



## STAR CHAPTER 317 - RIDE AND SAFETY GUIDE



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## 1. Group Rides

### 1.1. What New Members Need to Know

Chapter 317 rides in an organized, "staggered" formation. The purpose of riding in an organized group instead of an undisciplined pack is to provide the additional safety that a well-organized group inherently generates. This comes from within the group and from the outside. When a group rides in an orderly fashion, people don't get in each other's way and the organization of the formation itself discourages cars from attempting to cut in.

Every one riding with the Chapter is expected to follow the agreed upon rules. Anyone violating the rules and compromising the safety of others will be warned and if their actions continue, will no longer be welcome to ride with the group.

#### 1.2.1 Riding in Formation

When riding in the staggered formation the **Road Captain** will be in the left most position of the lane and the second bike will be to his right and 1 second behind. This formation creates two columns with each rider 2 seconds behind the rider directly ahead and 1 second behind the rider in the staggered position. This formation creates a 2 second "safety cushion" allowing for reaction time. The **Tail Gunner** will be the last bike and will ride on whichever side he prefers.

The **Road Captain** (ride leader) is responsible for the safety of the entire formation. He must be aware of the length of the columns and must gauge the passing of merges, highway entrances and exits, etc. to allow for maximum safety and for keeping the group together. He must make sure that he leaves enough time/space for the formation to get into the appropriate lane before exits or turns.

All directions come from the **Road Captain**. The **Road Captain** makes all decisions regarding lane changes, stops for breaks and fuel, closing of gaps, turning off at exits, any concerns of what lies ahead, accepting/rejection radioed messages from other individuals and so on. **NO** individual will assert himself independently without direction from the **Road Captain** to do so.

The **Tail Gunner** serves as the eyes of the **Road Captain**. He watches the formation and informs the **Road Captain** of any potential problems within the group. He watches other vehicles and informs the **Road Captain** (and anyone else with radios) of hazardous conditions approaching from the rear, such as vehicles trying to cut into the formation and trucks passing with potentially dangerous wind blasts. He will watch for merging lanes, and will move into a merging lane (or stay in a merging lane just vacated by the

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group) in order to “close the door” on other vehicles that may otherwise find themselves trying to merge into the formation. At the **Road Captain’s** request, the **Tail Gunner** changes lanes before the group, to secure the lane so the group can move into it.

The position of new (inexperienced with GROUP riding) riders within the group is significant. New riders should be positioned as close to the front as possible. New riders should be teamed up with an experienced Shepherd. It’s the Shepherd’s responsibility to instruct the new rider on all ride signals and rules.

## 1.2.2 Changing Lanes

All lane changing starts with a radio request from the **Road Captain** to the **Tail Gunner**. When it is safe to do so the **Tail Gunner** will move into the requested lane and will inform the **Road Captain** when the lane is clear.

At this point the **Road Captain** has three options.

### SIMPLE LANE CHANGE.

front of him has started moving.

### BLOCK LANE CHANGE.

The **Road Captain** (after having the **Tail Gunner** secure the lane) Raises his left arm straight up. Each rider repeats this signal. Then as the **Road Captain** lowers his arm to point to the lane into which he’s moving, he actually initiates the change. All other riders lower their arms at the same time and change lanes too.

### REAR FILL-IN.

After having the **Tail Gunner** secure the lane and putting on his directional signal (which is repeated by each rider), the **Road Captain** raises his left hand to his shoulder and “pushes” his open hand toward the lane into which he wants to move. This signal is repeated by all riders, and each rider in turn, rearmost first, moves into the space ahead of the riders behind them.

## 1.2.3 Emergencies

In the unlikely event of an emergency condition, the **Road Captain** will make every attempt to move the formation to the shoulder in an orderly manner. If a bike breaks down, let the rider move to the right. DO NOT STOP. The **Tail Gunner** will stop with the problem bike. The **Road Captain** will lead the group to a safe stopping place.

