



Department of Oklahoma American Legion Riders Handbook

July 2026

<https://okamlegion.org/legion-riders>

Prayer for Members of the Armed Forces

O God Almighty, the Creator and Ruler of the Universe, we ask that you will Strengthen and protect the members of the Armed Forces of the United States of America. In the day of battle may they be courageous and strong, resourceful and Capable, resolute and victorious. In the time of peace may they serve with dignity and Honor, as effective emissaries of good will for this Nation. May their devotion and Loyalty to You and to their homeland inspire them in moments of challenge, and Comfort them in tribulation and long separation from loved ones. And finally, we ask That they may return safely to serve you and our Country in the days and years to Come.

Amen.

I. INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

The Oklahoma American Legion Riders is a program sponsored by The American Legion Department of Oklahoma. Its purpose is to participate in and promote the aims and purposes of The American Legion Department of Oklahoma including but not limited to the programs of The American Legion. The Oklahoma American Legion Riders shall be known as the Oklahoma Chapter and local Chapters sponsored by an American Legion Post shall be known by the name and number of its sponsoring Post.

As a motorcycle association the Oklahoma American Legion Riders shall:

- I.** Promote motorcycle safety while providing a social atmosphere for members of The American Legion family who share common interests in serving veterans, their communities and motorcycling.
- II.** Promote, support and participate in the programs and ceremonies of The American Legion including calling for a full accounting of all prisoners of war and those missing in action; and honoring our nation's fallen soldiers, sailors, airmen and marines, and to support their families.
- III.** Not have authority to enter into any formal association or club/council membership with any outside organization that may act, collect monies or vote in any manner outside the control of The American Legion.
- IV.** Avoid the perception of being a "motorcycle club" or biker club".
- V.** As ambassadors of The American Legion family, Riders will always represent the organization in a manner in keeping with the Preamble of the Constitution of The American Legion; *"For God and Country, we associate ourselves together for the following purposes: To uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States of American; to maintain law and order; to foster and perpetuate a one hundred percent Americanism; to preserve the memories and incidents of our associations in the Great Wars; to inculcate a sense of individual obligation to the community, state and nation; to combat the autocracy of both the classes and the masses; to make right the master of might; to promote peace and good will on earth; to safeguard and transmit to Prosperity the principles of justice. Freedom and democracy; to consecrate and sanctify our comradeship by our devotion to mutual helpfulness."*

II. OKLHOMA CHAPTERS

A complete list of current sponsoring Posts and chartered American Legion Rider Chapters are listed below

- American Legion Riders Post 68 Clayton, Oklahoma
- American Legion Riders Post 20 Fort Gibson, Oklahoma
- American Legion Riders Post 110 Broken Arrow, Oklahoma

- American Legion Riders Post 126 Bristow, Oklahoma
- American Legion Riders Post 146 Sayre, Oklahoma
- American Legion Riders Post 136 Marietta, Oklahoma,
- American Legion Riders Post 153 Wagoner, Oklahoma
- American Legion Riders Post 164 Tishomingo, OK
- American Legion Riders Post 178 Grove, Oklahoma
- American Legion Riders Post 244 McLoud, Oklahoma
- American Legion Riders Post 308 Tulsa, Oklahoma
- American Legion Riders Post 1340 Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
- American Legion Riders Post 141 Claremore, Oklahoma
- American Legion Riders Post 2 Collinsville, Oklahoma

III. MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS

As per Article I of the Department of Oklahoma Constitution By Laws, American Legion Rider members must:

There are three requirements for membership in the Oklahoma American Legion Riders Program.

- a. Must be a current member of The American Legion, The American Legion Auxiliary, or Sons of The American Legion.
- b. American Legion Riders program may allow for continued membership for those members who have given up motorcycle ownership because of age, illness, injury, or other reasons outside the member's control.
- c. National dictates that you must own directly or through marriage a motorcycle of 250cc displacement or larger.

IV. CHAIN OF COMMAND

The Chain of Command for all members of the Oklahoma American Legion Riders is:

Member to their ALR Chapter Director, to the Commander of the sponsoring Post, to the Area Director, to the Department ALR Chairman/Committee, to the Department Adjutant, to the Department Commander and the Department Executive Committee.

