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ROAD CAPTAIN COURSE INTRODUCTION FOR STUDENTS

These are a set of guidelines to help in training a group to ride safely as a team. These guidelines are intended to be used in conjunction with the GWRRA Team Riding Manual. It seems like everywhere you go, each group appears to ride a little differently. It is our hope that these guidelines will help in teaching techniques that may become used universally. If someone in Virginia participates in a ride in Arizona or Maine, they will fit in with the way each group rides because each group rides the same.

The Road Captain Course is designed for all that want to participate. The person who really wants to be a group leader will benefit the most, but we highly encourage the co-rider and riders who are not interested in being leaders to take this course. Everyone will learn something that will be useful. The co-rider can help by pointing at an object in the road so that the next bike may be able to avoid that object, or give a hand signal for file formation, etc.

This course is divided into two sections. The first section is a classroom session where we will discuss these guidelines and theories. The second session is the road portion of the course, which consists of a short ride that will allow us to apply and practice the theories learned in class.

If you will put to use the principals taught in the Road Captain Course, you would find that in time, they would become second nature to you. Some riders have commented that, even when there are only two or three bikes, they ride this way because it has become so automatic.

ROAD CAPTAIN GUIDELINES

1. Try to arrive at the meeting place early, with a full fuel tank. The person who sets up the ride is usually the **Trip Coordinator** and, in most cases, also the **Drag** of Group #1 -- unless he/she gives up that responsibility.
2. As participants begin to arrive, get them in place, keeping in mind that some folks may not have CB capability. If there are trikes, place them at the rear of the group (in front of **Drag**); place bikes with a trailer and/or sidecar near the front of a group as they talk longer to stop and may need more room to maneuver.
3. If more than 5 bikes show up, ask if there is another **Lead/Drag** on site, and get them to begin setting up another group. The ideal group size is 3-5 bikes.
4. Spend some time looking at the bikes that are going to be in your group, keeping an eye out for any obvious safety problems. Get you group members to assist, as additional eyes will see more than just one pair.
5. Choose your **Drag/Lead** early and discuss the route that you will be taking, the kind of terrain that you will be running, the kind of terrain that the group will be riding through, etc. Make sure that all members of your group know the route. If you know the route in advance, you might draw up a map and make copies for all group members.
6. At about 5 minutes prior to the announced departure time, begin to your group to mount up so that all groups can leave at the appointed time.
7. If the ride will be going through the kind of terrain that some people may have trouble with, ask other **Road Captains** if they would volunteer to **Lead/Drag** a slower group. This group may choose to leave a little earlier than the other groups, or later. Be sure that the slower group is aware of scheduled stops, so that everyone will have a chance to get together for lunch, etc.
8. If your group has a bike with no CB, go over the hand signals with this person. Make sure that this person, and all other group members, know the route and approximate length of time between breaks.
9. **Lead** should start out slow, allowing time for all group members to get out onto the road and into position. Then, increase speed to cruising speed (per designated speed limits).

10. Where road conditions permit, ride in the staggered formation. However, if your travel route takes you onto narrower roads or road conditions that indicate a need, call for single file formation, both by CB and by hand signal.
11. Once on the road, assume the standard staggered file formation positions for **Lead** and **Drag**. **Lead** bike is always in the left track of the lane you are traveling in.
12. When you have a choice of several lanes, **Lead** should plan lane changes in advance. Conditions will occur that call for immediate action.
13. **Lead** should call the **Drag** and ask him/her to **secure the left/right lane**. **Drag** will move to the requested lane and call back that **the lane is secured**. At that time, the **Lead** will announce to the group to **look left/right and move left/right**. The **Drag** should check to see that all members are looking left/right over their shoulder before making the lane change. All group members should be encouraged to move as a unit, and move with the bike directly in front of them. This makes for a safer and smoother lane change by the group. An individual bike diving across lanes can cause the remainder of the group to have to break or swerve.
14. Keep the length of a ride down to a reasonable time between breaks. Remember, your co-rider may tire before you do.
15. Keep to the right lane at all times, unless passing or conditions in the right lane warrant staying in the left lane, such as on/off ramps of interstate highways. On divided highways (with 3 lanes on your side), you may want to stay in the center lane, versus constantly changing lanes.
16. If you notice the group is spreading out, or getting sloppy in the formation, don't hesitate to tell the group to close it up or to get the formation straight. This is especially true for the **Drag**, because he/she has the best view of the group. Remember that the group's safety is as much the concern of the **Drag** as the **Lead**.
17. When pulling off of the road or preparing to stop, find an area that will accommodate the entire group. Pull into the area, ride to the end, and swing the front of your bike out. Then back up to the curb. All bikes should follow suit. This makes for a neat formation when parked and leaves more room for other groups, or for non-riders to park. Always remember that we want

to make a good impression on the general public, and not hogging all available parking spaces is just one more way to do this.

