

COMBAT VETERANS MOTORCYCLE ASSOCIATION ®



**CVMA® MS 44-1 Group Riding Standard Operating
Procedure (SOP)**

1. Introduction

- This SOP is provided in order to ensure all CVMA® MS 44-1 members are informed and are aware of expectations during our rides and to minimize ride brief requirements.
- During all group rides, CVMA® MS 44-1 CEB will be in the front of the formation with any visiting CEB or NBOD, followed by chapter members and finally invited guests to the rear. Trikes, bikes with sidecars and the Tail Gunner will be last in the line of riders behind the non-chapter CVMA® members and invited guests.
- This document does not cover all situations. During times of un-briefed or unusual circumstances, it is the responsibility of each rider to ride with common sense and the skills you have learned through your training and experience.
- This SOP has been reviewed by the Executive Officer, Safety Officer and Road Captains, and approved by the Commander.
- An electronic copy will be available for reading and/or downloading on the Chapter website.
- Every member is expected to read and be familiar with this SOP and to ensure their guests are aware of expected conduct during rides.
- This SOP will be reviewed periodically by the Chapter Safety Officer/ Senior Road Captain and will be updated as required with the approval of the Commander, who will have gained concurrence of appropriate chapter members.

Arrive prepared.

- Show up on time.
- Arrive with a full gas tank.
- Keep a properly maintained motorcycle.
- Wear all state-required safety equipment.
- Be familiar with and exercise the Chapter's Group Riding SOP
- Know the Chapters Hand and Arm Signals
- Listen to and follow the instructions of the Road Captains unless those instructions will put them or others in an unsafe situation.
- Know the basic route.

INSPECT YOUR MOTORCYCLE – All riders are responsible for making sure their motorcycles are mechanically up to the task. Before you even meet up with the group, make sure you've got plenty of fuel in the tank, and that you've taken care of all those maintenance issues. Not sure what to check? Use T-CLOCS, which stands for Tires, Controls, Lights, Oil, Chassis and Kickstand. See the T-CLOCS chart (Appendix C). Safety Officer can provide copies as required.

