



**COVID-19 Riding Guidelines  
(including group riding and  
first responder incident  
management)  
December 2020**

## COVID-19 Riders' Safety Code

Even though the prospect of mass vaccination against COVID 19 disease is now in sight, the maintenance of strict discipline to suppress transmission of the infection in all settings will remain necessary for several months yet. Much has been sacrificed already to prevent infection, disease and death due to the virus and we need to continue to work together until we reach the end of the pandemic. The motorcycling community must continue to play its part.

The Government and devolved administrations have deemed it right to apply tighter restrictions where the prevalence of COVID 19 infection is highest and health services are under the greatest pressure and they have therefore introduced a differentiated approach, applying different tiers of restrictions in different parts of the UK:

It is imperative that riders are fully conversant with the local restrictions which apply to their riding. Where group rides are allowed, it is vital that those that organise them research any local restrictions, considering not only the starting point and destination but also the route to be followed. As an individual rider you also need to check. The links below will give the latest advice, including updates to restrictions in England and for the devolved administrations.

<https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-information-for-individuals-and-businesses-in-scotland>

<https://gov.wales/coronavirus>

<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/coronavirus-covid-19-regulations-guidance-and-what-they-mean-you>

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing-and-tracing/nhs-test-and-trace-if-youve-been-in-contact-with-a-person-who-has-coronavirus/>

Considering Government guidance on local restrictions and on travel, these measures would seem to have the following broad implications for motorcycling:

Riding motorcycles except for permitted reasons - and that includes to spend time outdoors - will remain limited in all Tiers. Riding where permitted to spend time outdoors and to go to a place of recreation however should be carefully planned so that it is suitably limited and local. In England you may ride through Tier 2 and Tier 3 areas if necessary as part of a longer journey, but if you live in a Tier 3 area you should not ride out of it except for an entirely necessary and valid reason such as to go to a place of work (if you cannot work from home), for essential shopping, health, educational, care or other permitted reasons. In Tier 1 you can meet up to six people inside (while remaining socially distanced) - but in all other Tiers you must not meet indoors with those who are not in your bubble. In Tier 2 you must not meet with more than six people ("the rule of six") in open public space (while also remaining socially distanced and adopting other precautionary measures as appropriate) and this number reduces to two persons in a Tier 3 area.

COMORG emphasises that, during the pandemic, like walking and cycling, motorcycling offers a

more COVID secure way to undertake essential and permitted journeys than do public transport or car sharing. COMORG advises that in Tiers 1 and 2 small (not exceeding six persons) and suitably short group rides to spend time outdoors, can be undertaken but only if all necessary COVID security measures are observed. None of the rides from Tier 1 or 2 should start, pause or finish in a Tier 3 area and riders living in a Tier 3 area should not seek to participate as Tier 3 advice is to reduce all journeys where possible. All such rides should be carefully planned to minimise the risk of transmission, particularly at the start, stopping and finishing points (following existing COMORG COVID guidance on group riding).

The Tiers in England will be reviewed every 14 days, so use the postcode checker at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/full-list-of-local-restriction-tiers-by-area> to keep up to date with the restrictions that apply where you live.

The other areas of the United Kingdom have different permissible group sizes which are detailed in the links above and may change when restrictions are tightened or relaxed in response to the spread of the virus

The following guidelines have been endorsed by: The National Police Chiefs' Council, IAM RoadSmart, the British Motorcyclists Federation, the Vintage Motor Cycle Club, the Motorcycle Action Group, the Trail Riders Fellowship, Auto Cycle Union, the Triumph Owners Motor Cycle Club and Biker Down have developed the following advice for their members:

You will need to consider the following points: -

- Plan your route carefully to avoid busy locations, traffic congestion and crowds.
- You must only ride with a pillion or sidecar passenger if they are part of your household or social bubble.
- If you need to ride for essential purposes you can do so but you must ride on your own. The chance of transmission of the virus while riding on the highway is very low, but you must ensure that when you start and stop you remain socially distanced from anyone who is not in your household bubble. Under Government and devolved administration legislation any gathering exceeding permitted limits may be identified as unlawful and may also court unwelcome publicity.

