

Drew's Views

Be Brilliant at the Basics (B³)

Proud to be your 2024 Safety Officer! Let's get to it!

While I do not know much about sports, I know this. When the Devil Rays first hit the ice at the James Raymond Arena to begin the season, they do not start practicing Hail Mary kickoffs, quadruple plays, or do lay-ups from the 3-point line. They focus on the basics. Blocking. Tackling. Puck drops. Field goals. Pitching. Bunting. B³ wins games and leads to fun, safe rides.

So, our 1st article focuses on a basic aspect of group riding; the staggered column (SC). First, the **purposes**. The SC is generally the safest technique for Group Riding because every rider: 1) can see further ahead and 2) has use of the entire lane if needed. Such as when a rider in front of you does not point out the pothole and you need to swerve. It happens. So please don't follow so close you do not have time to swerve! It could happen.

And on seeing further, let's go to the **1" – 2" Rule**. Rule of thumb: a rider should be able to see the face of rider to their diagonal front in the rider's mirror. This does not work at all speeds though. Good at ~ 25-35 mph, but the faster you go, the more distance you need.

I often get asked "Drew, how many feet should I be from the rider to my diagonal front at 60 mph, a common speed for group rides?" Simple math. 60 mph = a mile a minute. A mile = 5,280' (feet). A minute = 60" (seconds). So here we go. Check out the table, top to bottom.

Time (seconds)	Distance (feet)
60"	5,280'
30"	2,640'
15"	1,320'
1"	88'

Or another way: $5,280' \div 60" = 88$ feet. I know what you are thinking! "*C'mon man, great, give me a visual. I am reading my Bull Shots in the bathtub smoking a cigar, for crying out loud!*" OK. Measured my Road Glide once; ~ 8' long. So at 60 mph in 1" you travel about the length of 10 Road Glides. Want a better visual?

Picture the TBHD service bay door. Stand in front of it, outside, facing SR 60. Ten Road Glides lined up tire to tire is about the distance of the overhang. Out to where you step off the curb. So, if we're riding out in the sticks, no need to be any closer than that to the rider to your diagonal front in most cases. Riding too close serves no purpose. ***Riding further apart is safer!***

Let's dig further. We call it the **1" – 2" Rule**, but it's really a guide and situation dependent. When I rode to Sturgis we did the 2" – 4" rule in a staggered column using 2 lanes. We were going a tad faster than 60 mph, so we needed to be further apart, and other vehicles were few and far between. Or let's say we are out in the sticks on a narrow lane and the woods almost come up to the asphalt. We probably need to increase our interval *just in case* an *unseen-until-the-last-second* hazardous condition appears. Single file would work too, especially if it's a long stretch.

Last bit, **well begun is half done** (you can probably tell I like maxims and old sayings 😊). How do we start our rides? Lined up side-by-side in a double column. How many times have we rolled out the back gate riding down Crater Lane and riders must switch sides because we did not start off in the right sequence? How do we prevent that? Line up axle-to-axle and the rider on the left goes first. At red lights & stop signs; also line up side-by-side.

Well begun is half done! Let's ride and have fun!