## 1.2.4 Tolls

The **Road Captain** should be aware of tolls and collect money from all riders in advance. When the formation arrives at the toll booth, the **Road Captain** pays for all bikes, and the bikes proceed through the toll booth.

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Many toll booths have counters that count the number of vehicles coming through. To accommodate these, ride through the toll booth one at a time.

If some people in the group are using EZ pass, they will split out from the group, and they will regroup on the other side of the toll booth. Make sure the **Road Captain** know in advance how many bikes he is paying for.

## 1.2.5 Hand Signals

Each rider and passenger should duplicate all hand signals given by the rider in front of them, so that the signals are passed all the way to the back of the formation.

Images of each of the hand signals are found on the following pages. But first, here is a description of when use of some of the hand signals is appropriate.

### SINGLE UP

Conditions such as narrow road, anticipated wind blast from trucks, obstructions, pedestrians, etc, may cause the **Road Captain** to call for single file.

### STAGGERED FORMATION

After Singling Up, when single file is no longer necessary, the **Road Captain** will return the group to staggered formation.







### TIGHTEN FORMATION

When the **Road Captain** feels that the formation should be tighter – that is the bikes need to be closer together - usually after being informed by the **Tail Gunner**. Riders should tighten up but never with less than a 2 second “safety cushion” between their bike and the one in front of them.

### ROAD HAZARD


This is a signal that can be initiated by ANYONE. Anyone seeing a hazardous condition on the road surface (road kill, oil, gravel, significant pot hole, ect..) will point at it. All following riders will repeat this, and all riders will avoid the hazard.

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<p><b>Start Engines</b> With your right or left arm extended, move your index finger in a circular motion</p>	
	<p><b>Left Turn</b> Raise your left arm horizontal with your elbow fully extended</p>
<p><b>Right Turn</b> Raise your left arm horizontal with your elbow bent 90 degrees vertically</p>	
	<p><b>Hazard Left</b> Extend your left arm at a 45 degree angle and point towards the hazard</p>
<p><b>Hazard Right (A)</b> Extend your right arm at a 45 degree angle and point at the Hazard. Extreme Hazard</p>	
	<p><b>Hazard Right (B)</b> Extend your left arm upward at a 45 degree angle with your elbow bent to 90 degrees and point towards the hazard over your head</p>



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**Speed Up**  
Raise your left arm up and down with your index finger extended upward. This indicates the Road Captain wants to speed up.

**Slow Down**  
Extend your left arm at a 45 degree angle and move your hand up and down.




**Stop**  
Extend your left arm at a 45 degree angle with the palm of your hand facing rearward.

**Single File**  
Position your hand over your head with your fingers extended upwards. This indicates the Road Captain wants the group in a single file formation.



**Staggered Formation**  
Extend your left arm upward at a 45 degree angle with your index and pinkie finger extended. This is to indicate that it is safe to return to staggered formation

**Tighten Up**  
Raise your left arm and repeatedly move up and down in a pulling motion. This means the Road Captain wants the group to tighten up



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## 1.2. What Road Captains / Tail Gunners Need to Know

### 1.2.1 Description of Responsibilities

Together the Ride Captain and Tail Gunner work as a team to try and make the ride for the members as safe and enjoyable as possible.

The RC and TG are very important positions and should not be taken lightly. While it is their responsibility for group safety they must insure their own safety as well. Do not deal with a driver suffering Road Rage to your own demise. Try and work together to allow that driver to pass the group. Remember the best rides are the ones we all return from.