Organised sporting events conducted in a COVID secure environment may take place dependent on UK Government guidance/advice in place at the time. The event organiser must also consult with the respective Local Authority/police force and the organisers must have complete a comprehensive risk assessment that demonstrates control measures to be adhered to by all competitors/officials and spectators (if allowed).

**The motorcycle sport governing body, the ACU has issued specific guidelines for sporting events.** It can be found here: <https://www.acu.org.uk/>

- Aim to be as self-sufficient as possible, for example, by taking all food, refreshments and other essentials with you.
- Agree in advance what you are going to do if you have problems. Agree, for example, how to deal safely with any breakdowns or emergencies. **For Biker Down guidance for riders in attendance at accidents see Appendix 1**
- Try to avoid stopping in places where other people are gathering (there will be time for that when the present crisis is over). If you do find yourself in any such setting, do not interact with others who are not part of your social bubble.
- Try to establish in advance where there will be essential facilities on your route such as public conveniences and stay away from crowded spaces, where social distancing may be an issue.
- Try to limit the number of stops you make, and wherever possible stop in isolated places.

Do not to stop or park in public car parks where you cannot be sure of maintaining adequate social distancing.

- Know the COVID-19 safe procedures to follow at filling stations or shops. Try to limit the number of fuel or convenience stops you make.
- Decide what COVID-19 safety kit you are going to take with you, such as alcohol hand gel, masks, gloves, tissues, plastic bags, etc. Use it and dispose of it appropriately and safely.
- Make sure that your route is not so long and difficult that you cannot return home safely if things like the weather change suddenly. If you are going to stay overnight (for example when travelling for essential reasons), pre-booked COVID secure accommodation would be advised.
- Always encourage other riders to be COVID-19 safe.
- Ride sensibly and with consideration for others.
- Be aware that aspects of official guidelines for COVID-19 security may continue to be different in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland and that restrictions may be imposed in certain areas at short notice to deal with localised infection outbreaks.

You should not go riding at all if you, a member of your household or someone you have been in close contact with, has tested positive for or shows symptoms of COVID-19 and you must therefore self-isolate. If you are an older rider or someone at higher risk because of a pre-existing condition, think very carefully about the precautions you must take, including whether to resume riding until the infection risk has been reduced sufficiently. Don't let the present crisis stop you from maintaining your mental well-being by riding your bike but only ride where you can do so legally and safely, while always complying with Government guidelines.

Richard Gladman **Head of Riding Standards, IAM RoadSmart**

Jim Freeman **Chair, BMF**

Selina Lavender **Chair, MAG**

Bob Clark MA (Oxon), MSc, FMA, FSA Scot **Chair, VMCC**

Mario Costa-Sa BSc (Eng), MBA **Chair, TRF**

Roy Humphrey, **Chair, ACU**

Ken Talbot, **Chairman, TOMCC**

Kevin Mulligan, **Superintendent NPCC**

James Sanderson, **Founder, Biker Down**

## Advice on Group Riding – (Size of group is determined by local restrictions)

The various members of the Coalition of Motorcycling Organisations recognise that group rides vary from informal runs to more organised events that may require more detailed planning, for example, where detailed directions relating to routes and rights of way may be required. The following advice is offered to those organising and leading group rides, including trail rides, club runs, and training and observed rides, but its general principles are applicable wherever motorcyclists decide to ride together.

If the event is an organised sporting activity approved by the local authority and the police, regulations about gatherings may not apply but the organisers will have completed a comprehensive risk assessment and will have issued their guidelines which will contain control measures to be followed.

Be aware that, at present, aspects of official guidelines for COVID-19 security may be different in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland and may also be more stringent if an area has been identified as having a significant increase in infection rates and is subject to a local lockdown. Before organising any ride, check all current local, regional and national restrictions to ensure you are up to date with any recent changes.

Under current legislation in, it is permissible for groups from different households to gather outside, provided that social distancing rules are followed. The size and make-up of these groups varies in all of the UK administrations and the organiser must check that the suggested group is legal under the current local guidelines. This means it is permissible for riders to ride together on the public highway as a group. Whilst riding, it will be easy to maintain social distancing and the chance of infection transfer is extremely small when you are on the move. The risk, however, may be significantly higher at the start and finish points, and at intermediate stops where riders and their passengers may intermingle. It is extremely important for ride leaders and event organisers to ensure that riders not only stay compliant and safe but actively avoid behaving in unsafe ways that will also present motorcycling in a negative light.

