



How-To

Have a Chapter Gathering

It is where your Association has FUN, grows, teaches, educates, informs, and establishes a basis for your Association's very existence. The Chapter gathering is the most important aspect of what we strive for, educating our Members in ways of safety, skill, knowledge and fun.

If we, as Officers, recognize our responsibilities to our Members, we understand the importance of what is represented in our beliefs, fun, safety, and knowledge. We have found that one of the ways to get them involved is to provide a positive, fun and worthwhile environment. It is called a Chapter gathering.

A Chapter gathering is the perfect medium to carry out our prime responsibility to our Members. It provides them with a place to come to have fun, friends, knowledge, and camaraderie. It provides us the opportunity to present to our Members the tools and skills, the knowledge that will enable them to safely enjoy their chosen hobby —Motorcycling.

We should look forward to organizing the gathering with a focus on enticing our Members to attend. We do this by making our Chapter gatherings fun. We make it a relaxed, non-political, non-religious, friendly place where there are no strangers... tasty food, interesting people, and educational programs. This is not as difficult as it sounds, but it is essential to the health of our Chapters. If we can motivate our Members to attend a Chapter gathering, our job is half done. We

must then ensure that the gathering is so good, so interesting, so entertaining, so rewarding and so much fun that they will return every month. They will also “talk it up” with their friends, helping us receive the positive publicity that goes a long way in attracting new Members.

The following is a suggested outline to help you get started.

Steps to finding a gathering space.

1. Look in an area that is as centrally located as possible to your members.
2. Make sure that there is easy access from expressways and main roads.
3. Check for available, safe, and well-lit parking.
 - a) Check the lot during the time of day and day of the week you plan on holding your gathering.
 - b) Check the lot during inclement weather. Does it flood?
4. If the location is a restaurant, ask the following questions:
 - a) Is there a private room away from the main dining area?
 - b) Can we book that room monthly for a year in advance?
 - c) Will we have server(s) assigned to the room?
 - d) May we order off the menu or will there be a limited menu for our gathering?
 - e) Will a gratuity be automatically added to the checks?
 - f) Will there be a charge for the room, or a required minimum amount of food ordered for the room be free?
 - g) What is the maximum occupancy for the room?

Setting an agenda for a gathering.

Although our gatherings are not as structured as a formal club or organizational meeting, there should be a plan in place that will allow for an easy flow of information. The plan allows you to be spontaneous and still come back to where you were so all topics are covered. The following is a suggested agenda but can be tailored to best fit the Chapter. In most cases, we want the Gathering to be social, fun and full of sharing of information about events and safety.

Chapter Director - Introduction and welcome. If this fits the Chapter Director’s personality, take the microphone around the room, and ask select Members about a ride or event they attended, this gets them involved right away.

Many Chapters do a Pledge of Allegiance and/or a moment of silence.

Door Greeter - welcome from the sign-in roster of guests, visiting Chapter, District and Team GWRRA representatives.

Chapter Director - Occasionally, more often for newly formed Chapters, an introduction of Team Members and a brief explanation of their duties would be helpful. This can also be done when you introduce them before they speak. Membership Enhancement Coordinator and Social Coordinator – Identify first time visitors and prospective members so they may stand up and introduce themselves. They can be asked what they ride, how long they have been riding or related questions. Birthdays, wedding anniversaries and joining anniversaries can be announced. Some Chapters offer gifts if the budget allows.

A great idea is to recognize second timers, as they came back. Give them something with Chapter colors at that time, bandana, Chapter pin, or patch, etc.

If there is a guest speaker, introduce them and the topic and allow them to make their presentation.

Visiting Chapter representatives are then encouraged to speak, to share information on upcoming events, etc.

The Chapter Ride Coordinator or Safety Officer speaks. Can do a brief safety presentation and announce upcoming rides. Choose members to share about the past month's rides.

Chapter Director - Announce upcoming events and gatherings for the Chapter. May have Members share about events attended in the past month. Give details about upcoming events, especially reoccurring annual events. Do not assume Members will understand what the event is just by the title.

Identify the Member who is responsible for patches, pins and shirt orders.

Anytime during the gathering, fun activities such as games, door prize drawings, prizes awarded for wearing Chapter gear, mileage awards, etc., can be included. End the gathering with the 50/50 drawing, should you choose to have one.

Thank everyone for taking the time to attend.

To encourage riding, going for a ride after the Chapter Gathering is a great idea so long as it is promoted in advance. This, of course, depends on the day and time of your Gathering.

Stay open to fun ideas, reach out to peers to see what they are doing and going to their Gatherings is a great place to learn new ideas. You know your Chapter, but you can always be creative and fun.

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