1. **Motorcycle Safety Inspection** - Conduct an inspection of your bike. When bikes sit unridden for a long-time things can happen. Inspect all the following:
   a. **Tires** - Make sure the tread is good and the sidewalls are not cracked. Also check and adjust your tire pressure as proper pressure is critical.
   b. **Fluids** - Check all your fluid levels even if you did not see any leaks.
   c. **Controls** - Make sure all your controls are working properly.
   d. **Lights** - Check all your lights especially the headlamp and brake lights.
   e. **Gauges** - Make sure all your gauges are functioning properly. Check your neutral light to make sure your bike is really in neutral when the light is on.
   f. **Suspension** - Check your shocks for proper movement. If you plan on riding with a passenger, or a lot of gear, make sure you make the necessary suspension adjustments to accommodate the extra weight.
   g. **Side and/or Center Stand** - Make sure the stand is working properly to hold your bike up when parked. Make sure the stand goes all the way back up to its riding position before you move. Always have a side stand puck with you in case you ever have to park on grass or soft land.
   h. **Windshield/glasses/goggles** - Make sure they are clean. Don’t forget about sunglasses or a tinted visor to help with your vision in the sun.
   i. **Bike Service** - If your bike is in need of service such as an oil change, get it done now before the dealerships get too busy. Don’t put off bike services. Take care of your bike and it will take care of you!
   j. **First Aid Kit** - Great to have an up-to-date kit just in case.
   k. **Rain Suit and extra riding gear** - Being prepared is very important.
   l. **Gas** - Arrive to the ride with a full tank of gas. **See Tip # 7.**

2. **Spring Riding** - If your bike has been parked throughout this long, cold and snowy winter, make sure you get out and ride some before our Ride to the Tide event. Not riding for four or five long months will cause your riding skills to deteriorate. You will be riding with a large group of bikes and safety is our number one concern. Ride over to a large empty parking lot and practice starting out and stopping, quick stops, swerves and cornering. If you plan on riding with a passenger, once you get comfortable by yourself, ride around with a passenger on the back in the parking lot. Remember how much riding with a passenger affects your bike’s overall handling and performance.

3. **Watch out for Pot Holes during the ride.** This past winter has led to numerous pot holes developing on many roads. What could result in a bent rim on your car could be a very tragic accident on your motorcycle. Remember to use hand and foot signals to warn the riders behind you of any approaching dangers. See the back of the Safety Card for the hand and foot signals when you arrive for the ride. The Safety Cards will be distributed at Registration/Check-In at our starting point in Smyrna.
4. **Group Riding** – The group will be riding in a staggered formation. Always maintain at least a two-second following distance from the bike directly in front of you and a one-second distance behind the bike staggered in front of you to your right or left. See number five.

5. **Important Tip** – Never ever ride alongside another rider no matter how good of a rider you are. You need time and space to react to sudden problems you may encounter. Riding side by side gives you no safety cushion and no reaction time.

6. **Hand Signals** – If you’ve never browsed the Motorcycle Safety Foundation’s (MSF) web site take a few minutes to do so. MSF has a lot of great information on their site. If you don’t know the standard hand signals used by riders when riding in groups, you can find the signals on the site. Go to [www.msf-usa.org](http://www.msf-usa.org). Click on Library, Quick Tips and then on Group Riding. This important site will give you additional information on group riding, following distances diagram and will show you all the hand signals.

7. **Filling up gas tank** – At the start of our Ride to the Tide two years ago we encountered the following problem. We found three big bikes had gas leaking from their gas tanks. Apparently, the riders had just topped off their gas tanks before arriving to the start location. As the sun began heating up the temperature it caused the gas in the tanks to expand and began leaking out of the overflow. This creates a hazardous condition with so many people and bikes being closely together. A carelessly discarded match or cigarette could be disastrous. **Manufacturers recommend not filling your motorcycle’s gas tank all the way to the top to avoid this potential problem. Leave several inches of space for the gas to expand especially during the hot months.**

Remember, you will be riding with a large group of motorcyclists. Whatever you do on your bike can and will affect the riders behind you.

Ride Smart. Ride Safe and Enjoy the Ride. Ride to stay alive. Thank you.