



## **AMERICAN LEGION RIDERS DISTRICT 9** *“The Rolling 9s”* **RIDER’S HANDBOOK**



### **Rolling 9s Mission Statement**

*It is the mission of the Rolling 9s to support the principles and values of the American Legion Riders Department of California, American Legion District 9, and our hosts at Legion Post 161 through our conduct and positive interactions with the community; to provide a social venue for motorcyclists of the American Legion Family; and to promote a positive public perception of both Veterans and motorcyclists through community service, professionalism, safe and responsible conduct, and the support of motorcycle safety programs in the community.*

**AMERICAN LEGION RIDERS DISTRICT 9**

# RIDER'S HANDBOOK

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## AMERICAN LEGION RIDERS DISTRICT 9

December 2018

Welcome!

By joining the **Rolling 9s**, you have entered a special order of the American Legion Family that strives to promote awareness of issues pertaining to active duty military, their families, and military veterans in and around the motorcycling community. As a member, anytime you ride you represent this Chapter and the larger ALR organization. You will be expected to do so in a safe and professional manner worthy of the respect granted the American Legion Riders and the causes for which we ride.

This *Handbook* will provide guidelines and standards for ALR District 9 members to ensure consistency in our safe and professional conduct. We ride as *one group*, and in doing so it is important that we know and follow the same set of rules.

Organizational rules and norms can be found in the **ALR District 9 By-Laws**. The purpose of this *Handbook* is to outline the operational procedures followed by the Rolling 9s. An electronic copy of the By-Laws, this *Handbook*, and other important information about ALR District 9 can be found on our website at [www.ALRedistrict9.com](http://www.ALRedistrict9.com).

Safety is paramount on any ride. Riders are responsible for their own personal protective gear, which should include a DOT-approved helmet, eye protection, boots, and gloves. Each Rider is responsible for maintaining and routinely conducting safety checks on his own bike so as to not introduce unnecessary danger to himself or those around him. All members are strongly encouraged to complete a safety course endorsed by the Motorcycle Safety Foundation (MSF). Neither this *Handbook*, nor Chapter road training events are intended to be substitutes for an MSF course.

Any Rider who ever feels his safety is unduly threatened on a ride should safely exit the situation, and notify the Road Captain at the soonest opportunity.

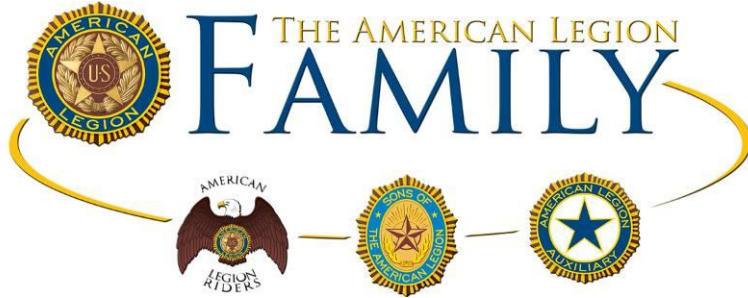
Riders are encouraged, but not required, to purchase a quality CB radio or Bluetooth communication device that is specially fitted for motorcycle use. Use of a radio will allow the Rider to remain in constant communication with the group during rides, and will make for a safer and more enriching riding experience.

All ride participants—Chapter members or guests—must have a signed liability release form on file with the Chapter Secretary before participating in any Chapter ride.

# RIDER'S HANDBOOK

## WHO WE ARE

The **American Legion Riders** operates as a nation-wide organization separate from The American Legion, but as a part of the American Legion Family (which also includes the American Legion Auxiliary and the Sons of the American Legion). All ALR members must also hold membership in the American Legion, the American Legion Auxiliary, or the Sons of the American Legion.



Today American Legion Riders chapters operate in every state of the nation, as well as in a few foreign countries. The Department of California has a growing number of chapters in every corner of the state. Affiliation with the American Legion and its principles unite well over 100,000 Riders who proudly wear the ALR patch.

California is divided geographically into five “areas” and thirty-one “districts.” Many ALR chapters associate with their American Legion district, while others associate with a specific post within the district. While the Rolling 9s call Antioch and Legion Post 161 our home, as ALR District 9, we represent all of Contra Costa County and draw our membership from a broad geographic area.