Officers:

The administrative affairs of American Legion Riders Program shall, except as may be otherwise provided by the By-Laws, be under the supervision of an Executive Committee which shall consist of not less than three, and not more than six members in addition to the Officers of the Program. The term of office of members of the Executive Committee shall be for one year. The

Program By-Laws may provide for such other standing Committees as the business of the Program may require.

The Officers of this Program shall be a Director, a Vice Director, an Adjutant, a Finance Officer, a Program Historian a Program Chaplain, Program Service Officer and a Sergeant –at-Arms, and such other Officers as may be deemed necessary by the Program. The Director, The Vice Director, the Sergeant-at- Arms, and the Executive Committee shall be elected from the floor at the Department Annual Convention.

The Director, Vice-Director, the Sergeant-at-Arms and the Executive Committee shall be elected annually, they shall hold office for one year or until their successors are duly installed or as otherwise provided in the By- Laws.

All electees/appointees may serve multiple terms in office, except for the Director – he/she may not serve more than three (3) consecutive terms (he/she may serve again after being out of the office of Director for at least two (2) consecutive terms).

All other Officers, Committees, or groups shall be nominated for appointment by the Director and be confirmed by the Program.

Any Officer or Executive Committee member may be removed for disloyalty, neglect of duty, dishonesty or conduct unbecoming a member of The American Legion, by the Executive Committee, a three-fourths vote of said Committee being necessary to affect such removal.

V. AMERICAN LEGION, SONS, AND AUXILIARY EMBLEMS

The reproduction of The American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary, and the Sons of The American Legion emblems, trademarks, service marks, trade names and service names ***require permission*** of the National Adjutant. Forms for obtaining permission for their reproduction are available from Department Headquarters. All requests must be signed by the sponsoring Post Commander or Adjutant before submittal to the Department Adjutant for his signature and forwarding to the National Adjutant. Questions regarding the reproduction and usage of the name(s) or emblem(s) of The American Legion including the American Legion Rider program should be directed to the Department Adjutant.

VI. OFFICIAL OKLAHOMA AMERICAN LEGION RIDERS VESTS AND JACKETS

As per Article VI of the Department of Oklahoma American Legion Riders Bylaws:

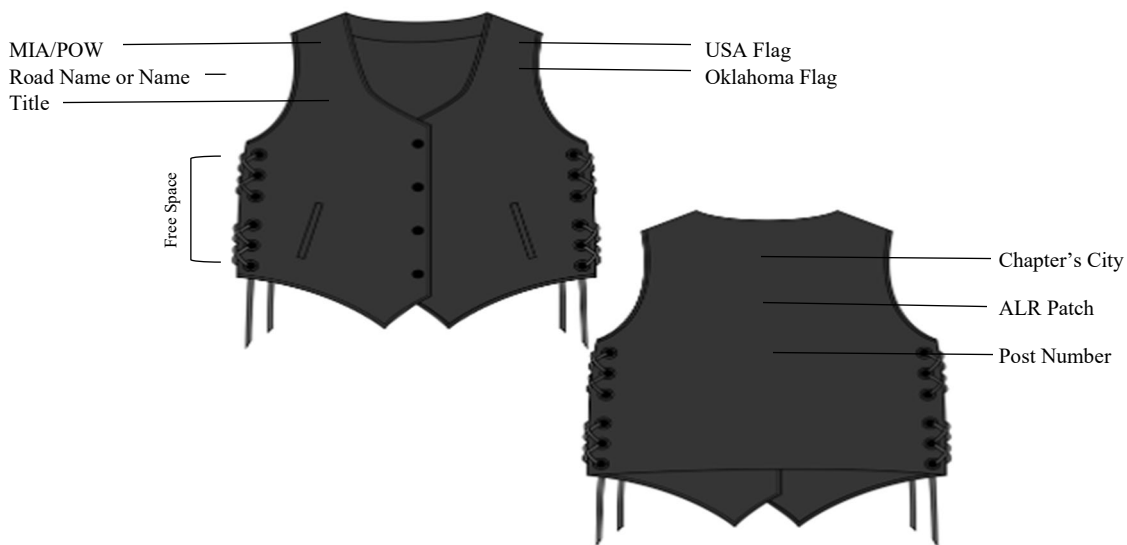
The front of the vest will consist of the following: An American flag will be worn on the left side, high on the chest. Patches with any art or wording that defaces the flag shall not be worn on the American Legion Riders vest. An Oklahoma flag will be placed immediately below the American flag. A POW/MIA patch will be worn on the right side high on the chest. Road names and officer titles will be worn below the POW/MIA patch. The lower half of both the left and right front of the vest is free for individual patches and pins. Absolutely nothing will be worn above the American Flag or POW/MIA patch.

