



Patriot Guard Riders  
Ride Safety Guidelines  
National

PGR RIDE SAFETY GUIDELINES	RIDE SAFETY GUIDELINES	REV - 0
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**Overview:**

The PGR membership is an amalgamation of diverse riders from across the nation. This statement accurately describes our membership as well as the participants on any mission. We have individuals with varying degrees of experience in solo riding, and in group riding. Some have never before ridden with the PGR, on the missions we undertake. While no one expects this endeavor to be totally risk free, it has become apparent that we need some standard safety precautions applied. To those of you who may not know, we have lost 2 of our brothers, and have at least 4 others recovering from injuries sustained in conjunction with our mission rides. I believe, as I hope you do, that this is unacceptable and preventable. With that thought in mind, National has developed the following guidelines and boundaries that will take effect immediately.

**Objective:**

To insure that the missions that the PGR undertake are as safe as is possible.

**Method:**

**Effective Immediately all State Captains will ensure that there is a "Safety Captain" assigned to all Missions. This Safety Captain will assume the responsibilities outlined below and ensure that each mission is in compliance.**

**Process:**

Selection of the Safety Captain.

When the State Captain has confirmed a mission, and a Ride Captain has been assigned, a Safety Captain will be sourced and identified. It is the responsibility of the State Captain to ensure that a Safety Captain is assigned and conducting their duties on each mission within their area of responsibility. The actual selection of the Safety Captain may be delegated to the assigned Ride Captain if desired. The identity of the Safety Captain should be included in any itinerary postings relating to the mission.

A State may select a permanent Safety Captain to handle communications and mission selection. **However each mission must have a Safety Captain assigned and present. This person cannot be the Ride Captain.** Larger rides may require the appointment of multiple Safety Captains.

Role of the Safety Captain:

The Safety Captain's primary responsibility is to ensure the mission ride is as safe as possible.

Responsibilities of the Safety Captain:

- Ensure that all PGR safety requirements (listed below) are completed
- Active interaction with Ride Captain, LOE, Riders, and others as required
- Pre-Ride all routes if practical
- Conduct Safety Briefing before ride per format attached
- Provide feedback to Ride Captain, State Captain as required
- Ensure that other group rides in conjunction with the mission have safety briefings and a safety captain assigned.



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PGR RIDE SAFETY GUIDELINES	Ride Safety Captain	REV - 0
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**Boundaries and Rules effective Immediately:**

1. A Ride Safety Captain will be assigned to all PGR group rides.
2. Safety Captain will ensure that the PGR RIDE SAFETY GUIDELINES are adhered to.
3. Unescorted group rides of over 15 bikes will be broken into smaller groups of 15 riders maximum, for safer transit, and will maintain at least a 4-5 minute (240 - 300 Seconds) interval between groups.
4. Ride Speed will be "5 MPH below Posted speed limit" or as directed by escort organization.
5. A uniform set of hand signals will be utilized on all rides; these are posted on the PGR website.
6. A Lead Ride Captain and Tail Gunner (Sweep) will be assigned on all rides. (Each group should have one of each if possible.)
7. The Safety Captain on all rides will hold a pre-ride safety briefing. (See State/Ride Captain Guidelines)
8. A Bike / Vehicle inspection should be conducted by the Safety Captain prior to the pre-ride briefing.
9. Lead Ride Captain and Tail Gunner must be able to communicate with each other. PGR recommends the use of radio's when possible.
10. New riders should be placed near the rear of the group. This will allow them to ride at their own pace, if needed, and keep the group from being affected by the rubber band effect.
11. No U-Turns should be made during the mission. Discuss what your intentions are going to be if you need to make a direction change during the mission, at the pre-ride safety briefing.

**A Ride Safety Captain will be assigned to all PGR group rides.**

**Objective:**

The State Captain, Ride Captain will ensure that a "Safety Captain" is assigned to all group rides occurring in support of a PGR Mission. This will relieve the Ride Captain of additional responsibilities and allow him/her to communicate with escort / LEO's, CAO and/or Funeral Director.