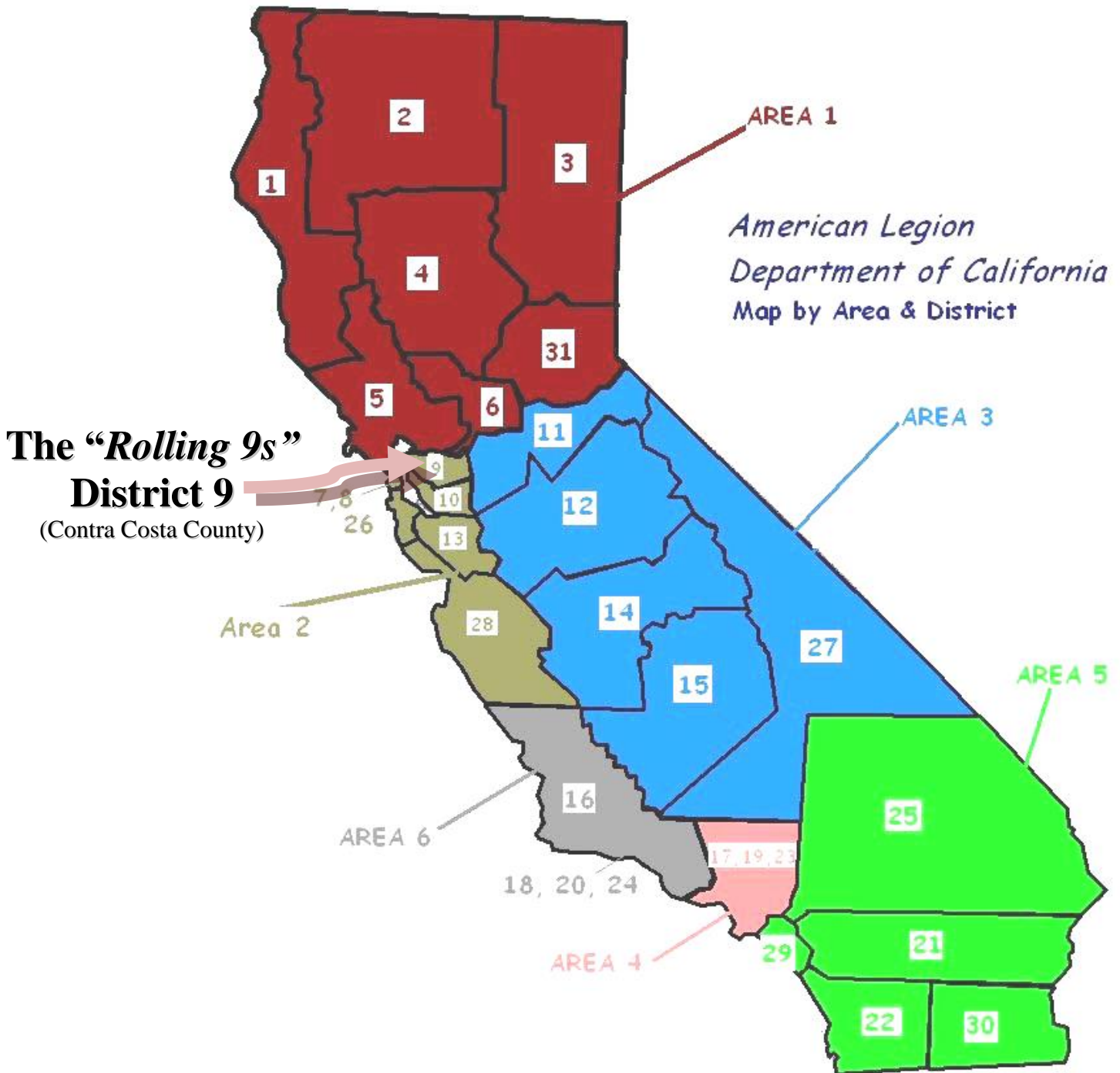
## American Legion Riders Preamble

*For God and Country, we associate ourselves together for the following purposes:  
To participate in parades and other ceremonies which are in keeping with the aims and purposes of the American Legion; to promote motorcycle safety education programs, and to provide a social atmosphere for American Legion members with the same motorcycle interests.*

## AMERICAN LEGION RIDERS DISTRICT 9

The **American Legion Riders Department of California (ALR-DOC)** defers to the leadership of the *American Legion Department of California*, and the national *American Legion* leadership. Within the ALR-DOC, the hierarchy of elected officers, from the top down, includes the ALR-DOC *president*, five *area vice presidents*, and the individual chapter *presidents*. Internal organizational structures vary from chapter to chapter, but will be delineated in each chapter's by-laws.

The leadership of the **Rolling 9s** includes an elected *president*, *vice president*, *secretary*, *treasurer*, and *sergeant-at-arms*. Additionally, the chapter president will appoint a *chaplain* and a *road captain*, as well as some other positions as needed.



# RIDER'S HANDBOOK

## GROUP RIDING ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Group riding is an important part of what we do as a Chapter. The appearance of a group of motorcycles riding in formation on the public roadways leaves an impression with other drivers, and we want that public impression to always be positive. Riding *cleanly* in a tight formation, in a safe and professional manner, with our ALR patches clearly visible, will go a long way toward building good relations between the general public and the American Legion. Positive perceptions help us draw attention to the causes that we support.

The following assignments pertain to Chapter rides, and are in addition to the administrative elected officers described in the ALR District 9 By-Laws. Members are expected to be familiar with the duties and responsibilities of each ride position (as well as the rest of the contents of this *Handbook*). Last-minute changes before a ride commences may result in a Rider taking on an unexpected assigned role for the ride, and all Riders should be prepared to do so.

### Road Captain

The **Road Captain** is a standing office appointed by the **President**. If the Road Captain is to be absent from any ride, he shall designate (with the President's approval) a competent stand-in for that ride, who shall be beholden to all of the normal responsibilities of the Road Captain for the duration of the ride.



The Road Captain is the final authority on all issues regarding the safe conduct of a Chapter ride. Being familiar with the riding skill of each Rider, the Road Captain determines the order and placement of Riders. He will work closely with, and will advise the **Ride Coordinator**.

Active membership in the Rolling 9s does not guarantee participation in all Chapter rides. The Road Captain, in consultation with the President, may determine a member, or any other ride invitee, to be ineligible for any given ride due to:

1. Mechanical condition of the participant's bike;
2. Physical, mental, or emotional condition of the participant;
3. Current skill level of the Rider;
4. Failure of the Rider to attend scheduled Chapter road training events;
5. Any other reason for which the Road Captain determines the rider's participation would be detrimental to the safe and professional conduct of the ride in question.

By joining a Chapter ride, any Rider or guest agrees to submit to the Road Captain's authority for the duration of the ride.