The back of the vest will consist of the following: The American Legion Riders Association patch centered on the back. The Chapter's city may be embroidered on the patch above the emblem with OK and Post number embroidered below the emblem. The open areas outside the back patch and rockers on both the left and right is free for individual patches or pins.

Absolutely no "Property Of", property-type, other "M/C" patches or support patches of any other motorcycle organization will be worn on a garment also displaying the American Legion Riders logo – This is essential to maintaining our "neutral" status within the motorcycle culture.

Refer to NEC Resolution No. 5 May 5-6, 2021: Guidelines for the American Legion Riders National Program

Riders with patches before July 17, 2021, will be "Grandfather Clause" as long they meet the Section 3 above and patches do not deface the American Flag. New Riders after the July 17 2021, will adhere to Article XI "Wearing of Patches".



The above illustration shows the required patch placement on your vest or jacket. The American flag will be worn on the left side, high on the chest. Patches with anything art or wording defacing the flag shall not be worn on the American Legion Riders vest.

An Oklahoma flag will be placed immediately below the American flag. A POW/MIA patch will be worn on the right side high on the chest.

Road names and officer titles will be worn below the POW/MIA patch. Additional optional patches are permitted provided they conform to Article XI Section III, of the Oklahoma American Legion Riders Bylaws.

The back of the vest will consist of the following: The American Legion Riders Association patch centered on the back. The Chapter's city may be embroidered on the patch above the emblem with OK and Post number embroidered below the emblem.

VII. FLAG DISPLAY ORDER OF PRECEDENCE FOR

The order of precedence for flags is National, State, Military, and Other.

According to the Department of Defense Directive 1005.8, the prescribed precedence of military flags is determined by service birthdays. The appropriate order is given below:

Army Birthday --14 June 1775

Marine Corps Birthday – 10 November 1775

Navy Birthday – 13 Oct 1775-Abolished Feb 1781-Reinstated 7 Sep 1781

Air Force Birthday – 18 September 1947

*Coast Guard Birthday – 4 August 1790

*According to the Institute of Heraldry and in keeping with the order in which troops are listed in Department of Defense Directive 1005.8, during peacetime the Coast Guard falls under the Department of Homeland Security. During wartime, if the Coast Guard comes under the control of the Department of Defense, then the Coast Guard flag would come before the Air Force flag in order of precedence.

Organization flags such as The American Legion and POW/MIA are displayed following the military flags.

VIII. DISPLAYING A US FLAG ON A MOTORCYCLE

When the US flag is flown alone, it needs to be at the center on the back of the motorcycle, or to its "marching right." The "marching right" is on the right side of the motorcycle to the rider's perspective when facing forward. If the US Flag is on your bike with another, it should be to its "marching right." All flags flown with the US Flag are the same size and at the same height of the US Flag. While the US Flag is on your bike with several other flags the US flag is placed at the center and highest. Other flags should be arranged in alphabetical order and in decreasing importance - Nations first, states (in order of admittance) and territories second, military third (in order of establishment), and then any others.



RIDERS' MEETING

When you were contacted by your group ride organizer, they should have informed you about the time and place for the riders' meeting. Plan to arrive at this meeting with your bike prepped, a full tank of fuel and everything else you plan to bring on the ride. Generally, a riders' meeting will take place about 30 minutes before the ride. At the meeting, expect to receive a map noting the group's route, itinerary, and the location of fuel, meal, rest or lodging stops. Sometimes, if the ride is large enough,

you may be asked to select a buddy within the group so you can watch out for each other.

