Washington State CVMA Chapter 11-6

ROAD CAPTAIN

FIELD MANUAL



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# 1 INTRODUCTION

Congratulations on your decision to become a CVMA CH 11-6 Road Captain. 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 that means having good, well qualified

Road Captain’s. By volunteering, you have already demonstrated that you have the best

Interest of our Chapter at heart, this manual will help you develop the skills necessary to become a competent and fully qualified Road Captain.

# 2 RESPONSIBILITIES OF A ROAD CAPTAIN/TAIL GUNNER

Every Road Captain (RC), to include the Sergeant at Arms (SAA), has certain basic responsibilities; in addition, Lead Road Captains (Lead RC) and Tail Gunner have responsibilities that are specific to their jobs.

Some of these responsibilities are related to Pre-Ride planning and preparation; others govern your safe action on the road.

This section defines the responsibilities of Lead Road Captains and Tail Gunners. Also included is a description of the equipment every Road Captain should carry on an organized Chapter ride.

**2.1 BASIC RESPONSIBILITIES OF ALL ROAD CAPTAINS**

As a Road Captain, you have seven basic responsibilities:

* 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 signed release forms for chapter rides.
* Act as a guide, i.e., Lead Road Captain, for organized Chapter rides.
* Act as a Tail Gunner or “sweep,” for organized Chapter rides.

**2.2 RESPONSIBILITIES OF A LEAD ROAD CAPTAIN**

The Lead Road Captain will:

1. Take charge of the group until the final destination has been reached.
2. Lead as safe a ride as possible at all times.
3. Conduct a Pre-Ride brief for all riders.
4. 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.
5. If road conditions or weather dictates, the Lead RC may alter the ride route or destination.

**The LEAD RC may also cancel the ride.**

1. Position new riders within group at the front, just behind the Lead RC, this is to lead the group SAFELY at a speed that the new riders can follow.
2. 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.
3. Lead the group in a safe manner and execute sound judgment in situations not specifically covered in these guidelines.
4. Make sure to have all needed RC equipment and documents, including a current listing of all Chapter RCs and their phone numbers.
5. Have access to a cell phone. This is required to contact RCs or to call for emergency services.
6. Locate and make note of other cell phones and first aid kits among riders if necessary.
7. Separate large groups into smaller groups if possible. Group size should be kept to 12 bikes or less including the ride leaders. The Lead RC will make any judgment calls needed to place riders with needs in specified groups and or positions within the group.
8. Ensure appropriate waivers are completed and signed.

## 2.3 RESPONSIBILITIES OF A TAIL GUNNER

The Tail Gunner will:

1. Be observant of any hazardous conditions or conduct, take immediate corrective action as appropriate, and inform the Lead RC at the earliest safe opportunity.
2. In the event the group becomes separated and in the absence of another Road Captain, either;
3. Move to the lead position of the rear group, or
4. Remain in the Tail Gunner position and appoint another rider to take the lead.
5. Carry a first aid kit.
6. Have access to a cell phone. This is required to contact RCs or to call for emergency services.
7. Make sure to have all needed RC equipment and documents, including a current listing of all Chapter RCs and their phone numbers.

## 2.4 EQUIPMENT

At a minimum, all Road Captains 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

Carry a first aid kit consisting of at least 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

Although RCs are not mechanics, all Road Captains should carry a basic tool kit 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 screwdrivers, pliers, electrical tape, zip ties, and chem-lights or signal flares.

### 2.4.3 Documents

Each RC should have waivers and a list of Chapter RC and Officer Phone numbers.

#### 2.4.3.1 Release Forms

• Adult: Chapter Event Release form for one adult must be filled out for each non-CVMA member that is on the ride.

#### 2.4.3.2 Injury Report

If any injuries occur during an official chapter ride, an injury report must be completed as soon as possible on the same day that the injury occurred. If applicable, attach the riders release form and any police reports to the completed form. Deliver the completed documents to any CEB officer or the Senior Road Captain. The chapter SAA will maintain reports in case any action is needed. Please note that only police can take a witness report.

# 3 QUALIFYING AS A ROAD CAPTAIN

Becoming a Road Captain is not automatic. New volunteers are accepted as “Candidate Road Captain”

(CRC), provided they meet a short list of prerequisites. Once an individual has been accepted as a CRC, 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.

This is a two-part process. First the candidate will qualify as a Tail Gunner. After that, the candidate may qualify as a Lead Road Captain. An LEAD RC is considered “fully qualified.”

