

## The right to ride in a group

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It's a cold December day and with nothing better to do I was reading a story in the American Motorcyclist magazine. The story was about a group ride that went badly. The group was on a charity ride and a driver took exception to being slowed down by a group of motorcycles going below the posted speed limit. The driver started to drive erratically and tried to pass the group and eventually hit one of the bikes in the group. The rider suffered some injuries and his bike was totaled. The officer who investigated the crash did not issue any citations because the driver of the car was able to talk his way out of it. This was probably not the right thing for the officer to do but he was getting two different stories from the people involved. The rider said that the driver hit him by coming into the group and the motorist said he did nothing wrong. So in the end civil courts and insurance companies will need to solve this one.

What really went wrong here? The group was doing their thing at a slow speed and the driver was trying to get somewhere in a hurry. Sounds familiar? When you look at the laws for group riding you will find that there are only a couple covered by state or federal laws. One you will need a parade permit to be covered by the law and another is a funeral procession. Both do not fit what we want to do as a group. I do not want to ride at 10mph for a parade permit and I really do not want to do what it takes to do the funeral thing. Each bike in the group is its own individual vehicle according to the law. We are subject to the same rules as every other vehicle on the road.

When we group ride we need to aware that we cannot impede other traffic. We need each rider to stop for stop signs and signals, not just follow the bike in front. And we need to keep the group size to a small number of bikes, no more than six, to keep things manageable. We also need to understand that cars will be in the group sometimes and that they may need to cut through the group to get to an exit ramp or a turn on the other side of the group. It is good to keep the group together but not at the cost of road rage. We need to remember we are not a group but individual riders riding together with no special rights. Common courtesy dictates some but the law does not.