Often during the meeting, **hand signals** are reviewed so that you can communicate with the other riders during the ride. Hand signals are a useful tool to keep the group aware and cohesive on the roadway. Your group is free to determine its own set of signals, but here's a review of some commonly used ones.

Hand Signals

Stop – arm extended straight down, palm facing back



Speed Up – arm extended straight out, palm facing up, swing upward



Slow Down – arm extended straight out, palm facing down, swing down to your side



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



Single File – arm and index finger extended straight up



Double File – arm with index and middle finger extended straight up



Turn Signal On – open and close hand with fingers and thumb extended



Hazard in Roadway – on the left, point with left hand; on the right, point with right foot



Fuel – arm out to side pointing to tank with finger extended



Highbeam – tap on top of helmet with open palm down



Refreshment Stop – fingers closed, thumb to mouth



Pull Off – arm positioned as for right turn, forearm swung toward shoulder



Comfort Stop – forearm extended, fist clenched with short up and down motion



RIDING IN FORMATION

As part of a group ride, never pair up side-by-side by positioning your motorcycle directly alongside another rider. This riding formation does not give both riders an adequate **space cushion** or room to maneuver. There is no place to go if you have to avoid a car or a hazard in the roadway. To talk, wait until you are both stopped. The only time a side-by-side formation might be required is during a parade event that is using a police escort.

Ideally, the group will ride in a **staggered formation**. Riding formations are for your safety as well as the safety of the group. When a group is riding in a staggered formation, it takes up less space on the highway than a single-file line, is easier for other motorists to see and, by **protecting its lane**, is less likely to be separated by other traffic. Larger groups should divide up into smaller, more manageable groups, ideally five to seven riders.

Your staggered formation can be tight or loose, depending on traffic conditions. During heavy traffic, a tight staggered formation usually works best to keep other traffic from cutting into your group, although keep in mind that safety comes before the tightness of the group.

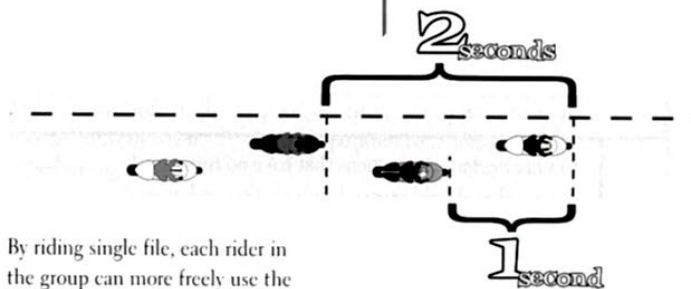
A staggered formation is the best way to keep ranks close and still maintain an adequate space cushion both in front of and behind each rider. A space cushion will give each rider plenty of room to maneuver and still maintain the riding formation. On a sunny day on dry roads, a minimum space cushion is considered to be a two-second following distance* between a rider and the rider directly in front of them. During inclement weather it is advisable to increase following distance by adding more space in between riders of the group.

In a staggered formation, the leader rides in the left third of the lane, while the next rider stays at least one second behind in the right third of the lane. The rest of the group follows this pattern.

If your formation is correct, the third rider is two seconds behind the leader, but only one second behind the second rider.

If trikes or sidecars are part of your group, those machines should be ridden in the center of the lane, and keep at least a two-second following distance within the group to maintain their space cushion.

In certain situations, it is safer for the group to ride in single file. The single-file formation is best used when more room to maneuver might be needed such as on narrow or curvy roadways, in poor visibility, at tollbooths, entering and leaving highways, on roadways with bad surfaces, when entering a traffic circle or roundabout, or in any other situation where more space cushion is needed.



By riding single file, each rider in the group can more freely use the entire lane and choose their own line through a turn. As with riding formations, keeping an adequate space cushion between riders and adjusting it to suit changing needs is important.

*To establish a "two-second following distance," use this technique: pick a fixed object ahead of you – street signs or light poles work well, as do painted roadway lines. As soon as the vehicle in front of you passes the object, count off "one-thousand-one, one-thousand-two..." If you haven't yet reached the object by the time you finish your two-second count, your following distance meets the two-second minimum.

