

# Combat Veterans Motorcycle Association

# Alaska Chapter 43-1

# Standard Operating Procedures (SOP)

# May 2016

**Organization Of Rides**

**All CVMA 43-1 group rides will be led by a Road Captain (RC). If there is not a RC present, the ride will be led by an RC designated by the Commander or by the Commander.**

**Prior to the ride, the RC will to the best of their ability, perform a visual safety inspection of the motorcycles that will be participating in the ride.**

**Five minutes prior to kick stand up (KSU) the RC will conduct a Safety Brief (Attachment 1) This is the RC’s time to set the tone for the ride. Questions should be held until the end of the brief.**

**Typically the Chapter officers will ride at the front of the formation. The Chapter Road Captain will be the front left bike and leading the group. The RC may opt to have an assistant in front with them to assist with routes and ride familiarity. The RC will designate a Tail Gunner to ride at the rear of the formation. The Tail Gunner will be responsible for signaling to the RC that all riders appear ready to roll after engine start. As required, the Tail Gunner will maneuver into a position to hold the lane open for a lane change or to secure a lane when there is a reduction in the number of lanes. The Tail Gunner will also be the one to assist any rider of the group that may break down or fall out of formation. It is imperative the the Tail Gunner is knowledgeable of all route stops and get well points to the final destination.**

**If the amount of riders for any particular event is greater than 10 bikes, the RC will designate a second echelon Road Captain. The 2nd RC will ride at the front and lead the second group of up to 10 bikes. They will be briefed on all route stops and get well points to the final destination. Chapter rides will maintain group integrity.**

**Riding Formation**

**CVMA Chapter 43-1 has a standard riding formation of 2 second staggered. The RC will ride in the front left position; the Tail Gunner will attempt to ride in the aft left position.**

**To optimize visibility and situational awareness with larger groups, the RC may choose to ride in the center of the lane and brief the Tail Gunner to do the same. The rest of the riders in the group will follow the 2 second staggered formation. Trikes and Scoots with sidecars will always travel at the back of the formation in single file, ahead of the Tail Gunner.**

**Guest riders will ride behind CVMA members and ahead of the Tail Gunner. Exception will be if spouses and significant others ride, they may ride next to their sponsor.**

**In traffic and controlled intersections, especially stop lights, the formation will come to a side by side or parallel formation. When accelerating or turning from this parallel formation, the bike on the left will have the right of way. When riding in challenging environments or narrow roads, the RC may signal for single file formation maintaining a 2-3 second following distance. Transitioning from a staggered formation to single file will allow the bike on the left to go ahead of the bike on the right.**

**In the event of a bike leaving the formation for any reason, the gap will be filled in from the back. DO NOT begin a criss cross effort to fill in the open position. Simply move forward to the empty position.**

**Group Riding Signals**

**Riders will pass on hand signals initiated by the riders in front of them**

**Ready to Ride: Thumbs up high enough in the air to be visible to the RC**

**Staggered Formation: Two fingers in a “V” on top of the helmet. (Usually pointer and pinky)**

**Single File Formation: One finger pointing towards the sky on top of helmet**

**Back Off: Palm of left hand shown to group, pushing motion toward rear of bike.**

**Slow Down: Left arm held out straight and move arm up and down**

**Emergency Vehicle Alert: Knock on helmet**

**Speed up/Close formation: Circling hand over head**

**Need to Stop: Point to your tank. No matter the reason, this alerts others in the group you need to stop. Fuel, mechanical, pit stop etc… In this case, ONLY the Tail Gunner will stop with the bike in need. The rest of the group will press on to the next designated point or get well point.**

**Lane Changes**

**The RC will signal for a lane change. All riders will hold their position. The Tail gunner will secure the new lane and from back to front will begin the lane change. Lane changing will try to be held to a minimum.**

**Lanes are counted from left to right. The left lane being referred to as the “fast” lane or “passing” lane and is counted as lane 1. With lanes to the right becoming 2, 3 so on. The RC will lead the group in a single lane.**

**The RC will brief which lane will be the preferred lane of travel. This cannot always be maintained depending on traffic conditions.**

**No lane splitting will be condoned nor is it legal. DO NOT attempt to block cagers from entering the formation, they WILL take you out. Roll off throttle let them in.**

**Breakdowns**

**In the event it is necessary for a rider to pull over, they will clear the formation and safely leave the highway or roadway. The Tail Gunner will stop with the problem rider. All others will maintain the formation filling in the gap as briefed to continue to preplanned get well or next destination. Whichever is closer. If in a large formation, it may be necessary for the last rider to ride ahead and inform the RC of the drop outs. The RC will then make the decision to pull over immediately, proceed to get well point or next route stop.**

