



## **CENTRAL VIRGINIA CHAPTER (27-3) OF THE COMBAT VETERANS MOTORCYCLE ASSOCIATION ROAD CAPTAIN MANUAL**

### **1.0 Introduction**

Congratulations on your decision to become a CVMA Chapter 27-3 Road Captain (RC). As a Road Captain, you will make an important contribution to the success of our Chapter's safe riding program. In order to have fun riding in a group, we have to be safe and have well qualified Road Captains. By volunteering, you have already demonstrated you have the best interests of our Chapter at heart. This manual is a guide to the rules and procedures followed by CVMA Chapter 27-3 Road Captains and lists the qualification requirements to become a fully qualified Road Captain.

### **2.0 Responsibilities of a Road Captain**

Every Road Captain has certain basic responsibilities. Lead Road Captains (LRC) and Tail Gunner (TG) have responsibilities specific to their duties including Pre- ride planning and preparation and road safety. This section details the responsibilities of all Road Captains and specific responsibilities of Lead and Tail Road Captains.

#### **2.1 Basic Responsibilities of all Road Captains**

As a Road Captain, you will:

- Assist in planning routes for Chapter rides
- Educate Chapter members about group riding techniques
- Inform Chapter members of hand signals used by the chapter on group rides
- Assist in obtaining attendance forms for Chapter rides
- Act as a Lead Road Captain, i.e. guide, for organized Chapter rides
- Act as a Tail Gunner, i.e. sweep, for organized Chapter rides
- Lead at least the minimum required number of rides as agreed upon by the Chapter Executive Board (CEB). Candidates should lead at least 1 ride (Planned and Executed) and shall not be patched until at least 1 planned and executed ride is made with 6 or more bikes.
- Find a replacement if unable to fulfill any ride commitment. If the assigned RC and the Sergeant at Arms (SAA) are unable to find a replacement, the ride may be cancelled or turned into a Pickup Ride
- Ensure all needed RC forms and material, including a current listing of all Chapter RCs and their phone numbers are available

## 2.2 Responsibilities of a Lead Road Captain

The Lead Road Captain will:

- Prepare and have written route directions for distribution to other RCs on the ride
- Conduct a Pre-Ride brief for all riders
- Ensure appropriate event release forms are completed and signed
- Take charge of the group until the final destination has been reached
- Plan enough time into your ride schedule have a proper Pre-Ride brief and time to get to your destination while considering the possibility of traffic and ride delays
- If road conditions or weather dictate, the LRC may alter the ride route or destination. The LRC may also cancel the ride upon notifying the SAA.
- Separate large groups into smaller groups if possible. Group size should be kept to 10 or less bikes or less including the ride leaders. The LRC will make any judgment calls needed to place riders with needs in specified groups and or positions within the group
- Position new riders within group, ideally at the front of the formation, or where the new rider designates a preference.
- If needed, instruct any rider to ride in a specific position within the group, or to leave the group entirely, for reasons of misconduct, disorderly or unsafe riding, or faulty/unsafe equipment
- Lead the group in a safe manner and execute sound judgment in situations not specifically covered in these guidelines
- Forward a ride report to the SAA at the end of the ride indicating the Ride Name, LRC, TG, number of bikes, number of participants, total miles per rider, total miles and any significant problem.
  - Identify any safety issues with any bike prior to departing on the planned ride.

## 2.3 Responsibilities of a Trail Road Captain (AKA Tail Gunner)

The Tail Gunner:

- Notify the Lead Road Captain that Group is ready to depart for the ride.
- Be observant of any hazardous conditions or conduct, take immediate corrective action as appropriate, and inform the LRC at the earliest safe opportunity
- In the event the group becomes separated either: a) move to the lead position of the rear group, or b) remain in the TG position and appoint another RC/rider to take the lead
- Respond to directions from the LRC
- Primary member to stop with any rider who has a problem.

## 2.4 Equipment

At a minimum, all RCs should carry or ensure that they have access to a cell phone, a well-stocked first aid kit, and a basic tool kit.

### 2.4.1 First Aid Kit

RCs should carry a first aid kit consisting of the following: sterile gauze squares; antibacterial spray or ointment; clean water; and rolled gauze, sufficient for administering minor first aid.

## 2.4.2 Tool Kit

Road Captains should carry a basic tool kit, or identify the person with the toolkit, to assist others who may need to make minor repairs. A recommended tool kit includes assorted Hex Head wrenches, assorted Torx head wrenches, flat head and Phillips screw drivers, pliers, electrical tape, zip ties, and chem-lights or signal flares.