**Method:**

Utilizing the resources of our membership, select an experienced person to act as a Safety Captain for all groups rides occurring in support of a PGR mission. This would include pre-staging rides were more than 3 vehicles are known to be meeting. In larger groups there may have to be multiple Safety Captains reporting to the overall mission Safety Captain. The intent is that the term of service for this position is for the duration of the assigned ride.

**Process:**

Selection of the individual to fill this role is at the discretion of the State Captain. This authority may be delegated to individual Ride Captains but the over all responsibility remains with the State Captain.

The individual selected should have the following:

- Experience in Group Riding
- Be familiar with the Ride Safety Guidelines posted on the PGR website
- Good communications skills
- Willingness to accept the responsibly of this position
- State Captain's faith that the role will be carried out as outlined.

Once identified, and the role has been accepted. The individual will be identified on the Itinerary or on a forum update relating to the mission.



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**Safety Captain will ensure that the PGR RIDE SAFETY GUIDELINES are adhered to.**

**Objective:**

While participation in the PGR and its missions is strictly voluntary it is hoped that the membership accepts that the organization has its Ride Safety Guidelines, traditions, and methods of operation. ***It is further hoped that the membership will put aside personal feelings in the pursuit of a larger goal. The fulfillment of our Mission Statement.*** That being said the Ride Safety Captain's primary responsibility is to ensure that all participants adhere to the Ride Safety Guidelines. The State Captain and National Board will provide support as required.

**Method:**

Active communication is the key to ensuring compliance with the RIDE SAFETY GUIDELINES. Active communication must occur while planning a mission, before the mission, and during the mission. The Ride Safety Captain should be very familiar with the elements and details of the RIDE SAFETY GUIDELINES. The Safety Captain must ensure that everyone understands up front, that the expectation is that the RIDE SAFETY GUIDELINES will be adhered to. Anyone who has problems, or wants to discuss an issue or decision, is much better off discussing it before he or she has ridden 300 miles and then the problem arises. The RIDE SAFETY GUIDELINES Expectations will be posted on the Web Site for everyone to read and understand. The National Safety Director will post something to the effect that *"This mission will utilize the PGR RIDE SAFETY GUIDELINES located at <http://patriotguard.org/Forums/tabid/61/view/topics/forumid/52/Default.aspx>, call Gus Quist @ 970-290-0241 for questions etc.* It is hoped that this will preclude any last minute problems. In the event that an individual refuses to comply with the RIDE SAFETY GUIDELINES he or she will be asked to exit the ride

**Process:**

- After accepting the position of Ride Safety Captain for a mission you should receive the Safety RIDE SAFETY GUIDELINES for review. Please take the time to read and understand. If you require clarification on any element, contact the Ride Captain, State captain (or National Safety Director at Firehawk@patriotguard.org.)
- Contact the Ride Captain and ensure that you understand the mission and all the elements. Ask if there are any special considerations you need to be aware of. (Example: requirements for entry onto a military base.)
- Update your current mission forum that you are the Safety Captain and announce that this ride will be utilizing the RIDE SAFETY GUIDELINES. List contact information for questions. List the link to the Members RIDE SAFETY GUIDELINES document for their review, and ask all to review it. You must be clear in your message that the expectation is that everyone has read and will adhere to the RIDE SAFETY GUIDELINES.
- Work with the Ride Captain to resolve any questions, concerns, etc., that may arise. And if decisions have to be made affecting the participation of an individual, ensure that it is communicated appropriately. If required, get National Safety Director involved through the State Captain.
- At the Pre-Ride briefing ensure that everyone knows the expectations, and seek approval from everyone. During your safety inspection, resolve all issues that arise.
- If inappropriate behavior or a blatant disregard for the RIDE SAFETY GUIDELINES is encountered, get the Ride Captain, or LOE involved ASAP. Your decision is the final one in matters of safety for the PGR membership. Under no circumstances ever allow a known unsafe situation to continue.



