

# A guide to running and taking part in a KAMG Group Run using the Marker System

## Introduction

This document is created largely using extracts direct from the IAM RoadSmart Group Organised Rides Manual of Guidance (V2.1 May 2021). Some wording has been changed to bring it in line with terms used within KAMG, along with some additional hints and tips.

The purpose of this document is to provide a clear guide for planning and executing a group ride using the 'Marker System'.

It is important that before undertaking any KAMG ride all riders must have current membership of both KAMG and IAM RoadSmart. They should also ensure their ICE card and ICE details on Tracker are complete and up to date.

## Group Insurance

Event organisers and/or Run Leaders should note that the group insurance coverage (Public Liability) varies depending upon the mix of the riders taking part (full members, Associate Members and/or non-members). Full details can be found in Section 5 of the IAM RoadSmart Group Organised Rides Manual of Guidance (V2.1 May 2021).

## Run Leader and Back Marker basic principles

Riding in convoy and stopping on the road to allow riders to regroup are two practices that should be avoided when riding in a group. A well-established method exists that makes both unnecessary. This is the Marker System that utilises a Run Leader (RL) and Back Marker (BM) (or tail end Charlie).

The basis of the system is that the RL (usually the ride organiser) stays at the front of the group and the BM remains at the rear, as the names suggest. Whilst not compulsory and depending on distance, communication via radio/Bluetooth/mobile phone can greatly assist both the RL and BM.

Whenever there is a deviation from the obvious straight-ahead route, the rider travelling behind the RL will be directed to pull over in a visible, safe and legal position to point all bikes in the correct direction. This bike is the 'Marker' and when the BM comes along the marker re-joins the route in front of the BM. As the journey continues each rider will, in turn, become the rider behind the RL, and therefore become a marker before re-joining in front of the BM.

By following this basic system every rider regardless of ability within the group may ride their own ride, without the need to maintain a pace they are not comfortable with and without the risk of getting lost. There is never a need to ride in convoy with all bikes in sight of each other.

## The Run Leader's role

- Plan a route that will be achievable for the abilities of the expected riders, with suitable refreshment stops and refuelling opportunities.
- *Select a suitable start venue, ideally with refreshments and public conveniences. Start venues should have been risk assessed and approved by the committee.*
- Brief all riders before setting off.
- Ride smoothly and at a steady pace.
- If you do not have a bike behind you to act as a marker for a change in direction, stop in a safe place or slow down until one arrives.
- Unless there is a deviation from the obvious straight-ahead route, you do not need to mark the junction except at roundabouts when the exit should always be marked.
- Always leave a marker at a change in direction, even if you think all the group are in sight of each other. Recommended places to stop are:
  - Left turn – prior to the junction.
  - Right turn – immediately after the turn (providing they are still visible to the following riders).
  - Right turn with visibility issues – before the junction.
  - Roundabouts – at the appropriate exit.
  - Large or complex roundabouts – a marker may be needed on both entrance and exit.
  - There are some occasions when they may have to park their machine and get off it to be clearly visible.
- The ultimate responsibility for the safety of markers is their own, but you can help them mark the route effectively and safely by giving them plenty of warning that you require them to stop.
- If it becomes apparent that the Group has come to a halt because a rider has had problems, consider retracing the route until you discover the cause of the hold-up and take appropriate action. Ensure that those who have stopped beyond the hold-up are kept informed of the situation.
- The RL should first warn and ultimately exclude from the run a rider who through their attitude or actions:
  - Endangers others within the group ride.
  - Endangers members of the public.
  - Whose riding would bring IAM RoadSmart into disrepute.

If any rider is excluded, a report must be created detailing the incident and submitted by the RL to the group committee.

## The Pre-ride briefing

- Remind all riders that they are responsible for maintaining safety and complying with the law at all times.
- Make sure that everyone is familiar with the Marker System. If the group is large, consider riding in two or more separate groups.
- All riders should be made aware who the RL and BM are and how they can be identified on the road. We endeavour to make the RL and BM easily identifiable through wearing distinctive HiVis vests.
- Ensure every rider knows how to recognise the RL's signal to stop and act as a marker.