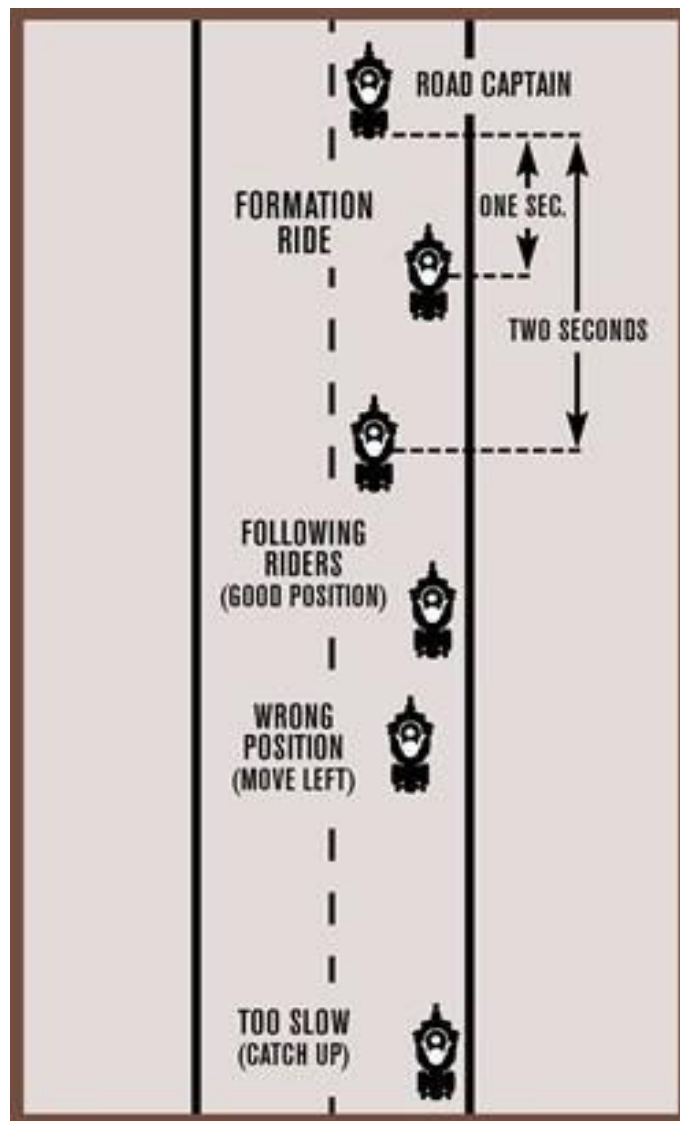
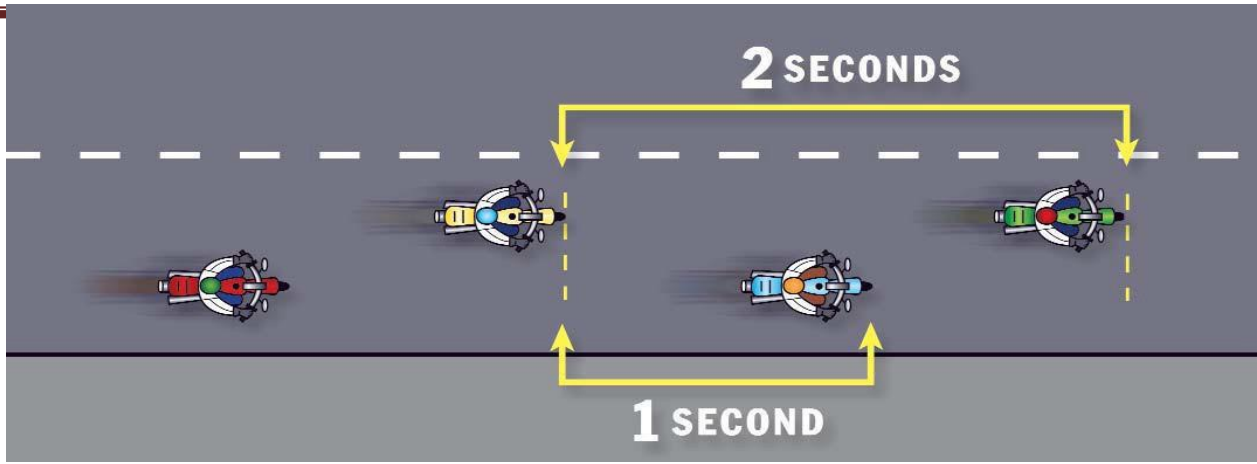
2. **Pre-ride brief.** We will discuss things like safety, the route, rest and fuel stops, and hand signals (see diagrams on next page), and assignment of a lead and tail gunner, if not already assigned. Both should be experienced riders who are well-versed in group riding procedures. The leader should assess everyone's riding skills and place them in the formation appropriately. Ride may include a DOD Installation. If this is the case, please review the requirements for DOD Installation Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), (Appendix B)

CVMA® MS 44-1 Group Riding SOP

3. **Ride prepared.** At least one rider in each group should pack a cell phone, first-aid kit, and full tool kit, so the group is prepared for any problem that they might encounter. This is required gear for the Tail Gunner.
4. **Lining up the formation.** The formation will line up with Chapter Officers in front based on CEB position. Following CEB members, any visiting National, Regional, State, and/or visiting Chapter Officers.
5. **Ride in formation.** The staggered riding formation (see diagram below) allows a proper space cushion between motorcycles so that each rider has enough time and space to maneuver and to react to hazards. A single-file formation may be required on a curvy road, under conditions of restricted visibility, poor road surfaces, or other situations where maneuvering room is restricted. Under normal conditions, same side spacing should be a maximum of 2 seconds.
6. **Keeping formation** – Nothing is quite as irritating as seeing undisciplined riding, especially when riding with the CVMA® insignia. If for some reason a member repositions in the formation, it is incumbent upon all other riders to adjust. There is only one way of doing this that is acceptable in this Chapter to maintain the staggered formation:
 - **Pull Forward (chapter required method)** – All members of one side of the formation pull forward to fill any gaps. This enables all members to maintain maximum of 2-second spacing while repositioning. *No criss-crossing is authorized as it is too dangerous.* During the ride brief, the Ride Captain will ensure the **Pull Forward** method is included, along with other safety items briefed. The Tail Gunner is charged with safety and maintaining group integrity compliance while on the roll.