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PGR RIDE SAFETY GUIDELINES	Unescorted Group Rides		REV - 0
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**Unescorted group rides of over 15 bikes will be broken into smaller groups of 15 riders maximum, and will maintain at least a 4 - 5 minute (240 - 300 Second) interval between groups.**

**Objective:**

The intent is that large groups of bikes and cagers moving on the road create a large exposure for unexpected incidents to occur. The intent is to break up larger groups into smaller more easily managed groups and to separate them from one another to decrease the impact on the traffic as well as reduce the impact that traffic controls have on the group. It is expected that this most likely will occur when groups are moving to the staging area after meeting up to ride together. This smaller group size also makes sense when moving from the staging area to the area of service and an escort is unavailable. (The intent is that these sections not apply during a funeral escort itself.)

**Method:**

Should there be more than 15 bikes and cages present for a ride that will be unescorted the group should be broken up in to groups of no more than 15 vehicles each. An interval of at least 4 – 5 minutes should be maintained between each group. This should allow for traffic to flow around the groups, allow for successful movement of each group through traffic controls without road guards etc. A lead rider, and a Tail gunner should be designated for each group, and the RIDE SAFETY GUIDELINES should be adhered to during the ride. The individual setting up the pre-stage or one identified by the Ride Safety Captain will assume the responsibility for this. Mixing Cages among groups or having a group of their own is at the discretion of the Lead Ride Captain of the group.

**Process:**

- The State Safety Captain should monitor the Mission thread and where members have expressed a staging area or meeting point for a group to form. A safety contact should be appointed to ensure that the RIDE SAFETY GUIDELINES are understood for that segment. If possible a leader should be designated at that time as a group Safety Captain to oversee this process for that group. Failing to accomplish this then it is the responsibility for each member to understand the spirit and intent of this section and adhere to it when riding under the PGR banner.
- At staging area, should there be the necessity to ride unescorted, the Ride Safety Captain will ensure that the group has been broken up and everyone knows whom they are riding with, that a Lead Ride Captain and Tail Gunner have been identified for each group, and the expectation of intervals, etc., is understood, prior to the ride / safety briefing.
- It is expected that the Lead Rider will maintain a minimum of a 4 – 5 minute interval at all times between groups, whether on the highway, or in city.
- On arrival at destination the groups can reform as required by circumstance and under the direction of the ride captain.



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PGR RIDE SAFETY GUIDELINES	Ride Speed Guidelines		REV - 0
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**Ride Speed will be “5 MPH below Posted speed”**

**Objective:**

To establish a speed that will allow for the most efficient transit possible, while creating the least amount of disruption to the flow of traffic, thereby establishing the safest environment for our riders as possible; it is felt that a slower speed than traffic will allow, enhances the likelihood of safe passing of the group without undue interruption in our formations. It is also felt that this lower speed will reduce the “Rubber Banding” that normally occurs in a group. (Smaller groups will also reduce the likelihood of “Rubber Banding.”) At no time does the PGR advocate going over the posted speed limit.

**Method:**

During the pre-ride briefing a group speed of 5 MPH below any posted speed will be announced as the ride speed. The lead Rider will ensure that this speed is adhered to during the duration of the ride.

**Process:**

- Establish during pre-ride briefing that the formation speed will be: 5 MPH below the posted speed.
- Lead Rider for the group will maintain a road speed no faster than 5 MPH below any posted speed.

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PGR RIDE SAFETY GUIDELINES	Uniform Set of PGR Hand Signals	REV - 0
	Section 06	No. 1 Pg 06

**A uniform set of hand signals will be utilized on all rides.**

**Objective:**

As our riders are a diverse amalgamation of riders from different organizations, and or may not have ridden in groups, there has been some confusion as to the hand signals being used. Further, failure to communicate information to other riders in a safe, clear, and understandable manner can result in an unsafe condition. Therefore, a uniform set of hand signals will be utilized on all rides.

**Method:**

To ensure that everyone on the ride understands critical ride information being passed through the formation a uniform set of PGR hand signals will be utilized. These hand signals have been adapted from the Motorcycle Safety Foundation.