#### a. Road Captains

1. Are Responsible for insuring the group they lead makes it to the destination safely.
2. Monitors Hazards to the Front and Sides
3. Must know the Route to the Destination
4. Establishes Group Riding Speed
5. Make ride decisions based on Group Safety and abilities
6. Initiates and Executes Lane Changes.
7. Will address riders that are not following procedures and Ride Rules.
8. Gives Ride Instructions prior to departure
9. Picks wingman and gives cursory examination of bikes in his group

#### b. Tail gunners

1. Also knows the Route to the Destination
2. Monitors Riders to make sure they are complying with Ride Rules will notify Ride Captain of any problems.
3. Secures Lane for Lane Changes Initiated by Ride Captain
4. Will block a lane that is ending to insure a Driver will not be pulling into group and endangering riders
5. Will stop to assist any rider dropping out of ride to lend aid
6. Assists Ride Captain in maintaining Group Safety from Rear and sides by monitoring for Hazards in those Directions
7. Will notify Ride Captain when communication is available that a vehicle wishes to pass.
8. Gives Cursory Examination of bikes in his group
9. Establishes Ownership of the lane with other traffic.

Sometimes a group will use a wingman. This is the person who rides at the RC right stagger position. While it would be preferable for this person to be a RC or at least a TG, It needs to be a rider with some common sense and since the RC cannot see the TG in a right hand lane change, will be able to make right hand lane changes for the group safely.

Chapter By-Laws state we will run the speed limit. In practicality we can run +5mph on that.

Remember if you are running 70 at the lead position the Tail Gunner can be

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going in excess of 80 due to the accordion effect. The faster the lead speed the greater difference with the back of the pack will be.

Slow down for Curves. While most bikes and riders have the capability to exceed the recommended speed, a lot of our riders are not comfortable exceeding that recommendation.

When on a freeway DO NOT ride in the passing lane if you are only doing the speed limit or +5 as you will get run over and actually may get a ticket for impeding traffic.

Accelerate slowly; this cuts down on the accordion effect on entrance ramps and helps keep the group together.

## 1.2.2 Traveling as a Group.

### 1. Lane Changes

- a. With communication capabilities.
  - RC Notifies TG of desire to change Lane
  - TG secures Lane and Notifies RC
  - RC Signals and executes lane Change all members follow.
- b. Without communication capabilities.
  - RC Signals for Lane Change
  - All Members signal for Lane Change
  - TG Secures Lane
  - RC executes Lane Changes to Left – Wing man executes Lane Changes Right.
  - All Members follow.

### 2. City Driving

- a. PLAN AHEAD!
- b. ANTICIPATE LIGHTS!
- c. Watch for signals such as Walk Light going Red, cross traffic Slowing/Stopping
- d. Know where you are going. Make Lane changes in advance of turn/destination
- e. Keep the group tight. Accelerate slowly; Use the tighten formation Hand Signal if needed.
- f. If Multiple lanes, try not to ride in leftmost or rightmost lane as people are turning in and out of these lanes.

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- g. Watch for Hazards not only for yourself but for the group and act accordingly.

## 2. Two Lane Driving

- a. Passing on a 2 lane road
  - Go To Single File
  - When it is safe to Pass the RC will pass. All members are now responsible for their own safe pass. In order. DO NOT PASS THE PERSON IN Front of you. Once the vehicle is passed go back to stagger formation. As the Ride Captain make sure you are riding fast enough to insure your group can safely move back into the proper lane but not so fast that you leave everyone behind. Once you verify that all have successfully passed the vehicle resume your normal riding speed.
- b. If a vehicle is identified by the Ride Captain or reported to the RC from the Tail Gunner as wanting to pass the group, the Ride Captain should, when approaching an area it would be safe for that vehicle to pass, slow down the group allowing the vehicle to pass as quickly and safely as possible.
- c. At 4 way stops hold up the group and allow other traffic to pass, when traffic congestion will allow that. When traffic does not allow you to just sit and wait cross as normal but ride slowly till the group gets back together. Using MC's to Block Traffic is **ILLEGAL** if you do so you do it at the risk of getting a ticket.