## AMERICAN LEGION RIDERS DISTRICT 9

### Ride Coordinator

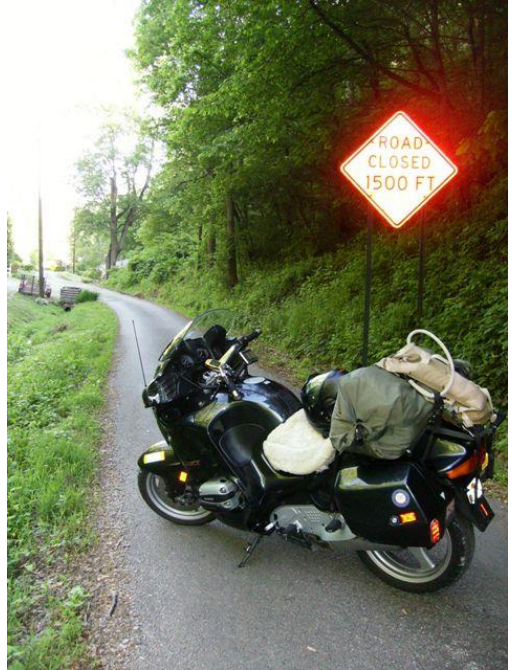
We strive to conduct monthly riding events as a Chapter. For each event, a Ride Coordinator is assigned, usually at the monthly meeting two months in advance. The Ride Coordinator position is rotated on a voluntary basis among Chapter members to ensure diversity of input for the monthly rides.

Ride coordination is a difficult task, requiring some creative thinking and detailed planning well in advance. By sharing this responsibility among the membership, we ensure that every member has the opportunity to share their favorite ride with the group, and no one officer is overly burdened with planning and coordination duties.

The duties of the **Ride Coordinator** include:

1. Choosing a ride (can be an independent ride, or a ride put on by another organization that is in keeping with our Mission Statement);
2. Planning the route, to include rest, refueling, and meal stops;
3. Selecting the initial rendezvous location and time;
4. Coordinating the rendezvous with other chapters, if applicable;
5. Following any changes in weather or road conditions up to the time of the ride;
6. Updating members on the ride at the monthly meeting preceding the ride;
7. Assisting the Road Captain in the pre-ride briefing.

As noted previously, the Road Captain is always the final authority for the safe and professional conduct of all rides, and will work with the Ride Coordinator to ensure that the ride plan is in compliance with this *Handbook* and the standards of our Chapter.



### Lead Rider

This role refers to the physical position in the ride layout, as determined by the Road Captain. The **Lead Rider** holds no inherent authority in planning the ride, but nevertheless holds an important responsibility in the safe and professional conduct of the ride. The Lead Rider should be an experienced Rider, who is able to ride in a confident and decisive manner, and is very familiar with the route dictated by the Ride Coordinator. In many cases, it may be most practical for the Ride Coordinator to be the Lead



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Rider. Whenever possible, the Lead Rider should be in radio communication with the Tail Gunner, the Ride Coordinator, and the Road Captain.

At a minimum, the **Lead Rider** must:

1. Know the route, and lead the group into all pre-planned stops;
2. Never pull out until he has seen a “thumbs-up” from every Rider;
3. Maintain visual contact with the Tail Gunner when possible;
4. Signal any upcoming hazards in the road using arms or legs to point;
5. Exercise controlled accelerations to avoid an exaggerated accordion effect through the group;
6. Never exceed the safe speed limit;
7. Avoid excessive lane changes on the freeway (left, or #1, lane is preferred for long stretches);
8. Use good judgment when passing vehicles on single-lane roads;
9. Signal changes in formation when applicable (staggered formation is the default for most rides);
10. Be aware of the group's progress through traffic lights (slowing down, or bringing the group to a safe stopping point if regrouping is necessary);
11. Bring the group to a safe area to stop and regroup if there is a problem, or if contact with part of the group has been lost;
12. Be constantly vigilant of speed, road conditions, and the integrity of the group—the Lead Rider never has the luxury of being a “tourist” on a ride.

Riding a motorcycle as a Lead Rider is drastically different than riding solo. Most significantly, a Lead Rider is not only responsible for his own safety, but his riding style can significantly impact the safety of every Rider behind him. Accelerations from stops must be slow and deliberate in order for each Rider in the chain reaction to safely gain and maintain his position in the formation quickly, and the Lead Rider must *always* ensure every Rider is fully prepared to advance before he leads the group forward.

### Tail Gunner

The Road Captain shall designate a **Tail Gunner** (sometimes referred to as the “Ride Safety Officer”) who will be the last bike in the formation, and thereby hold the best vantage point for observing the safe conduct of the ride. The Tail Gunner position may often be filled



by the Road Captain himself. No other Rider should ever fall behind the Tail Gunner. The Tail Gunner will act as a shepherd to the group, and should work with the Lead Rider and individual Riders to ensure tight formations are maintained. Besides the Road Captain, the Tail Gunner is the only other Rider authorized to break formation in order to communicate with another Rider during a ride. Whenever possible, the Tail Gunner should be in radio communication with the Lead Rider, the Ride Coordinator, and the Road Captain. The priority positions for radios, if radios are limited, are the Tail Gunner and the Lead Rider.

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The responsibilities of the **Tail Gunner** include:

1. Maintaining group integrity through communication with the Lead Rider;
2. Observing any lapses in formation or safe conduct (if possible, the Tail Gunner should correct these by radio transmission; or otherwise bring them up to the Road Captain at the soonest opportunity);
3. Anticipating and initiating lane changes from the rear, through radio coordination with the Lead Rider when possible;
4. Assisting any Rider in the group that needs to pull over (advising the Lead Rider and pulling over with the other Rider);
5. Alerting the Lead Rider if a Rider in the group goes down, stopping as quickly as practical, and directing traffic around the accident.
6. Providing social waves to oncoming motorcyclists or waves of thanks to drivers giving way (the Tail Gunner is the only Rider who should be giving such signals).



