

# **2013 Florida Motorcycle Handbook**



## **Includes Moped Information**

A complete copy of this manual is available via the Internet at: [www.flhsmv.gov](http://www.flhsmv.gov)

Access to the Governor's home page via: [www.myflorida.com](http://www.myflorida.com)

**HSMV 71905**

(Revised 09/2012)

Visit the FRTP for information on Sponsor contacts and locations by county at:  
[motorcycles.flhsmv.gov](http://motorcycles.flhsmv.gov), or the DHSMV website at [www.flhsmv.gov](http://www.flhsmv.gov)  
Or call 850-488-3286 for an automated listing by county

## Welcome To the Sunshine State!

Florida is a great place to ride motorcycles year round. Being properly licensed is required by law and is one of the first steps to becoming a safe rider. This motorcycle operator's manual contains valuable information for both novice and experienced motorcyclists on techniques to operate a motorcycle safely.

Courses for beginner and for more experienced riders are offered through DHSMV's Florida Rider Training Program (F RTP). Courses cover strategies and techniques on managing the riding environment and avoiding crashes. In addition, the courses offer on-cycle riding sessions in order to practice these street-riding strategies and crash avoidance skills. Learning these skills is important as Florida and other crash studies show that rider course graduates have far less injury and fatality rates as untrained riders, clearly depicting the need for rider education.

The greatest factor contributing to motorcycle related crashes, injuries and fatalities is alcohol involvement. In 2009, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) reported that motorcycle operators in fatal crashes had BAC (Blood Alcohol Concentration) levels higher than any other type of motor vehicle operator. The crash facts report also noted that 42% of the 1,903 motorcycle riders who died in a single vehicle crash in 2009 had BAC levels of .08 or higher.

The first faculty impaired by alcohol is a person's judgment, causing them to think they are "okay" to operate a motorcycle safely. After just one drink, alcohol negatively affects a motorcyclist's ability to balance a motorcycle, reduces coordination, vision, and all essential mental and physical skills needed for safe motorcycle operation. It is up to all motorcyclists to separate alcohol or other drug impairment from motorcycle operation. Moreover, it is up to all of us to step in and stop others from operating motorcycles while impaired. Removing alcohol as a crash factor will reduce motorcycle crashes and save lives. Part of the DHSMV mission is to make highways safe for all users, and provide important and essential safety information. After all, having an enjoyable and safe ride should be the goal of all motorcyclists.

Clayton Boyd Walden, Director  
Division of Motorist Services

## Disclaimer

The Florida Driver's Handbook covers many condensed and paraphrased points of Florida's laws and provides safety advice not covered in the laws. The handbook is not a legal authority and should not be used in a court of law. The Florida Driver's Handbook is printed in volume and copies already obtained will not reflect any changes made by Legislature regarding fees or laws passed after the revision date.

**Remember Driving Is A Privilege and Not A Right. Protect Yourself and Others By Knowing The Laws and Driving Safely.**

## Warning

Under section 322.212 (5), Florida Statutes, it is a **third degree felony** to use a false or fictitious name in any application for a driver license or identification card, or to knowingly make a false statement, knowingly conceal a material fact, or otherwise commit a fraud in any such application.

Violators face immediate arrest and, upon conviction, penalties up to a maximum fine of \$5,000 and imprisonment up to 5 years.

The Department will suspend the driving privilege for one year of any person who makes a fraudulent application for a Florida driver license.

Under section 322.36, Florida Statutes, it is unlawful for any person to authorize or knowingly permit a motor vehicle to be operated by any person who does not hold a valid driver license.

## Public Records

Florida law and sound records management practices require the collection of certain personal information in the driver licensing process. This personal information identifies an individual and is used for records management, driver improvement, financial responsibility, and law enforcement purposes.

Failure to provide the required information will result in denial of a license or identification card. Falsification of information may result in prosecution. Florida law specifies that all documents or other material made or received in connection with the transaction of official business by any agency are public records. In addition to all documents, information taken from them is subject to public disclosure under Florida's Public Records law. This personal information, including name, address and driver license number is confidential by law, but may be given to law enforcement agencies, insurance companies, credit bureaus, lending institutions, and any other entity exempted by statute. Medical information, social security number and emergency contact information are further protected and may only be released as specifically authorized by Florida law.

The Division of Motorist Services strives to ensure the accuracy of information obtained in the licensing process and makes every effort to correct any incorrect information in its files. Incorrect information may be corrected by supplying your complete name, date of birth, driver license number, information on the nature of the error and proof that it is an error to the Chief, Bureau of Records, Neil Kirkman Building, MS 89, Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0575, or telephone (850) 617-2000. Certain information, such as conviction reports received from a court, can only be corrected upon notification from the court that the report was in error.

Automobile insurance information is exempt from the Public Records Law. This information is provided to any party involved in the crash, their attorney or insurance company, law enforcement agencies and officers of the court, after receiving a written request and copy of the crash report.

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## Section 1 DHSMV Contact Information

### 1.1 - Contact Information

Customer Service Center (850) 617-2000  
DHSMV Official Web Site [www.flhsmv.gov](http://www.flhsmv.gov)  
Gather Go Get [gathergoget.com](http://gathergoget.com)  
*Find out what you need to bring with you before you make the trip.*  
DHSMV Virtual Office  
(online transactions) [GoRenew.com](http://GoRenew.com)

### 1.2 - Appointments

Appointments are recommended for any of the services provided by the driver license offices. Appointment scheduling and a listing of driver license offices are available on our homepage at [www.flhsmv.gov](http://www.flhsmv.gov). Schedule your appointment in advance and report at least five minutes before your scheduled time.

### 1.3 - Emergency Contact Information

In an emergency situation could law enforcement personnel contact someone for you?



They could, if you had entered your information onto the emergency contact information system. The system allows Floridians to voluntarily provide emergency contact information online, giving law enforcement immediate access to this information and making it easier for them to speak with someone quicker in case of emergency.

If you have a Florida driver license or identification card, you can go online at [www.flhsmv.gov](http://www.flhsmv.gov) and enter your emergency contact information. This information is available to law enforcement officers through a secure, web-based system and, by law, can only be used in the event of an emergency.

### 1.4 - Florida Organ and Tissue Donor Program

Donate Life Florida is the non-profit 501(c)3 organization contracted by the State of Florida, Agency for Health Care Administration to create and oversee the state's organ, eye, and tissue donor registry, in addition to implementing educational initiatives tailored to increase understanding and support for donation and donor designation.



The Joshua Abbott Organ & Tissue Donor Registry was created in July 2009 to allow Floridians an easy, user-friendly means of joining the state's Registry. Floridians can join the Registry online at [www.DonateLifeFlorida.org](http://www.DonateLifeFlorida.org), when renewing their driver license online, or, when

obtaining/renewing their license at a local driver license office. Individuals can also request a registration form by calling Donate Life Florida at 1-877-FL-SHARE (1-877-357-4273).

Individuals that already have "organ donor" on their licenses are still encouraged to join the new Registry, ensuring their wishes are documented.

Today, more than 100,000 children and adults await lifesaving organ transplants, while hundreds of thousands more are in need of tissue transplants. Together, we can make a difference.

### How Can You Help?

1. Learn the facts about organ, eye and tissue donation.
2. Designate your wishes by joining the Joshua Abbott Organ & Tissue Donor Registry at [www.DonateLifeFlorida.org](http://www.DonateLifeFlorida.org).
3. Spread the word about the importance of donation and donor designation with family and friends.
4. Get involved as a volunteer, contribute financially in support of the Registry or statewide educational initiatives, or, request a speaker by calling Donate Life Florida at 1-877-FL-SHARE.
5. ALL OF THE ABOVE

### 1.5 - Florida's Move Over Law

Florida's Move Over Law protects law enforcement officers, emergency workers and tow truck drivers stopped along roadways while performing their jobs. Violating the Move Over Law puts both yourself and a public safety professional at risk of injury or death and can result in fines and points on your license.



- On a two-lane roadway, you are required to slow to a speed that is 20 miles per hour less than the posted speed limit.
- If the speed limit is 20 miles per hour or less, you must slow down to five miles per hour.
- If you are driving on an interstate or roadway with multiple lanes of travel in the same direction, and you approach an emergency or law enforcement vehicle parked along the roadway, you must vacate the lane closest to that vehicle as soon as it is safe to do so. If you are not able to safely move over, you must slow down to a speed of 20 MPH below the posted speed limit unless directed otherwise by a law enforcement officer.