UNDER NO CONDITION SHOULD A FORMATION CHANGE OCCUR WITHOUT THE POSITIVE INDICATION AND / OR ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF THE RIDER'S CHANGING FORMATION (i.e. DO NOT MOVE FORWARD PAST ANOTHER RIDER UNTIL INDICATED OR ACKNOWLEDGED TO DO SO).

CVMA® MS 44-1 Group Riding SOP



6. **Scan-** Riders should develop a scan pattern that allows them to determine any abnormality in a timely manner. Scan should include:
 - **Where you're going** – The vast majority of your attention should be focused towards the front in order to react in a timely manner to any situations that may arise and, of course, to stay on the road.
 - **Periodically check the riders following in your rear view mirror.** If you see a rider falling behind, slow down so they may catch up.
 - **Engine instruments and lights** - Check to see if your turn signals are on, any caution lights you may have are on, fuel state, speed and any other gauge you may have. A proper scan of these should take no more than 1 second, maybe 2. You should scan these on a regular basis.

7. **Key positions:**
 - **Road Captain** – Sets the pace, determines stops and is responsible for overall safety of the ride.
 - **Blockers/Road Guards** – If the situation dictates, the first bike after CEB or guest (and third if required) rider in the formation will stage his motorcycle to block traffic to allow all members of the group to complete a maneuver (leaving parking lot, making turns...). This should only be done if briefed, or clearly understood by hand signals.
 - **Trikes and Sidecars** – Trikes and bikes with sidecars will travel in staggered formation after the last motorcycle and before the Tail Gunner.
 - **Tail Gunner (also known as “Sweeper”)** – Responsible for the safe conduct of maneuvers during the ride. Sets spacing if required (loosening up or “pushing” forward). Is primary member to stop with any rider who has a problem unless another rider has been designated. Clears and begins lane changes. If the designated Tail Gunner stops to render assistance, the last rider will assume Tail Gunner duties. At the discretion of the Road Captain, a trike rider may be assigned as Tail Gunner.

8. **Lane changes** – Normally, lane changes will be signaled from the front and will be completed from front to back, unless the situation dictates otherwise. After the Road Captain or lead rider signals for lane change, the Tail Gunner will ensure a clear lane at his ride position when signaled, and then move into the new lane in order to block rolling upcoming traffic. Pass the signal back. **DO NOT CHANGE LANES UNTIL THE RIDER IN FRONT OF YOU MOVES.** The **ONLY** exception to this rule is the Tail Gunner.

9. **Use Hand and Foot Signals** –The Ride Captain will use hand or foot signals (Appendix A) to indicate a change of course, hazards, or other information to the group, unless safety dictates otherwise. Each rider uses the same signal to pass the information back through the group. If you are new to group riding, only pass the signals back if you are comfortable with taking your hands off the controls. See MSF Hand Signals used by the Chapter contained within this SOP.

10. **Fuel stops** – Fill one, fill all. If we all follow first guideline, we will all have similar amount of fuel. Unless you have a 10 gallon or more gas tank, fill-er-up with the rest.

11. **Keep the group together without extraordinary steps** – Occasionally the group will get separated by a stop light, traffic congestion, etc. It is neither necessary nor advisable to take exceptional steps to regroup. In the event the group is separated, the Lead Motorcycle will adjust the ride (either by slowing down or stopping at a safe location) until the ride is regrouped. In some circumstances, this may take several miles. BE PATIENT! If you find yourself leading part of the group due to a break and you are not sure of the route, pull over to a safe place. *(Important: Neither the center lane, median strip nor a soft shoulder are acceptable or safe places to stop. Find a hard surface that will fit the number of bikes pulling off and pull off there.)* Everyone behind you and the Tail Gunner will stop so that you can let the Tail Gunner assume the Road Captain spot.