## 4. Freeway Driving

- a. PLAN AHEAD!
  - DO NOT WAIT UNTIL THE EXIT IS RIGHT THERE TO MOVE OVER!
  - If you are approaching a slower vehicle, look at the traffic behind you. Plan your move to the passing lane as to not hinder traffic or jam up your group.
  - A little hint on Exit Signs. If the Small Exit sign on top is oriented left of the large exit sign the exit will be a left hand exit. If it is oriented to the right the exit will be a normal right side exit.
- b. Merging: Accelerate slowly keeping the group together. Due to traffic we cannot always use our lane change technique. If we can great if not move over when it is safe at least one lane and wait for the group to congregate then use the lane changing techniques for further lane changes. Cover Freeway merging in your Ride Instructions.
- c. **DO NOT RUN IN THE RIGHT MOST LANE!!** Due to lanes closing down. Exiting and Merging traffic this is a very dangerous lane to run a group in!

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- d. There are times when it is necessary to run in the rightmost lane, like as we are getting ready to Exit. When this happens as you are passing an on Ramp **LOOK AT IT and the traffic on the ramp!** You need to adjust your speed to get the group by the merging traffic with the least amount of interaction. Unfortunately since you cannot accelerate the bikes behind you, your only option is to slow down and let the traffic merge ahead of you.

### 5. Ride Instructions

- a. Part of the responsibilities of a Ride Captain is to give Ride Instructions. The TG should be paying attention and bring up any items that the RC may forget.
- b. Go over the Hand Signals
  - Left/Right Turn
  - Debris or Hazard in Road Left/Right
  - Single File
  - Stagger
  - Tighten up
  - Stop
  - Pull Over
  - Emergency Vehicle
  - Turn Signal On
- c. Go over the Ride
  - Planned Route
  - Known hazards
  - Where you plan to ride. i.e. HOV Lane
  - Where you plan to initiate a lane change if known
- d. Consider selecting a wingman - explain responsibilities.
- e. Go over the proper riding of Stagger Formation
  - 1 sec between you and the staggered rider in front of you
  - 2 sec between you and the rider directly in front of you
  - Explain reason is for safety
- f. Ask if there are any new riders or inexperienced riders in your group. If there are make sure they are put towards the front of the group
- g. Go over Lane Change Procedures. Emphasis that **NO ONE** moves until the RC (or Wingman ) changes lanes
- h. Explain the procedure for dropping out of ride.
  - If going down road Pat Head. Once space is granted by riders around you pull off to right
  - **ONLY TAIL GUNNER STOPS TO ASSIST!!**
  - RC will pull group over once it is safe to do so.

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- If at a stop notify either RC or TG that you are pulling out of the Ride
- i. Remind everyone that while we are trying to insure his or her safety it still comes down to them as an individual to insure their own safety. If a car tries to enter the group LET IT! They will lose otherwise.
- j. Remind everyone of the **NO ALCOHOL RULE** from STAR. This states that no alcohol may be consumed during an organized STAR Ride. Once the ride is declared over then they are on their own.
- k. Cover Freeway Merging as well.
- l. Ask if there are any questions.

## 1.2.3 Miscellaneous Items

If at all possible we should keep ride groups at no larger than 6 bikes. There are many good reasons for doing this but the main one is safety.

A small group is easier to pass than a large group

A small group can pass a vehicle easier than a large group

Traveling through a city or on a two lane is easier in a small group

The RC can observe all riders in his mirrors easier with a small group

When travelling with multiple groups each group will leave from the start point after the group has been briefed and is ready to go. Once on the road, if the groups should come together, leave a space equal to two (*OR GREATER THAN TWO*) Semi's between your group and the group in front of you. This allows a space for vehicles wishing to pass to have a place to pull in. It also gives your group more time to respond to an emergency if one should arise.

Whenever possible we should always try to use Ride Captains and Tail Gunners with communication capabilities as it makes the jobs much easier and safer. It also allows communication between groups when we are close enough so the lead group could notify the subsequent groups of hazards or other info. However we all need to know how to do these jobs with manual signals as you never know when your communications can have a problem also another reason for keeping smaller groups.

