for administering minor first aid.

2.4.2 Tool Kit

Road Captains should carry a basic tool kit to assist others who may need to make minor repairs. A recommended tool kit includes assorted Hex Head wrenches, assorted Torx head wrenches, flat head and Phillips screw drivers, pliers, electrical tape, zip ties, and chem-lights or signal flares.

2.4.3 Documents

Each RC should have the following:

- Loyalty Rewards Points Attendance List
- RC contact information
- FTW HOG Mileage Challenge Rules and Sign-up Forms
- Pre-ride Briefing Sheet
- Release Form for Adults
- Release For Minors
- Minor's Assumption of risk Acknowledgement Form
- Injury Report Form
- FTW HOG Activities Log
- Emergency Phone Numbers

2.4.3.1 Injury Report

If any injuries occur during an official chapter ride, an injury report must be completed as soon as possible on the same day the injury occurred. If applicable, attach the riders release form and any police reports to the completed form. Deliver the completed documents to any primary officer or the HRC/AHRC. The Chapter Secretary shall fax the forms to Harley-Davidson Insurance. Note that only police can take a witness report.

2.4.3.2 Briefing Card

The briefing card should always be used to give the pre-ride briefing. Cards may be obtained from the HRC.

2.5 Qualifying as a Road Captain

Becoming a Road Captain is not automatic. New volunteers are accepted as Candidate Road Captains (CRC), provided they meet a short list of prerequisites. Once an individual has been accepted as a candidate, the Head Road Captain will pair up the candidate with a mentor (senior-level Road Captain), who will be responsible for the education and development of a CRC. The candidate must then demonstrate certain skills and abilities to his or her mentor in order to become a fully qualified Road Captain.

The CRC will first qualify as a Tail Road Captain and then as a Lead Road Captain. A LRC is considered to be “fully qualified.”

2.5.1 Road Captain Prerequisites

The Candidate Road Captain (CRC) shall meet the following prerequisites:

- Be a member in good standing of National H.O.G.
- Be a member in good standing of the Ft. Washington Chapter of H.O.G.
- Have the approval of the Head Road Captain or his/her designee

Once you have been qualified as a Road Captain, you must ensure that you continue to meet these prerequisite requirements. If you do not, you will be removed from the Road Captain roster.

2.5.2 Qualifying Process

The Head Road Captain will have the final approval.

2.5.2.1 Qualifying as a Tail Road Captain

In order to qualify as a TRC (aka tailgunner/sweep), a CRC must demonstrate the following skills/abilities to his or her assigned mentor. The mentor will notify the Head Road Captain when a CRC has completed this stage. The CRC shall demonstrate the ability to:

- Notice unsafe / improper group riding technique
 - Issues include: Following too close, following too far, not correcting a broken stagger, weaving, passing within the lane, showing off in an unsafe manner, etc.

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- Instruct group riders in proper group riding technique during a ride
- Provide corrective actions to riders for above issues will be done at stops or at the end of the ride
- Demonstrate knowledge and proper use of Ft. Washington H.O.G. hand signals
- Demonstrate the proper way to accomplish a lane change

2.5.2.2 Qualifying as a Lead Road Captain

In order to qualify as an LRC, a TRC must demonstrate the following skills/abilities to his or her assigned mentor. The mentor will notify the Head Road Captain when a CRC has completed this stage. The CRC shall demonstrate the ability to:

- Plan the route for one ride
- Demonstrate a proper Pre-Ride brief
- Negotiate a group through urban and suburban environments
- Demonstrate proper acceleration technique and good speed control
- Execute proper lane changes in urban, suburban, and highway environments
- Demonstrate the canceling of a lane change
- Demonstrate the proper technique for passing vehicles in the oncoming traffic lane. This may be done on an empty road
- Demonstrate the proper technique for passing a big-rig on a multi-lane highway
- Demonstrate the ability to recognize and adjust the ride to the experience level/riding capabilities of the entire group
- Demonstrate an awareness of environmental changes including weather and road conditions
- Complete a qualification ride preferably with a group of RCs. The RCs will evaluate the CRC and report to the HRC

2.5.3 Presentation of Road Captain Rocker

After a Road Captain candidate meets all the prerequisites of becoming a Road Captain and the Head Road Captain determines Road Captain eligibility, every effort will be made to present the Road Captain Rocker to the candidate at a regularly scheduled Chapter meeting. This presentation will indicate to all members present that this individual has met the basic requirements of the position.

