

## Safety Briefing Details

### Emergency Information Forms

- Fill out & carry your Emergency Information Form folded into the provided lanyard pouch at all times

### Morning Meetings

- Attendance at Morning Meetings is MANDATORY for ALL Leadership, Riders, Passengers, and other participants. Be there on time – see your Itinerary book for details.

### Hydration

- Drink something at every stop; grab a snack (fruit, chips, cookies, or crackers).
- Alternate between water and Gatorade.
- Drink water before going to bed at night and before leaving the room.
- Watch others for signs of dehydration; Pale or flushed skin; Not sweating; the 1000 yard stare or abnormal speech to name a few. **WHEN IN DOUBT, HAVE APL OR TG ESCORT THE PERSON TO MEDICAL FOR EVALUATION.**

### 15-Minute warning – When the 15-minute horn sounds off:

- Go immediately to your bikes.
- Check your bike and your gear.
- Start donning your gear and get saddled up.

### 5-Minute warning

- Be on your bike, with helmet and gloves on.
- Start your bike be prepared to depart.
- Refrain from carrying on conversations with those around you – they should be busy too.
- Get your head in the game!

### Behavior at Functions

- Show respect to our hosts. Watch your language and check for offensive patches.
- Remain quiet and respectful during ALL programs. If someone tries to talk to you ask them to be quiet or do not answer.
- Silence all Cell Phones – If an emergency requires that you must talk with someone, leave the area and keep the talking low. Remember that our supporters have worked hard to prepare this event for us, and we owe them respect and the courtesy of our attention.
- Thank our hosts for their efforts and be sure they know just how much we appreciate the respect they have shown us and our mission. Police your area. Do not litter!

### HOT MIC

- On every Run, we have a problem with someone experiencing a Hot Mic. If it's you, your first indication may be a long period of silence. Nearly all radios have an indicator that shows if you are transmitting – be familiar with yours. If it is not a stuck switch, generally cycling your radio power off and on will clear it. If the hot mic condition persists, turn off your radio. Your Hot Mic on the command frequency will have a serious adverse effect on the safe and orderly conduct of the Run.

## **Attitudes**

- Bad Attitudes will not be tolerated! Don't make it worse by mirroring the Attitude.
- This is a demanding Mission and a stressful situation for some of our riders. We are here to help each other. Be careful to separate attitude from stress induced tension.
- If you have a problem with anyone, bring your concerns to someone that can help. Platoon Leadership or Chaplain Corps are prepared to help in these situations.

## **Standard of Conduct Statement**

- All riders must remember that while participating for RFTW, they serve to represent the Veteran Community as a whole. As such they must control their behavior and emotions to the best of their ability. Neither verbal nor physical altercations will be tolerated. Extreme and/or repeated incidents of unruly or hostile behavior will be handled by the Route Coordinator to determine what actions should be taken to ensure the integrity and safety of the Run up to and including requiring an individual(s) to terminate their participation.

## **Road Guard Instructions**

- Follow the instructions of all Road Guards (Period)!
- If you have a problem with an instruction of a Road Guard or feel that you were not treated with respect, do what you are told, and then report the situation to the Assistant Platoon Leader, who will do a follow-up and get your answers.
- Roadside conflicts are never helpful.

## **Resources**

- Chaplains may be assigned to Platoon but will still be available if not specifically assigned.
- Vet Centers and VA staff will be available at some stops.
- We are all here for each other, don't hesitate to ask for the support you need.
- Most of your questions (departure times, arrival times and locations, meals, hotels, etc.) are in the RFTW 2026 Route Itinerary book.

## **Focus on the Current Leg**

- Most legs do not exceed 2 hours of riding time, many are closer to 1- 1.5 hours so you need to remain focused at all times while riding. "5-Hour Energy" type drinks, especially after a lunch break, may help you stay alert and fight off post meal fatigue. Your medical condition may prohibit the use of these drinks – please consult your doctor first if that is a concern.

## **Speed & Interval**

- At steady state, the RC typically runs 5 MPH under the posted speed limit.
- The Platoon Leader sets the speed and interval for their platoon.
- DO NOT USE YOUR CRUISE CONTROL. The platoons and pack must maintain consistent gaps between platoons and between riders. This consistency cannot be maintained using cruise control.
- For open highway travel, the interval target between Platoons is 100 yards unless briefed otherwise by your RC or PL. This interval is intended to minimize Platoon to Platoon interaction and forced accordion effect.
- Surface street interval is variable based on traffic and road conditions.