Major damage to the public perception of motorcycling is being done by media reports of large numbers of riders gathering at places where this is customary and appearing to completely ignore the rules of social distancing. Likewise, riders are advised not to attempt to evade the legislation and hold a larger event by claiming it consists of a series of smaller activities, since, as suggested above, these may be identified as an unlawful mass gathering.

Before organising an event where venues such as campsites, hostels, hotels and cafes are open and might be used as planned start and finish points, it is essential to liaise with their owners or operators in advance to understand what COVID-19 safety restrictions they have put in place. Hospitality venues may be recording details for 'test and trace' so an organiser may want to ensure they have correct details for group members.

## Planning and Management

Those leading group rides need to consider the following points:

- Identify who will be included in your group ride and identify yourself clearly as the person who is leading it.
- Communicate beforehand with all other members of the group, for example through an online meeting, to explain the plan for the ride, getting their views and ideas, and both setting and communicating the essential ground rules.
- Make sure that none of those wanting to join should be self-isolating because they have tested positive for or are showing symptoms of COVID-19; have had significant contact with such persons, or have been advised to shield or shelter as part of a vulnerable group or as a caregiver for a vulnerable person, or are part of a household where other persons are any of the above.
- Be firm that the ride is for invited riders only. If additional people turn up unannounced at the start, they cannot be included and will need to ride as a separate group with their own leader and directions.
- Consider having a reserve list of riders who are easily contactable if someone drops out.
- Swap phone numbers/emails electronically before any meeting.
- To avoid unnecessary contact, arrange for any signing on procedures (for example, for Club or insurance reasons) to be completed by email.
- Remind everyone that:
  - ✓ their motorcycle needs to be fully road legal, advising them to carry out POWDERY (petrol, oil, water, damage/drive, electrics, rubber and importantly YOU) checks beforehand;
  - ✓ they should remain outdoors and in a public place for the duration of the ride, always maintaining the Government's recommended social distancing;
  - ✓ they will need to know and follow the COVID-19 safe procedures at filling stations or shops;
  - ✓ they should avoid touching or riding each other's machines or kit;
  - ✓ they will need to bring with them appropriate COVID-19 safety kit (such as alcohol hand gel, masks, gloves, tissues, plastic bags, etc.) as well as food, refreshments and all other necessary resources for the journey; and that
  - ✓ they should have a full tank of fuel and try to limit the number of fuel stops needed during the ride.
- Plan your route carefully to meet your group's requirements and expectations but avoiding potentially crowded or busy locations such as heavily used car parks and areas likely to suffer from traffic congestion. Consider issuing written route instructions electronically.

- Choose a safe starting point and the best start time, remembering that your meeting place and stopping venues should enable full compliance with social distancing guidelines. Make sure safe assembly arrangements include parking for any vans and trailers used to transport machines to and from the start or finish. Where a rider wishes to transport their machine to the start by van or trailer, this will only be possible if they are able to unload and load on their own or with only the assistance of a member of their social bubble who has travelled with them.
- Plan and agree on rest, refreshment and comfort stops where riders/passengers can remain suitably distanced. Do not share food or drink. Use your local knowledge to locate essential services such as public conveniences which maybe open along your route. Consider contacting any venue where you may stop en route to check on their COVID-19 compliance.
- Establish beforehand any system of signalling or direction-indicating that may be used during the ride, including for example, 'ready to ride off thumbs up' or any form of 'drop-off system'. If using radio equipment, make sure it is compatible but do not share headsets or microphones.
- To be able to deal safely with emergencies, agree in advance what you are going to do if you have problems; **(See appendix 1 for COVID incident procedure)** if riders get separated; or if a breakdown or other incident occurs. If helping another rider with a problem with their machine, he/she should step away and the person helping should then use hand gel or wear disposable gloves and avoid touching their face. Crews of any breakdown vans accompanying the ride should be fully COVID-19 aware and prepared.
- Identify a suitable finishing point where riders can park up and converse while observing the required social distancing. Any de-brief, for example, to share thoughts, impressions and suggestions, should take place with the latest recommended social distancing being maintained. (Talking to each other for any prolonged period is safer side-by-side than face-to-face.) You may want to consider what to do to prevent people from huddling together if it rains. Do not exchange any materials or documents. Follow up with a phone call or virtual meeting if necessary, to plan the next ride.
- While in certain settings it may be permissible to hold a meeting indoors if absolutely essential, it will be necessary to fully observe appropriate social distancing, limit time spent there and respect local requirements such as one-way systems, use of sanitising hand gel etc.
- At all times ride with care and consideration for other road users and residents of the places you pass through.
- Be conscious that during the current restrictions, the public image of motorcycling will remain under extra scrutiny.