All extra (*NOT WORKING A RIDE*) Tail Gunners and Ride Captains that have not been designated a wingman, should when possible ride towards the rear of a group in case they are needed. Such an occasion might be in the case of a Tail Gunner having to pullover to lend assistance. They would then be able to take over the Tail Gunner Duties. Until you are needed to perform a function remember that all Ride Captains and Tail Gunners not in command of a group are under the same obligation to follow the Ride Rules as any other member. Do not move in anticipation of the Ride Captain in

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command!

All new or inexperienced riders should be placed toward the front of the Group (other than wing position) so they will not experience the accordion effect. It also allows more experienced riders to keep an eye on them.

All Ride Captains and Tail Gunners should give a cursory glance over the bikes in their group and report any safety deficiencies to the Rider. If the bike is such that it is unsafe to be in a group (Cord showing on a tire, No Tread on a tire--especially on a wet day), they need to deny that person the right to ride in the group.

**Remember our job is the SAFETY of our members please take this responsibility seriously !**

## 2. Keeping Your Bike Road Ready

### 2.1. T-CLOCK

The **T-CLOCK** inspection is most effective if performed when your bike is clean. Dirt, grease and road grime can easily hide potential problems. Regular cleaning not only keeps your motorcycle looking new, but actually extends its life by cleansing and protecting it from the corrosive elements of the road.

No matter what you do, you can't prevent certain parts from wearing. But by replacing worn parts *before* they break, you may stop them from causing extensive damage by breaking several other parts along with them. Be sure to follow the manufacturer's recommended maintenance schedule. This will keep your motorcycle running at peak performance and reduce the chances of mechanical failure. Keep a detailed maintenance record-it not only shows when the maintenance was performed, but it can add value to your motorcycle should you sell it.

Some routine maintenance procedures are simple. Others require the expertise of a trained technician. If you are unsure of your ability to perform any procedure, take your motorcycle to an authorized dealer. Remember, a mechanical problem incorrectly repaired can cause more extensive damage, which could ultimately lead to a crash. How well you ride depends on how well your motorcycle performs. And that depends on the quality of care you provide.

Use this easy way to remember motorcycle components that should be examined during a pre-ride inspection. The components are:

- ✓ **T**ires and wheels;
- ✓ **C**ontrols, such as levers, cables and throttle;
- ✓ **L**ights and electrics.
- ✓ **O**il and lubricants;
- ✓ **C**hassis and chain; and
- ✓ **K**ickstand.

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		Check		
Tires	Condition	Tread Depth, wear, weathering, evenly seated, bulges, imbedded objects	F	
	Pressure	Check when cold, adjust to load/speed		
Wheels	Spokes	\Bent, broken, missing, tension, check at top of wheel. "ring" ok-"thud" loose spoke		
	Cast	Cracks, dents		
	Rims	Out of round/true= 5mm. Spin wheel, index against stationary pointer		
	Bearings	Grab top and bottom of tire and flex; No free play (click) between hub and axle, no growling		
	Seals	Cracked, cut or torn, excessive grease on outside, reddish-brown around outside		
Levers	Condition	Broken, bent, cracked, mounts tight, ball ends on lever		
	Pivots	Lubricated		
Cables	Condition	Fraying, kinks, lubrication: Ends length.		
	Routing	No interference or pulling at steering head, suspension, no sharp angles. Wire looms in place		

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Hoses	Condition	Cuts, cracks, leaks, bulges, chafing, deterioration		
	Routing	No interference or pulling at steering head, suspension. No sharp angles, wire looms in place		
Throttle	Operation	Moves freely, snaps closed, no revving		