## How We Ride - Side by Side or Stagger Formation

- Whether in Side by Side or Stagger formation, each two-bike group is a section. The Bike on left is the Lead Bike of the section, the Bike on right is the Wing Bike of the section.
- The roadway is divided into three tracks – Left/Middle/Right. Riders should get experience riding in both the left and right tracks.
- DO NOT ENTER THE MIDDLE TRACK except for safety of the lane.
- DO NOT CROSS TRACKS. Riders shall NOT change lane position either to the Left or Right unless an emergency. Move forward to fill in spaces.
- The PL & APL will demonstrate proper spacing, just follow their example.
- To assist in maintaining position in your section, the Wing Bike Rider should pick and align two sight points on the Lead Bike – stay in your track with those points aligned and you will be in position.

### Side-by-Side Formation

- The Lead Bike will maintain an approximate 2-second spacing from the Lead Bike directly ahead of them, in the Left Track. (The 2-second rule is a Requirement.)
- The Wing Bike will maintain position beside his/her Lead Bike, offset in the Right Track, aligning their Front Wheel with that of their Lead Bike.

### Stagger Formation

- The Lead Bike will maintain an approximate 2-second spacing on the Lead Bike directly ahead of them, in the Left Track.
- The Wing Bike will maintain 1 second spacing on the Lead Bike, offset in the Right Track.
- NEVER OVERLAP THE POSITION OF YOUR BIKE ONTO ANY PART OF THE LEAD BIKE. As you become comfortable in position, you will naturally ride closer. Overlapping the position of your bike onto that of another bike is considered hazardous for Stagger Formation Riding.

### Throttle Control

Use small micro-adjustments to maintain position. **Pro Tip:** [ZEN Throttle Control](#) - Move the throttle with your mind, not your hand. Practice, Practice, Practice!

### Rubber Banding (Accordion Effect)

Rubber Banding is often caused by inattentiveness, hard acceleration to catch up and quick deceleration to achieve position. Be patient and deliberate in resuming position. Maintain good throttle control and always pay attention!

### Getting onto the Interstate (Slab)

The platoon leader will slowly increase the speed allowing the platoon to keep position. Don't worry about being with your "ride partner" until we are in final position, things change. Your platoon should slowly and smoothly approach the lead platoons so there is no need to quickly accelerate then back down.

## Down Shifting vs. Braking

Watch several bikes ahead and not just the one right in front of you. If you see a decrease in speed, be prepared to decelerate using throttle control and/or downshifting. Occasionally you may have to drop a gear or two to achieve proper engine braking. If you must apply your brake to avoid a collision, by all means do so. Remember, for every slow down, there's a speed up. Please be judicious in applying both.

## Slowing and Stopping the Formation

As your platoon slows down, **DO NOT CREATE AN OPENING GAP IN FRONT OF YOU**. Just to be clear, **DO NOT CREATE AN OPENING GAP IN FRONT OF YOU**. If you are braking harder and slowing more quickly than the bike in front of you, you are stealing space from the bike behind you.

## Hotel Parking

Do not park your motorcycles under any hotel porticos or in any fire lanes at the hotels or at any of our stops. Your ribbon may be removed, and your bike towed.

## Passing and Lane Changing

Observe and pass all hand signals denoting the intent of the pack to shift lanes. The lane change hand signal does NOT mean “Move now” – it means a move is coming. Do not move until the Platoon Leader moves, then make your transition point in the same general location as the PL/APL. **We want to change lanes like a snake, NOT a swarm of bees.**

ALWAYS glance to the left or right (head check) to be sure the space is open for you to move. If there is a platoon leader or Road Guard protecting the lane, pass **IN FRONT** of them! **NO DIVE BOMBING!** Slowly but steadily move into your appropriate track. Maintain speed! Do not slow down.

## Tapping Out and Rejoining the Platoon

- If you need to leave the platoon for any reason, whether you have to make an emergency pit stop, bike trouble, loose gear, etc... Use the proper Hand Signal by tapping the top of your helmet and pointing where you want to go, then carefully move that way. Riders behind should open a space to allow the exit to occur.
- If you and your bike are ok, signal the **WHOLE PACK** with a “thumbs up” until the Chase Trucks pass by.
- If you or your bike need help, wave your arms above your head and the information will be relayed to the chase truck for pick up. Do **NOT STOP WAVING** until the Chase Truck stops for you. If you're not waving, they will not stop.
- If a tap-out occurs in front of you, move forward to fill the empty space. The **ONLY** time a rider may move from one track to the other is at the direction of the Tail Gunner, who will point to a rider and then point where the rider should go. (This does not apply to the Wagon Train – they will shift tracks to fill in after a tap-out.)
- Even if you are out of the pack for only a few moments, you must fall in at the end of the pack. You may tap-in at the direction of the Rear Road Guard – look for the placard on their bike. You may rejoin your Platoon at the next stop.