KEEPING THE GROUP TOGETHER

The Lead rider should plan ahead for changes and signal early so the word "gets back" to the rest of the group in plenty of time.

Many groups put newer and less-experienced riders near the back of the group. This way, slower riders won't hold up the group, but the Sweep rider, who is an experienced rider, is behind them to ensure that there aren't any problems. Other groups prefer to put newer riders up front directly behind the Lead rider so that the entire group can keep an eye on them and no one rider falls too far behind. This decision rests with the group and particularly with the Lead rider who is aware of the demands of the chosen route and the skills of each rider in the group. Your group

should determine the way that suits its needs the best. The only two positions that require the most experienced riders of the group are the Lead rider at the front of the group and the Sweep rider at the end of the group. Of course, wherever the newer riders are placed, a good lead rider will set a pace that accommodates the skill and safety levels of all the riders in the group.

Another good way to keep the group together is for each rider to periodically check on the following riders in their rearview mirrors. This way if a rider falls behind, the other riders can slow down to prevent the slower rider from falling too far behind. If all riders of the group use this technique, the group will be able to maintain a fairly steady speed without the others feeling pressured to ride too fast to catch up.

INTERSECTIONS

Intersections are the area of highest risk for a motorcyclist. This is still true for the group, despite the increased visibility. All intersections should be approached with caution.

When making a left turn at a protected intersection, where traffic turning left has its own turn signal arrow, tighten the formation to allow as many riders as possible to pass through the intersection. Do not ride

side-by-side; the group should make the turn single file or in a tight, staggered formation.

Use the same procedure for right turns and remember to respect the rights of other roadway users. During your riders' meeting, you should have discussed what to do if all of your group cannot proceed through the light before it turns red. Knowing that the group will stop at a designated point up ahead will help keep each rider from feeling pressured to jeopardize their safety by running the light.

In unprotected intersections that have no turn signal arrow, riders should proceed with caution and in single file. Each rider should act as an individual, only making the turn when it is safe and legal for them to do so. While awaiting your turn, remember to check your rearview mirrors, as other motorists may be expecting you to ride on as a group. The most important thing is to make the turn safely. The group can re-form after everyone has ridden safely through the intersection.

Blocking an intersection without specific permission and an appropriate escort is illegal in most circumstances. In the case of an escorted parade and event ride, riders should be given specific instructions at the riders' meeting on the group formation and the procedures to be used for moving legally through blocked intersections.

At two-way stop intersections, where you are required to stop, move through only when it is safe and legal.

When stopping at an intersection with a light, it may be appropriate to close up the formation and sit side-by-side while waiting for the light to change. If you do this, the rider on the left proceeds first, and the following riders reestablish the staggered formation and space cushion as they depart.

At yield intersections be safe and cautious. Turn your head to check for traffic before merging. Respect the law, other members of the group and other roadway users. Put safety and operating within the law ahead of trying to stay in formation. The group can reestablish its formation afterward.

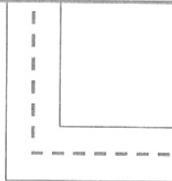
INTERSTATES AND FREEWAYS

A staggered formation is essential on freeways and interstates. Enter in single file and form up only after safely merging onto the roadway. Your Lead rider should maintain a merging speed that will allow enough space for following riders to safely merge. Since riding in a group doesn't change your right-of-way, be alert to the fact that cars entering or exiting may cut through your formation if your group is traveling in the far right lane. It may be better to move the group over one lane when everyone has safely

entered the interstate. In heavier traffic, resist the temptation to close up the formation too much. Maintain your space cushion and at least your one-second/two-second staggered formation following distance.

Exiting an interstate always requires a single-file formation. Doing so provides more time and space to react to whatever is at the end of the exit lane, or allows you to merge onto another roadway.

PASSING



When your group wants to pass slower traffic as a group (or change lanes) on a freeway or interstate, the group may pass as a unit. When it is safe and legal, the Lead rider should signal the lane change when they have determined the entire group can change lanes and pass as a unit. The other riders then follow this lead and signal one at a time to move into the next lane.

