**Group Riding - “Second Man Drop Off”**

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**Overview**

Second man drop off is a riding system used by HOG to highlight a route when there are a larger number of riders, or the group is likely to get stretched out or split due to riding conditions (e.g. towns, high number of traffic lights, etc).

It is used where the direction of the ride is **NOT** straight on at a junction. It is designed so a group of riders can make progress safely without getting split up, lost and most of all, without putting pressure on the less experienced riders in the group.

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The Lead Road Captain, Tail Rider, Sweep Rider and any additional road crew shall be experienced to lead a large group and will have surveyed (recced) the route before the ride out.

**​Team / Equipment**

The Lead Road Captain, Tail Rider, Sweep Rider and any additional road crew shall be highly visible to the group. They will wear Hi-Vis vests and, where fitted, will ride with passing lamps on. If possible Tail & Sweep riders will have a different colour Hi-Vis vest to the Lead Road Captain.

**‘The System’**

On main, ‘A’ roads and motorways, the group will generally ride in staggered formation. This allows the ride to close up and dominate the road space as a group, especially on faster flowing roads such as by-passes, motorways etc. It also helps to maintain the 2 second safety rule as this provides riders with a larger margin for error, i.e. the correct stopping distance.

On some B roads and country lanes it is NOT appropriate to ride in staggered formation due to road conditions / size and single file should be adopted.



During this formation the Lead Road Captain at the front of the group is the only person who does **NOT** stay in staggered formation. He/she will ride in a number of positions across the width of the carriageway, to ensure the best view for safe progression of the ride. All other riders should maintain their staggered formation as indicated above.

When the ride sets off it is advisable to fall into the staggered formation if safe to do so. The person directly behind the Lead Road Captain is known as ‘Second Man’ (hence the name of the routine) and they should assume a position to the left of the Lead Road Captain, e.g. kerbside. All other riders should then be staggered behind the Lead Road Captain as indicated above.

When the group approaches a fixed hazard (junction, set of traffic lights and major or minor turnings) the Lead Road Captain will indicate to the Second Man that he/she will soon be ‘dropped off’. This is done by the Lead Road Captain raising his/her left arm in the air. The Lead Road Captain will then point to the spot on the side of the road where he would like the Second Man to stop and direct other riders in the group. It is important that the rider stops where they feel it is safe to do so, but within the general area indicated by Lead Road Captain.

As soon as the Second Man has stopped, they should cancel indicators, select neutral gear and clearly point with a raised arm the direction that the Lead Road Captain has gone. All indications should be exaggerated as it is often hard to see arm movement when sleeves are the same colour as main jacket background. Please note that for right hand turns this should be done with the left arm indicating over the head towards the right. This is to protect the rider from having their right arm hit by passing traffic and prevent fellow riders from being hit by the indicating arm.

The Second Man should stay in position directing all the subsequent riders in the right direction until they see the Tail Rider and Sweeper in their mirror approaching. The Tail Rider will endeavour to leave a significant gap between him/herself and the last rider that the Second Man can safely pull into and re-join the ride. If this is not possible, the Tail Rider / Sweeper will ride past the Second Man and acknowledge them, subsequently slowing down so that the Second Man can safely overtake them when safe to do so and re-join the **back of the group**. In re-joining the group the Second Man should assume the next relative staggered position (left or right). This may not be the same as the position they vacated when dropped off. This does not matter, the importance is maintaining the staggered formation and 2-second safety rule.

When the Second Man is initially dropped off, the rest of the riding group should remain in formation and **NOT** change their relative riding position to fill the gap left by the dropped off rider. The next rider behind the Lead Road Captain now becomes Second Man (regardless of whether they are kerbside or not) and the system repeats.

At roundabouts the Second Man will be dropped off at the exit so as not to cause confusion and put riders at risk on the approach to the hazard. Sometimes a rider will be dropped off on the approach where the size of the island and traffic conditions dictate advance warning is required. On long roads, the Lead Road Captain **may** also drop a rider off at the side of a road to give confidence to the group that they are on course.

This routine is then repeated over and over without any of the group stopping. This system takes practice to work effectively and to gain confidence in, as the group may be spread over a few miles but still be able to follow the Lead Road Captain with no problems.

Please have confidence in the Second Man Drop off system, and under no circumstances must you re-join the group before you see the Tail / Sweep riders approach as it will split the group as they won’t know what direction to take

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** For many reasons it may take a while for all riders to pass the dropped off Second Man. There could be several long gaps without any riders being visible, this is normal and the Second Man should remain in position until the Tail Rider appears and the last rider of the group has passed. If the Second Man leaves their position too early (often in a panic as they haven’t seen another rider for a few minutes – which can seem much longer on the side of the road) this **WILL** destroy the system and mean your fellow Brothers/Sisters riding with you will have no direction and will undoubtedly get lost, ruining the ride for them.

All riders are reminded that they are ultimately responsible for their own safety.

**Leaving the ride**

If for any reason it is necessary to leave the ride, the rider should safely pull over to the kerbside, set their indicator / hazard warning lights and wait for the Tail and Sweeper riders to approach and give the recognised hand signal of their intent. The common signal is a flat hand waved side to side across the throat signalling “I’m done, heading home”.

Making the communication clear will avoid a Lead Road Captain having to stop, or turn round and go back, to check that the rider is ‘ok’. It is also good practice to let the Lead Road Captain know before leaving on the ride of their intentions so that others following are aware and do not follow once an individual(s) leave the ride.

**Road Rage**

DON’T DO IT. Other road users can become frustrated and venting anger at other road users may have consequences for riders’ further back in the group who may not be aware of any situation.