Blocking traffic in order to maintain a vehicle convoy is not legal in California. However, the Tail Gunner should use his best judgment in cases where it may be necessary to provide greater visibility of bikes entering the roadway into oncoming traffic.

### Member/Rider

While certain necessary roles are assigned for specific tasking, the responsibility for a safe and professional ride falls on the shoulders of every participant. To this end, individual Riders, and their passengers, are expected to abide by the following:

1. Maintain your motorcycle in proper operating condition;
2. Ensure your motorcycle meets all Vehicle Code requirements, including the placement and operability of lights;
3. Arrive at events on time, or preferably early, and with a full fuel tank;
4. Complete your own safety checks on your motorcycle prior to KSU (kick stands up);
5. Give the thumbs-up to the Lead Rider *only when* you, your passenger, and your bike are fully prepared (no Rider or passenger should be adjusting gloves, helmets, or radios as the group is moving forward);
6. Observe all signals from the Rider ahead, and accurately pass these signals on to the Riders behind;
7. Always know the group's next planned stop, in case you become separated;
8. Be vigilant of (but not focused on) the Rider in front of you, and maintain the proper distance for the given formation—do not allow large gaps to form in the formation, nor ride too closely;

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9. NEVER employ automatic cruise-control or a throttle lock to maintain speed while riding in a group (unless you are the Lead Rider);
10. Observe any unsafe or unprofessional situations on the ride, and report them to the Road Captain at the soonest opportunity.

Maintaining the proper distance of *two seconds* behind the bike directly in front is an *essential* responsibility of each Rider. Riding closer than this decreases reaction time to an unsafe level. Riding further back than two seconds risks giving up group integrity and may encourage other vehicles to break

into the group. Riding as an integral group promotes visibility and is safer than a long string of scattered bikes. A Rider who falls too far behind may not be noticed by an oncoming vehicle, particularly if that driver's attention is focused on the larger group of motorcycles further in front. New Riders and Riders who may not yet be comfortable with a two-second separation should always be



placed in an appropriate position in the group as determined by the Ride Captain.

### Guest Rider and Sponsor

On occasion, non-members will be permitted to join Chapter rides upon being cleared by both the Road Captain and the President. In fact, all prospective members will be expected to complete at least one ride with the Chapter prior to being voted in. A guest rider must have a full member as a sponsor, who can vouch for the appropriate skill level of the rider and the mechanical condition of his bike. Guest riders are expected to have read, and to comply with this *Handbook*.

## AMERICAN LEGION RIDERS DISTRICT 9

### PRE-RIDE BRIEFING

The Road Captain will always facilitate a pre-ride briefing, regardless of the length of the upcoming ride. The Road Captain is not required to personally deliver all of the briefing, but may delegate others to explain specific topic areas to the group (eg. the Ride Coordinator may be tasked to give the navigation brief). The Road Captain *is* responsible for ensuring that each of the following areas is covered in the pre-ride brief, either by himself or another member:

1. Riding Order
  - This may be altered later only with the permission of the Road Captain
2. Communications
  - Primary and secondary radio channels, if applicable
  - Which bikes are equipped with radios
3. Route
  - Detailed street-by-street directions
  - Tolls, and procedure for passing toll booths
  - Anticipated traffic or construction slow-downs
4. Expected formations to be used
5. Group consensus on lane-splitting
6. Prayer or blessing (if desired by any member)

### SIGNALS AND FORMATIONS

In almost all cases, it will be the Lead Rider who initiates signals for formation changes while the group is in motion.

The Rolling 9s utilize the following set of signals that are in keeping with the standard signals adopted by the ALR-DOC. It is imperative for all Riders to understand each signal as it is used by the Rolling 9s or by other ALR chapters with whom we may ride.



All other signals, including friendly waves to other riders or drivers that are often used on solo rides, are to be avoided during group rides except by the Tail Gunner. For example, if an oncoming motorcyclist extends a wave toward the group, only the Tail Gunner will return the wave. If a driver pulls over to allow the group to pass, only the Tail Gunner will extend a wave in thanks. The reason for this is to avoid unnecessary confusion of signals within the group, and also to present the image of a disciplined riding unit.

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### Thumbs-up – “Ready to ride”

After Riders have lined up in the proper order, as directed by the Road Captain, and before the Lead Rider moves forward, he will give a “thumbs-up” sign to the Riders behind him. Coming from the Lead Rider, this signal is asking, “Are you prepared to start the ride?”



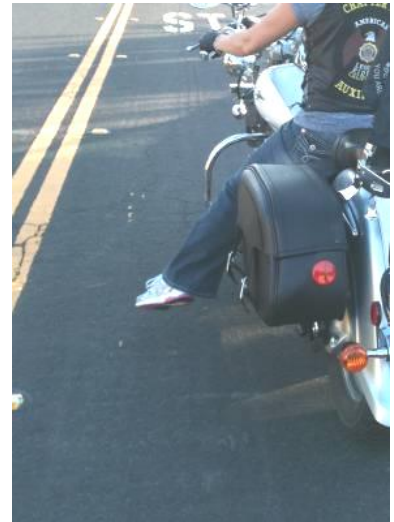
Each Rider will return the same “thumbs-up” signal when, and only when, he is fully prepared to move forward safely. This means both Rider and passenger have a helmet on and fastened, gloves are both on, and bike engine is running.