For more information, please visit [www.flhsmv.gov/fhp](http://www.flhsmv.gov/fhp).

### 1.6 - Florida Department of Transportation's Free 511 Traffic Information Service

The Florida Department of Transportation's (FDOT) free 511 Traveler Information



System provides real-time traffic information in English and Spanish for major Florida roadways. The system is updated with information about crashes, commuter travel times, congestion, lane closures, severe weather, construction and emergency evacuation information on interstate highways, Florida's Turnpike, and other metropolitan roadways. Information is available on the phone by dialing 511, or on the web at [FL511.com](http://FL511.com).

Drivers are encouraged to find out about traffic conditions before getting behind the wheel. FDOT's My Florida 511 personalized services on [FL511.com](http://FL511.com) allows registered users to customize routes and alerts to quickly retrieve travel information. Free personalized services include:

### **Custom Routes**

- Program frequently traveled routes using 511 - covered roads
- Once 511 is dialed, callers can immediately hear information on their custom routes

### **Personalized Alerts**

- 511 will alert callers about unusual roadway conditions on programmed routes
- Program alerts by time, day and severity of conditions
- Receive alerts by e-mail, text message and/or phone call (cell phone minutes and/or text message charges may apply)

FDOT also offers a free 511 application (app) for the iPhone, iPad and iPod Touch in the iTunes App Store. The app provides the same real-time traffic and travel time information as the 511 phone system and [FL511.com](http://FL511.com). The 511 app uses the iPhone's GPS tracking to provide users with traffic information within miles of their location. Users can set the app to provide information for a range of up to 200 miles from their location or receive traffic information based on their registered My Florida 511 custom routes. Travel time information is also available based on location and direction of travel. The Florida 511 app offers traffic updates in three ways:

- An audible recording of incidents
- On-screen list of incidents
- Map view displaying incidents

### **511 Features:**

- Traffic information and travel times on Florida interstates, Florida's Turnpike and other major roadways
- Voice-activated or touch-tone navigation
- Travel updates, including accidents, lane closures, severe weather and construction
- Public safety alerts and emergency evacuation information
- Access to public transit, airport and seaport information
- Available 24 hours a day, seven days a week

- Cell phone or landline use; standard cell phone minutes or text message charges may apply
- Traffic cameras and customized services on [FL511.com](http://FL511.com); users can register for customized trips and e-mail, text and phone alerts

## Section 2 Motorcycle Legislation

### 2.1 - Florida Rider Training Program (FRTTP)

**All persons requesting a motorcycle endorsement are required to complete a basic motorcycle safety education course prior to being issued a motorcycle endorsement or “Motorcycle Only” license. A list of course sponsors can be found at the end of this handbook.**

Rider course providers (Sponsors) offer the Motorcycle Safety Foundation (MSF) sponsored Basic Rider Course (BRC) and Basic Rider Course II (BRC II). The BRC provides the basic entry-level skills for new riders to begin practicing and developing the mental and motor skills important for safe street operation. The BRC has approximately five-hours of classroom instruction and 10-hours of on-cycle instruction. Both sessions are facilitated by experienced motorcyclists trained as RiderCoaches by the FRTTP to assist your learning. To enroll in the BRC, a person must possess at least a valid Learners License in order to have knowledge of Florida Traffic laws and road rules; however, the actual motorcycle endorsement may not be obtained with a regular operator (Class E) license until age 16 per s. 322.05(1) F.S. The person must also be able to have sufficient balance or capability to operate a bicycle.

Sponsors provide motorcycles less than 500cc for the BRC, usually 125cc to 250cc, helmets, and course handbooks for the BRC. Students must provide gloves, full hand coverage, shatterproof eye protection, unless the helmet has a face shield, long pants, long sleeve shirt or jacket, over the ankle shoes or boots and rain gear for light rain - non dangerous conditions. A call or email to the Sponsor of your choice can clarify many issues regarding equipment, fees, method of payment and scheduling. Many sponsors allow sign-up and payment via a website. Refer to the FRTTP web site at <http://www.motorcycles.hsmv.state.fl.us/> and click on the “**course locations**” heading for sponsor locations by county.

**2.1.1 - S/TEP** – The Sidecar/Trike Evaluation Program is completed by persons riding three wheel motorcycles. The curriculum for the S/TEP course was developed by the Evergreen Safety Council. The S/TEP course provides the basic skills for those who are new to the operation of three wheel motorcycles and side car rigs. The course includes the knowledge and skills necessary to ride safely on the streets and highways. The student handbook and Insurance are provided for the course. Some schools also provide trikes, rigs and helmets. Students must provide eye protection, gloves (full hand coverage), long pants, long sleeved shirt or jacket, and sturdy over-the-ankle footwear.

The S restriction is placed on the license of those who have passed the motorcycle S/TEP course. This S restriction is explained in the comment section at the end of the issuance process so that it is known that the person only has permission to operate a three wheeled motorcycle.

**2.1.2 - The BRC II or Basic Rider Course II** are for persons already endorsed for riding skill enhancement with course completion cards issued for insurance reduction or other purposes.

**NOTE: All BRC II courses require** the participant to furnish their own street legal motorcycle with valid tag and registration and proof of liability insurance coverage, or one borrowed with proof of permission. The participant must also furnish a helmet, shatterproof eye protection and similar protective riding gear as outlined for the **BRC**. See FRTTP website above for sponsor locations or call the FRTTP 850-488-3286 for an automated guided listing.

### 2.2 - Financial Responsibility Law - It Does Apply To Motorcycles!

Florida’s No-Fault, or “PIP Law” does not apply to motorcycles, “Trikes” or motorcycles with sidecars. **HOWEVER**, the Financial Responsibility FR Law applies to ALL motor vehicles in Florida, including motorcycles. Thus the **voluntary** purchase of motor vehicle liability insurance by an owner, operator or owner/ operator is highly recommended.

Failure to carry property damage and bodily injury liability insurance in case of a crash, DUI conviction or other occurrences outlined in Florida’s FR Law, Ch. 324, may result in some or all of the following:

- Loss of license
- Loss of tag and registration
- Restitution or civil court judgment
- Future proof of high risk SR-22 or FR-44 (three years)

### 2.3 - Florida Motor Vehicle Laws and Definitions (Find these at: [myflorida.com](http://myflorida.com))

Statute definitions for the same term may differ from one section of State Law to another due to the nature of the law being enforced, such as motor vehicle or motorcycle defined in traffic law vs. driver license law.

#### 2.3.1 - Definitions

**Bicycle:** Every vehicle propelled solely by human power, and every motorized bicycle propelled by a combination of human power and an electric helper motor capable of propelling the vehicle at a speed of not more than 20 miles per hour on level ground upon which any person may ride, having two tandem wheels, and including any device generally recognized as a bicycle though equipped with two front or two rear wheels. The term does not include such a vehicle with a seat height of no more than 25 inches from the ground when the seat is adjusted to its highest position or a

scooter or similar device. No person under the age of 16 may operate or ride upon a motorized bicycle.

**Note:** A driver license is not required to operate an electric helper-motor bicycle.

**Motor Vehicle:** Any self-propelled vehicle not operated upon rails or guide way, but not including any bicycle, motorized scooter, electric personal assistive mobility device, or moped.

**Motorcycle:** Any motor vehicle having a seat or saddle for the use of the rider, and designed to travel on not more than three wheels in contact with the ground, but excluding a tractor or a moped.

**Bicycle Path:** Any road, path, or way that is open to bicycle travel, which road, path, or way is physically separated from motorized vehicular traffic by an open space or by a barrier and is located either within the highway right-of-way or within an independent right-of-way.

**Motorized Scooter:** Any vehicle not having a seat or saddle for the use of the rider, designed to travel on not more than three wheels, and not capable of propelling the vehicle at a speed greater than 30 miles per hour on level ground.

**Electric Personal Assistive Mobility Device:** Any self-balancing, two non-tandem-wheeled device, designed to transport only one person, with an electric propulsion system with average power of 750 watts (1 horsepower), the maximum speed of which, on a paved level surface when powered solely by such a propulsion system while being ridden by an operator who weighs 170 pounds, is less than 20 miles per hour. Electric personal assistive mobility devices are not vehicles as defined in this section.