## 2.4.3 Documents

Each RC should have the following:

- RC contact information
- Pre-ride Briefing Sheet (Appendix B)
- Route
- Emergency Phone Numbers

## 2.5 Qualifying as a Road Captain

Becoming a Road Captain is not automatic. New volunteers are accepted as Candidate Road Captains (CRC), provided they meet a short list of prerequisites. Once an individual has been accepted as a candidate, the SAA will pair up the candidate with a mentor (senior level Road Captain), who will be responsible for the education and development of a CRC. The candidate must then demonstrate certain skills and abilities to his or her mentor in order to become a fully qualified Road Captain. The SAA and CEB will make the final decision on readiness of the candidate and when to end the candidacy becoming a Chapter Road Captain. The RC program may take some less time to complete, others may need more mentoring.

### 2.5.1 Road Captain Prerequisites

The Candidate Road Captain (CRC) shall meet the following prerequisites:

- Be a member in good standing of National CVMA.
- Be a member in good standing of the CVMA Chapter 27-3.
- Have the approval of the SAA and the Chapter CEB.

Once you have been qualified as a Road Captain, you must ensure that you continue to meet these prerequisite requirements. If you do not, you will be removed from the Road Captain roster.

- Ideal number of rides to lead is 5, but the SAA and CEB can make the decision to move the candidate up to the RC position if all parties are comfortable with their leading of rides.

### 2.5.2 Qualifying Process

The Chapter CEB will have the final approval.

#### 2.5.2.1 Qualifying as a Trail RC

In order to qualify as a TG (aka tailgunner/sweep), a CRC must demonstrate the following skills/abilities to his or her assigned mentor. The mentor will notify the Head Road Captain when a CRC has completed this stage. The CRC shall demonstrate the ability to:

- Notice unsafe / improper group riding technique
- Instruct group riders in proper group riding technique during a ride
- Provide corrective actions to riders for issues will be done at stops or at the end of

the ride.

- Issues include: Following too close, following too far, not correcting a broken stagger, weaving, passing within the lane, showing off in an unsafe manner, etc.
- Demonstrate knowledge and proper use of Chapter 27-3 hand signals (Appendix A)
- Demonstrate the proper way to accomplish a lane change

### **2.5.2.2 Maintaining Road Captain (RC) Status**

To maintain the skills required of a Road Captain, one must practice these skills on a regular interval by leading (Plan & Executed) rides for the chapter. If a chapter member that has been identified as a RC is not an active RC, active RC is defined as performing as Lead RC or Tail Gunner as least twice a year. At the end of the riding season, November timeframe, a panel of chapter RC will make a decision if an individual will remain as a RC. If a RC is unable to lead rides due to health issues or circumstances out of their control ie.. deployments (Military or Civilian) this will be taken into consideration at that time.

### **2.5.2 Presentation of Road Captain Patch**

After a Road Captain candidate meets all the prerequisites of becoming a Road Captain and the SAA and Chapter CEB determines Road Captain eligibility, every effort will be made to present the Road Captain Patch to the candidate at a regularly scheduled Chapter meeting. This presentation will indicate to all members present that this individual has met the basic requirements of the position.

## **3.0 The Ride**

Every rider who chooses to participate in an official Chapter ride has a responsibility to:

- Show up on time
- Arrive with a full gas tank
- Keep a properly maintained motorcycle
- Wear all state-required safety equipment
- Be familiar with and exercise the Chapter's Group Riding and Safety SOP
- Know the Chapters Hand and Arm Signals
- Listen to and follow the instructions of the Road Captains unless those instructions will put them or others in an unsafe situation
- Know the basic route

### **3.1 Meeting Place & Time**

RCs will determine the meeting place and time for their ride and provide a ride description form to the SAA. The meeting time will be stated as the time that the ride briefing will start. The briefing should take no more than 15 minutes. The RCs for each ride will meet at least 15 minutes prior to the scheduled time to ensure they are prepared for the ride.

#### **3.1.1 Communication**

The SAA will ensure the Chapter Google Group is updated with the latest ride information.

## 3.1.2 Ride Cancellation

The decision to cancel a ride should be made a minimum of two hours prior to the briefing. After making the decision to cancel a ride, the LRC shall notify the SAA, Chapter Commander or XO in person or by telephone, and posted to the Chapter Google Group. The LRC shall ensure someone travels to the designate meeting sight and any pick-up sights to ensure anyone who shows up for the ride is notified of the cancellation.