18. When heading back from a ride, there are times when a bike (or group of bikes) will split off from the main group. This split should come before the turn so that you do not have bikes breaking out of formation at an intersection, where other drivers might get confused and pull out in front of one of us. If you know that you will be leaving the group during the ride, position yourself at the rear of the group. As the split is made, make sure that the **Lead** knows who his **Drag** is.
19. If you find your group behind a slow moving vehicle on a narrow two-lane road, you may need to pass the vehicle individually. The **Lead** should announce this fact to the group. Once you are around the vehicle, you should keep in contact with the rest of the group, informing them about passing lanes and traffic conditions. Once the group has gotten around the vehicle, the **Drag** should inform the **Lead** of that fact.
20. When traveling through towns, the group may be broken up at traffic lights. The **Lead** may pull over to wait, if an area is available. If not, continue on at a reduced rate of speed and keep in touch with the stragglers, letting them know where you are. This is especially important if there is a turn to be made before the group gets back together.
21. We all enjoy the fellowship of our Chapter members, and enjoy talking to them during rides. You have to keep in mind that the **Lead** and **Drag** need to be able to pass on safety information to the group. Keep conversation short to keep the airway clear. This is especially true when there is more than one group. Everyone should keep conversation to an absolute minimum.
22. This guide may seem cumbersome at first glance. However, the GWRRA Chapters that use this training have an excellent record for safety on the road. Compliments are heard, wherever they go, regarding the professional look that is projected. Let's continue the tradition.
23. **Make it clear to all participants, each person is responsible for the safety and operation of their own bike. Never become a lemming, RIDE YOUR OWN BIKE!**

**RIDE SAFE,
RIDE SMART!**

ROAD CAPTAIN COURSE TERMS

Trip Coordinator

Lead

Drag

Single File

Staggered File

Road Kill/Pot Hole/Object Left/Center/Right Tract

Move Out (Lead to Group)

Group All Together and Moving As A Unit (Drag to Lead)

Secure Right/Left Lane (Lead to Drag)

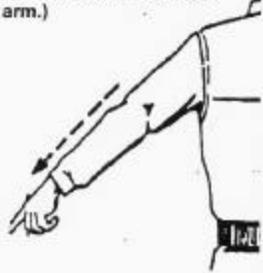
Lane Secured. . . . (Drag to Lead)

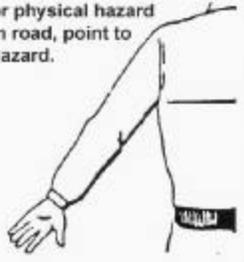
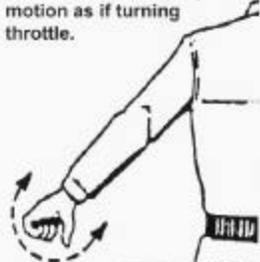
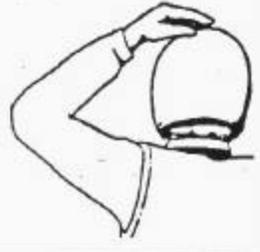
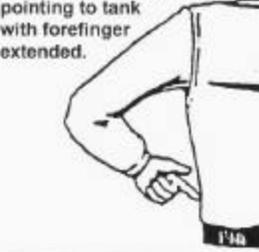
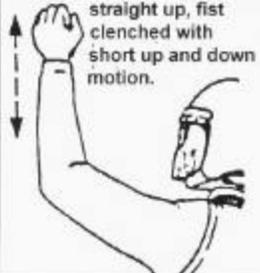
Look Left/Right and Move Left/Right (Lead to Group)

Group out Safely and Together (Drag to Lead)