**If a rider or riders become separated from the group, they should continue to ride on to the next get well or route stop. If no other riders can be located, attempt to reach the leaders by cell phone text or voice message. Leave message with intentions and associated times clearly.**

**Weather and Road Conditions**

**In the event of changes in weather and road conditions, the RC will pull over in a safe location for the formation to adapt to the condition. In the event of dense fog, riders should exit the roadway at the absolute earliest opportunity. If unable to exit, park bikes safely away from potential collisions and find/make shelter until weather breaks.**

**Etiquette**

**The CVMA serves as ambassadors for all veterans and respects all clubs and associations. When encountering other clubs or groups allow the CC, XO or RC to make contact or introduction. When arriving at events hosted by clubs or other groups, consider allowing them to make first contact. Socialization is well received by these clubs and groups. When conversing, be aware that asking to many questions may be deemed an interrogation and most likely won’t be welcome conversation. Should you encounter a “downed rider” from an MC, it is appropriate and expected to render first aid until another member from his club arrives. Briefly explain what you have done and have perceived to be the injuries involved. Then defer the victim to their club member. Under no circumstance remove that downed riders colors.**

**Common Sense**

**Always begin your ride with a full tank of gas. When fuel stops are made, top off. Even if you don’t need to take on any fuel at that point, its better to have it and not need it than to need and not have! Experienced riders will agree with that statement.**

**Ride your own bike. Never allow the formation to exceed your riding ability or comfort level. The easiest pace and smallest amount of speed change is at the front of the formation. Small amount of throttle adjustments will decrease the “accordion” effect.**

**Difficulty or disagreement with other riders: If you encounter a rider that is not to your “skill” or riding level, attempt to distance yourself from that rider until the next stop. At that time try and politely explain your reason for separation and maybe encourage or mentor the rider if need be. They may also try and do the same to you. We all wear the same patch. If an agreement is not obtainable, then bring your differences to the attention of the RC or SA.**

**Complacency versus anticipation during long rides. Avoid the “Sled dog” mentality. If you find yourself staring at the taillight in front of you, you are in a good spot for an accident. Look ahead at least 4 bikes to analyze and anticipate acceleration, braking, hazards and lane changes. Challenge yourself to scan the horizon, check mirrors and play the “what if” game. What if this car stopped at the light pulls out ……now! What will I do? That taillight ahead of you will remain in your field of view. You will also increase the safety of the riders behind you.**

**From the RC back to the Tail Gunner, avoid hard acceleration. Execute gradual speed changes, especially entering on and off ramps as well as traveling mountainous roads.**

**Responsibilities**

**Road Captain. Has full charge of the group until arrival at the destination. The RC will:**

**Lead the group ride in a manner consistent with the objectives and guidelines established in this SOP utilizing best judgement in situations not specifically covered herein.**

**Brief the Tail Gunner and road guards on route, responsibilities and other details pertinent to the ride prior to departure.**

**Conduct a ride briefing to all members prior to departure**

**Exercise the responsibility for the final decision with regard to ride termination due to inclement weather, hazardous conditions or other difficult or unsafe conditions.**

**Instruct any rider to ride in a specific position within the group or to leave the group for reasons of misconduct or unsafe riding practices. Common sense and tact will be exercised.**

**Ensure a maintained first aid kit is available.**

**Ensure a maintained tool kit is available.**

**Designate a 9-1-1 caller within the group and identify other riders with cell phones, first aid and tool kits.**

**Establish and maintain speed in conjunction with road, traffic, and weather conditions to accommodate the abilities of the least experienced rider in the group.**

**Execute safe riding maneuvers**

**Generally lead the group ride in standard fashion**

**Tail Gunner**

**The Tail Gunner will assist the RC in the performance of their duties and may be required to assume the duties of the RC in their absence. The Tail Gunner will:**

**Be responsible for bringing the First Aid Kit to the ride**

**Be responsible for bringing the Tool Kit to the ride**

**Ride sweep unless required to stop and assist a broken ride, or assume duties of RC**

**Observe any hazardous conditions or conduct and take immediate action to fix the situation. Notify the RC and/or SA at first chance.**

**Generally ride where best visibility can be given to the RC at the front of the formation. Lane protection is the main responsibility. During lane changes, the Tail Gunner will procure the lane to move into, then the RC followed by the rest of the group.**

**Questions concerning this SOP may be directed to the chapter officers or the State Rep.**

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**State Representative Commander**

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**Executive Officer Sergeant at Arms**