## 3.2 Pre-Ride Briefing

At the stated meeting time the LRC or designee will conduct a briefing from the RC briefing sheet. This should be done as expeditiously as possible. The following talking points shall be covered prior to every ride (these are not in any particular order).

- All stated time intervals are minimums!
- Staggered Riding – 2 seconds interval of the bike directly in front of you, 1 second interval of all other bikes
- Stop Signs – double up, proceed through in pairs and then make separation
- Stop Lights – stop if light turns regardless of your position in group unless there are road guards posted, in which case all riders proceed through traffic signal regardless of light color.
- If separation occurs, the LRC will slow down and /or find a safe place to pull off and wait for the group to catch up
- TG or other RCs within the group may have to take the lead of a broken group to get them caught up. Make sure all RCs know directions and destination
- Lane Changes – instruct riders: pass signal (hand and/or light) back, do not move, the TG will change position, move only after rider behind you does. Inform riders that LRC could cancel the lane change if needed
- Immediate Lane Changes – The LRC may initiate the lane change prior to notifying the TG if the situation requires it. All riders will follow safely without regard to other vehicles ending up within the group
- Passing: Always using riders own judgment
  - One lane each direction
  - Multilane Big Rigs
  - Any vehicle on an adjoining shoulder
- Hand Signals – minimally the bold signals should be covered
  - **Left Turn**
  - **Right Turn**
  - **Stop**
  - **Slow Down**
  - **Speed Up**
  - **Single File**
  - **Staggered**
  - **Obstacle left**
  - **Obstacle right**
  - Pull Off
  - Blinker On
  - High Beam

- Gas
- Food
- Comfort Stop
- Breakdown / Accident Procedure – everyone following incident bike stops. Road Captain(s) will determine what needs to happen.
- Return Route / Way Home – repeat from initial brief.
- If equipped, have all riders turn passing lamps (spots) off, except for the TG.
- If equipment failure occurs, TG will attend to the rider, the LRC will pull over, when safe. The LRC will determine the actions that will follow.
- Accidents: Preemptively identify who will, if needed, call emergency numbers, handle traffic, stay at scene, and perform first-aid. The LRC will be the focal point to make decisions.

The LRC is the final word for that ride; they are in charge. Any problems or issues should be communicated to him/her as soon as possible

### **3.3 Riding Guidelines**

- The LRC will wait at stop signs until the TG has stopped.
- The LRC and TG will communicate via Hand Signals.
- LRC will use all hand signals as needed and will re-issue hand signals if required after stops.
- In the event of a serious safety issue the TG shall signal the LRC via CB radio or headlight or Hand Signals to make an immediate stop to correct the issue.

### **3.4 Riding Formations**

The basic formation for all rides is the staggered formation. At no time shall the formation switch position within the lane in order to fill a gap. The next rider in line should fill forward.

#### **3.4.1 Environmental Conditions**

Environmental conditions will dictate when the LRC places the group in a single file formation. All stated time intervals are minimums! Environmental considerations may include, but are not limited to:

- Road width
- Presence of frequent or tight curves (normally back roads)
- Road conditions (construction, sand or gravel, pot holes, etc.)
- Vehicles on the side of the road (bicycles, emergency, disabled, etc.)
- Weather

#### **3.4.2 Staggered Formation**

The staggered formation, signaled by the LRC by a hand signal above the head with the index and little finger extended, consists of riders, alternately, in the right and left halves of the travel lane. All riders in the left half of the lane should have a two (2) second separation. All riders in the right half of the lane should have a two (2) second separation. All riders should have a one (1) second separation to the nearest bike, right or left, to them.

#### **3.4.3 Single File**

Single File, noted by a hand signal above the head with the index finger only extended is used

when environmental conditions preclude use of the Staggered Formation. All riders will slow slightly to allow a two (2) second separation from the rider in front of them. Each rider may now use the entire lane. LRC will signal when to return to the staggered position.

## **3.5 Hand Signals**

Hand signals will be used at all times to maneuver the group, change formation or point out hazards. Hand signals should be given in a timely manner but not so early or late that they are meaningless or unnecessary. The LRC will initiate all hand signals with the exception of pointing out hazards. Any rider in the group, in any position, upon becoming aware of a hazard, should point out the hazard to all riders that follow. When the LRC issues a hand signal, he or she shall hold the hand signal until the rider behind the LRC performs the signal. Upon seeing the signal relayed back, the LRC may then resume riding with two hands. Each subsequent rider will maintain the hand signal until the rider behind acknowledges receipt by also performing the hand signal. The TGC will perform the hand signal to signal the traffic that follows.