The Lead Rider will visually confirm that each Rider has returned the “thumbs-up” signal before turning and moving forward.

While riding, the “thumbs-up” (or “thumbs-down”) signal will also be used to indicate safe (or unsafe) passage when maneuvering into the oncoming lane to pass a vehicle (see “Passing” under the Special Maneuvers section).

### Road Hazard

This signal may be initiated by any Rider to point out specific, unexpected hazards in the road that may interfere with a Rider’s safe passage. This is done simply by pointing with the index finger and arm extended, or pointing with the leg extended, toward the subject hazard. The arm or leg used should be on the same side of the bike as the hazard. Riders seeing this signal should 1) maneuver to avoid the hazard if necessary, and 2) repeat the signal for the next Rider in line.



### Lane Changes and Turns

The Lead Rider should always utilize his turn indicator lights to signal an upcoming turn or lane change. Each Rider, upon seeing a turn signal from the bike in front, should also turn on his own indicator. Turn indicator lights are the preferred signal for turns and lane changes, however if a bike is not so equipped, the Rider may use hand signals in place of the indicator light. (An outstretched left arm with flat palm indicates a left turn, and the left arm held up with the elbow at a 90-degree bend, palm flat, indicates a right turn.)

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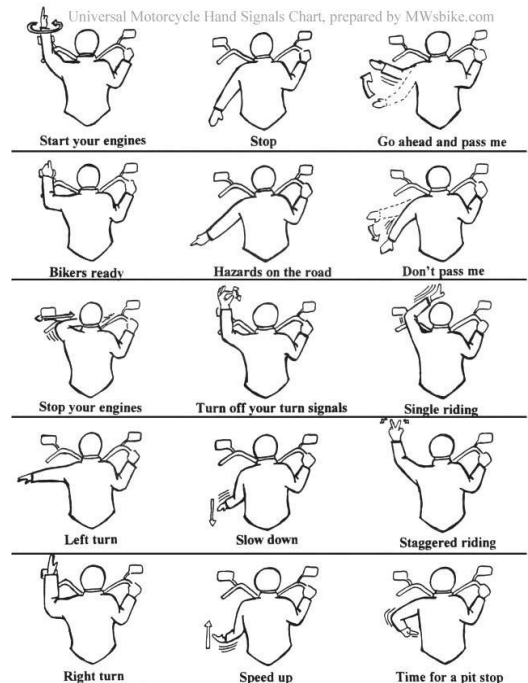
(Note: Riders should *always* strive to secure the turn indicator as soon as the turn is completed in order to avoid confusion or a false impression of the Rider's inexperience.)

### ALR-DOC-Adopted Signals

The preceding signals utilized by the Rolling 9s are in keeping, for the most part, with the ALR Department of California new standards. Riders should also be familiar with all other signals used by other ALR chapters. The following is excerpted from the *ALR-DOC 2017 Safety Handbook*:

### ALR-DOC Motorcycle Hand Signals and Pointers While Riding

- 1) Start your engines: Point up and circle finger.
- 2) Stop: Arm extended straight down, palm facing back.
- 3) Go past me: Arm out, forward waving.
- 4) Point to tank: I need gas, stop at the next station.
- 5) Point to ground: Careful, hazard on the road.
- 6) Point at ground, rub fingers together: Road is slippery.
- 7) Flash brake lights very rapidly: Major watch out! Be prepared to stop QUICK.
- 8) Single finger point up from top of helmet: Ride single file ahead.
- 9) Two fingers pointed up: Staggered riding.
- 10) Point to sign: Read the sign, if it's a highway sign with multiple exits listed, hold up the number of fingers corresponding to which exit you want (e.g. two fingers for the second exit listed).
- 11) Point at another rider, then pat leg: you want that rider to come alongside you (usually so you can talk).
- 12) Point at another rider, then point to side of road: Pull over now.
- 13) Arm out, palm back: Stay behind me.
- 14) Waving arm in quick downward motion, with palm down and parallel: Slow down! Often used for bikes traveling in the opposite direction to warn of hazard or police.
- 15) Tap top of helmet, or hand on helmet: Pay attention! (There is something ahead in the road to be aware of).
- 16) Point forward, shrug shoulders: I don't know where we're going, I probably shouldn't be leading!
- 17) Little wave to oncoming motorcyclist: "Aren't motorcycles great?"
- 18) Finally, when someone gives YOU a signal, YOU should nod your head so they know you understand since they can't usually see your face very clearly from behind a helmet.



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## Staggered Formation

The staggered formation is the default formation for all group rides. Unless another formation is signaled, Riders will always assume this formation.

