

Some Don'ts and Don'ts:

All up in my space: Try not to be directly next to someone in the other half-lane for any longer than it takes to pass them. Try to keep a good following distance. We still want to maintain that cushion for hazards as much as possible.

Curvin' and Swervin': Don't try to pass someone on a curve. In fact, for really sharp curves we'll slow to fall in line single file behind the leader. It's easy to misjudge the room you need on a curve so it's best to give everyone extra space.

Slip 'n Slide: Avoid being in between the two lanes or generally riding in the middle of the traffic lane. This might be tricky when you're also avoiding potholes or debris, but be aware that the middle area is where all the oil and other road grime tends to collect and could potentially turn you into a hazard.

Wide load: Don't make wide turns. Turn from right lane into right lane, and left lane into left lane. But if you do, hopefully the staggered formation means you had some space to maneuver.

No Scooterist Left Behind:

We'll do our best to keep the group together.

4-way stops: Expect the leader to come to a complete stop, but everyone will follow through the intersection together.

Check behind you. If you see someone falling behind, slow down so they can catch up. If everyone does this, ideally the whole group will slow so that the pack can stay together. **And in case of a split** due to a traffic signal or some other situation, pull over if it is safe to do so and wait for those behind you to catch up. Ideally the leader will notice as more and more people pull off and eventually everyone will be able to catch up again.

Ride at your comfort and skill level and follow traffic laws. We try not to block traffic or run lights. You are responsible for your safety.

If we do get split up, the ride leader will be periodically checking that the pack is all together. They will pull over when it's safe to do so and either wait for the rider(s) to catch up or retrace the route to see if assistance is needed.

If you need to leave early, communicate this with the ride leader and the sweep at the pre-ride meeting. Make sure they know when or where you will be taking off, so we don't think you've had an accident or other awful reason for disappearing.

If you have a sudden need to leave early, try to communicate that to the riders closest to you. For example, a double tap of the horn and a wave as you leave so we know you've left on purpose.

Group Riding Safety Sources

A lot of this information comes from these sources. Please take a look if you want to learn more:

AllState 10 Rules for Group Riding

<https://www.allstate.com/resources/motorcycle-insurance/rules-for-group-riding>

Quick Tips - MSF Guide to Group Riding and Hand Signals

https://www.msf-usa.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Group_Ride.pdf

You and Your Scooter - Riding Tips

<https://msf-usa.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/RT-3-pdf.pdf>

Group Riding Best Practices

<https://ridermagazine.com/2019/10/31/group-riding-best-practices/>



Nice to Meet You!

We are a group of scooterists based in the greater St. Louis area who have started a local charter of Vespa Club of America (VCOA). You can easily join us just by registering with Vespa Club of America and paying the annual dues (As of April 2023: \$35). As a member of the national club, you'll get a few goodies when you sign up, plus roadside assistance, and you'll be eligible to become a member of **Vespa Club of Greater St. Louis (VCOA-STL)**. We charge no additional dues. Don't have a Vespa? That's ok! **You can join with any brand of scooter!**

<https://www.vespaclubofamerica.com/>

Once you've signed up, be sure to let us know! As a member of VCOA-STL, you'll have access to our Discord server where we chat and plan events.

<https://www.facebook.com/VCoSTL>

Group Riding Guidelines

Be Prepared:

Arrive on time with a full tank of gas. Your scooter should be in good running condition. If there's any issue that could impact the ride, let the leader know. It's not required, but we strongly suggest wearing safety gear such as helmets and armored jackets.

The Talk:

Before we leave, we'll have a pre-ride meeting to cover the following:

- Acknowledge rider skill level and vehicle capabilities (i.e. max speeds)
- Designate the ride leader(s) and ride sweep(s)
- Discuss the route and any rest or fuel stops
- Demonstrate hand signals
- Discuss what to do if you get separated from the group or have a problem
- Discuss what to do if you need to leave the group
- Share any relevant contact information (i.e. sag wagon)

Group Management:

If you're leading a group larger than 5-7 riders, consider breaking up into smaller groups or having designated riders who know the route. It's also helpful to post any stopping points and final destination ahead of time for all riders to access. The sweep will always be last in the group and should also know the route.



Formation:

We ride in staggered formation within a single traffic lane. There are times the leader will signal to ride single file, but most of the time we are effectively dividing a single lane into two parts, a left-half-lane and a right-half-lane.

The ride leader is always at the front of the left half-lane. Staggered formation gives each rider room enough to maneuver around any hazards that may appear. When turning you'll stay in your chosen half-lane within that traffic lane. **See below diagram.**

Good following distance:

Within your half-lane, you should be 2-seconds following distance from the person in front of you. If the first 2 riders are staggered correctly, you'll be 1-second following distance from the person in front of you in the other half-lane.

Mind the gap:

We fill gaps a little differently than what MSF recommends. Rather than zig-zagging to fill a gap, we'd rather have you move up within your half-lane and maintain being 2-seconds behind the person directly in front of you. There may be momentary gaps as people accelerate and catch up from a stop. But if you feel the need to switch just be sure to signal and look before you make your move. The goal is to maintain our cohesiveness as a group and avoid getting separated by lights or other road traffic.

Pass signals down the line. The Motorcycle Safety Foundation has a diagram of hand signals that would be helpful to know.

Quick Tips - MSF Guide to Group Riding and Hand Signals

https://www.msf-usa.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Group_Ride.pdf

