

SSR Fanatic Cruising & Caravanning Guidelines

3/17/07

Document Intent

This is a list of Guidelines (not to be confused with rules) intended to be used by cruise / caravan organizers to improve the safety of our cruising and promote a standard knowledge base. Note that not all guidelines apply to all events. Each traveling group is unique in its needs and you will need to use your individual judgment on which guidelines are to be stressed or possibly exempted for that particular cruise. In all cases, be safe and have fun.

Preparation / Communication

1. The organizer should have a roster of the cruisers and a cell phone number for each.
2. On most cruises of over an hour (one way), a map showing the route and all gas/rest/food stop locations should be provided to each vehicle. The organizer's cell phone number should be on each map.
3. If the caravan is on a schedule for any reason, all stops should be coordinated to the "departure time" from that stop.
4. On cruises that will be joined by other groups, a schedule of departure times from the stop locations should be provided with the map and coordinated with the joining groups. Cell phone numbers are key connections between organizers of the groups. Be mindful of time zone changes when appropriate.
5. A driver's briefing is critical before starting any cruise. Plan to brief "joiners" when they connect with the caravan, if possible.
6. On longer cruises, plan a "leg stretch" about every 1 to 1 ½ hours if possible. Pick a suitable location for the number of vehicles and people in your group. Again, this should be on your map.
7. Large caravans are very difficult to manage. Try to keep the number of vehicles in an individual group to a maximum of 10 or 12. If more than 10 or 12, consider breaking into multiple groups with individual leaders. Identify the leader of each group and share cell phone numbers between leaders.
8. Large caravans that are broken into groups are recommended to allow a couple minutes between departures of those groups.

Driver's Briefing

1. Conducting a driver's briefing before starting will eliminate confusion and is an essential part of safe cruising.
2. Review the guidelines, as they apply to your individual cruise / caravan, and prepare an outline well in advance of your briefing.
3. Stress those points that are unique to your outing and identify any items that will be ignored.
4. Assign "Lead" and "Trail" vehicles for your group(s).
5. Review the agenda, plan, route, hazards and points of interest.
6. Be sure everyone has a map and lead/trail phone numbers.

Options to be considered for the Driver's Briefing

1. You can choose to be "everyone for themselves" through town and then regroup at the point where open highway speed signs are posted on the outskirts of the city.
2. You can choose to take two lanes through the city to help get all vehicles through traffic lights together. This is only appropriate in segments that do not have turns.
3. Cover the vehicle spacing issue completely. Acceptable distance is different for city -highway and 2lane – interstate traveling. Each trip is different and has individual needs, just be sure that everyone understands any limitations or recommendations.
4. You should choose how to deal with "lagging" vehicles in the group. One option is to allow passing, thereby eventually sending that vehicle to the rear. Be sure to advise all that being passed is not an indictment.

General Caravanning

1. A **lead vehicle** should be assigned to set the pace and direction of the caravan (or caravans if more than one is necessary). If possible, the lead and trail vehicles should have each others cell phone numbers. We encourage everyone to have a hand held radio tuned to Channel 7 or some other agreed upon channel.
2. As a member of your caravan, your job is to keep track of the vehicle directly **behind** you. This is very important as it will ensure that we all remain together if anyone has difficulties. If the vehicle **behind** you stops, **you** stop and so on up the line. That way, no one is left stranded with an emergency.
3. On the highway, expect to drive at the posted speed limit, or (as a recommended maximum speed) the limit plus 10%. This should be part of the initial briefing and recognized by all participants. At no time should the designated lead vehicle exceed the maximum speed.
4. It is permissible for any caravan member (or members) to leave the caravan and pass the leader. If you choose to do this, you will be on your own until the rest of the caravan meets up with you at the next stop.
5. Typical caravanning is usually done in the far right hand lane, unless road/traffic conditions dictate otherwise. If the **lead vehicle** pulls into another lane, all following vehicles will activate their turn signals to follow. Any following vehicle, that can safely do so, will pull into the lane and act as a **blocker** to allow any following vehicles in front of the **blocker** to safely enter that lane. Once the trail vehicle is back in line, the blocker can pass forward back into the caravan.
6. In the city, traffic lights can cause a problem. However, we all should observe the rule of watching the vehicle **behind** us. If someone misses a light, all in front simply slow down until the rest can catch up. With larger caravans, the **lead vehicle** will usually stop in a convenient location to re-group just before we reach our destination.
7. Everyone will be expected to observe all traffic laws and "rules of the road". Don't follow too closely and try to allow room for civilian vehicles to pass safely.
8. Keep a reasonable distance to the vehicle in front of you, but don't lag or dilly-dally. This causes as many problems as a leader that is going too fast. The two second rule applies universally to keep "appropriate" spacing in the caravan. More than 4 second spacing should be avoided, as this will stretch out the caravan in many cases.
9. Hold a constant speed. This will allow those in the rear of the caravan to avoid those 100 mph "catch-ups" that we all hate. The longer the caravan, the more important this becomes.
10. Absolutely NO consumption of alcoholic beverages while cruising!!!
11. If you have a problem, or see a problem with a vehicle in front of you, contact your leader or that vehicle immediately. If you don't have a phone or radio, flash your headlights and begin to slow down to a safe stop. Again, if everyone is observing the "watch the vehicle **behind** you" rule, the entire caravan will come to a stop and the problem can be handled.
12. If for any reason you become lost or separated from the caravan, immediately **proceed to the next scheduled stop**. The rest of the caravan will be waiting for you at that location (usually with someone dispatched to back-track to the last place you were seen). If you **intend to leave** the caravan and not continue on the cruise, **PLEASE** notify someone so that we don't wait for you at the next stop or send out a search party to locate you under the assumption that you have encountered some difficulty!
13. The trail vehicle is also responsible for watching the back door of the caravan and informing of overtaking traffic coming forward. Especially emergency vehicles.
14. Whenever possible, turn on your headlights and **ALWAYS** buckle up!