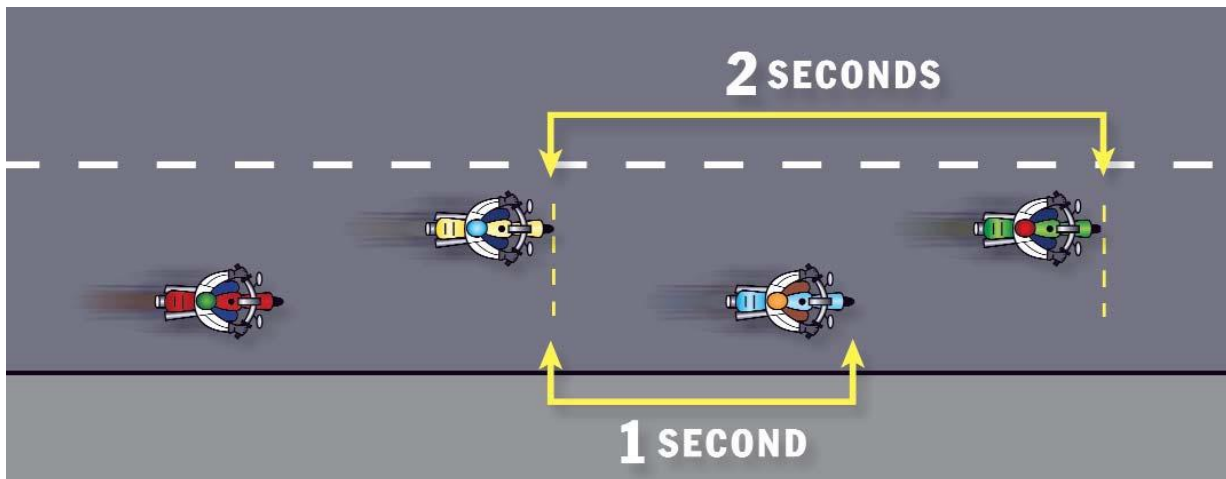
To signal a shift into staggered formation, the Lead Rider will hold up high the left index finger and middle finger (peace sign). Each subsequent Rider will repeat the signal, then maneuver into the new formation.

In staggered formation, the Lead Rider will ride on the left side of the lane. The next Rider will be to the right side of the lane, and one second behind the Lead Rider. The third bike will be on the left side of the lane, one second behind the Rider ahead of him and to his right, and two seconds behind the Rider directly in front of him. The pattern continues as such down the line.

Maintaining this formation, and these distances, will discourage other vehicles from cutting into the group, while still allowing a safe reaction time between each bike. However, if a vehicle does try to cut in between Riders in the group, Riders behind should back off and let the vehicle in. Safety of the group is the first concern.

One other advantage of such a close formation is that vehicles in adjacent lanes, or approaching from the rear, are much more likely to see the bikers (visibility in numbers), whereas a bike that has fallen far behind the formation may be invisible to a driver who is focused on the larger body of Riders.

For all column formations, including staggered, trikes (if present) will always occupy their own rank, centered in their lane, and will be positioned near the rear of the formation.



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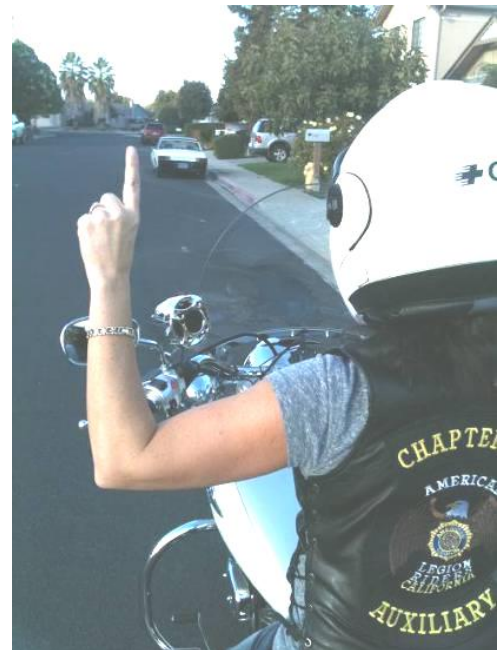
### Single-Column Formation

The Lead Rider uses this signal to shift the formation from a staggered or double-column into a single-column. This formation change is usually in preparation for safer passage along narrow or winding roads.

The Lead Rider will hold up high the left index finger (as in “number one”). Each subsequent Rider will repeat the signal, and then maneuver into the new formation.

The single-column formation has an increased following distance between *each* bike of two seconds. With this spacing, each Rider is free to utilize the center, left, or right side of his lane as needed to negotiate curves.

Note that when approaching an imminent stop at a controlled intersection, the group will always assume a double-column, or side-by-side, formation at the stop—then revert to the previous formation once moving again.





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### Double-Column (Side-by-Side) Formation

The double-column formation (sometimes referred to as “riding bars”) is generally only used in parades or for slow rides around town. Use of this formation is explained further in the Special Maneuvers section. The use of the double-column formation will be approved by the Road Captain, and will be noted in the pre-ride brief.

The Lead Rider will signal a shift to the double-column formation by holding up high the left hand with only the index finger and pinkie finger extended. Each subsequent Rider will repeat the signal, and then maneuver into the new formation as follows.

The second Rider in the formation will accelerate so that his position relative to the Lead Rider is directly to the Lead Rider's right. The third Rider will maintain his position on the left side of the lane, two seconds directly behind the Lead Rider. The fourth Rider will accelerate along the right side of the lane to come alongside the third Rider. Thus, each Rider on the right side of the formation will come alongside the bike that had previously been just ahead of them in the order. Riders on the right will cover down on the Riders to their left. Riders on the left will maintain two seconds of distance from the Rider directly in front of them.

Shifting from a double-column formation back to staggered or single-column is simply the reverse of the procedure above. Riders in the right column will always slow to fall back behind their previous rank, thus preserving the original riding order.

The double-column is our most challenging formation, and will only be utilized with experienced Riders. Any Riders who are uncomfortable with side-by-side riding should make this known to the Road Captain during the pre-ride briefing. The Road Captain may exempt selected Riders from riding in double-column formation, and will move them toward the rear of the riding order where they will stay in a staggered formation even after a double-column has been signaled.

Riding in double-column requires extra vigilance as well as special maneuvering guidelines, which are described in the later section under “Parades.”

