

## **'Caution-Warning-Danger' Signal**

### **Lead bike Alert - Follower Reaction**

Among the many responsibilities of the lead bike is communications. Whether the lead bike has (or uses) a CB or not, it is essential for the safety of the group that signals be used to convey much needed information.

An obstruction in the road, for example, must be pointed out - literally by pointing at it.

An expected lane change needs to be announced using turn signal lights. (Note that many groups tend to also use left arm signals announcing left or right turns but I am completely against that particular practice as having two hands on the grips is far too important, particularly if speed adjustments are being made in anticipation of the turn.)

There are lots of group specific hand signals that have come about over time. For example, patting the top of the head, in some groups, means 'smoky' (a policeman) ahead. Hand on top of the helmet forming a knife edge vertically means, to some groups, 'ride in single file' while in others the left arm pointing up at a ninety degree angle with a single finger pointed to the sky means the same thing.

Whatever the group practices are they should be announced at a pre-ride briefing so that all will understand them.

But one signal does not seem to get mentioned very often yet it turns out to be the most important one of all - the 'general warning' or 'Caution-Warning-Danger' signal.

Whenever the lead bike sees something, anything, that might become a threat to the group or that may require the group to slow down or stop quickly then the lead bike must double tap his/her front brake to advise the rest of the group. This double tap of the front brake causes a double flash of the brake lights. Whenever you see a double flash of brake lights ahead of you your reasonable and automatic response **MUST BE** to duplicate the signal (with a double tap of your own) and then to **SLOW DOWN**.

This accomplishes three things at once: it passes along the warning, it insures that your brakes are 'covered', and it adds space between you and the bike ahead just in case you will need it.

If it turns out that the threat is not real, nothing has been lost.

If, after 10 seconds or so nothing has happened, you can resume normal spacing and speed.

This is such a fundamentally important and useful signal it should become an international standard, in my opinion.