**Note:** The above refers to a stand-on-and-ride type vehicle with a handlebar control and two (usually large) side-by-side wheels; it is not necessarily a disability related vehicle. A driver license is not required for this vehicle; see s. 316.2068 F.S. for more details on operating this type vehicle.

## 2.3.2 – Statutes

### State Uniform Traffic Control, Chapter 316

#### 316.1995 Driving upon sidewalk or bicycle path.—

(1) Except as provided in s. 316.008 or s. 316.212(8), a person may not drive any vehicle other than by human power upon a bicycle path, sidewalk, or sidewalk area, except upon a permanent or duly authorized temporary driveway.

(2) A violation of this section is a noncriminal traffic infraction, punishable as a moving violation as provided in chapter 318.

(3) This section does not apply to motorized wheelchairs.

#### 316.208 Motorcycles and mopeds.--

(1) Any person operating a motorcycle or moped shall be granted all of the rights and shall be subject to all of the

duties applicable to the driver of any other vehicle under this chapter, except as to special regulations in this chapter, and except as to those provisions of this chapter which by their nature can have no application.

(2)(a) Any person operating a moped upon a roadway at less than the normal speed of traffic at the time and place; and under the conditions then existing shall ride as close as practicable to the right-hand curb or edge of the roadway except under any of the following situations:

1. When overtaking or passing another vehicle proceeding in the same direction.
2. When preparing for a left turn at an intersection or into a private road or driveway.
3. When reasonably necessary to avoid any condition, including, but not limited to, a fixed or moving object, parked or moving vehicle, bicycle, pedestrian, animal, surface hazard, or substandard-width lane, that makes it unsafe to continue along the right-hand curb or edge. For purposes of this paragraph, a "substandard-width lane" is a lane that is too narrow for a moped and another vehicle to travel safely side by side within the lane.

(b) Any person operating a moped upon a one-way highway with two or more marked traffic lanes may ride as near the left-hand curb or edge of such roadway as practicable.

(3) A person propelling a moped solely by human power upon and along a sidewalk, or across a roadway upon and along a crosswalk, has all the rights and duties applicable to a pedestrian under the same circumstances, except that such person shall yield the right-of-way to any pedestrian and shall give an audible signal before overtaking and passing a pedestrian.

(4) No person shall propel a moped upon and along a sidewalk while the motor is operating.

(5) A violation of this section is a noncriminal traffic infraction, punishable as a moving violation as provided in chapter 318.

#### 316.209 Operating motorcycles on roadways laned for traffic.

(1) All motorcycles are entitled to full use of a lane and no motor vehicle shall be driven in such manner as to deprive any motorcycle of the full use of a lane. This subsection shall not apply to motorcycles operated two abreast in a single lane.

(2) The operator of a motorcycle shall not overtake and pass in the same lane occupied by the vehicle being overtaken.

(3) No person shall operate a motorcycle between lanes of traffic or between adjacent lines or rows of vehicles.

(4) Motorcycles shall not be operated more than two abreast in a single lane.

(5) Subsections (2) and (3) do not apply to police officers or firefighters in the performance of their official duties.

(6) A violation of this section is a non-criminal traffic infraction, punishable as a moving violation as provided in chapter 318.



### **316.2095 Footrests, handholds, and handlebars.**

(1) Any motorcycle carrying a passenger, other than in a sidecar or enclosed cab, shall be equipped with footrests and handholds for such passenger.

(2) No person shall operate any motorcycle with handlebars or with handgrips that are higher than the top of the shoulders of the person operating the motorcycle while properly seated upon the motorcycle.

(3) A violation of this section is a non-criminal traffic infraction, punishable as a nonmoving violation as provided in chapter 318.

### **316.222 Stop lamps and turn signals.**

(1) Every motor vehicle, trailer, semi-trailer, and pole trailer shall be equipped with two or more stop lamps meeting the requirements of s. 316.234(1). Motor vehicles, trailers, semi-trailers and pole trailers manufactured or assembled prior to January 1, 1972, shall be equipped with at least one stop lamp. On a combination of vehicles, only the stop lamps on the rear-most vehicle need actually be seen from the distance specified in s.316.234(1).

(2) Every motor vehicle, trailer, semi-trailer, and pole trailer shall be equipped with electric turn signal lamps meeting the requirements of s. 316.234(2).

(3) Passenger cars and trucks less than 80 inches in width manufactured or assembled prior to January 1, 1972, need not be equipped with electric turn signal lamps.

(4) A violation of this section is a non-criminal traffic infraction, punishable as a non-moving violation as provided in chapter 318.

### **316.304 Wearing of headsets.**

(1) No person shall operate a vehicle while wearing a headset, headphone, or other listening device, other than a hearing aid or instrument for the improvement of defective human hearing.

(2) This section does not apply to:

(a) Any law enforcement officer equipped with any communication device necessary in performing his or her assigned duties or to any emergency vehicle operator equipped with any ear protection device.

(b) Any applicant for a license to operate a motorcycle while taking the examination required by s. 322.12(5).

(c) Any person operating a motorcycle who is using a headset that is installed in a helmet and worn so as to prevent the speakers from making direct contact with the user's ears so that the user can hear surrounding sounds.

(d) Any person using a headset in conjunction with a cellular telephone that only provides sound through one ear and allows surrounding sounds to be heard with the other ear.

(e) Any person using a headset in conjunction with communicating with the central base operation that only provides sound through one ear and allows surrounding sounds to be heard with the other ear.

## **Motor Vehicle Licenses, Chapter 320**

### **S. 320.02 Registration required; application for registration; forms.**

(1) Except as otherwise provided in this chapter, every owner or person in charge of a motor vehicle, which is operated or driven on the roads of this state shall register the vehicle in this state. The owner or person in charge shall apply to the department or to its authorized agent for registration of each such vehicle on a form prescribed by the department. No registration is required for any motor vehicle, which is not operated on the roads of this state during the registration period.

## **Driver Licenses, Chapter 322**

### **S. 322.01, F.S. Definitions**

(26) "Motorcycle" means a motor vehicle powered by a motor with a displacement of more than 50 cubic centimeters, having a seat or saddle for the use of the rider, and designed to travel on not more than three wheels in contact with the ground, but excluding a tractor or moped.

(27) "Motor vehicle" means any self-propelled vehicle, including a motor vehicle combination, not operated upon rails or guide way, excluding vehicles moved solely by human power, motorized wheelchairs, and motorized bicycles as defined in s. 316.003.

### **S. 322.57 Tests of knowledge concerning specified vehicles; endorsement; nonresidents; violations.**

(1) In addition to fulfilling any other driver's licensing requirements of this chapter, a person who:

(g) Drives a motorcycle must successfully complete a Motorcycle Rider Course. A person who successfully completes the Motorcycle Rider Course shall be issued an endorsement if he or she is licensed to drive another type of motor vehicle. A person who successfully completes the Motorcycle Rider Course and who is not licensed to drive another type of motor vehicle shall be issued a Class E driver's license that is clearly restricted to motorcycle use only.

#### **Helmet and Eye Protection Requirements**

Head injuries are reduced by wearing approved motorcycle helmets!

- Anyone under 16 years of age **must** wear a Department approved motorcycle helmet and may only ride as a passenger on any motorcycle, moped, motor-driven cycle regardless of engine size.
- A person is not required to wear a helmet while operating or riding upon a moped, scooter or other two or three-wheel motor vehicle 50cc or less, if at **least 16 years of age**.
- Anyone **16 years of age but less than 21** years of age must wear a Department approved helmet when operating or riding upon a motorcycle. Per s. 316.211 F.S.
- Persons at least 21 years of age may ride a motorcycle without a helmet if they can show proof of medical

insurance coverage in the amounts of at least \$10,000.00 that will pay for injuries they may incur in a motorcycle crash. A separate motorcycle medical insurance policy card or other forms of health insurance coverage will suffice, such as employee group or private health insurance cards. Law officers shall make final determination if proof of insurance is acceptable.

- Per s. 316.211(2), a person may not operate a motorcycle as defined in s. 316.003(22), unless the person is wearing one of these Department approved eye-protective devices over his or her eyes; goggles, face shields designed for use with, and as part of an approved helmet or eyeglasses including sunglasses. Contact lenses are not acceptable. Each device must be in good repair, free of sharp edges or projections and made of material suitable for ophthalmic use. It shall be free from cracks, waves, bubbles or any other defect which may impair its normal visibility. Any tinted device should not impair the wearer's ability to see color and shall not be used at night.