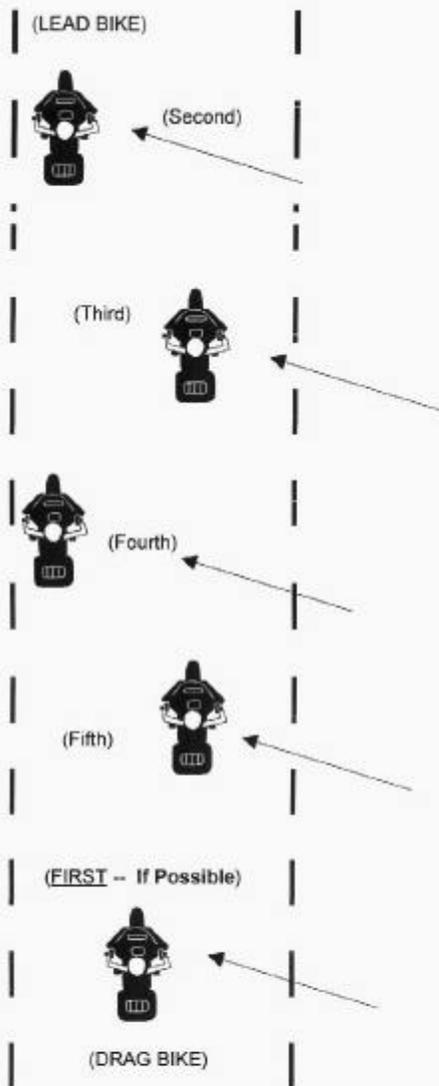
ROAD CAPTAIN COURSE HAND SIGNALS

Hand signals for communicating while riding:

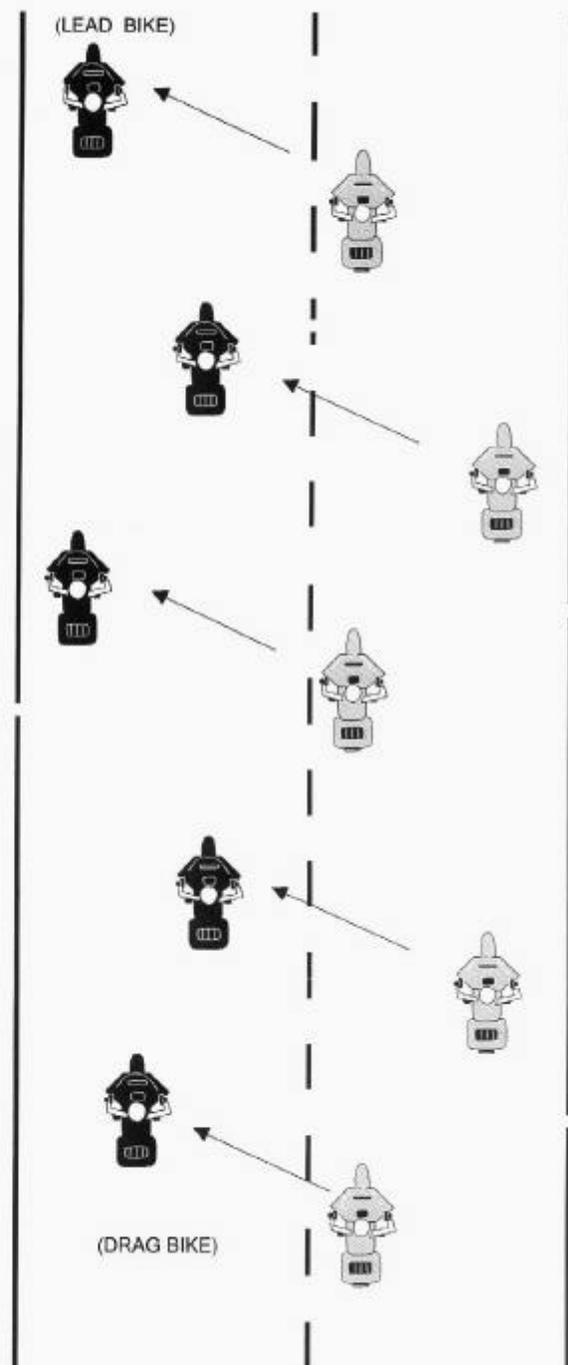
<p>HAZARD IN ROAD</p> <p>Point immediately with emphasis. (Sometimes this must be done with right arm.)</p> 	<p>SINGLE FILE</p> <p>Arm and index finger extended straight up.</p> 	<p>STAGGERED FILE</p> <p>Arm extended straight up with "rams horn" sign.</p> 
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<p>STOP (Slow Down):</p> <p>Arm extended straight down, palm back. Animal or physical hazard in road, point to hazard.</p> 	<p>SPEED UP:</p> <p>Arm down to side, fist clenched with twisting motion as if turning throttle.</p> 	<p>FOLLOW ME:</p> <p>Arm extended straight up from shoulder, palm forward.</p> 	<p>PULL OFF:</p> <p>Arm positioned as for right turn, forearm swung toward shoulder.</p> 
<p>TURN SIGNALS (Accidentally left on):</p> <p>Open and close hand with fingers and thumb extended.</p> 	<p>HEADLIGHT:</p> <p>Tap on top of head, open palm down.</p> 	<p>FUEL:</p> <p>Arm out to side, upper arm about 45 degrees below horizontal, forearm pointing to tank with forefinger extended.</p> 	<p>FOOD, COFFEE STOP:</p> <p>Fingers closed, thumb to mouth.</p> 
<p>COMFORT STOP:</p> <p>Upper arm extended horizontally, forearm straight up, fist clenched with short up and down motion.</p> 		<p>YOU LEAD: Arm extended (palm forward) down. Begin behind hip and swing forward in an arc away from body about 45 degrees from vertical.</p> <p>COME ALONGSIDE: Same motion, but stop at side and point to position for other cycle.</p> 	