## Zipper and Fog Lines

Keep all of you and all of your bike, highway pegs and mirrors off of the Zipper and Fog Lines.

## Bad weather

We DO NOT stop to put on Rain Gear. Watch the experienced riders around you for hints.

## Be Aware of Your Surroundings

- If a cage wants in, let them! They are bigger than you. But be polite! Road Guards will move traffic out of the pack if necessary.
- Your safety and all of those around you depend on everyone staying focused while riding.

## Staging

- For those new to the Run, there are two types of staging that occur on any given day.
  - The first is organized Staging by Platoon, occurring at first morning assembly and after Fuel & Lunch stops.
  - The second type is at some end of day locations where bikes may be directed into an area without any particular order or Platoon grouping.
- In the morning when you arrive at the start, or after each fuel stop you will look for the Stager or Road Guard with a flag or flashlight and follow their instructions. Make sure your
- Platoon Number is visible on the right front of the bike. If it goes missing notify the
  - Assistant Platoon Leader and you will be provided another number, if available. The Flaggers will direct you to the staging area where you'll look for your platoon number on a placard, held by a Stager. The Staging Team will then guide you into the correct Platoon column and guide you to close parking to accommodate the entire pack.
- Moving to and in the staging area is not a race – keep it slow, be observant and be cautious. Staging at many locations are on unimproved parking lots.

## Fuel stops

Two important points for emphasis:

- **ARRIVE AT MORNING STAGING WITH A FULL TANK!** Every dollar the Route takes in is donated somewhere. The extra gas in your tank equals \$'s donated along on the Route.
- **DO NOT SKIP A FUEL STOP!** We often have to take unforeseen detours or get stuck in traffic adding miles and running time between Fuel Stops.

## Approaching the fuel pumps, ensure that you have...

- Your HIGHWAY PEGS UP and out of the way.
- Your extra key ready (if your gas cap is the locked type).
- Your Pre-Paid Fuel Token, Sticker or Wristband visible for the Fuel Crew, or...
- Fueling is done two-up. The Fuel Team will hand you the nozzle to fill your own bike. After you've fueled your bike, hand the hose back to the fuel team member. Please assist with passing the hose if necessary, then pay and pull forward carefully. Look for the Flaggers!
- Once you're staged, you'll have time to use the toilet facilities, visit the hydration trailer, etc. Please take care of these basic needs first. This will allow those behind you in the pack to get to the facilities quicker. Use your time wisely. Do not walk in front of bikes moving into staging areas. "Check twice, Motorcycles are everywhere."

- If your Platoon fuels first, please take care of your personal needs quickly so that others following will not be as rushed at the facilities. Then feel free to visit or make purchases as you see fit. Also, if you finish early, consider handing out water bottles to those just getting off their bikes to help them have more time at the stop.

### **“Gas & Go” Fuel Stops**

- Gas & Go Fuel stops are planned with a very short on station time that does not allow for restroom or hydration breaks. They are utilized ONLY with a very short span of time before or after a stop where those restroom and hydration were available.
- “DO NOT LEAVE YOUR BIKE” Be sure your Platoon understands this concept and riders do not casually stroll away while the pack completes fueling.
- When the last bike is fueled, the pack will roll. Those with personal urgent needs who are do not leave with the pack may rejoin at the next stop. (See Tapping Out and Rejoining the Platoon section above.)

### **Road hazards**

The Road Guards and Advanced team do their best to clear the road of gators, and other types of removable hazards, however that’s not a guarantee that we won’t run across one. Watch for hand signals coming back and follow the path of the bikes in front of you. Be prepared to ride through or over the hazard if necessary. Do not kick at road hazards.

### **Cameras**

While the Run is an event worthy of being recorded, it is still a mission that requires your full attention. While the pack is in motion, cameras should be stowed or mounted, but above all, IGNORED. It is fine for passengers to use cameras, as long as it does not interfere with the rider or create a hazard. While at events or stops, observe normal courtesies when taking pictures and if in doubt, ASK PERMISSION. Children may have “No Pictures” tags on, so be mindful of that situation.