The above requirements do not apply to persons riding within an enclosed cab or to persons 16 years of age or older who operate or ride upon motorcycles powered by a motor with a displacement of 50 cubic centimeters or less or rated not in excess of 2 brake horsepower and which are not capable of propelling such motorcycles at speeds greater than 30 miles per hour on level ground.

**Note:** If at any time however, the 50 cc or less vehicle being operated exceeds any of the above statute limitations, such as having the engine enhanced for more horsepower, then said vehicle no longer meets the exempt definition and the operator is subject to enforcement of the eye-protection device statute.

## **2.4 - How to Identify Unsafe & Illegal Motorcycle Helmets if Wearing or Required to Wear Helmets**

The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) requires that all motorcycle helmets sold in the U.S. meet Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard (FMVSS) 218. Accordingly, Florida law requires that motorcycle helmets meet FMVSS 218 requirements. Chapter 15B-1.006(3), Florida Administrative Code, deals with motorcycle helmet design and construction. The code clearly states: "Helmets not designed for use by motorcycle occupants, including but not limited to the following, are not approved: bicycle helmets, toy helmets, military combat helmets, flight helmets, soft helmets and team sports helmets." Many Florida motorcycle riders wear cheap and unsafe helmets that do not meet FMVSS 218. Most of these helmets are sold as novelty items by merchants and are used to circumvent the FMVSS 218 requirements. The following information will exceed FMVSS 218. It is important to note that some sellers of novelty helmets provide DOT stickers separately for motorcyclists to place on non-complying helmets. In this case, the DOT sticker is invalid and does not certify compliance.

### **2.4.1 - SNELL or ANSI Sticker**

In addition to the DOT sticker, labels located inside the helmet showing that a helmet meets the standards of private organizations like Snell or the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) are a good indicator that the helmet meets the federal safety standard. A novelty helmet that has a phony DOT sticker plus a phony Snell or ANSI sticker is rare and would probably not be seen.

### **2.4.2 - Manufacturer's Labeling**

Manufacturers are required by FMVSS 218 to place a label on or inside the helmet stating the manufacturer's name, model, size, month and year of manufacture, construction materials, and other information. A helmet that does not meet the federal safety standard usually does not have such a label. However, some non-compliant helmets are falsely labeled claiming to meet the standards of FMVSS 218.

### **2.4.3 - Impact Absorbing Liner**

Helmets meeting the minimum federal safety standard have an inner liner, usually about one-inch thick, of firm polystyrene foam. Sometimes the inner liner will not be visible, but you should still be able to feel its thickness. Unsafe helmets normally contain only soft foam padding or a bare plastic shell with no foam at all.

## Section 3 Earning Your License

### 3.1 - Application for Driver License Endorsed for Motorcycle Operation

Florida law requires proof of identification, social security number (if issued, Chapter 322, Florida Statutes, requires the Department see proof of social security number for the issuance of driver license and identification cards) and proof of residential address from all customers before a driver license or identification card can be issued. The name assigned to the social security number must match the name that will appear on the Florida driver license or identification card. If you have recently changed your name, update your records with the Social Security Administration before you apply for your license or identification card.

If the name you are going to use on your driver license or identification card is different than the name on your primary identification, you will be required to show additional identification. This additional identification may include marriage certificates, court orders or divorce decrees to link the names between the primary identification and the name that will be used on the driver license or identification card.

Immigrants and non-immigrant will need to have the new name placed on their United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) document before the new name can be placed on a Florida driver license or identification card.

**To easily identify your identification requirement needs, visit [www.gathergoget.com](http://www.gathergoget.com).** These requirements are also listed in the Florida Driver Handbook.

### 3.2 - Motorcycle Licensing

Safe riding requires knowledge and skill. Assessing your own skills is not enough. People often overestimate their own abilities. It's even harder for friends and relatives to be totally honest about your skills. To ensure that you have the training and skills necessary to operate a motorcycle safely, you will be required to complete a motorcycle safety course before obtaining a motorcycle endorsement. If you are coming from another state and your license is endorsed for motorcycle operation, Florida will reciprocate the endorsement and the motorcycle course will not be required. **(Except Alabama)**

#### 3.2.1 - Age Limitations

No one under 16 years of age may legally operate or be licensed to operate any of the following two or three-wheel motor vehicles on Florida roads, streets or highways: motorcycles, mopeds, motor-driven cycles, motorized scooters or electric helper-motor bicycles as defined in s. 316.003(2) F.S.

#### 3.2.2 - Restrictions

Persons holding a **Florida Learner's Driver's License** may **not** legally operate or be licensed to operate any two or three wheel motor vehicles on Florida roads, streets or highways regardless of his or her age (Per s. 322.1615 F.S.) Persons passing the motorcycle skills test using a three-wheel motorcycle or sidecar motorcycle will have their license restricted to operating three-wheel motorcycles **only** until or unless they pass the skills test on a two-wheel motorcycle.

#### 3.2.3 - Issuance Requirements

##### Motorcycle Also License

All persons requesting a motorcycle endorsement:

- Must hold a Class E license or higher or meet the requirements for a Class E license.
- Must complete a motorcycle safety course, BRC or
- Provide an out-of-state license with a motorcycle endorsement (except Alabama).

##### Motorcycle Only License

Under 18

- Must hold a Learner's License at least 12 months or until the 18<sup>th</sup> birthday prior to the issuance of a Class E Motorcycle Only license.
- Must have NO moving traffic violation convictions 12 months from the issue date of the learner's license.
- Must provide completion of an approved motorcycle safety course.

Over 18

- Pass the vision, road sign and road rule examinations or hold a current Learner's License.
- Must provide completion of an approved motorcycle safety course. OR,
- Provide an out-of-state motorcycle only license (except Alabama).

##### Motorcycle Safety Course Completion

The following courses meet Florida's motorcycle rider course requirements for a motorcycle endorsement:

- Certificate of completion from an approved Motorcycle Rider Course, BRC. A list of the approved Florida providers is available in the back of this handbook.
- Law enforcement officers presenting a certificate of completion from a motorcycle training course sponsored by the Institute of Police Technology and Management.
- A Motorcycle Safety Foundation (MSF) sponsored, rider course conducted by any branch of the military service.

#### 3.2.4 - Mopeds

Moped operators have the same rights and duties as motor vehicle operators and can also receive citations for traffic violations; therefore, they should know and obey these moped laws.

- Moped operators must be at least 16 years old and hold at least a Class E License to operate a moped on public

streets or roadways. A learner's license is not sufficient. (Mopeds fit the definition of motor vehicle in 322.01(26).

- A motorcycle endorsement is not required to operate a moped.
- Mopeds must be registered annually and a tag must be purchased.
- Mopeds may not be operated on bicycle paths or footpaths when operated using the motor.
- Moped operators do not have to carry PIP insurance.
- A moped is defined in s. 320.01(28) F.S. as any vehicle with pedals to permit propulsion by human power, having a seat or saddle for the use of the rider and designated to travel on not more than three wheels, with a motor rated not in excess of 2-brake horsepower and not capable of propelling the vehicle at a speed greater than 30 miles per hour on level ground, and with a power-driving system that functions directly or automatically without clutching or shifting gears by the operator after the drive system is engaged. If an internal combustion engine is used, the displacement may not exceed 50 cubic centimeters.

### **3.2.5 - Motorized Scooters: (Not Legal on Public Streets or Sidewalks)**

Though considered motor vehicles in section 322.01(26) Florida Statutes and tag/registration law, the registration laws do not provide for registration of these vehicles, thus they cannot be operated on public streets or highways. If operated on a public roadway anyway, regardless of a person's age, law enforcement officers can require the person to show at least a valid operator (Class E) license as per driver license law they are considered motor vehicles (Statute Ref: s. 322.03(1) and 322.01(26). F.S.)

## Section 4 PREPARING TO RIDE

### 4.1 - Preparing to Ride

What you do before you start a trip goes a long way toward determining whether or not you'll get where you want to go safely. Before taking off on any trip, a safe rider makes a point to:

1. Wear the right gear.
2. Become familiar with the motorcycle.
3. Check the motorcycle equipment.
4. Be a responsible rider.

### 4.2 - Wear the Right Gear

When you ride, your gear is "right" if it protects you. In any crash, you have a far better chance of avoiding serious injury if you wear:

- An approved helmet.
- Face or eye protection.
- Protective clothing.