**T-Tires & Wheels**

**C-Controls**

Battery	Condition	Terminals clean and tight, electrolyte level held down securely		
	Vent Tube	Not kinked, routed properly, not plugged		
Lenses	Condition	Cracked, broken, securely mounted, excessive condensation		
Reflectors	Condition	Cracked, broken, securely mounted		
Wiring	Condition	Fraying, chafing, insulation		
	Routing	Pinched, no interference or pulling at steering head or suspension, wire looms and ties in place, connectors tight, clean		
Headlight	Condition	Cracks, reflector, mounting and adjustment		
	Aim	Height and right and left		
Levels	Engine	Check warm on centerstand, dipstick, sight glass		
	Hypoid	Transmission, rear gear, shaft		
	Hydraulic	Brakes, clutch, reservoir or sight glass		
	Coolant	Reservoir and/or recovery tank—cool only		
Leaks	Engine	Gaskets, housings, seals		
	Hypoid	Gaskets, seals, breathers		
	Hydraulic	Hoses. Master cylinders, calipers		
	Coolant	Radiator, hoses, tanks, fittings, pipes		
	Fuel	Lines, fuel taps, carbs		

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Frame	Condition	Cracks at gussets, accessory mounts, lifting paint		
	Steering-head Bearing	No detent or tight spots through full travel, raise front wheel check for play		
	Swingarm	Raise rear wheel check for play, pushing & pulling		
Suspension	Forks	Smooth travel, equal air pressure/damping anti dive setting		
	Shocks	Smooth travel, equal pre-load/air pressure/damping settings. Linkage moves freely and is lubricated		

**L-** Lights

**O-** Oil

Chassis Chain or Belt	Tension	Check at tightest point		
	Lubrication	Side plates when hot. Note: Do not lubricate belts		
	Sprockets	Teeth not hooked, securely mounted		
Fasteners	Threaded	Tight, missing bolts, nuts		
	Clips	Broken, missing		
	Cotter Pins	Broken, missing		
Centerstand	Condition	Cracks, bent		
	Retention	Springs in place, tension to hold position.		
Sidestand	Condition	Cracks, bent Safety cut-out switch or pad of equipped		
	Retention	Springs in place, tension to hold position		

**K-** Kickstands

### 3. Substance Abuse

Research shows that alcohol and drugs hinder drivers skills; visual sharpness, reaction time and general awareness.

The physical coordination and concentration needed to ride a motorcycle allow no room for impairment of any kind.

Even prescription drugs and Over-The -Counter medications can lessen a motorcyclists riding ability

Nearly 50% of fatally injured riders are alcohol involved. Drugs other than alcohol were found to be involved in a sizeable percentage of fatally injured drivers; however, 64% of these cases involved alcohol.

Good judgment is the most critical skill in motorcycle riding. Judgment is an essential element in the process of preventing accidents. Unfortunately judgment is the first skill affected by alcohol.

Most people ride motorcycles because they enjoy the immediate feedback provided by the machine and the connection with the riding environment. Use of alcohol and other drugs (over-the-counter, prescription or illegal) before riding a motorcycle compromises the intimate relationship between the motorcyclist, machine and the road.

There has been a lot of research that shows how alcohol hinders car driver's skills, including:

- ✓ Visual Sharpness
- ✓ Judgment
- ✓ Reaction Time
- ✓ General Awareness

#### 3.1. And what about motorcycle riding skills?

Research also shows that alcohol adversely affects riding skills as well. Most motorcyclists agree that it takes more coordination and alertness to ride a motorcycle than drive a car. Thus, motorcyclists need the above skills even more than automobile drivers.

Good judgment is the most critical skill in motorcycle riding. Judgment is an essential element in the process of preventing crashes. Unfortunately, judgment is also the first function to be affected by alcohol. This leads to one conclusion: Drinking before riding is a big risk. Using other drugs before riding can also be dangerous and increases risk significantly.

### 3.2. The Effects of Alcohol

Alcohol is a depressant and acts as a sedative to the brain. Although many people feel stimulation when drinking, this is indirect. Even a small amount of alcohol causes depression of those parts of the brain that control judgment, self-control and inhibition. The release of inhibition causes the feeling of stimulation. As greater amounts of alcohol enter the system, the parts of the brain controlling coordination and physical reflexes become depressed.