3.0 The Ride

Every rider who chooses to participate in an official Chapter ride has a responsibility to:

- Show up on time
- Arrive with a full gas tank
- Keep a properly maintained motorcycle
- Wear all state-required safety equipment
- Be familiar with and exercise the Chapter's group riding procedures
- Listen to and follow the instructions of the Road Captains unless those instructions will put them or others in an unsafe situation
- Know the basic route

3.1 Meeting Place & Time

RCs will determine the meeting place and time for their ride and provide a ride description form to the HRC. The meeting time will be stated as the time that the ride briefing will start. The briefing should take no more than 15 minutes. The RCs for each ride will meet at least 15 minutes prior to the scheduled time to ensure they are prepared for the ride.

3.1.1 Communication

The HRC/AHRC will ensure the Chapter Web page and H.O.G. phone system is updated with the latest ride information.

3.1.2 Ride Cancellation

The decision to cancel a ride should be made a minimum of two hours prior to the briefing. After making the decision to cancel a ride, the LRC shall notify the HRC, AHRC, Chapter Director or Assistant Director in person or by telephone, so the H.O.G. Announce can be updated. The LRC shall ensure someone travels to the designate meeting sight and any pick-up sights to ensure anyone who shows up for the ride is notified of the cancellation.

3.2 Event Release Forms

Chapter activities are conducted primarily for the benefit of H.O.G. Chapter members. There are three categories of activities; they are identified as follows:

- Member Only Events are events that are open only to Fort Washington chapter members
- Closed events are Chapter events which are open only to Chapter members and one guest per member
- Open events are Chapter events which are open to Chapter members, National H.O.G. members and other guests as desired

Closed and Member Only events are covered by existing H.O.G. chapter General Liability and Event Insurance Policy; Open events usually require purchase of additional insurance. Prior to each ride, the LRC or designee will identify any non-chapter members and/or minors and obtain the necessary event release forms. These forms are to be submitted to the Chapter Secretary or the Head Road Captain at the next scheduled H.O.G. Chapter meeting or deposited in the HOG mailbox located in HDW. These forms are to be retained for seven years.

Those release forms are:

- Chapter Event Release Forms for Adults (18+ years of age)

- One filled out for each non-Fort Washington H.O.G. adult that is on the ride
- Chapter Event Release Forms for Minors
 - One filled out for each rider under the age of 18
- Minor's Assumption of Risk Acknowledgment
 - One filled out for each minor over the age of 12

3.3 Pre-Ride Briefing

At the stated meeting time the LRC or designee will conduct a briefing from the RC briefing card. This should be done as expeditiously as possible. The following talking points shall be covered prior to every ride (these are not in any particular order).

- All stated time intervals are minimums!
- Staggered Riding – 2 seconds interval of the bike directly in front of you, 1 second interval of all other bikes
- Stop Signs – double up, proceed through in pairs and then make separation
- Stop Lights – stop if light turns regardless of your position in group
- If separation occurs, the LRC will slow down or find a safe place to pull off and wait for the group to catch up
- TRC or other RCs within the group may have to take the lead of a broken group to get them caught up. Make sure all RCs know directions and destination
- Lane Changes – instruct riders: pass signal (hand and/or light) back, do not move, the TRC will change position, move only after rider in front of you does. Inform riders that LRC could cancel the lane change if needed
- Immediate Lane Changes – The LRC may initiate the lane change prior to notifying the TRC if the situation requires it. All riders will follow safely without regard to other vehicles ending up within the group
- Passing: Always using riders own judgment
 - One lane each direction
 - Multilane Big Rigs
 - Any vehicle on an adjoining shoulder
- Hand Signals – minimally the bold signals should be covered
 - **Left Turn**
 - **Right Turn**
 - **Stop**
 - **Slow Down**
 - **Speed Up**
 - **Single File**
 - **Staggered**
 - **Split Staggered**
 - **Obstacle left**
 - **Obstacle right**
 - **Lane Change Cancellation**
 - Pull Off
 - Blinker On
 - High Beam
- Gas

- Food
- Comfort Stop
- Breakdown / Accident Procedure – everyone following incident bike stops. Road Captain(s) will determine what needs to happen.
- Return Route / Way Home – repeat from initial brief.
- If equipped, have all riders turn passing lamps (spots) off, except for the TRC.
- If equipment failure occurs, TRC will attend to the rider, the LRC will pull over, when safe. The LRC will determine the actions that will follow.
- Accidents: Preemptively identify who will, if needed, call emergency numbers, handle traffic, stay at scene, and perform first-aid. The LRC will be the focal point to make decisions.