#### 4.2.1 – Helmets

##### Helmet Use

Crashes are not rare events — particularly among beginning riders. And one out of every five motorcycle crashes results in head or neck injuries. Head injuries are just as severe as neck injuries — and far more common. Crash analyses show that head and neck injuries account for a majority of serious and fatal injuries to motorcyclists. Research also shows that, with few exceptions, head and neck injuries are reduced by the proper wearing of an approved helmet.

Some riders don't wear helmets because they think helmets will limit their view to the sides. Others wear helmets only on long trips or when riding at high speeds. Here are some facts to consider:

- **An approved helmet** lets you see as far to the sides as necessary. A study of more than 900 motorcycle crashes, where 40% of the riders wore helmets, did not find even one case in which a helmet kept a rider from spotting danger.
- **Most crashes happen** on short trips (less than five miles long), just a few minutes after starting out.
- **Most riders** are riding slower than 30 mph when a crash occurs. At these speeds, helmets can cut both the number and the severity of head injuries by half.

No matter what the speed, helmeted riders are three times more likely to survive head injuries than those not wearing helmets at the time of the crash.

##### Helmet Selection

There are two primary types of helmets, providing two different levels of coverage: three-quarter and full face.

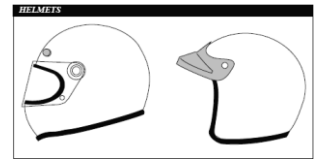
Whichever style you choose, you can get the most protection by making sure that the helmet:

- **Meets U.S.** Department of Transportation (DOT) and state standards. Helmets with a label from the Snell Memorial Foundation give you an added assurance of quality.
- **Fits snugly**, all the way around.
- **Has no obvious defects** such as cracks, loose padding or frayed straps.

Whatever helmet you decide on, keep it securely fastened on your head when you ride. Otherwise, if you are involved in a crash, it's likely to fly off your head before it gets a chance to protect you.

#### 4.2.2 - Eye and Face Protection

A plastic shatter-resistant face shield can help protect your whole face in a crash. It also protects you from wind, dust, dirt, rain, insects and pebbles thrown up from cars ahead.



These problems are distracting and can be painful. If you have to deal with them, you can't devote your full attention to the road. Goggles protect your eyes, though they won't protect the rest of your face like a face shield does. A windshield is not a substitute for a face shield or goggles. Most windshields will not protect your eyes from the wind. Neither will eyeglasses or sunglasses. Glasses won't keep your eyes from watering, and they might blow off when you turn your head while riding.

*To be effective, eye or face shield protection must:*

- **Be free** of scratches.
- **Be resistant** to penetration.
- **Give a clear view** to either side.
- **Fasten securely**, so it does not blow off.
- **Permit air** to pass through, to reduce fogging.
- **Permit enough room** for eyeglasses or sunglasses, if needed.

Tinted eye protection should not be worn at night or any other time when little light is available.

#### 4.2.3 - Clothing

The right clothing protects you in a collision. It also provides comfort, as well as protection from heat, cold, debris and hot and moving parts of the motorcycle.

- **Jacket and pants** should cover arms and legs completely. They should fit snugly enough to keep from flapping in the wind, yet loosely enough to move freely. Leather offers the most protection. Sturdy synthetic material provides a lot of protection as well. Wear a jacket even in warm weather to prevent dehydration. Many are designed to protect without getting you overheated, even on summer days.

- **Boots or shoes** should be high and sturdy enough to cover your ankles and give them support. Soles should be made of hard, durable, slip-resistant material. Keep heels short so they do not catch on rough surfaces. Tuck in laces so they won't catch on your motorcycle.
- **Gloves** allow a better grip and help protect your hands in a crash. Your gloves should be made of leather or similar durable material.

In cold or wet weather, your clothes should keep you warm and dry, as well as protect you from injury. You cannot control a motorcycle well if you are numb. Riding for long periods in cold weather can cause severe chill and fatigue. A winter jacket should resist wind and fit snugly at the neck, wrists and waist. Good-quality rain suits designed for motorcycle riding resist tearing apart or ballooning up at high speeds.

### 4.3 - Know Your Motorcycle

There are plenty of things on the highway that can cause you trouble. Your motorcycle should not be one of them. To make sure that your motorcycle won't let you down:

- **Read** the owner's manual first.
- **Start** with the right motorcycle for you.
- **Be familiar** with the motorcycle controls.
- **Check** the motorcycle before every ride.
- **Keep** it in safe riding condition between rides.
- **Avoid** add-ons and modifications that make your motorcycle harder to handle.

#### The Right Motorcycle for You

First, make sure your motorcycle is right for you. It should "fit" you. Your feet should be flat on the ground while you are seated on the motorcycle.

*At minimum, your street-legal motorcycle should have:*

- **Headlight, tail-light and brake-light.**
- **Front and rear brakes.**
- **Turn signals.**
- **Horn.**
- **Two mirrors.**

#### 4.3.1 - Borrowing and Lending

Borrowers and lenders of motorcycles, beware. Crashes are fairly common among beginning riders — especially in the first months of riding. Riding an unfamiliar motorcycle adds to the problem. If you borrow a motorcycle, get familiar with it in a controlled area. If you lend your motorcycle to friends, make sure their license is motorcycle endorsed and know how to ride before allowing them out into traffic. No matter how experienced you may be, ride extra carefully on any motorcycle that's new or unfamiliar to you. More than half of all crashes occur on motorcycles ridden by the operator for less than six months.

#### Get Familiar with the Motorcycle Controls

Make sure you are completely familiar with the motorcycle before you take it out on the street. Be sure to review the

owner's manual. This is particularly important if you are riding a borrowed motorcycle.

If you are going to use an unfamiliar motorcycle:

- Make all the checks you would on your own motorcycle.
- Find out where everything is located, particularly the turn signals, horn, headlight switch, fuel-control valve and engine cut-off switch.
- Find and operate these items without having to look for them.
- Know the gear pattern. Work the throttle, clutch and brakes a few times before you start riding. All controls react a little differently.
- Ride very cautiously and be aware of surroundings. Accelerate gently, take turns more slowly and leave extra room for stopping.

#### 4.3.2 - Check Your Motorcycle

A motorcycle needs more frequent attention than a car. A minor technical failure in a car seldom leads to anything more than an inconvenience for the driver. If something's wrong with the motorcycle, you'll want to find out about it before you get in traffic. Make a complete check of your motorcycle before every ride.

*Before mounting the motorcycle, make the following checks:*

- **Tires** — Check the air pressure, general wear and tread.
- **Fluids** — Oil and fluid levels. At a minimum, check hydraulic fluids and coolants weekly. Look under the motorcycle for signs of an oil or gas leak.
- **Head-lights and Tail-light** — Check them both. Test your switch to make sure both high and low beams are working.
- **Turn Signals** — Turn on both right and left turn signals. Make sure all lights are working properly.
- **Brake-Light** — Try both brake controls, and make sure each one turns on the brake light.

Once you have mounted the motorcycle, complete the following checks before starting out:

- **Clutch and Throttle** — Make sure they work smoothly. The throttle should snap back when you let go. The clutch should feel tight and smooth.
- **Mirrors** — Clean and adjust both mirrors before starting. It's difficult to ride with one hand while you try to adjust a Mirror. Adjust each mirror so you can see the lane behind and as much as possible of the lane next to you. When properly adjusted, a mirror may show the edge of your arm or shoulder—but it's the road behind and to the side that's most important.
- **Brakes** — Try the front and rear brake levers one at a time. Make sure each one feels firm and holds the motorcycle when the brake is fully applied.
- **Horn** — Try the horn. Make sure it works.

In addition to the checks you should make before every trip, check the following items at least once a week: wheels, cables, fasteners and fluid levels. Follow your owner's manual to get recommendations.

#### 4.3.3 - Know Your Responsibilities

"Accident" implies an unforeseen event that occurs without anyone's fault or negligence. Most often in traffic, that is not the case. In fact, most people involved in a crash can usually claim some responsibility for what takes place.

Consider a situation where someone decides to try to squeeze through an intersection on a yellow light turning red. Your light turns green. You pull into the intersection without checking for possible latecomers. That is all it takes for the two of you to tangle. It was the driver's responsibility to stop. And it was your responsibility to look before pulling out. Neither of you held up your end of the deal. Just because someone else is the first to start the chain of events leading to a crash, it doesn't leave any of us free of responsibility.