### **CAUTION**

**DO NOT MAINTAIN OR PERFORM ANY HAND SIGNALS IF SAFETY REQUIRES TWO HANDS ON YOUR HANDLEBARS**

## **3.6 Traffic Lanes**

The group shall stay in a single traffic lane whenever possible. The LRC will pick a lane where the flow of traffic is consistent with the speed of the group. In an urban environment, the LRC should consider the distance to the next turn on the ride route and the direction of that turn when deciding which lane to utilize. On limited access roads with more than two travel lanes in each direction, the LRC should avoid using the right lane as a travel lane to avoid merging traffic. On limited access roads with only two travel lanes in each direction, the group will normally travel in the number two (right) lane unless the LRCs believes the frequency of access ramps would likely cause a disruption to the group from merging traffic. Lane changes will be kept to a minimum and only used to pass slower traffic or to avoid road hazards.

### **3.6.1 Lane Changes in Detail**

A lane change refers to maneuvering the group into a new travel lane where the direction of traffic in the new lane is in the same direction of travel of the group. Lane changes may be performed for a wide variety of reasons including passing slower traffic, maneuvering the group into a lane where the traffic speed is the same as the group wishes to travel, or in preparation for turning onto an intersecting roadway or exiting a freeway. Lane changes should be kept to a minimum and, whenever possible, should be well thought out in advance to minimize the disruption to the group. The LRC will initiate lane changes by signaling the TG by hand signal and the motorcycle's turn signal. The LRC can cancel the intended lane change if needed. This is noted by a back and forth hand signal at the neck, similar to that used to signal shutdown of engines. Subsequent riders will hold their positions and pass the signal back. Upon receipt of the lane change signal, the TG will show the hand signal for following traffic and, when safe to do so, the TG will move into the middle half of the new lane. Each rider, in turn, will then follow suit and maneuver into the new travel lane.



## NOTE

**IF THE LANE CHANGE IS REQUIRED FOR EITHER SAFETY REASONS (E.G., HAZARD IN THE CURRENT TRAVEL LANE) OR BECAUSE THE RIDE ROUTE REQUIRES (EXITING A FREEWAY OR A TURN ONTO AN INTERSECTING STREET) AND TRAFFIC DOES NOT PERMIT A LANE CHANGE IN THE ABOVE DESCRIBED MANNER, THE LEAD ROAD CAPTAIN MAY INITIATE THE LANE CHANGE WITHOUT WAITING FOR THE TG. ALL SUBSEQUANT RIDERS SHALL THEN FOLLOW INTO THE NEW TRAVEL LANE, AS INDIVIDUALS, WHEN SAFE TO DO SO, WITHOUT REGARD FOR AUTOMOBILES THAT MAY END UP IN THE MIDDLE OF THE GROUP. WHEN SAFE THE GROUP WILL REASSEMBLE.**

### **3.8 Breakdown / Accidents**

In the event of a breakdown or an accident, all riders behind the motorcycle(s) involved in the incident will pull over to the side of the road where safe to do so. The LRC will find a safe place to pull over the rest of the group that was in front of the accident. The TG and/or another RC will assess the situation and assign individuals to help as needed to block oncoming traffic or call for emergency services. The LRC must be contacted to inform him or her of the situation. Once the situation has been assessed and stabilized, a Road Captain will proceed or designate another member to lead the rest of the riders, those who are not required to stay and help, to join up with the LRC's group. If any injuries occur during an official chapter ride, notify the Chapter Leadership or the Head Road Captain. Please note that only police can take a witness report. When the situation has been resolved and the ride is ready to proceed, ensure that everyone is accounted for and NO ONE is left behind.

### **3.9 Ride De-Brief**

All members are expected to identify any issues to the group. This should be done in a courteous, semi-professional manner in order to maximize benefit of lessons learned. During the ride a Hot Wash/After Action Review will be conducted (Appendix C Ride Hot Wash/After Action Review). This should be conducted prior to the group breaking for home, i.e.. last fuel stop or rest break area

### **4.0 After the Ride**



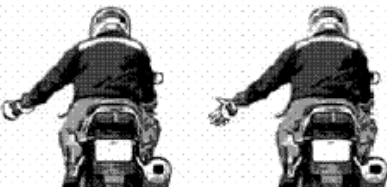
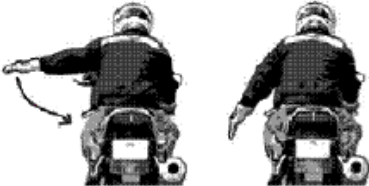