### Stop Requested

Any Rider may request an unplanned group stop for any necessity—fuel, food, water, changing clothes, etc. In the absence of a radio, the Rider will do this by holding up the left hand, palm flat, with elbow at a 90-degree angle. He will then slowly move his hand back and forth between his helmet and the vertical position.



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Each following Rider will repeat this signal until it reaches the Tail Gunner, who will then communicate with the Lead Rider to bring the group to a safe stopping point. If necessary, and it is safe to do so, the Tail Gunner will move forward to the front of the formation to communicate directly with the Lead Rider. No other Rider, other than the Road Captain, should ever break formation in this manner.

### SPECIAL MANEUVERS

#### Lane Changing

Although changing lanes on the freeway is generally done with barely a second thought when driving a cage (car), doing so with a large group of motorcycles requires some finesse. People *will* be watching you and your patch, and following these standard procedures can make the difference between presenting the image of a bunch of reckless amateurs on bikes, or an experienced and professional riding organization.

Standard Lane Changing Procedure:

1. Use your mirrors consistently, but never rely on them. Glance over your shoulder to confirm what you think your mirror shows you.
2. After making your lane change, always resume the same position you occupy in the group. The same rule applies when you are passing.
3. Car lanes on multi-lane highways, are numbered from left to right in one direction (the far left, or fast lane, is Lane #1). The Lead Rider and the Tail Gunner will advise the group of their lane changes by referring to the lane number when radio communication is available.
4. Lane changes by the group on highways with two or more lanes going in the same direction should be executed by the Tail Gunner first, after the Lead Rider requests a lane change. The Tail Gunner will then advise the Lead Rider that the lane is "secure." The Lead Rider then announces over the radio to all bikes in his group, "Let's all move to the #\_\_\_ lane, (pause) NOW!" The Group Leader hesitates, before saying NOW, giving each Rider a chance to look over his shoulder, to see for himself, that it is clear to move to the new lane. Then all the other bikes are to signal and follow the bike in front of them. This is especially important when every bike does not have a radio.
5. On some occasions, depending mostly on traffic, the Lead Rider or the Tail Gunner may determine it to be safer or easier to initiate a lane-change from the front. If that is the case, the Lead Rider will announce the decision to do this over the radio.
6. No Rider other than the Lead Rider or Tail Gunner should ever initiate a lane change unless safety requires it.
7. Some situations, especially entering and exiting the freeway, will require allowing cars to break into the formation. *Cars should never be intentionally blocked from doing so.* Such practice is dangerous and illegal. Any Rider that finds himself behind a car should pass the vehicle and regain his formation position only when it is safe to do so. The Lead Rider will slow the formation to facilitate this when possible.

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### Passing (Oncoming Traffic Lane)

The following refers to passing maneuvers on highways where there is only a single lane in each direction. For passing on multi-lane roadways, the preceding lane-changing procedure will be followed.

The Lead Rider will utilize prudent judgment when determining whether to initiate a passing maneuver. The maneuver will only be initiated when it is both safe and legal to do so, and this condition will remain so for a protracted length of time.



The Lead Rider may choose to put the formation into single-column prior to executing the passing maneuver. Even if he does not, the group will execute the maneuver in single file, returning to the original formation only when past the obstructing vehicle.

The Lead Rider will turn on his left turn indicator. This signal will be repeated down the line so that all Riders are aware of the impending maneuver, as are other vehicles around the group. The Lead Rider will then change lanes while accelerating past the obstructing vehicle. While passing the vehicle, he will extend his left arm and give a “thumbs-up” if it is safe for the next Rider to pull out. If it is not safe, he will give a “thumbs-down.” Upon seeing the thumbs-up signal, the next Rider will repeat this same maneuvering, giving the appropriate signal to the next Rider as he passes the vehicle. If a thumbs-down signal is given, any Rider currently in the passing lane should maneuver back to his own lane by the most expeditious means, either well in front of, or back behind the vehicle he was passing. The first Rider behind the obstructing vehicle will restart the maneuver when he deems it safe to do so.

When the Lead Rider completes his own passing maneuver, he will continue on at an accelerated pace until the last Rider has made it around. It is critical that each Rider follow this pace and hold formation with the Lead Rider so that there is ample room for the passing Riders to get back into their lane. Riders who slow down too soon will create a hazardous situation for the Riders approaching from the rear at an accelerated speed.

### Rider Down - Crash

If a Rider goes down on the road, following Riders must obviously maneuver to avoid a chain reaction, but then should pull to the side of the road as soon as they can safely do so to assist. The Tail Gunner will immediately radio the Lead Rider, who will lead the rest of the group to a safe stopping point. The Tail Gunner and any Riders in the vicinity should maneuver their bikes, if possible, to positions behind the downed Rider in order to best alert traffic. When their bikes are in position in a diagonal pattern

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across the lane (like road flares), the hazard lights should be left on and the Riders positioned away from the bikes in a safe location, or assisting the downed Rider if necessary. The Tail Gunner will designate one Rider to contact emergency services, if necessary, and that Rider will remain on the line with emergency services until help arrives. If the Rider does not require medical assistance, and his bike has been safely moved out of traffic, the group will proceed as directed in the following section.

### **Bike Down – Controlled Stop**

If a Rider is forced to pull over and stop due to mechanical failure, or other reason, the Tail Gunner will follow him into a safe location and radio the Lead Rider, who will lead the rest of the group into the next safe area to stop and regroup. The Road Captain may decide to send the main group back to where the problem Rider pulled over if this is a safe area for the group to pause and further assessment and discussion by the group is called for.