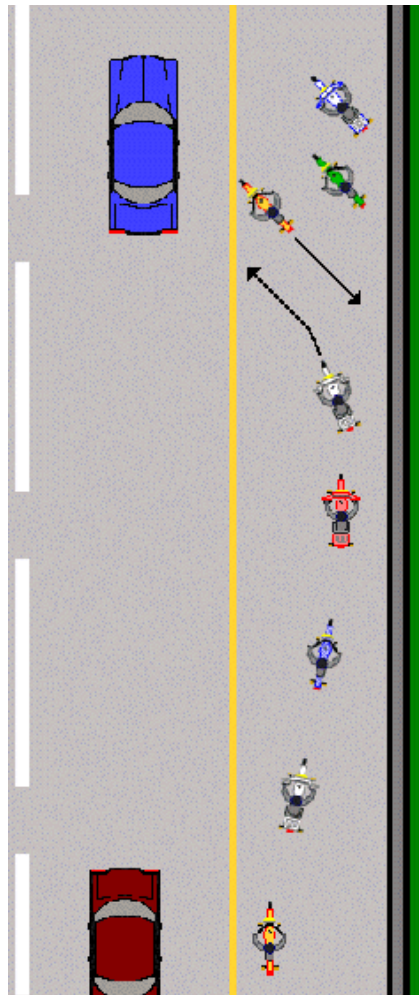
12. **Keep the group together with extraordinary steps** – Using Blockers: assist in getting the group or entire formation through intersections safely, quickly, and efficiently. While technically illegal, blocking also eases the effect of the passage on traffic in general. It also helps to avert any rider or riders from making a risky choice rather than chance being separated from the rest. Blockers, when directed to a position by the Lead Motorcycle, should activate their flashers just prior to pulling out of formation. The flashers should be shut off after rejoining just ahead of the Tail Gunner. While blocking, it is wise to remain in gear and ready to move should another vehicle ignore the request to wait. A "stop" hand signal is suggested while blocking and is most easily accomplished by the passenger if present. A "thank you" signal by blockers and Tail Gunner as well is a nice touch and is usually appreciated. Since a blocker assumes the responsibility of holding up traffic, plus a remote possibility of a traffic violation, it is of course voluntary. Should you have no desire to block, position yourself toward the rear of the pack. In the event that you later anticipate being called upon, signal rearward riders ahead of you at an appropriate time. NEVER do what you are not comfortable doing. **This technique will only be used in extraordinary circumstances.**

13. **Blockers Reintegration into the group** – The blockers fall back into the formation in front of the Tail Gunner. When Trikes or Sidecars are in the formation, the blockers will fall into the formation behind the Trikes or Sidecars and in front of the Tail Gunner. When it is safe to do so the Trikes or Sidecar will waive the blockers ahead to pass them and for the blockers to reestablish themselves with the staggered motorcycle formation.

14. **Pull side-by-side at stops, start together with the left bike accelerating faster** – This helps move the group through the stops quickly and get as many bikes through the stop light as possible. As the two columns come to a stop, the right column will move up even with the left column. On the start, the bikes leave together with the left bike accelerating faster to reestablish the staggered formation. This movement is legal in the State of Mississippi.

15. **Yield to Cars (Especially at Entrance Ramps and Lane Changes)** – When a car needs to enter from an entrance ramp or is signaling to break into the group, *—yield and give them plenty of room.*

16. **Signal All Turns and Lane Changes with Turn Signal Lights and Hand Signals** – The Lead Motorcycle will signal for turns and lane changes. You, in turn, make the same signal to pass it back through the group and to signal any other vehicles near you. Normally, lane changes will be completed from back to front, unless the situation dictates otherwise. After signaling for lane change, the Tail Gunner will move into new lane in order to allow all other members to make lane change once any traffic has cleared. Before making a turn or lane change and after you have signaled for an appropriate amount of time, **Look with your Head**, (not in your mirror) to see if you have clear space. If so, then make the turn or lane change. **Never move without looking.**
17. **Parking** – Riders should pull up to the left of each rider ahead, so that everyone can immediately back into the parking space without waiting. With a little experience, the whole group can get parked quickly, which helps move everyone off the road efficiently. When the group pulls into a parking lot, don't try to be creative. Follow the parking drill with everyone else. Don't ride up behind the next rider, but pull alongside to the left, and immediately roll your bike back into the parking space (as per picture below). This is a “Best case” scenario. It will not be feasible all times during parking. Road conditions, weather conditions and traffic will all play a role in how we park. Safety is of the up most importance.



18. **The Ride Officially Ends on Arrival at the Destination** – You can return home at any time if not returning with the group and by any route you choose. If you are unsure how to get back home, ask the Road Captain for directions. After you arrive at home, let everyone know, preferably by posting Returned to Base (RTB) on the FB page within two hours of RTB (This is to ensure all are safe and accounted for).