The LRC is the final word for that ride; they are in charge. Any problems or issues should be communicated to him/her as soon as possible

3.4 Riding Guidelines

- The LRC will wait at stop signs until the TRC has stopped.
- The LRC and TRC will communicate via radios or signals using head and/or passing lamps.
- LRC will use all hand signals as needed and will re-issue hand signals if required after stops.
- In the event of a serious safety issue the TRC shall signal the LRC via CB radio or headlight to make an immediate stop to correct the issue.

The RCs will NOT require riders to wear safety equipment that is not required by the laws of the state that the ride is currently in.

3.5 Riding Formations

The basic formation for all rides is the staggered formation.

3.5.1 Environmental Conditions

Environmental conditions will dictate when the LRC places the group in a single file formation. All stated time intervals are minimums! Environmental considerations may include, but are not limited to:

- Road width
- Presence of frequent or tight curves (normally back roads)
- Road conditions (construction, sand or gravel, pot holes, etc.)
- Vehicles on the side of the road (bicycles, emergency, disabled, etc.)
- Weather

3.5.2 Staggered Formation

The staggered formation, signaled by the LRC by a hand signal above the head with the index and little finger extended, consists of riders, alternately, in the right and left halves of the travel lane. All riders in the left half of the lane should have a two (2) second separation. All riders in the right half of the lane should have a two (2) second separation. All riders should have a one (1) second separation to the nearest bike, right or left, to them.

3.5.3 Split Staggered Formation

Split staggered formation, noted by a left turn hand signal with index and pinky finger extended, is used for occasions when two lanes will be narrowing into one lane. The separation of the standard stagger is kept; however, the left half of the group will go into the left lane and the right half of the group will go into the right lane. The stagger is kept because as the lanes merge together, all riders will be in the proper stagger.

3.5.4 Single File

Single File, noted by a hand signal above the head with the index finger only extended is used when environmental conditions preclude use of the Staggered Formation. All riders will slow slightly to allow a two (2) second separation from the rider in front of them. Each rider may now use the entire lane. LRC will signal when to return to the staggered position.

3.6 Hand Signals

Hand signals will be used at all times to maneuver the group, change formation or point out hazards. Hand signals should be given in a timely manner but not so early or late that they are meaningless or unnecessary. The LRC will initiate all hand signals with the exception of pointing out hazards. Any rider in the group, in any position, upon becoming aware of a hazard, should point out the hazard to all riders that follow. When the LRC issues a hand signal, he or she shall hold the hand signal until the rider behind the LRC performs the signal. Upon seeing the signal relayed back, the LRC may then resume riding with two hands. Each subsequent rider will maintain the hand signal until the rider behind acknowledges receipt by also performing the hand signal. The TRC will perform the hand signal to signal the traffic that follows.

CAUTION

DO NOT MAINTAIN OR PERFORM ANY HAND SIGNALS IF SAFETY REQUIRES TWO HANDS ON YOUR HANDLEBARS

3.7 Traffic Lanes

The group shall stay in a single traffic lane whenever possible. The LRC will pick a lane where the flow of traffic is consistent with the speed of the group. In an urban environment, the LRC should consider the distance to the next turn on the ride route and the direction of that turn when deciding which lane to utilize. On limited access roads with more than two travel lanes in each direction, the LRC should avoid using the right lane as a travel lane to avoid merging traffic. On limited access roads with only two travel lanes in each direction, the group will normally travel in the number two (right) lane unless the LRCs believes the frequency of access ramps would likely cause a disruption to the group from merging traffic. Lane changes will be kept to a minimum and only used to pass slower traffic or to avoid road hazards.