Regardless of the source, when alcohol enters the blood system the effects are the same. One standard size drink, whether it is a 12- ounce beer, a 5-ounce glass of wine or a cocktail equals 1 ounce of pure alcohol. Many people think a beer contains less alcohol than a standard mixed drink. This is because it usually takes longer to drink a beer than it does a cocktail. And a beer is much more filling. Also, cocktails sometimes are mixed stronger than a standard drink, making them equal to two normal servings of wine or beer.

### 3.3. Different Reactions

Alcohol affects people differently. A heavy drinker may show few physical signs of drunkenness, but the effect on the brain is the same as it is for a light drinker. A motorcyclist showing no outward signs of intoxication may still be unable to ride safely.

A physically large person can have two drinks and only be affected moderately, while a smaller person could become quiet intoxicated on the same amount. Smaller people have less blood in their system, so after one drink the percentage of alcohol in their blood, or blood alcohol concentration (BAC), will be higher than it would be for a larger person. A BAC of .10 means that the blood system contains about 1/10 of 1% of alcohol. In most states, a person with a BAC of .08 is legally intoxicated; impairment however, starts long before this BAC is reached. Some states have a lower BAC for motorcyclists to be considered legally intoxicated.

Once a person's BAC is at any level, it can only be reduced by allowing the liver time to oxidize the alcohol. Showers and coffee don't make you sober. Only time will do that. Showers and coffee may make a person feel more awake, but they don't reduce drunkenness.

### 3.4. Differences Between Alcohol and Other Drugs

Alcohol is considered a drug. Although some comparisons can be made between alcohol and other drugs, for the most part alcohol is unique. It is a single substance with a simple chemical structure. It's action inside the body is fairly simple and easy to understand. It's rarely used for medical purposes. And, although it's often abused, it's a legal drug usually approved

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by society.

Other drugs may include many substances. Most are products of modern chemistry. Their action in the body is usually much more complex than that of alcohol. Unlike alcohol, which “burns off” after being in the blood system for a while, other drugs remain in the body for long periods of time. Sometimes a drug’s effects may continue after it can no longer be detected in the blood.

In other cases, a drug may be detected in the blood after it’s action has stopped.

### 3.5. What About Prescription Drugs?

Illegal drugs are not the only ones that can impair your ability to ride a motorcycle. Many prescription drugs have adverse effects on a motorcyclist’s riding skills. Even over-the-counter drugs such as cold tablets and allergy remedies can lessen a cyclist’s riding ability.

### 3.6. The Effects of Other Drugs

There has been a lot of study done on the effects of drugs on driving behavior, but not much relating drug use to motorcycle accidents. As with alcohol however it can be easily assumed that the adverse effects of some drugs on driving behavior will be magnified when riding a motorcycle.

Motorcyclists should be aware of prescription and over-the-counter drugs that contain warnings to motor vehicle drivers. Even a cold tablet can reduce alertness and perception.

Regardless of whether it is an “upper” or “downer” a beer or a shot of whiskey, all drugs have immediate or delayed effects that impair mental or physical processes. Many affect both. These processes are important for all drivers, but even more so for motorcyclists. The coordination and awareness needed to ride a motorcycle safely leaves no room for impairment of any kind. Who’s involved in more fatal accidents involving intoxication car drivers or motorcyclists?

### 3.7. For Your Information

The proportion of all motor-vehicle drivers involved in fatal accidents who were legally intoxicated (BAC of .08 or greater) dropped to 24% in 1989-- a decline of 20% over the last decade. Unfortunately, the proportion of motorcycle riders involved in fatal crashes while legally intoxicated has remained relatively constant at about 40% over the last 10 years. Alcohol accounted for 41% of all traffic fatalities over the past 3 years.