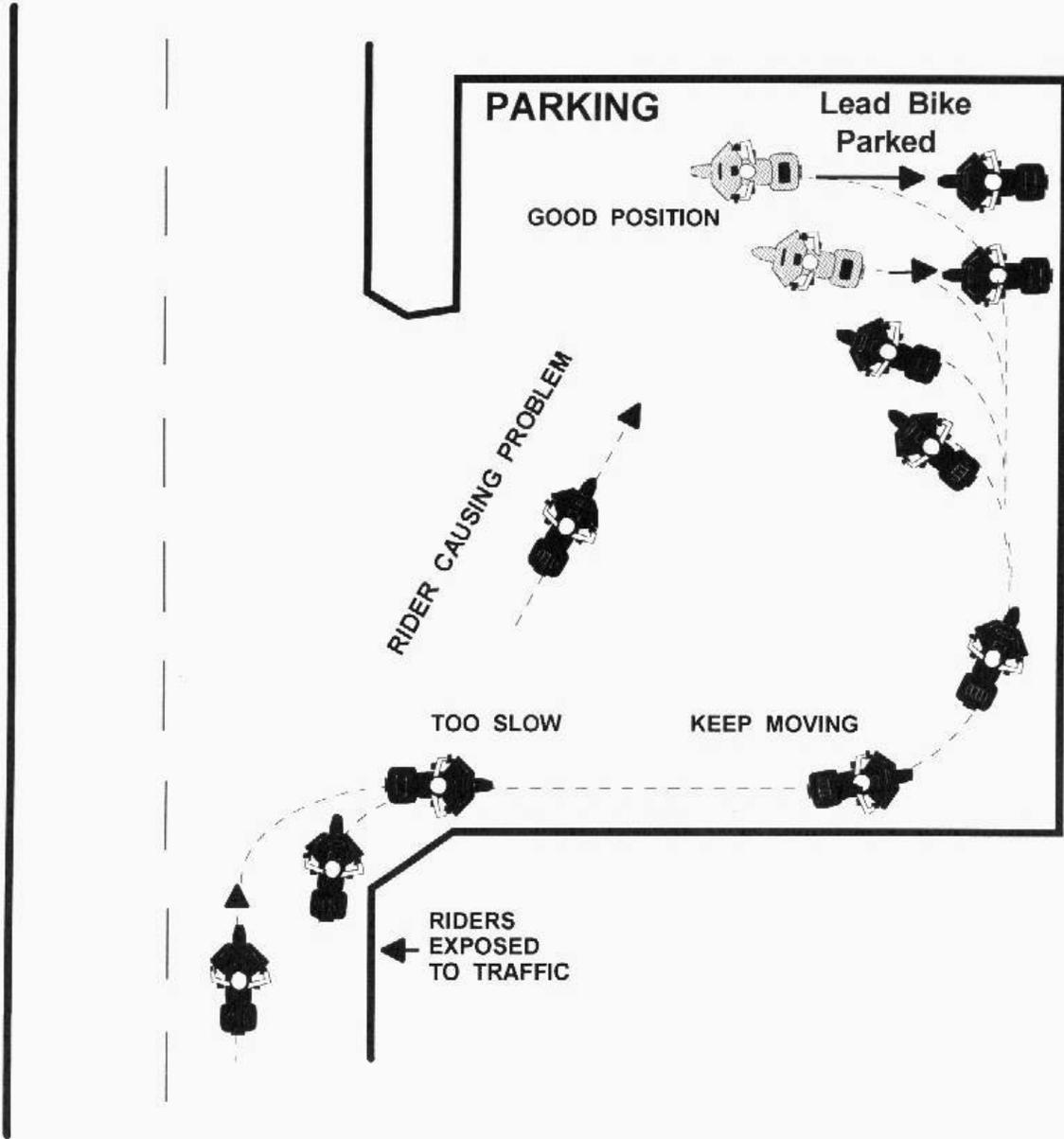
ENTERING HIGHWAY FROM ON-RAMP



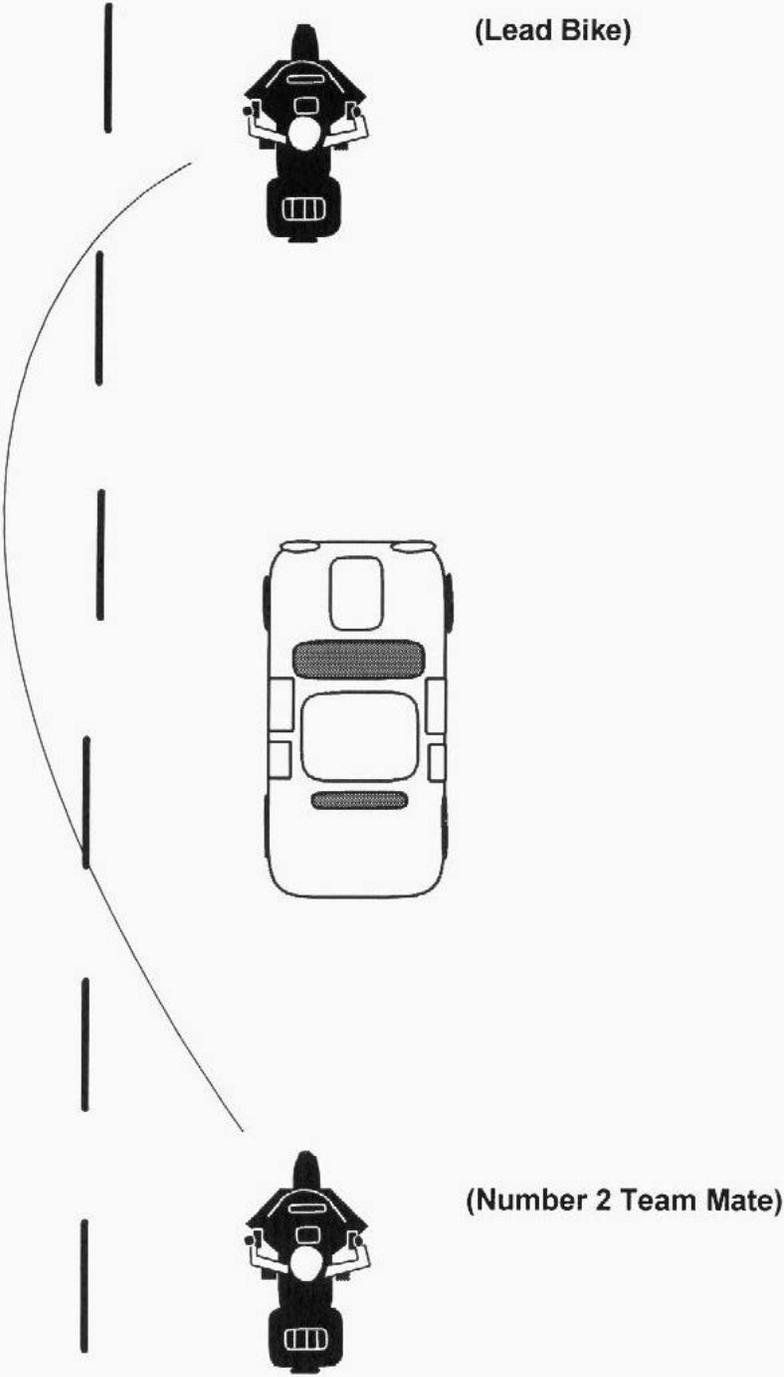