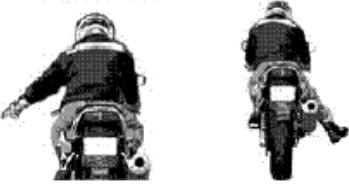





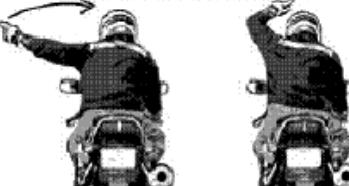
**The Ride Officially Ends on Arrival at the Destination** – You can return home at any time and by any route you choose. If you are unsure how to get back home, ask a Road Captain for directions. After you arrive at home, let the Ride Captain know, preferably by Text or E-mail (Google Group).

### **5.0 Mentoring**

Prospective Road Captains shall choose or be assigned a mentor from the cadre of experienced Road Captains by the SAA. The mentors shall work to educate and train the new volunteer CRCs ensuring that he or she is familiar with the Road Captain Manual and the CVMA Chapter 27-3 Group Riding and Safety SOP.



**Appendix A**  
**MSF's Guide to Group Riding: Hand Signals**

<p><b>Stop</b> - arm extended straight down, palm facing back</p> 	<p><b>Single File</b> - arm and index finger extended straight up</p> 	<p><b>Turn Signal On</b> - open and close hand with fingers and thumb extended</p> 
<p><b>Slow Down</b> - arm extended straight out, palm facing down</p> 	<p><b>Double File</b> - arm with index and middle finger extended straight up</p> 	<p><b>Fuel</b> - arm out to side pointing to tank with finger extended</p> 
<p><b>Speed Up</b> - arm extended straight out, palm facing up</p> 	<p><b>Hazard in Roadway</b> - on the right, point with right foot; on the left, point with left hand</p> 	<p><b>Refreshment Stop</b> - fingers closed, thumb to mouth</p> 
<p><b>You Lead/Come</b> - arm extended upward 45 degrees, palm forward pointing with index finger, swing in arc from back to front</p> 	<p><b>Highbeam</b> - tap on top of helmet with open palm down</p> 	<p><b>Comfort Stop</b> - forearm extended, fist clenched with short up and down motion</p> 
<p><b>Follow Me</b> - arm extended straight up from shoulder, palm forward</p> 	<p><b>Pull Off</b> - arm positioned as for right turn, forearm swing toward shoulder</p> 	

**Appendix B Pre-RIDE BRIEF**

Ride Date \_\_\_\_\_

1. Road Captain is \_\_\_\_\_

2. TailGunner Rider is \_\_\_\_\_

3. Group Leader(s) is \_\_\_\_\_

4. Destination is \_\_\_\_\_

5. Route will be:

Expected Departure Time is \_\_\_\_\_

Expected Arrival Time is \_\_\_\_\_

Expected Return Departure Time is \_\_\_\_\_

6. Intermediate stops will be at:

- Location: \_\_\_\_\_ Arrive At: \_\_\_\_\_ Depart At: \_\_\_\_\_
- Location: \_\_\_\_\_ Arrive At: \_\_\_\_\_ Depart At: \_\_\_\_\_
- Location: \_\_\_\_\_ Arrive At: \_\_\_\_\_ Depart At: \_\_\_\_\_
- Location: \_\_\_\_\_ Arrive At: \_\_\_\_\_ Depart At: \_\_\_\_\_

7. Expected Expenses: \_\_\_\_\_

8. General:

- ID Riders with 1st Aid Kit.
- ID New Rider(s).
- Verify Cell Phone Numbers.
- Expected Ride Speeds (No more than 10 over posted Speed limits).
- We will ride in a staggered formation whenever possible.
- Review Breakdown Procedures.
- Be attentive to, and pass back to the next rider, all signals from the Road Captain.
- If using Blockers is anticipated, Review Hand Signals and Reintegration of Blockers to formation.
- The Road Captain (or the Group Leaders if the group becomes separated) will make all decisions concerning the route, speed, lane of travel, etc.. These are not suggestions! Follow the Road Captain or leave the ride if you feel your safety is at risk.
- YOU are responsible for your own safety!

## **Appendix C Ride Hot Wash/After Action Review**

The purpose of the Hot wash/AAR is to improve the group riding experience.

All members are expected to identify any issues to the group.

This should be done in a courteous, semi-professional manner in order to maximize benefit of lessons learned.

Discuss three positive things about the ride:

Discuss three items that needs improvement in the ride:

Are there items that need to be addressed in the SOP ? If so, Inform the Safety Officer.