19. **Debrief/Constructive Criticism**

The Ride Captain summarizes the completed group ride and “Lessons Learned” with emphasis on:















- Chapter/Group Ride Movement
- Tail Gunner ride summarization (from his perspective of behind looking forward) and known safety issues caused by:
- CVMA® chapter members Cages and commercial vehicles Pedestrian traffic Chapter members are expected to identify any issues to the group.
- This should be done in a courteous, professional manner in order to maximize benefit of lessons learned. This will be the first and last opportunity for any chapter members to convey constructive criticism for this group ride.

20. **If you’re separated from the group**, don’t panic. We will have a pre-planned procedure in place to regroup. Don’t break the law or ride beyond your skill level to catch up.

21. **Common Sense** – Your own safety, and therefore the safety of the group, is paramount. In all conditions, use common sense to determine what needs to be done. Do not ride beyond your personal skill level,

Appendix A

MSF Group Riding Hand Signals

<p>Stop - arm extended straight down, palm facing back</p> 	<p>Single File - arm and index finger extended straight up</p> 	<p>Turn Signal On - open and close hand with fingers and thumb extended</p> 
<p>Slow Down - arm extended straight out, palm facing down</p> 	<p>Double File - arm with index and middle finger extended straight up</p> 	<p>Fuel - arm out to side pointing to tank with finger extended</p> 
<p>Speed Up - arm extended straight out, palm facing up</p> 	<p>Hazard in Roadway - on the right, point with right foot; on the left, point with left hand</p> 	<p>Refreshment Stop - fingers closed, thumb to mouth</p> 
<p>You Lead/Come - arm extended upward 45 degrees, palm forward pointing with index finger, swing in arc from back to front</p> 	<p>Highbeam - tap on top of helmet with open palm down</p> 	<p>Comfort Stop - forearm extended, fist clenched with short up and down motion</p> 
<p>Follow Me - arm extended straight up from shoulder, palm forward</p> 	<p>Pull Off - arm positioned as for right turn, forearm swung toward shoulder</p> 	

Appendix B

RIDING ON DOD INSTALLATIONS

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE) – These items are required for riding on DOD installations and are recommended by the Motorcycle Safety Foundation for off-base riding:

- **Department of Transportation (DOT) Approved Helmet.** A motorcycle protective helmet properly fastened (under the chin) which meets the standards of the DOT or Snell Memorial Foundation (SNELL).
- **Eye Protection.** Shatter resistant wrap around glasses, or full-face shield (properly attached to helmet) designed for impact and shatter resistance. A windshield, non-safety rated eyeglasses, or a fairing alone does not constitute proper eye protection. ANSI approved motorcycle goggles may be worn but must not restrict peripheral vision.
- **Properly Worn Long-Sleeved Garment.** A shirt or jacket that covers the arm to the wrist. (While ballistic motorcycle jackets and pants constructed of abrasion resistant materials such as leather, Kevlar, denim, and/or corduroy that contain impact-absorbing padding might be optional – they are strongly encouraged.)
- **Properly Worn Long-Legged Trousers.** Both legs covered to the ankle. (While ballistic motorcycle pants constructed of abrasion resistant materials such as leather, Kevlar, denim, and/ or corduroy that contain impact-absorbing padding might be optional – they are strongly encouraged.)
- **Appropriate Foot Wear.** It is strongly encouraged that lace up military boots or sturdy leather or ballistic nylon riding boots which cover the ankle be worn that provide the optimum protection.
- **Appropriate Hand Wear.** Full-fingered gloves or mittens.
- **Reflective Vest.** A reflective safety vest, when worn, will be worn as the outer garment, as it is intended to be worn. Only international orange, yellow and lime green colors are permitted. Each vest will have as a minimum, 2 1-inch reflective strips which extend from the front hem, up and over the shoulders to the rear hem, or from side to side on both the front and back of the vest. Military personnel are required to utilize all PPE listed above on base, and it is recommended off base as well.