As a rider you can't be sure that other operators will see you or yield the right of way. To lessen your chances of a crash occurring:

- **Be visible** — wear proper clothing, use your headlight, ride in the best lane position to see and be seen.
- **Communicate your intentions** — use the proper signals, brake light and lane position.
- **Maintain an adequate space cushion** — following, being followed, lane sharing, passing and being passed.
- **Scan your path** of travel 12 seconds ahead.
- **Identify and separate** multiple hazards.
- **Be prepared to act** — remain alert and know how to carry out proper crash-avoidance skills.

Blame doesn't matter when someone is injured in a crash. There is rarely a single cause of any crash. The ability to ride aware, make critical decisions and carry them out separates responsible riders from all the rest. Remember, it is up to you to keep from being the cause of, or an unprepared participant in, any crash.

## Section 5

# Ride Within Your Abilities

This manual cannot teach you how to control direction, speed or balance. That's something you can learn only through practice. But control begins with knowing your abilities and riding within them, along with knowing and obeying the rules of the road.

### 5.1 - Basic Vehicle Control

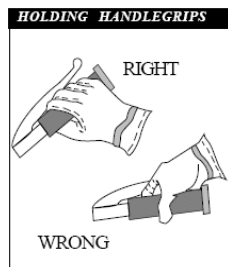
#### 5.1.1 - Body Position

To control a motorcycle well:

- **Posture** — Sit so you can use your arms to steer the motorcycle rather than to hold yourself up.
- **Seat** — Sit far enough forward so that arms are slightly bent when you hold the handle-grips. Bending your arms permits you to press on the handlebars without having to stretch.
- **Hands** — Hold the handle-grips firmly to keep your grip over rough surfaces. Start with your right wrist flat. This will help you keep from accidentally using too much throttle. Also, adjust the handlebars so your hands are even with or below your elbows. This permits you to use the proper muscles for precision steering.
- **Knees** — Keep your knees against the gas tank to help you keep your balance as the motorcycle turns.
- **Feet** — Keep your feet firmly on the foot-pegs to maintain balance. Don't drag your feet. If your foot catches on something, you could be injured and it could affect your control of the motorcycle. Keep your feet near the controls so you can get to them fast if needed. Also, don't let your toes point downward—they may get caught between the road and the foot-pegs.

#### 5.1.2 - Shifting Gears

There is more to shifting gears than simply getting the motorcycle to pick up speed smoothly. Learning to use the gears when downshifting, turning or starting on hills is important for safe motorcycle operation. Shift down through the gears with the clutch as you slow or stop. Remain in first gear while you are stopped so that you can move out quickly if you need to. Make certain you are riding slowly enough when you shift into a lower gear. If not, the motorcycle will lurch, and the rear wheel may skid. When riding downhill or shifting into first gear, you may need to use the brakes to slow enough before downshifting safely. Work toward a smooth, even clutch release, especially when downshifting. It is best to change gears before entering a turn. However, sometimes shifting while in the turn is necessary. If so, remember to do



so smoothly. A sudden change in power to the rear wheel can cause a skid.

#### 5.1.3 - Braking

Your motorcycle has two brakes: one each for the front and rear wheel. Use both of them at the same time. The front brake is more powerful and can provide **at least three-quarters** of your total stopping power. The front brake is safe to use if you use it properly.

*Remember:*

- **Use both brakes** every time you slow or stop. Using both brakes for even “normal” stops will permit you to develop the proper habit or skill of using both brakes properly in an emergency. Squeeze the front brake and press down on the rear. Grabbing at the front brake or jamming down on the rear can cause the brakes to lock, resulting in control problems.
- **If you know the technique**, using both brakes in a turn is possible, although it should be done very carefully. When leaning the motorcycle, some of the traction is used for cornering. Less traction is available for stopping. A skid can occur if you apply too much brake. Also, using the front brake incorrectly on a slippery surface may be hazardous. Use caution and **squeeze** the brake lever, never grab.
- **Some motorcycles** have integrated braking systems that link the front and rear brakes together by applying the rear brake pedal. Consult the owner's manual for a detailed explanation on the operation and effective use of these systems.)

#### 5.1.4 - Turning

Riders often try to take curves or turns too fast. When they can't hold the turn, they end up crossing into another lane of traffic or going off the road. Or, they overreact and brake too hard, causing a skid and loss of control. Approach turns and curves with caution.

- **Slow**
- **Look**
- **Press**
- **Roll**

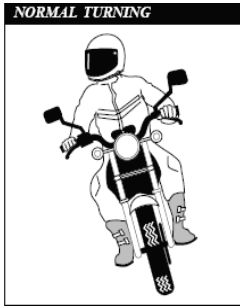
**Slow** — Reduce speed before the turn by closing the throttle and, if necessary, applying both brakes.

**Look** — Look through the turn to where you want to go. Turn just your head, not your shoulders, and keep your eyes level with the horizon.

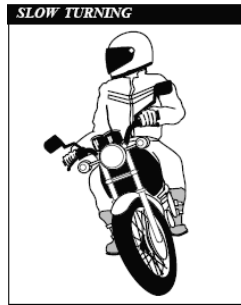
**Press** — To turn, the motorcycle must lean. To lean the motorcycle, press on the handle-grip in the direction of the turn. Press left—lean left—go left. Press right—lean right—go right. Higher speeds and/or tighter turns require the motorcycle to lean more.

**Roll** — Roll on the throttle through the turn to stabilize suspension. Maintain steady speed or accelerate gradually through the turn. This will help keep the motorcycle stable.





In normal turns, the rider and the motorcycle should lean together at the same angle.



In slow turns, counterbalance by leaning the motorcycle only and keeping your body straight.

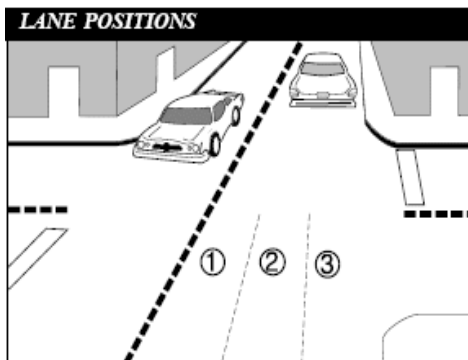
## 5.2 - Keeping Your Distance

The best protection you can have is distance — a “cushion of space” — all around your motorcycle. If someone else makes a mistake, distance permits you:

- **Time to react.**
- **Space to maneuver.**

## 5.3 - Lane Positions

In some ways the size of the motorcycle can work to your advantage. Each traffic lane gives a motorcycle three paths of travel, as indicated in the illustration.



Your lane position should:

- **Increase** your ability to see and be seen.

**Avoid** others' blind spots.

- **Avoid** surface hazards.
- **Protect** your lane from other drivers.
- **Communicate** your intentions.
- **Avoid** wind blast from other vehicles.
- **Provide** an escape route.

Select the appropriate path to maximize your space cushion and make yourself more easily seen by others on the road.

In general, there is no single best position for riders to be seen and to maintain a space cushion around the motorcycle. No portion of the lane need be avoided — including the center.

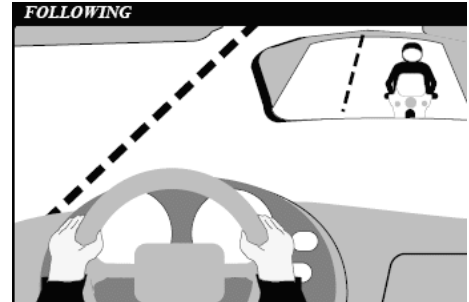
Position yourself in the portion of the lane where you are most likely to be seen and you can maintain a space cushion around you. Change position as traffic situations change. Ride in path 2 or 3 if vehicles and other potential problems are on your left only. Remain in path 1 or 2 if hazards are on your right only. If vehicles are being operated on both sides of you, the center of the lane, path 2, is usually your best option.

The oily strip in the center portion that collects drippings from cars is usually no more than two feet wide. Unless the road is wet, the average center strip permits adequate traction to ride on safely. You can operate to the left or right of the grease strip and still be within the center portion of the traffic lane. Avoid riding on big buildups of oil and grease usually found at busy intersections or toll booths.

## 5.4 - Following Another Vehicle

“Following too closely” could be a factor in crashes involving motorcyclists. In traffic, motorcycles need as much distance to stop as cars. Normally, **a minimum of two seconds** distance should be maintained behind the vehicle ahead.