## 3.1 ROAD CAPTAIN PREREQUISITES

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

* Be a member in good standing with National CVMA.
* Be a member in good standing with WA CVMA affiliated chapter.
* Have the approval of the SAA or Chapter CEB.

## 3.2 QUALIFYING AS A ROAD CAPTAIN

The SAA will have the final approval.

### 3.2.1 Qualifying as a Tail Gunner

In order to qualify as a Tail Gunner (aka “sweep “), a CRC must demonstrate the following skills/abilities to his or her assigned mentor. The mentor will notify the SAA when a CRC has completed this stage.

* The ability to notice unsafe / improper group riding technique.
* 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.
* The ability to instruct group riders in proper group riding technique during a ride.
* Provide corrective actions to riders for above issues will be done at stops or at the end of the ride.

\*\* If unable to wait for a planned stop, to address a serious safety issue, signal the LEAD RC with your radio or head light to make an immediate stop and correct the issue.

* Knowledge and proper use of hand signals.\* the proper way to accomplish a lane change \* Identify LEAD RC desire to change lanes.
* Wait for the LEAD RC to start lane change when lane is clear.
* Secure the lane to change to when safe.

\*Move back to prior lane if LEAD RC cancels the lane change.

\*\*\*Once you have been qualified as a Road Captain, you must ensure that you continue to meet these prerequisite requirements. If you do not, your name you could be remove from the Road Captain roster at the SAA’s discretion.

### 3.2.2 Qualifying as a Lead Road Captain (i.e., a “Fully Qualified” Road Captain)

In order to qualify as an LEAD RC, a Candidate must demonstrate the following skills/abilities to his or her assigned mentor. The mentor will notify the SAA when a CRC has completed this stage.

* Plan the route for one ride.
* Demonstrate a proper Pre-Ride brief.
* Negotiate a group through urban and suburban environments.
* Demonstrate proper acceleration technique and good speed control.
* Execute proper lane changes in urban, suburban, and highway environments.
* Demonstrate the canceling of a lane change.
* Demonstrate the proper technique for passing vehicles in the oncoming traffic lane. This may be done on an empty road.
* Demonstrate the proper technique for passing a big-rig on a multi-lane highway.
* Demonstrate the ability to recognize and adjust the ride to the experience level /riding capabilities of the entire group.
* Demonstrate an awareness of environmental changes including weather and road conditions.

\*\* Complete qualification ride with a group of RCs. The RCs will evaluate the CRC and report to the SAA.

### 3.2.3 Presentation of Road Captain Rocker

After a Road Captain candidate meets all the prerequisites of becoming a Road Captain and the SAA 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.

# 4 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. (See section 4.2)
* Be familiar with and exercise the Chapter’s group riding procedures.
* Listen to and follow the instructions of the Road Captains unless those instructions will put those or others in an unsafe situation.
* Know the basic route.

## 4.1 MEETING PLACE & TIME

The SAA and the Road Captains will work closely together to determine the meeting place and time for each ride. The meeting time will be stated. The Ride Briefing will start 15 minutes prior to departure.. The briefing should take no more than 15 minutes. The Road Captains for each ride will meet at least 15 to 30 minutes prior to the scheduled Ride Brief time to ensure that they are prepared for the ride.

## 4.2 GUIDELINES

* The LEAD RC will wait at stop signs until the Tail Gunner has stopped.
* The LEAD RC and Tail Gunner will communicate via radios or signals using head and/or passing lamps.
* LEAD RC will use all hand signals as needed and will re-issue hand signals if required after stops.
* The RCs will NOT require riders to wear safety equipment that is not required by the laws of the state that the ride is currently in.

## 4.3 PRE-RIDE BRIEFING

At the stated meeting time the LEAD RC or designee will conduct a briefing. 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.
* If separation occurs, the LEAD RC will slow down or find a safe place to pull off and wait for the group to catch up.
* Tail Gunner 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 Tail Gunner will change position, move only after rider in front of you does. **Inform riders that LEAD RC could cancel the lane change if needed**.
* Immediate Lane Changes – The LEAD RC may initiate the lane change prior to the Tail Gunner 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 – as safely as possible, one bike at a time.
* Multilane Big Rigs – as safely as possible, two bikes at a time.
* Any vehicle on an adjoining shoulder - single up while passing.
* Hand Signals – SEE HAND SIGNALS ON PAGE 15.
* 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 TAIL GUNNER.
* If equipment failure occurs, Tail Gunner will attend to the rider, the LEAD RC will pull over, when safe.