LANE CHANGE

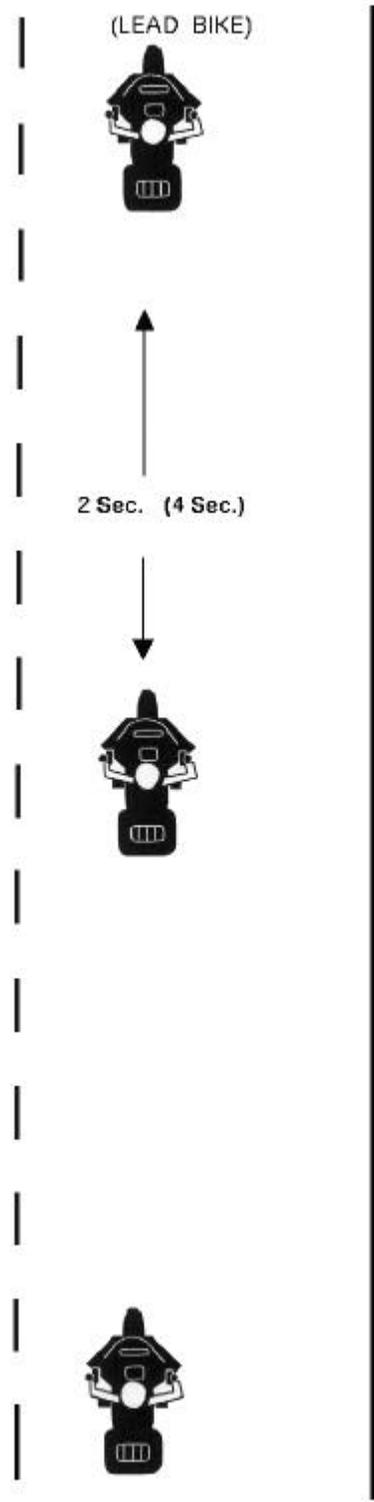
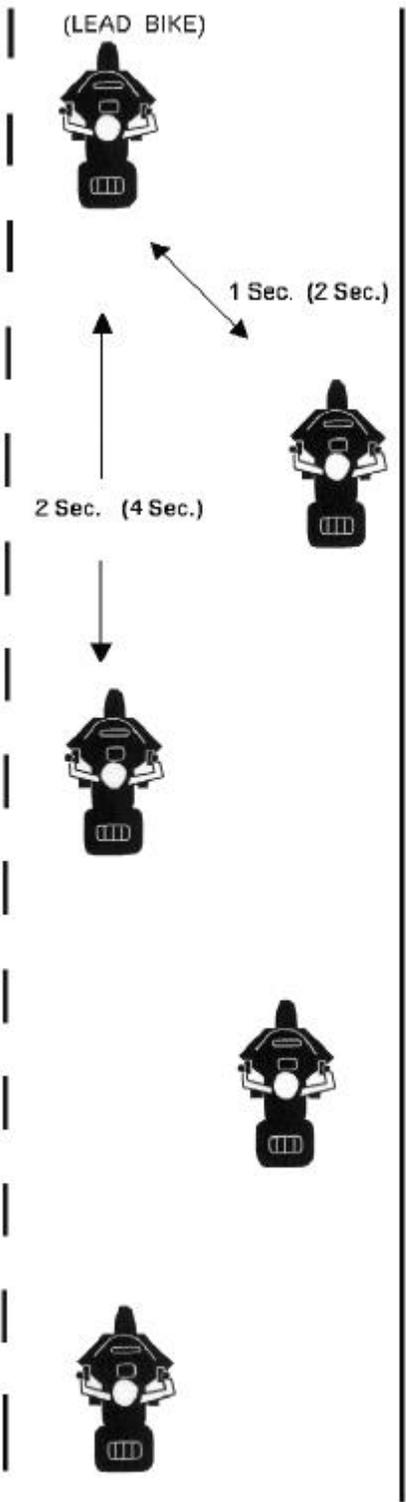


PARKING LOT / PULL OFF



SINGLE LANE PASS





STOP LIGHT



(LEAD BIKE)



(DRAG BIKE)