*To gauge your following distance:*



- **Pick out a marker**, such as a pavement marking or lamppost, on or near the road ahead. **When the rear bumper** of the vehicle ahead passes the marker, count off the seconds: “one-thousand-one, one-thousand-two.”
- **If you reach the marker** before you reach “two,” you are following too closely.

A two-second following distance leaves a minimum amount of space to stop or swerve if the driver ahead stops suddenly. It also permits a better view of potholes and other hazards in the road. A larger cushion of space is needed if your motorcycle will take longer than normal to stop. If the pavement is slippery, if you cannot see through the vehicle ahead, or if traffic is heavy and someone may squeeze in front of you, open up a three-second or more following distance.

Keep well behind the vehicle ahead even when you are stopped. This will make it easier to get out of the way if someone bears down on you from behind. It will also give you a cushion of space if the vehicle ahead starts to back up for some reason. When behind a car, ride where the driver can see you in the rearview mirror. Riding in the center portion of the lane should put your image in the middle of the rearview mirror — where a driver is most likely to see you.

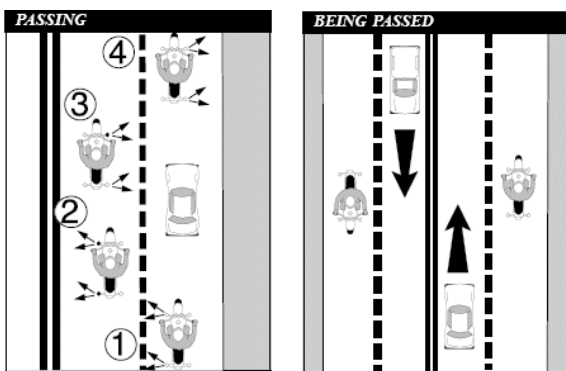
Riding at the far side of a lane may permit a driver to see you in a side view mirror. But remember that most drivers don't look at their side view mirrors nearly as often as they check the rearview mirror. If the traffic situation allows, the center portion of the lane is usually the best place for you to be seen by the drivers ahead and to prevent lane sharing by others.

## 5.5 - Being Followed

Speeding up to lose someone following too closely only ends up with someone tailgating you at a higher speed. A better way to handle tailgaters is to get them in front of you. When someone is following too closely, change lanes and let them pass. If you can't do this, slow down and open up extra space ahead of you to allow room for both you and the tailgater to stop. This will also encourage them to pass. If they don't pass, you will have given yourself and the tailgater more time and space to react in case an emergency does develop ahead.

## 5.6 - Passing and Being Passed

Passing and being passed by another vehicle is not much different than with a car. However, visibility is more critical. Be sure other drivers see you, and that you see potential hazards.



### 5.6.1 - Passing

1. **Ride in the left portion** of the lane at a safe following distance to increase your line of sight and make you more visible. Signal and check for oncoming traffic. Use your mirrors and turn your head to look for traffic behind.
2. **When safe**, move into the left lane and accelerate. Select a lane position that doesn't crowd the car you are passing and provides space to avoid hazards in your lane.
3. **Ride through the blind spot** as quickly as possible.

4. **Signal again**, and complete mirror and head checks before returning to your original lane and then cancel the signal.

**Remember, passes must be completed within posted speed limits, and only where permitted. Know your signs and road markings!**

### 5.6.2 - Being Passed

When you are being passed from behind or by an oncoming vehicle, stay in the center portion of your lane. Riding any closer to them could put you in a hazardous situation.

*Avoid being hit by:*

- **The other vehicle** — A slight mistake by you or the passing driver could cause a sideswipe.
- **Extended mirrors** — Some drivers forget that their mirrors hang out farther than their fenders.
- **Objects thrown from windows** — Even if the driver knows you're there, a passenger may not see you and might toss something on you or the road ahead of you.
- **Blasts of wind from larger vehicles** — Can affect your control. You have more room for error if you are in the middle portion. When hit by this blast than if you were on either side of the lane. **Do not** move into the portion of the lane farthest from the passing vehicle. It might invite the other driver to cut back into your lane too early.

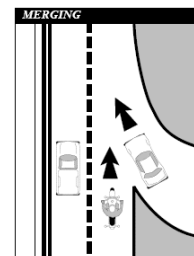
## 5.7 - Lane Sharing

Cars and motorcycles need a full lane to operate safely. Lane sharing is usually prohibited. Riding between rows of stopped or moving cars in the same lane can leave you vulnerable to the unexpected. A hand could come out of a window; a door could open; a car could turn suddenly. Discourage lane sharing by others. Keep a center-portion position whenever drivers might be tempted to squeeze by you. Drivers are most tempted to do this:

- **In heavy**, bumper-to-bumper traffic.
- **When they** want to pass you.
- **When you** are preparing to turn at an intersection.
- **When you** are getting in an exit lane or leaving a highway.

## 5.8 - Merging Cars

Drivers on an entrance ramp may not see you on the highway. Give them plenty of room. Change to another lane if one is open. If there is no room for a lane change, adjust speed to open up space for the merging driver.



## 5.9 - Cars Alongside

Do not ride next to cars or trucks in other lanes if you do not have to. You might be in the blind spot of a car in the next lane, which could switch into your lane without warning. Cars in the next lane also block your escape if you come upon danger in your own lane. Speed up or drop back to find a place clear of traffic on both sides.

## 5.10 - S.E.E. (Search – Evaluate – Execute)

Good experienced riders remain aware of what is going on around them. They improve their riding strategy by using SEE, a three-step process used to make appropriate judgments, and apply them correctly in different traffic situations:

- **Search**
- **Evaluate**
- **Execute**

Let's examine each of these steps.

### 5.10.1 - Search

Search aggressively ahead, to the sides and behind to avoid potential hazards even before they arise. How assertively you search, and how much time and space you have, can eliminate or reduce harm. Focus even more on finding potential escape routes in or around intersections, shopping areas, school and construction zones.

*Search for factors such as:*

- **Oncoming traffic** that may turn left in front of you.
- **Traffic** coming from the left and right.
- **Traffic** approaching from behind.
- **Hazardous** road conditions.

Be especially alert in areas with limited visibility. Visually "busy" surroundings could hide you and your motorcycle from others.

### 5.10.2 - Evaluate

Think about how hazards can interact to create risk for you. Anticipate potential problems and have a plan to reduce risk.

- **Road and surface characteristics** — Potholes, guardrails, bridges, telephone poles, and trees won't move into your path, but may influence your riding strategy.
- **Traffic control devices** — Look for traffic signals; including regulatory signs, warning signs, and pavement markings, to help you evaluate circumstances ahead.
- **Vehicles and other traffic** — May move into your path and increase the likelihood of a crash.

Think about your time and space requirements in order to maintain a margin of safety. You must leave yourself time to react if an emergency arises.

### 5.10.3 - Execute

Carry out your decision.

*To create more space and minimize harm from any hazard:*

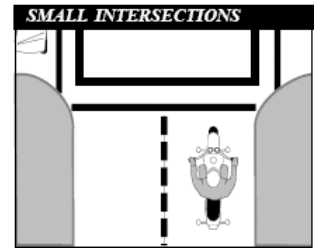
- Communicate your presence with lights and/or horn.
- Adjust your speed by accelerating, stopping or slowing.
- Adjust your position and/or direction

Apply the old adage "one step at a time" to handle two or more hazards. Adjust speed to permit two hazards to separate. Then deal with them one at a time as single hazards. Decision making becomes more complex with three or more hazards. Weigh the consequences of each and give equal distance to the hazards.

In potential high-risk areas; such as intersections, shopping areas, school, and construction zones, cover the clutch and both brakes to reduce the time you need to react.

### Intersection

The greatest potential for conflict between you and other traffic is at intersections. An intersection can be in the middle of an urban area or at a driveway on a residential street—anywhere traffic may cross your path of travel. Over one-half of motorcycle/car crashes are caused by drivers entering a rider's right-of-way. Cars that turn left in front of you, including cars turning left from the lane to your right, and cars on side streets that pull into your lane, are the biggest dangers. Your use of SEE at intersections is critical.



There are no guarantees that others see you. Never count on "eye contact" as a sign that a driver will yield. Too often, a driver looks right at a motorcyclist and still fails to "see" him. The only eyes that you can count on are your own. If a car can enter your path, assume that it will. Good riders are always "looking for trouble"—not to get into it, but to stay out of it.