**Process:**

- During Safety Briefing all hand Signals will be demonstrated by the Safety Captain

**Stop** - arm extended straight down, palm facing back      **Slow Down** - arm extended straight out, palm facing down      **Single File** - arm and index finger extended straight up



**You Lead/Come** - arm extended upward 45 degrees, palm forward pointing with index finger, swing in arc from back to front      **Follow Me** - arm extended straight up from shoulder, palm forward      **Double File** - arm with index and middle finger extended straight up



**Hazard in Roadway** - on the right, point with right foot; on the left, point with left hand      **Pull Off** - arm positioned as for right turn, forearm swung toward shoulder



- Complete PGR Hand Signals:

Please see PGR website:

<http://www.patriotguard.org/Forums/tabid/61/view/topics/forumid/52/Default.aspx>



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PGR RIDE SAFETY GUIDELINES	Pre-Ride Safety Briefing	REV - 0
	Section 07	No. 1 Pg 07

**The Safety Captain on all rides will hold a safety briefing.**

**Objective:**

A comprehensive safety briefing on all rides that is complete and consistent with all rides will aid in ensuring that expectations are established relating to safety. Furthermore, that the riders will have a complete understanding of ride behavior, expectations, and ramifications.

**Method:**

Time will be set-aside during each ride briefing for the Safety Captain to conduct a Ride Safety briefing. During this time all subjects listed below should be covered. Also time for a question and answer period should be allowed.

**Process:**

- Establish expectations relating to Safety, as well as ramifications of non-compliance.
  - All safety related items are expected to be followed. Failure or unwillingness to comply will result in you being asked not to participate in the ride.
- Talk to ride formation and spacing.
  - If formation is to be broken up, ID individual lead, and tail gunners
  - 5 min between formations
  - Staggered formation 2 seconds between bikes.
  - What lane to expect to run in.
- Talk to Speed expectations
  - Reinforce 5 MPH under posted speed
  - Talk to reducing rubber banding when possible.
- Talk to escort v/s no escort expectations
  - How to deal with Intersections – Traffic controls – exit, entrance ramps etc.
- Talk to Hand signals and demonstrate core signals
  - Use small hand out
  - Announce radio channels being utilized
- Talk to New persons, ensure you know who they are, let them know where in the formation you expect them to be.
- Talk about “If you feel uncomfortable in the formation – Do not hesitate to fall out.”
- Talk to breakdowns,
  - Use fall out signal and exit the formation. Tail gunner or designee will stop with you to aid.
- Tail gunner role
  - Ensure that Tail Gunners are aware of their role
    - Stop with fall outs
    - Lane changes
    - Blocker etc.
- Lane changes
  - Tail gunner to be made aware via radio/hand signal and then block lane.
  - Bikes then move over front to back.
- Expected hazards
- Ask for questions.



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PGR RIDE SAFETY GUIDELINES	RIDE SAFETY GUIDELINES	REV - 0
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**A Bike / Vehicle inspection should be conducted by the Safety Captain prior to briefing.**

**Objective:**

The intent here is not to really determine if the bike is safe from a mechanical standpoint but rather if there are Flags, Banners, etc., that the rider is carrying, that they are carried safely. If Flags are displayed, that the mounting, pole and attachment system is acceptable. Please also be aware, depending on the jurisdiction, there may be legalities involved. The intent is not to prevent anyone from riding with us but rather to ensure that everyone is safe. Someone may be trying a mounting system for the first time and have little if any experience with the tremendous forces involved when you fly a large flag from the back of a bike at highway speeds. It is hoped with the experience of more seasoned riders who have "been there and done that" that we can have a safer ride.

**Method:**

Prior to the Briefing, attempt to inspect the mounting of all displayed flags to ensure that they are secure and will withstand the expected ride. Have a conversation with the owner to attempt to resolve any problems noticed. If a problem is noticed and is not resolved it is the Safety Captains decision as to whether or not the individual will ride with the group based on the safety concerns the problem would present. Should you not feel comfortable in making an assessment, involve others who have more experience, ask for their opinion?

