



## RIDE PROTOCOL

This ride protocol is a set of guidelines to help us meet our mutual objectives of riding *safely* and everyone *enjoying* the ride. Reputable motorcycle clubs throughout the world all adhere to similar ride protocols. YOW MTC requests that all riders be familiar with this document.

### A. Before the Ride

These points are essential preparation before you turn up for the ride:

1. Ensure your insurance, registration and license is up to date.
2. If you have any physical or medical condition, or are under the influence of any substances or medicines, in the interest of safety for all, consider not riding until you're fit again.
3. Ensure your bike is mechanically and legally ready for the ride. Any problems put safety at risk and will inconvenience others. Conduct your own bike safety check before leaving home; check oils, brakes, the chain, belt tension, lights, turn signals, tyre tread depth, tyre pressures, any loose accessories and personal rider equipment.
4. Fill up with fuel before arrival at the ride meeting point.
5. Arrive at the correct time (check the 'Departure Point' link on the website if in doubt) to ensure you don't miss the pre-ride briefing. Take note of who the Ride Leader and Tail End Charlie are.
6. Make sure your ICE (In Case of Emergency) details are registered and up to date.

### B. During the Ride

7. Compliance with the road regulations and speed limits is the responsibility of each rider. Each rider has a responsibility to other road users, as well as an additional responsibility to the riding group. Please bear this in mind and at all times ride with consideration for other road users.
8. The ride is conducted under the direction of the designated Ride Leader. Follow the Ride Leader's instructions, and never overtake the Ride Leader (unless by prior arrangement – see Point 9). If there are enough bikes to warrant it, there will also be a Tail End Charlie (TEC) appointed who rides at the rear, wearing a yellow vest. The TEC ensures no riders fall behind them.
9. If a few riders wish to speed ahead of the group, they should arrange with the Ride Leader before departing and agree the point of separating and a later meeting point. Keep in mind that tearing off on your own to suit a particular riding style is fine but may erode the notion of group comradeship.
10. When riding in a close group in traffic or through towns, staggered formation is best practice. This keeps the group together so less chance of being split by lights or cars while maintaining safety. This formation has bikes in 2 lines, about 1/3 and 2/3 across the same lane respectively in alternating positions, with separation to the next bike in the line as per the next point.
11. Maintain a safe ride distance from the bike in front of you, based on two seconds for dry conditions and extend this space to three or four seconds in the wet. Note: This timing is gauged by selecting a fixed point (e.g. a line on the road) as the bike in front of you passes and counting the time it takes you to arrive at the same point. Get into the habit of regularly checking this timing. Safe riding in any formation requires continual concentration!
12. Use head checks, turn signals and, where appropriate, hand signals to provide warnings of change of direction, lane changes or hazardous road conditions.

13. Riders should only occupy one lane behind the Ride Leader on multilane highways.
14. Check your mirrors frequently in case traffic lights or other obstructions split the ride group. If you become separated from the group, do not compromise your (or anyone else's) safety or speed in order to catch up. Don't ride through red lights to avoid becoming separated.  
The technique is to follow the road, watching closely for *corner markers* at junctions until you catch up. If you don't see a corner marker at an intersection directing you, then continue straight on or whatever is naturally straight (eg 2<sup>nd</sup> exit on a roundabout).  
If safe to do so, the Ride Leader may also slow the lead group, the last rider of which should try to keep both groups in view. The lead rider of the split group should progressively bring the remainder of the pack back into formation with the lead group.
15. When the Ride Leader makes a turn, if he/she decides a corner marker is needed (usually if they can't see the TEC), then he/she will point to location on the roadside near the junction where the corner marker should pull over. If you are the bike riding directly behind the Ride Leader then you are the corner marker and should stop where directed and keep your indicator on to direct the rest of the group in the direction to turn. Note depending on the type of intersection and direction of turn the marking position could be on the left or right. When you see the TEC (wearing yellow vest) arrive, the TEC will slow and flash headlight to signal you fall in ahead of them. If you are not keen on being a corner marker, then avoid riding at #2. If you do find yourself in #2 then give the Ride Leader some extra space so if they are unsure at a turn they have time to decide. If there seems to be a delay before the Tail Rider appears, do not panic or leave your mark. In the event that the tail group has become lost, the lead group will soon realise this and come back for you. Note: it is also not recommended to race back to your position after corner marking. By staying in your new position there is rotation so everyone gets a turn to corner mark.
16. At all times, ride your own ride and never feel compelled to ride outside your comfort zone or take risks just to keep up. Allow faster riders to overtake you by moving over to the left on straight sections. The lead group will usually slow or stop periodically to allow slower groups to catch up.
17. If you need to stop during the ride and do not need assistance, ensure that you are well off the road when you stop and wave the following riders on. If you do require assistance, indicate to the Tail end Charlie by raising your hand in the air and he/she will stop to assist.

### **C. During Rest Stops**

18. Parking on the footpath is a privilege in Victoria. Ensure that your bike is always parked safely, close to or adjacent to the kerb, not obstructing pedestrians or driveways. Ensure your bike is not at risk of falling onto other bikes. Use your YOW side stand plate if in doubt!
19. Riders who intend to break away early from the ride should advise the Ride Leader and TEC and ensure they leave well before or well after the rest of the group so as not to cause any confusion.
20. Riders in doubt about any aspect of the ride should speak to the Ride Leader. Confusion can lead to breaches of safety.

Think of these guidelines as a common-sense safety checklist, rather than a bunch of rules being laid down, as everyone riding predictably means you can just concentrate on having a good time. However, YOW MTC expects these guidelines be adhered to by all riders at all times when participating in YOW activities, with consequences for those that flout safety.

This document may be updated from time to time, in which case a message will be posted on the e-Groups advising you when to review. There is also a handy short-form version of these guidelines available as a refresher for those already familiar with the Ride Protocol.