- *Ensure that all riders and pillioners are carrying ICE cards and that their ICE details on TRACKER are up to date.*
- Every rider doesn't need to have full route details, but it is helpful for them to know the rest stops and final destination.
- Ensure that everyone is aware of the number of bikes within the group and who are riding together.
- Remind participants that if any rider is planning to leave the group, other than at a pre-arranged stop, they should inform the RL or BM of their intentions.
- Although no rider will hopefully become separated from the group, it is advisable to have a plan on how to respond to this situation. Including an agreed rendezvous point and time and all riders should have the mobile phone numbers of the RL and BM.

### **On the road**

- Remember- Safety first!
- At all times, every rider is responsible for their own safety, their actions and any consequences that those actions may have.
- The RL is responsible for navigation only, every rider must use their judgement about every course of action that they take.
- Always obey traffic laws.
- Ride at a pace that is legal and at no time ride faster than you consider safe for the conditions.
- Always ride smoothly and predictably.
- Try to avoid harsh acceleration, sudden braking or changes in direction.
- At junctions take the obvious straight-ahead route unless a marker indicates otherwise.
- At roundabouts, the marker should be on the exit route, if you cannot see the marker on the approach be prepared to circle the roundabout to confirm the correct exit (mainly large roundabouts).
- Overtaking within the group is permissible when safe and legal. No rider should be pressured into going any faster than they feel safe. When following a slower rider be patient and do not put them under pressure to ride faster. The following rider can make their intentions known and where appropriate the rider in front can adjust their speed to allow a safe and courteous overtake. The tail-end rider will not overtake others in the group.
- Overtaking other road users, again it should be done in a safe and courteous manner (a raised hand of thanks never goes amiss), remember they may be about to have a number of riders overtake them, your courtesy may well assist those to follow.
- If you intend to leave the group, allow all riders pass you and indicate to the BM your intentions. Preferably this will have been communicated at the briefing stage if possible, however circumstances may change during the ride.
- When on the open road, ride in a staggered formation when in a tight convoy.
- Allow other road users to overtake the group if they wish. Where it is safe make space for them to do so.

## **When behind the Run Leader**

Be prepared to stop and act as the marker when indicated to do so by the RL. If you are the second bike behind the RL and you realise that the bike in front has not marked a change in direction when indicated to do so by the RL, then mark it yourself. In addition, if you feel that a junction would be clearer with a marker or additional marker, but the RL has not left one, feel free to take on the role of marker.

## **When you are the marker**

Never compromise your personal safety or the safety of others by stopping in a dangerous location. No one in the group wants to get lost, but that is preferable to putting yourself at risk. When the RL signals for you to stop, do so only where you are safe and visible. It is your decision where to stop, but remember that to be an effective marker you need to be visible to the following bikes and point out the direction to follow. Use a clear hand signal to achieve this. Do not move until the BM appears. If the BM fails to appear, do not move. If something has gone wrong, someone will return for you. REMEMBER - you are all that helps the following bikes find the correct route. If you see other riders from the group take the wrong direction do not attempt to chase after them. Wait until the BM arrives and inform them. If the riders return in the meantime, then you don't need to inform the BM if you are sure that all riders that took the wrong direction have returned to the location you are marking. Make sure that what appears to be the last bike is really the BM, who will slow down as they approach, to enable you to pull out safely in front.

Whenever possible, remain on your machine and be ready to move off.

## **The Back Marker**

- As you approach the marker slow down to enable the rider to pull out. If it is necessary to stop and wait, then do so in a safe place. Try not to pass the marker as this is how they will know you are the BM.
- Watch for any rider who feels that the pace is too quick and is signalling for other bikes to overtake. Allow such a rider to stay at the rear of the group in front of you. Such riders should be observed and not pushed to ride faster.
- Keep an eye out for riders in front of you that are clearly riding inappropriately or may be struggling. In conjunction with the RL, identify appropriate actions to address the situation.
- Watch for any bikes that have pulled over for any reason, if safe stop to find out what the problem is.

## **If you get lost**

The most common cause of getting lost is a failure to see a marker or someone leaving the group while on the road and the bike behind follows. These are avoidable if everyone follows this guide.

If you arrive at a junction and there is no marker it is likely that you have made an incorrect turn. Retrace your route to the last place you saw a marker where the BM may be waiting for you. Note that the BM will wait 10 minutes and then proceed on the route, so as not to hold up the ride.

The Marker System is well proven and works extremely well. It ensures a safe and enjoyable ride for all concerned, where no one should feel under pressure or gets lost (usually!).