### **Accidents**

Should an accident occur... Unless you are DIRECTLY involved, you should continue with your platoon, and DO NOT STOP! The Route has Road Guards, Medical Personnel and Chase Vehicles to handle the situation. UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCE are pictures allowed and there should be no mention of the accidents posted on social media, e-mail, or distribution.

### **Hand signals**

Pass back ALL hand signals! Every time! It’s not a “wave” nor is it necessary to wait for the signal to come to you before passing it back. See the Itinerary Book for common hand signals used on the Run or ask your PL, APL or TG for clarification.

### **How to Wave at “Friendlies” on the Overpass and Roadside**

Do not look up! Simply, raise your left arm and wave your hand. WATCH THE BIKES IN FRONT OF YOU! Often riders in front of you will, unknowingly, back off the throttle as they wave, causing rubber banding or at worst, collisions – it has happened! Maintain your speed!

## **Passengers Do's and Don'ts**

Do...

- Act as an extra set of eyes, watch for hazards.
- STAY ON THE BIKE WHILE FUELING.

Don't...

- Pass hand signals back (hand signals by driver only).
- Distract the rider by pointing out roadside sights.
- Communicate with passing vehicles.

## **Personal and Equipment Security**

Keep bags and trunks locked. Do not leave valuables unsecured on the bike. Double Check locks before getting on the road – saddlebags and tour packs come open easily.

## **Check Your Gear at Every Stop**

After you've gotten your own gear secured on the bike for the next leg of the mission, it's a good idea to visually check the bikes in front of and beside you for loose gear, especially since they could easily become your next road hazard.

## **Situational Awareness**

Stay alert to road conditions, watch the traffic around you, watch what the pack in front is doing, traffic coming in from the left and right, how you are feeling, and how the riders around you are performing. Watch for pedestrians as we travel through towns in procession. Do not attempt to make physical contact with spectators along the route.

## **SITREP (SITuation REPort)**

Any information you feel would be beneficial to the daily SITREP should be reported to the SITREP writer as soon as possible for publication on the website. Interesting stories, observations, photos, or complimentary notes will be more than welcome. The SITREP writer can't be everywhere, so your assistance is essential in providing a complete overview of the daily events.

## **NOTES**

## Platoon Daily Briefing Outline

- **Introductions – PL, APL, TG’s, RG, Chaplain**

**Route for the day:**

Traveling from: \_\_\_\_\_ Traveling to: \_\_\_\_\_

Total Distance: \_\_\_\_\_

Note any changes to the planned route: \_\_\_\_\_

Weather Expected for the day: \_\_\_\_\_

High Temp: \_\_\_\_\_ Wind: \_\_\_\_\_ Precipitation: \_\_\_\_\_

**We do not stop for weather to change gear**

- **Mandatory Rider Meeting each Morning** – BE ON TIME!
- Each rider is ultimately responsible for their own safety. 360 Bike check every day. Start each day with a full tank, proper air pressure in tires, rested and informed.
- **Emergency Information Forms**
- **Hydrate! Hydrate! Hydrate!**
- **15 and 5-minute warnings**
- **Behavior at functions**
- **Attitudes**
- **Standard of Conduct Statement**
- **Road Guard instructions**
- **Resources**
  - Route ITINERARY Booklet answers most questions
- **Focus on the Current Leg**
- **Platoon Intervals**
- **How we ride – Side by Side, or Stagger formation**
  - Formation
  - Throttle control
  - Rubber banding

- Getting on to the Interstate (Slab)
  - Downshifting vs. Braking
  - Slowing and Stopping the Formation
  - Passing and Lane Changing
  - Tapping Out and Rejoining the Pack
    - Keep waving until the Chase Truck STOPS!
  - Zipper and Fog Line
  - Bad Weather
  - Be Aware of Your Surroundings
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- **Staging**
  - **Fuel stops – Never Skip a Fuel Stop!**
  - **Road hazards**
  - **Cameras**
  - **Accidents (Do NOT post info or photos on social media)**
  - **Hand signals (review)**
  - **How to wave at “Friendlies”**
  - **Passenger Do’s and Don’ts**
  - **Personal and equipment security**
    - Check gear at every stop
    - Situational awareness
  - **Questions**
  - **Rider Comments**
  - **Platoon Chaplain / Road Guard Comments**