**Process:**

- Conduct a casual walk around to look at all flag and Banner mounting you can see.
- Attempt to make an evaluation as to the safety of the mounting based on the upcoming ride's speed, duration, weather etc.
  - Things to look for are un-reinforced PVC. (No Dowel inside etc)
  - Attachment of flag will not withstand the speed expected due to poor attachment
  - Security of Flag Staff mounting is questionable, (i.e., held on with small bungee cord, or tied on with string, etc.)
  - Flag may interfere with mechanicals of vehicle. (Chain, Wheel, steering etc.)
- Attempt to resolve any difficulties found on the spot, if possible.
- If group is very large, appoint someone to assist you in the inspection.
- Should someone have an unsafe condition that cannot or will not be corrected, inform them that they will not be permitted to ride with the group, and why. Should you require support, involve the Ride Captain, or State Captain if available.
- The intent here is not to prevent anyone from riding with us but to ensure that all riders are safe by using an extra set of eyes, and some experience to aid the Safety Captain.
- The decision of the Safety Captain and Ride Captain is final on all items relating to safety during the ride.



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**Better communications between Lead Rider and Tail Gunner. Radio Communications should be used whenever possible**

**Objective:**

Communications between the Lead Rider Captain and the Tail Gunner of the formation is critical to safe and smooth group movement. Lack of radio communications will not stop a mission from occurring, however, special attention will need to be paid to ensure that hand signals are being relayed.

**Method:**

The Safety Captain should, during the inspection, look for bikes equipped with radios, and ensure that they are placed appropriately to take advantage of the help. Also ensure that everyone is clear on the hand signals to be used.

**Process:**

- If the Lead bike, and tail gunner are not radio equipped:
  - During the Safety Inspection take note of the bikes or vehicles equipped with two-way radios.
  - Endeavor to place them in lead, or sweep (Tail Gunner) positions if possible. If this is not possible:
    - Placed them in the position right behind the lead rider to relay information to the rear radio. If the tail gunner is not equipped and another bike can be found with a radio, it should be placed right in front of the Tail Gunner.
    - They should receive instructions from the lead bike by hand signals and relay to the rear of the pack where again the intentions can be relayed by hand signal.
  - If no bikes, or vehicles are equipped with radios, then the Safety Captain needs to ensure that special attention be paid to hand signals being relayed to the back.
    - The lead rider needs to allow time for the relay to take place before executing maneuvers when possible (Lane Changes, etc.).
- In all cases the hand signals will need to be relayed through the pack to ensure everyone knows what is going on.
- If Radio communication is possible
  - Select an appropriate Channel to operate on. And a back up Channel if necessary.
  - Test the communicators prior to leaving.
  - Ensure everyone who desires to know is aware of the channel being used.
  - Caution all riders to keep chatter to an absolute minimum to allow for safety information to be passed in a timely manner.



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<b>New riders should be placed as far to the rear of group as possible.</b>			
<p><b>Objective:</b>          In placing new riders as far to the rear of the formation they will have more time to see and react to situations that develop, and not have the distraction of the formation in front of them. Rubber banding, and formation breakers will also be less prevalent at the front.</p> <p><b>Method:</b>          The Safety captain should, during the pre-ride briefing, attempt to identify those individuals who do not have experience in riding in formation. (Ask the question during pre-ride briefing.) Pull aside and explain in detail where they will ride. And set expectations.</p> <p><b>Process:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• During the Safety Briefing ask the question “who has not ridden in a formation before?”</li> <li>• Ask those individuals to stay a second after the main briefing.</li> <li>• Announce that they should ride to the rear of the formation.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ After the briefing talk to those individuals (Re., what to expect, where they will be, etc.).</li> </ul> </li> </ul>			



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**Safety Ride Briefing to be held on all rides.**

**Objective:**

Ensure that everyone is aware, and understands all the safety elements being used on the ride.

**Method:**

The Safety Captain will, during the pre-ride briefing, conduct a Safety Briefing in conjunction with the Ride Captain's briefing.

**Process:**

- During Ride Briefing conduct a Safety briefing covering the following subjects:
  - Ride speed
  - Ride Formation and Intervals if necessary
  - Hand Signals (Demonstrate)
  - Fall Out procedure
  - Identify Leads, and Tail riders
  - Cover intersection strategy if needed
  - No U-turns should be preformed during the mission, discuss your intentions if the situation arises that you need to turn the mission around. DO NOT MAKE U-TURNS.
  - Do not forget to include Cages –
    - Where in formation
    - Rubber Banding
  - Parking
  - New Riders - Place in formation
  - Flags, and mounting