The LEAD RC 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 LEAD RC will be the focal point to make decisions.
* The LEAD RC 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.

## 4.4 EVENT RELEASE FORMS

Chapter activities are conducted primarily to benefit CVMA Chapter members. There are two categories of activities; they are identified as follows:

* Member Events; these are events that are open only to CVMA chapter members.
* Closed Events; these are chapter events which are open only to Chapter members and one guest per member.
* Open Events; these are chapter events which are open to Chapter Members, National CVMA members and the Public.

\*\*\*Prior to each ride the LEAD RC or designee will identify any non-chapter members and obtain the necessary event release forms. These forms are to be submitted to the Chapter Secretary or the SAA at the next scheduled CVMA Chapter meeting. Those release forms are:

* Chapter Event Release Forms for Adults
* Chapter Event Release Forms for Minors. (Same as Adult form but will have Parent/Guardian Signature)

## 4.5 RIDING FORMATIONS

The basic formation for all rides is the staggered formation. Environmental conditions will dictate when the LEAD RC 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

The staggered formation 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.

Single File, noted by a hand signal above the head with the index finger only extended. 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 as he or she deems proper.

## 4.6 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. Not so early or late that they are meaningless or unnecessary.

The LEAD RC 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 LEAD RC issues a hand signal, he or she shall hold the hand signal until the rider behind the Road Captain performs the signal. Upon seeing the signal relayed back, the Road Captain 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 TAIL GUNNER will perform the hand signal to signal the traffic that follows.

# CAUTION: DO NOT MAINTAIN OR PERFORM ANY HAND SIGNAL IF SAFETY REQUIRES TWO HANDS ON YOUR HANDLEBARS

## 4.7 TRAFFIC LANES

The group shall stay in a single traffic lane whenever possible. The LEAD RC will pick a lane where the flow of traffic is consistent with the speed of the group.

In an urban environment, the LEAD RC 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 LEAD RC should avoid using the right lane as a travel lane.

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 LEAD RCs 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.

## 4.8 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 LEAD RC will initiate lane changes by hand signal and with the motorcycle’s turn signal (if so equipped). The LEAD RC 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 Tail Gunner will show the hand signal for following traffic and, when safe to do so, the Tail Gunner will move into the middle half of the new lane. The LEAD RC, upon observing the Tail Gunner in position and with no traffic between in the new lane, will maneuver his or her bike into the new lane. Each rider, in turn, will then follow suit and maneuver into the new travel lane. Once the group is established in the new lane, the TAIL GUNNER will then assume the correct position in either the left or right half of the travel lane.

# NOTE: WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE TAIL GUNNER, NO ONE IS TO CHANGE LANES UNTIL THE RIDER IN FRONT OF THEM DOES SO. 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 SWEEP. 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.**

## 4.9 PASSING IN DETAIL

Passing refers to maneuvering the group into a traffic lane where the direction of travel is in the opposite direction the group is riding. Passing will only be done on two lane roads (roads which have a single travel lane in each direction).

**WARNING: PASSING MAY ONLY BE DONE WHERE LEGAL TO DO SO! Passing across solid lines is not legal.**

Once the LEAD RC determines there is sufficient room for the group to pass, the LEAD RC shall maneuver into the oncoming traffic lane and accelerate past the slower traffic and return to the initial travel lane in his or her lead position. Each subsequent rider, in turn and when safe, should also maneuver into the oncoming traffic lane and accelerate past the slower traffic, then return to the initial traffic lane. Once the Tail Gunner has cleared the slower traffic he or she should return to the initial travel lane in tail position.

**4.10 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 LEAD RC will find a safe place to pull over the rest of the group that was in front of the accident. The Tail Gunner 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 LEAD RC 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 LEAD RC’s group. If a RC had to designate a leader to join up with the rest of the group, you must inform that person that while they are in front, the ride is NOT an official CVMA ride. If any injuries occur during an official chapter ride, an injury report must be completed as soon as possible on the same day that the injury occurred. If applicable, attach the riders release form and any police reports to the completed form. Deliver the completed documents to any CEB officer or the SAA. The chapter SAA will maintain reports in case any action is needed. 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.

**5 MENTORING**

CRC’s shall choose or be assigned a mentor from the cadre of experienced Road Captains by SAA. The mentors shall work to educate and train the new volunteer CRCs ensuring that he or she is familiar with the Road Captain Training Manual and responsibilities of being a CVMA Road Captain.