- Share information with other event organisers on how you are managing these challenges so that everyone can benefit from good practice and adopt novel solutions.

The preceding advice is prepared from the guidelines produced by the Government and best practice from within our groups. The emergency COVID regulations, the numbers and structure of permissible gatherings are changing constantly, and it is incumbent on organisers to check local administration guidelines to ensure the event complies.

Prepared by:

Roger Bibbings MBE CFIOSH  
Risk & Safety Adviser  
Coalition of Motorcycling Organisations

Richard Gladman  
Head of Riding Standards  
IAM RoadSmart

## Appendix 1

## **'Biker Down' Guidance for Riders in Attendance at Accidents during Covid-19 Crisis**

1. On approach carry out Dynamic Risk Assessment (ORA) for hazards, secure area for casualty and responder's safety.

Where possible gain casualty history, information can also be gained from witnesses/carers/relatives, to include:

- Causal History 5- Mechanism of Injury?
- Diagnosis of Covid-19?
- History of cough or fever,
- History of respiratory distress prior to collapse/injury?
- Have casualty been in contact with any C-19 casualties/or persons who have needed to self-isolate or, if they have themselves, been in isolation and if so the timescale since?

The above will help to share situational awareness with any attending Ambulance Crews and allow them to don appropriate PPE prior to patient contact.

### **CALL 999\***

2. PPE should be worn where possible to include:
  - Face shield/mask (preferably fluid repellent)\*\*
  - Eye protection/goggles
  - Nitrile Gloves, double glove (2 x pairs).
  - The above should be donned prior to making contact with the casualty and whilst at least 2 metres from them.
3. Conduct a primary Survey assess breathing by looking only- avoid putting your face in close proximity to the patients face, do not listen or feel for breathing in the usual manner. Expose chest to assess rise and fall visually.
4. If patient appears to be in cardiac arrest commence resuscitation dependant on available equipment
5. Undo helmet chin strap but leave helmet on with visor down, or improvised face covering (Buff, neck tube etc) to reduce aerolized particles from CPR
5. If and AED (Automated External Defibrillator) is available, open and follow voice prompts, delivering shock if indicated and perform 'compression only' CPR as prompted.
7. If no AED available perform 'compression only' CPR - NO rescue breaths. All persons present who are able to perform CPR should do so, in a cycle or approx. 2-minute intervals to maintain effective CPR.
8. Continue until Ambulance Clinician takes over, patient shows signs of life or you become exhausted.

9. If patient is conscious and breathing but is suffering a trauma injury adopt same levels of PPE, undo chin strap and leave helmet in place if possible, or encourage casualty to cover lower half of face with neck tube, buff etc. avoid close proximity to face and where possible keep your own face away from respiratory area of casualty. Treat as per normal based on your level of training/knowledge.
10. Keep number of Responders dealing with casualty to absolute minimum, if only one person is needed to treat, ensure only one is treating! Others/witnesses and bystanders should remain at least 2 metres away.
11. On arrival of Ambulance and when relieved from chest compression duties or casualty care, withdraw at least 2 metres and remove PPE/outer clothing if necessary and sanitise hands.

\*Call 999 - Timing of this event is not prescriptive or limited; it should be done as and when responder deems appropriate but the sooner the better!

\*\*The use of surgical masks would be ideal, but it is unlikely you will have these so consider alternatives such as a neck tube, buff etc, the advantage here is you're probably already wearing one and so is your casualty.