3.7.1 Lane Changes in Detail

A lane change refers to maneuvering the group into a new travel lane where the direction of traffic in the new lane is in the same direction of travel of the group. Lane changes may be performed for a wide variety of reasons including passing slower traffic, maneuvering the group into a lane where the traffic speed is the same as the group wishes to travel, or in preparation for

turning onto an intersecting roadway or exiting a freeway. Lane changes should be kept to a minimum and, whenever possible, should be well thought out in advance to minimize the disruption to the group. The LRC will initiate lane changes by signaling the TRC by hand signal, the motorcycle's turn signal or CB radio (if so equipped). The LRC can cancel the intended lane change if needed. This is noted by a back and forth hand signal at the neck, similar to that used to signal shutdown of engines. Subsequent riders will hold their positions and pass the signal back. Upon receipt of the lane change signal, the TRC will show the hand signal for following traffic and, when safe to do so, the TRC will move into the middle half of the new lane. The LRC, upon observing the TRC in position and with no traffic between in the new lane, will maneuver his or her bike into the new lane. Each rider, in turn, will then follow suit and maneuver into the new travel lane.

Once the group is established in the new lane, the TRC will then assume the correct position in either the left or right half of the travel lane.

NOTE

WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE TRC, NO ONE IS TO CHANGE LANES UNTIL THE RIDER IN FRONT OF THEM DOES SO.

NOTE

IF THE LANE CHANGE IS REQUIRED FOR EITHER SAFETY REASONS (E.G., HAZARD IN THE CURRENT TRAVEL LANE) OR BECAUSE THE RIDE ROUTE REQUIRES (EXITING A FREEWAY OR A TURN ONTO AN INTERSECTING STREET) AND TRAFFIC DOES NOT PERMIT A LANE CHANGE IN THE ABOVE DESCRIBED MANNER, THE LEAD ROAD CAPTAIN MAY INITIATE THE LANE CHANGE WITHOUT WAITING FOR THE TRC. ALL SUBSEQUANT RIDERS SHALL THEN FOLLOW INTO THE NEW TRAVEL LANE, AS INDIVIDUALS, WHEN SAFE TO DO SO, WITHOUT REGARD FOR AUTOMOBILES THAT MAY END UP IN THE MIDDLE OF THE GROUP. WHEN SAFE THE GROUP WILL REASSEMBLE.

3.7.2 Passing in Detail

Passing refers to maneuvering the group into a traffic lane where the direction of travel is in the opposite direction the group is riding. Passing will only be done on two lane roads (roads which have a single travel lane in each direction). Recommended methods for passing are:

- One lane each direction – one bike at a time
- Multilane Big Rigs – as a group or at the LRC discretion two bikes at a time or single column
- Any vehicle on an adjoining shoulder - single up while passing

WARNING
PASSING MAY ONLY BE DONE WHERE LEGAL TO DO SO

WARNING
PASSING ACROSS SOLID LINES IS NOT LEGAL

Once the LRC determines there is sufficient room for the group to pass, the LRC shall maneuver into the oncoming traffic lane and accelerate past the slower traffic and return to the initial travel lane in his or her lead position. Each subsequent rider, in turn and when safe, should also maneuver into the oncoming traffic lane and accelerate past the slower traffic, then return to the initial traffic lane. Once the TRC has cleared the slower traffic he or she should return to the initial travel lane in tail position.

3.8 Breakdown / Accidents

In the event of a breakdown or an accident, all riders behind the motorcycle(s) involved in the incident will pull over to the side of the road where safe to do so. The LRC will find a safe place to pull over the rest of the group that was in front of the accident. The TRC and/or another RC will assess the situation and assign individuals to help as needed to block oncoming traffic or call for emergency services. The LRC must be contacted to inform him or her of the situation. Once the situation has been assessed and stabilized, a Road Captain will proceed or designate another member to lead the rest of the riders, those who are not required to stay and help, to join up with the LRC's group. If a RC had to designate a leader to join up with the rest of the group, you must inform that person that while they are in front, the ride is NOT an official HOG ride. If any injuries occur during an official chapter ride, an injury report must be completed as soon as possible on the same day that the injury occurred. If applicable, attach the riders release form and any police reports to the completed form. Deliver the completed documents to any primary officer or the Head Road Captain. The chapter Secretary will fax the forms to Harley-Davidson Insurance. Please note that only police can take a witness report. When the situation has been resolved and the ride is ready to proceed, ensure that everyone is accounted for and NO ONE is left behind.

4.0 Mentoring

Prospective Road Captains shall choose or be assigned a mentor from the cadre of experienced Road Captains by the Head Road Captain. The mentors shall work to educate and train the new volunteer CRCs ensuring that he or she is familiar with the Road Captain Training Manual and responsibilities of being a Ft Washington Road Captain.