

It's that time of year once again, I call it the Holiday Freight Train. It usually starts about the first week of November and lasts until the 2nd week of January! A non-stop schedule of holiday gatherings and festivities!

One of the new items on our freight train schedule coming up soon is the **Holiday Toy Run**. The flyer for this event says it's "Lake County's Largest Motorcycling Tradition" and that it has proudly contributed more than \$125,000 to date. The event is put on by the Lake County United Motorcyclist Association, Inc on **December 3rd...(Okay, I admit that was a shameless plug for the event and I hope that you can come out and participate with us!)** \*There is a copy of the flyer posted on the motorcycle section of our website at [www.hillcrestinsurance.com](http://www.hillcrestinsurance.com) (Just in case you are interested)

This type of event brings up the subject of Group Rides. Riding with a group is one of the most enjoyable aspects of riding but it also has some unique risks associated with it. So I thought in this article I would highlight some safety considerations for Group Rides.

### ***Tips for Group Riding Safety***

**Pre-Ride Inspection**-Make sure and do a thorough inspection of your bike before leaving home. This is really for all rides, not just group rides.

Use your T-Clocs Inspection Checklist--\*A copy of the checklist is posted on the Motorcycle page of our site for your reference. This is a Motorcycle Safety Foundation document

**T**-Tires and Wheels  
**C** - Controls  
**L**- Lights  
**O** - Oil  
**C** - Chasis  
**S**- Stands

**Arrival early** and ready to ride - Fueled up ready to roll.

**Attention Please!** -Pay attention during the pre-ride meeting/briefing. The Ride Captain/leader will/ should discuss the route, rest and fuel stops, assign a lead and sweep (tail) rider and review the overall plan for the ride. The Captain/leader may also review the hand signals that will be used. A couple of examples are below.

**Ride Equipped**- At least one member of the group should pack a cell phone, first-aid kit, and full tool kit. --Seriously though, it's probably a good idea for all riders to have these items

**Formation** - Use a staggered formation (avoiding side by side situations). The Leader rides in the left third of lane, next rider 1-2 second behind in right third of lane, with the rest of the group following in this same pattern maintaining at least a 1-2 second interval. Single file formation is for curvy roads, poor visibility or road conditions, etc. At a stoplight or stop sign, wait in pairs, and always pass other vehicles individually (when safe), not in pairs or groups.

**Cover your Wingman**- Periodically check the riders following in your rear view mirror, if you see they are falling back slow down. If the entire group follow this advice it helps the group stay together and minimizes the pressure for the stragglers to have to ride too fast to keep up.

**Utilize the SEE Strategy** - **S**-Search around you for potential hazards  
**E**-Evaluate any possible hazards  
**E**- Execute the proper action to avoid the hazards

**Stay Cool** - If you do get separated (it happens), don't panic! And please don't ride beyond your skills to try and catch up, the group should have a pre-planned procedure in place to regroup. If not, make your

way to the next scheduled stop and regroup there.

**Hand Signals - Below are a few of the hand signals that I have seen most often.** You can find a more complete list of these signals at either the Motorcycle Safety Foundation website or the Motorcycle page of our agency website.

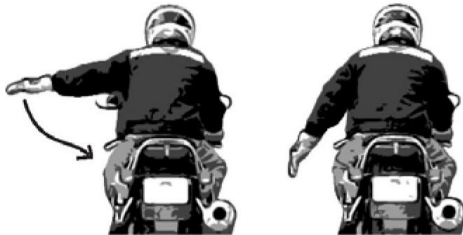
**Stop** - arm extended straight down, palm facing back



**Single File** - arm and index finger extended straight up



**Slow Down** - arm extended straight out, palm facing down



**Double File** - arm with index and middle finger extended straight up



Here's wishing you a very Merry Christmas and Happy Holiday season, hope to see you out there on a group ride over the holidays!

Submitted by Kevin McEwen, President - Hillcrest Insurance Agency -Your Biker Agent