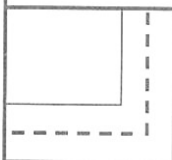
On a two-lane highway, when passing slower traffic such as construction or farm vehicles, the group should pass one at a time. Take special care if passing slower vehicles or horse-drawn carriages such as those that the Amish use. Be courteous and safe by only using marked passing zones. The leader should signal intentions first and then pull out when it is safe and legal. After completing the

pass, the leader should return to the left lane position and continue at a passing speed to leave room for the next rider, then the next rider should move up to the left position and watch for a safe chance to pass. After passing, this rider should return to the right position and open up room for the next rider. The rest of the group should follow the same pattern.

Some people suggest that the Lead rider should move to the right side after passing a vehicle. This is not a good idea. It encourages the second rider to pass and cut back in before there is a large enough space cushion in front of the passed vehicle. It's simpler and safer to wait until there is enough room ahead of the passed vehicle to allow each rider to move into the same position held before the pass.

PARKING

Parking as a group has many benefits. If parking is organized, you get your group off their bikes more quickly. You also run less risk of blocking access to others trying to park in the lot. Avoid parking downhill or head-in, or you may find you need to use your fellow riders as a reverse gear! Try to park where you can pull through to make both the arrival and departure smooth. If this isn't possible, try to position the motorcycles so that the group can depart as a unit in single file.



LEAVING THE GROUP

If you plan to drop out of the group, notify your leader or ride buddy beforehand about the place or time you will be leaving the group. This way, they know you have not had a problem and need assistance. When you depart, the rest of the group should adjust the formation while maintaining a good space cushion and following distance. This may require riders to change their position to the opposite side of the lane.

ROADSIDE EMERGENCIES

If a member of your group has mechanical difficulties or has been involved in a crash, the following riders should all stop, including the Sweep rider and the chase vehicle (if your group has one). The riders ahead of the incident should continue on to the next scheduled stop area since doubling back could cause additional safety problems.

The Sweep rider should assess the situation and, if it appears there will be a delay, send one rider ahead to meet the rest of the group at the next scheduled stop area. If medical assistance is necessary, the sweep rider can use their cell

SEPARATED FROM THE GROUP

You might get separated from the group because of a traffic signal, traffic or other reasons. Don't panic. Your group should have a pre-planned procedure or a place selected in which to regroup. Don't feel pressured to catch up, especially if it means breaking the law or riding beyond your limits. Proceed to the regrouping area or call the pre-selected contact person for your group.

ROADWAY HAZARDS

You may encounter differing types of roadway hazards or severe roadway conditions while on a group ride. When entering construction zones, it is probably best to ride single file, reduce speed and increase your space cushion. This will allow riders to adjust their lane positions and respond to the roadway conditions more freely.

Maintaining a good space cushion and following distance throughout the ride will allow riders to react to roadway debris like sand, gravel and oil. If riding in a staggered formation, it may be better to change to single file. The lead rider should use pre-determined hand signals. Avoid riding over debris unless you have no choice. Not only could you damage your tires or bike, but you also risk throwing the debris into another rider's path of travel. Ride as smoothly as possible and avoid sudden changes in speed or direction. The same is true for wet roadways.

ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS

Riding into the sun may seem scenic in movies, but can be hazardous for a motorcyclist. The glare makes it difficult for motorists to see one another. This might be a good time to plan a break as these conditions increase rider fatigue. But if you must ride into the sun, reduce speed and increase your space cushion. Remember, it may be more difficult to see roadway hazards.

Make extra precautions when riding at night. Be visible. Consider wearing a retroreflective vest. Make sure that all lights are working and your headlight is adjusted properly. Reduce speed and increase your space cushion. Remember that roadway hazards will be more difficult to see at night.

HAVE FUN

A group ride can be one of the most exciting on-roadway motorcycling experiences. Taking part in a group ride is a great way to share the fun and camaraderie of motorcycling. Following these guidelines will help make the ride safer and more enjoyable for yourself and everyone else taking part in the ride.