The Rider who had the problem will ultimately make the determination whether he can continue on safely. If he cannot, the Road Captain will make the decision as to how the group should proceed. Since every situation will vary, there can be no standard procedure that can be followed every time. The affected Rider may be left on his own to wait for roadside assistance, one or more Riders may wait with him, or he may continue on with the group as a passenger. The Road Captain will have to consider all factors, including the remoteness and safety of the location, availability of food and water, availability and length of time expected for a tow vehicle, and weather.

### **Parking**

While parking a group of bikes may not present the same level of risk to life and limb that high-speed freeway maneuvers do, parking will draw critical spectators who will be carefully observing your technique and your patch. An error here is unlikely to shatter a leg, but it can bruise an ego for a long time to come (as well as the reputation of the Chapter).



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Like many riding skills, parking is difficult to learn from reading a description in a book. It is best learned through repetitive practice, preferably with the group you will be riding with. Fortunately, such opportunities will be made available on a regular basis at our road training events, away from public view.

When entering the parking area, go to single file, and slowly follow the leader to his selected site. Back into your spot, side by side with the bike you were following. If performed properly, there should be a smooth chain reaction of bikes each backing into position in succession with equal spacing between each. If there is not enough room for all bikes, some Riders may need to break from the group to find other spots. Do so carefully, especially on dirt. Watch out for cars backing up. Try to keep the group together in an orderly fashion as much as possible. As with other maneuvers, simple procedural consistency here can make the difference between public admiration and public ridicule. Admiration feels better.

### Parades

Parades combine difficult maneuvering with large crowds of spectators, which can lead to embarrassing situations for the Chapter if Riders are unprepared. Members who ride in parades must be especially proficient with their motorcycle, and must have trained with the Chapter at regular road training events.

Double-column (side-by-side) formation will generally be used during parades. Vigilant attention to the following distance and the alignment with the adjacent bike is especially important during parades (think marching formations during boot camp). The bikes in the left column will maintain a proper distance from the bike in front of them, while the bikes in the right column will align to the bike directly to their left. (Note that this is the opposite of military marching, when you would cover to the *right*. However, in bike formations, the Lead Rider is always the guide-on, and will usually be on the left.) The following distance will be no less than one bike length, and no greater than two seconds, unless otherwise directed. The Lead Rider may be the sole bike in the first rank centered between the columns; or he may be the left-side bike in a first rank with two bikes. Trikes, when present, will always occupy their own single-trike rank near the rear of the formation.



Turns in a double-column formation will be done as a "wheeling" maneuver. That is, Riders will maintain their side-by-side alignment as near as possible during the entire turn. This means the Rider on

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the inside of the turn will need to slow to bare steerageway, while the Rider on the outside speeds up to maintain alignment with the inside bike. During *right* turns, responsibility for maintaining a consistent following distance will shift to the inside (or right) Rider, and the outside (or left) Rider will concentrate on maintaining alignment.

Riders must *not* break formation at the end of the parade route. Instead, the Lead Rider will signal the appropriate formation for exiting the parade ground in a safe and professional manner—generally single-column if transiting through a parking area. When shifting from double- to single-column, Riders in the right column will always fall behind the adjacent Rider on the left.

### **A Final Word on “Road Rage”**

The criteria required for any person to gain the privilege of operating a motor vehicle on public roads are minimal in California. You will inevitably encounter drivers on the roads who are inexperienced, are ignorant of traffic laws, are distracted, or are just plain stupid. There will also inevitably be cases where you feel a strong need to educate a driver with respect to his or her own ineptitude. This perceived need *must* be resisted when you are riding a motorcycle, and particularly when you are wearing the ALR patch. Outbursts of anger on the road, no matter how warranted, are never in keeping with the principles of the American Legion or of the Rolling 9s.

On occasions where a verbal discussion with a driver regarding a traffic incident is necessitated, it will only be done with all parties safely parked off the roadway. In addition, it is the policy of the Rolling 9s that the Road Captain will always be involved in such discussions and will provide the final authority regarding the position of the motorcyclist(s) in any discussion.

Any Rider in violation of the terms of this section will be referred by the Road Captain to the Rolling 9s Executive Committee for disciplinary proceedings. Intentional behavior that brings discredit to the Rolling 9s will not be tolerated.

\* \* \*

## RIDER'S HANDBOOK



It is no coincidence that so many who have endured sacrifice for their country go on to embrace motorcycling as a way of life. Many military Veterans have seen first hand the bleak alternatives to free, democratic society. A fast bike and an open highway represent in the purest form the spirit of individual freedom that all too many other Americans take for granted.

By riding with the American Legion Riders, you are more than just a motorcycle enthusiast. You embody not only the values of the American Legion, but the values of being an *American*. Thank you for all you do in supporting and promoting those values.

## Top Ten Reasons for Attending Rolling 9s' Road Training Events

1. Road Training events are an opportunity to spend time with fellow riders.
2. *New* riders need the mentorship of *experienced* riders in a safe training environment.
3. Promoting motorcycle safety is part of our charter as an organization.
4. Road Training events help us fulfill our Chapter's mission.
5. Road Training events give us the opportunity to better know our fellow riders, and their particular skills.
6. Road Training events are fun, social activities that take us outside the dark meeting room.
7. We ride better as a group when we train as a group.
8. Simple, low-speed group maneuvers such as parking and parade riding can be choreographed to perfection—but only if we have all our riding members present.
9. Regular Road Training promotes safe and professional riding, which in turn sustains the respect ALR enjoys from the community at large.
10. Road Training events are mandatory for active members who participate in Chapter events.