CVMA® MS 44-1 Group Riding SOP

Appendix C

T-CLOCS	WHAT TO	WHAT TO LOOK FOR	CHECK-	
T-TIRES & WHEELS				
Tires	Condition	Tread depth, wear, weathering, evenly seated, bulges, embedded	Fron	Rear
	Air Pressure	Check when cold, adjust to load.	Fron	Rear
Wheels	Spoke	Bent, broken, missing, tension, check at top of wheel: "ring" = OK —	Front	Rear
	Cast	Cracks, dents.	Fron	Rear
	Rim	Out of round/true = 5mm. Spin wheel, index against stationary pointer.	Fron	Rear
	Bearings	Grab top and bottom of tire and flex: No freeplay (click) between hub and axle, no growl when spinning	Fron	Rear
	Seal	Cracked, cut or torn, excessive grease on outside, reddish-brown around	Fron	Rear
Brakes	Function	Each brake alone keeps bike from rolling.	Fron	Rear
	Condition	Check pads and discs for wear.	Fron	Rear
C-CONTROLS				
Handlebars	Condition	Bars are straight, turn freely, handrips and bar ends are secure.		
Levers and Pedal	Condition	Broken, bent, cracked, mounts tight, ball ends on handlebar levers.		
	Pivot	Lubricated.		
Cables	Condition	Fraying, kinks, lubrication: ends and interior.		
	Routi	No interference or pulling at steering head, suspension, no sharp angles.		
Hoses	Condition	Cuts, cracks, leaks, bulges, chafing, deterioration.		
	Routi	No interference or pulling at steering head, suspension, no sharp angles.		
Throttle	Operation	Moves freely, snaps closed, no revving when handlebars are turned.		
L-LIGHTS & ELECTRICS				
Battery	Condition	Terminals: clean and tight, electrolyte level, held down securely.		
	Vent Tube	Not kinked, routed properly, not plugged.		
Headlamp	Condition	Cracks, reflector, mounting and adjustment system.		
	Ai	Height and right/left.		
Tail lamp/brake	Condition	Cracks, clean and tight.		
	Operation	Activates upon front brake/rear brake application.		
Turn signals	Operation	Flashes correctly.	Front Rear	Front Rear
Switches	Operation	All switches function correctly: engine cut-off, hi/low beam, turn		
Mirrors	Condition	Cracks, clean, tight mounts and swivel joints.		
	Ai	Adjust when seated on bike.		
Lenses & Wiring	Condition	Cracked, broken, securely mounted, excessive condensation.		
	Condition	Fraying, chafing, insulation.		
	Routi	Pinched, no interference or pulling at steering head or suspension, wire looms and ties in place, connectors tight, clean		

CVMA® MS 44-1 Group Riding SOP

O-OIL & OTHER FLUIDS				
Levels	Engine Oil	Check warm on center stand on level ground, dipstick, sight glass.		
	Gear Oil, Shaft	Transmission, rear drive, shaft.		
	Hydraulic	Brakes, clutch, reservoir or sight glass.		
	Coolant	Reservoir and/or coolant recovery tank — check only when cool.		
	Fuel	Tank or gauge.		
Leaks	Engine Oil	Gaskets, housings, seals.		
	Gear Oil, Shaft	Gaskets, seals, breathers.		
	Hydraulic	Hoses, master cylinders, calipers.		
	Coolant	Radiator, hoses, tanks, fittings, pipes.		
	Fuel	Lines, fuel valve, carbs.		
C-CHASSIS				
Frame	Condition	Cracks at gussets, accessory mounts, look for paint lifting.		
	Steering-Head	No detent or tight spots through full travel, raise front wheel, check for play by pulling/pushing forks.		
	Swingarm	Raise rear wheel, check for play by pushing/pulling swingarm.		
Suspension	Front Forks	Smooth travel, equal air pressure/damping, anti-dive settings.	Le	Right
	Rear Shock(s)	Smooth travel, equal pre-load/air pressure/damping settings, linkage moves freely and is lubricated.	Le	Right
Chain or Belt	Tension	Check at tightest point.		
	Lubrication	Side plates when hot. Note: do not lubricate belts.		
	Sprockets	Teeth not hooked, securely mounted.		
Fasteners	Threaded	Tight, missing bolts, nuts.		
	Clips & Cotter	Broken, missing.		
S-STANDS				
Center stand	Condition	Cracks, bent.		
	Retention	Springs in place, tension to hold position.		
Side stand	Condition	Cracks, bent (safety cut-out switch or pad equipped).		
	Retention	Springs in place, tension to hold position.		