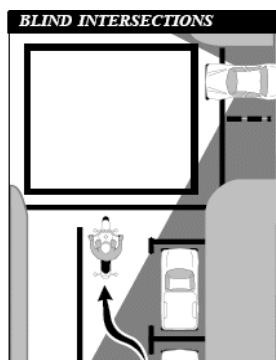
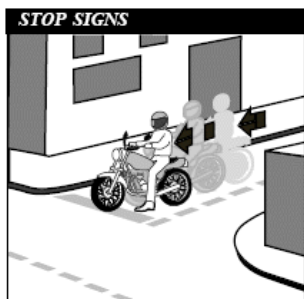
Increase your chances of being seen at intersections. Ride with your headlight on in a lane position that provides the best view of oncoming traffic. Provide a space cushion around the motorcycle that permits you to take evasive action. As you approach the intersection, select a lane position to increase your visibility to the driver. Cover the clutch and both brakes to reduce reaction time.

Reduce your speed as you approach an intersection. After entering the intersection, move away from vehicles preparing to turn. Do not change speed or position radically. The driver might think that you are preparing to turn.

## Blind Intersections

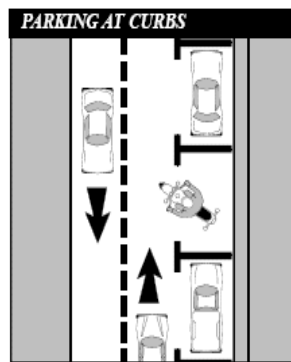
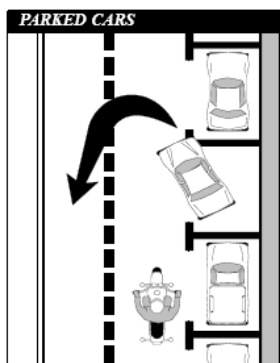
If you approach a blind intersection, move to the portion of the lane that will bring you into another driver's field of vision at the earliest possible moment. In this picture, the rider has moved to the left portion of the lane—away from the parked car—so the driver on the cross street can see him as soon as possible.

Remember, the key is to see as much as possible and remain visible to others while protecting your space. If you have a stop sign or stop line, stop there first. Then edge forward and stop again, just short of where the cross-traffic lane meets your lane. From that position, lean your body forward and look around buildings, parked cars or bushes to see if anything is coming. Just make sure your front wheel stays out of the cross lane of travel while you're looking.



## Passing Parked Cars

When passing parked cars, stay toward the left of your lane. You can avoid problems caused by doors opening, drivers getting out of cars or people stepping from between cars. If oncoming traffic is present, it is usually best to remain in the center-lane position to maximize your space cushion. A bigger problem can occur if the driver pulls away from the curb without checking for traffic behind. Even if he does look, he may fail to see you. In either event, the driver might cut into your path. Slow down or change lanes to make room for someone cutting in. Cars making a sudden U-turn are the most dangerous. They may cut you off entirely, blocking the whole roadway and leaving you with no place to go. Since you can't tell what a driver will do, slow down and get the driver's attention. Sound your horn and continue with caution.



## Parking At The Roadside

Park at a 90° angle to the curb with your rear wheel touching the curb.

## 5.11 - Increasing Rider Visibility

In crashes with motorcyclists, drivers often say that they never saw the motorcycle. From ahead or behind, a motorcycle's outline is much smaller than a car's. Also, it's hard to see something you are not looking for, and most drivers are not looking for motorcycles. More likely, they are looking *through* the skinny, two-wheeled silhouette in search of cars that may pose a problem to them.

Even if a driver does see you coming, you aren't necessarily safe. Smaller vehicles appear farther away and seem to be traveling slower than they actually are. It is common for drivers to pull out in front of motorcyclists, thinking they have plenty of time. Too often, they are wrong. However, you can do many things to make it easier for others to recognize you and your cycle.

### 5.11.1 - Clothing

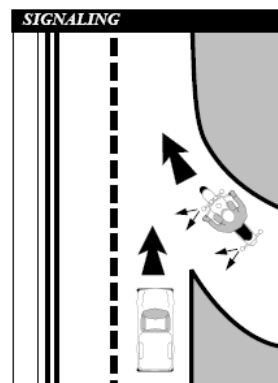
Most crashes occur in broad daylight. Wear bright-colored clothing to increase your chances of being seen. Remember, your body is half of the visible surface area of the rider/motorcycle unit. Bright orange, red, yellow or green jackets or vests are your best bets for being seen. Your helmet can do more than protect you in a crash. Brightly colored helmets can also help others see you. Any bright color is better than drab or dark colors. Reflective, bright-colored clothing (helmet and jacket or vest) is best. Reflective material on a vest and on the sides of the helmet will help drivers coming from the side to spot you. Reflective material can also be a big help for drivers coming toward you or from behind.

### 5.11.2 - Headlight

The best way to help others see your motorcycle is to keep the headlight on — **at all times** (although motorcycles sold in the USA since 1978 automatically have the headlights on when running). Studies show that, during the day, a motorcycle with its light on is twice as likely to be noticed. Use of the high beam during the day increases the likelihood that oncoming drivers will see you. Use the low beam at night and in cloudy weather.

### 5.11.3 - Signals

The signals on a motorcycle are similar to those on a car. They tell others what you plan to do. However, due to a rider's added vulnerability, signals are even more important. Use them anytime you plan to change lanes or turn. Use them even when you think no one else is



around. It's the car you don't see that's going to give you the most trouble. Your signal lights also make you easier to spot; therefore, it's a good idea to use your turn signals even when what you plan to do is obvious.

When you enter onto a freeway, drivers approaching from behind are more likely to see your signal blinking and make room for you.

Turning your signal light on before each turn reduces confusion and frustration for the traffic around you. Once you turn, make sure your signal is off or a driver may pull directly into your path, thinking you plan to turn again. Use your signals at every turn so drivers can react accordingly. Don't make them guess what you intend to do.

#### 5.11.4 - Brake Light

Your motorcycle's brake light is usually not as noticeable as the brake lights on a car—particularly when your taillight is on. (It goes on with the headlight.) If the situation will permit, help others notice you by flashing your brake light before you slow down. It is especially important to flash your brake light before:

**You slow more quickly** than others might expect (turning off a high-speed highway).

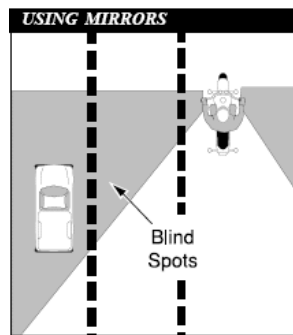
**You slow where** others may not expect it (in the middle of a block or at an alley).

If you are being followed closely, it's a good idea to flash your brake light before you slow. The tailgater may be watching you and not see something ahead that will make you slow down. This will hopefully discourage them from tailgating and warn them of hazards ahead they may not see.

#### 5.11.5 - Using Your Mirrors

While it's most important to keep track of what's happening ahead, you can't afford to ignore situations behind. Traffic conditions change quickly. Knowing what's going on behind is essential for you to make a safe decision about how to handle trouble ahead. Frequent mirror checks should be part of your normal searching routine. Make a special point of using your mirrors

- **When you are stopped** at an intersection. Watch cars coming up from behind. If the driver isn't paying attention, he can be on top of you before he sees you.
- **Before you change lanes.** Make sure no one is about to pass you.
- **Before you slow down.** The driver behind may not expect you to slow, or may be unsure about where you



will slow. For example, you signal a turn and the driver thinks you plan to turn at a distant intersection, rather than at a nearer driveway. Some motorcycles have rounded (convex) mirrors. These provide a wider view of the road behind than do flat mirrors. They also make cars seem farther away than they really are. If you are not used to convex mirrors, get familiar with them. (*While you are stopped, pick out a parked car in your mirror. Form a mental image of how far away it is. Then, turn around and look at it to see how close you came.*) Practice with your mirrors until you become a good judge of distance. Even then, allow extra distance before you change lanes.

#### 5.11.6 - Head Checks

Checking your mirrors is not enough. Motorcycles have "blind spots" like cars. Before you change lanes, turn your head, and look to the side for other vehicles.

On a road with several lanes, check the far lane and the one next to you. A driver in the distant lane may head for the same space you plan to take.

Frequent head checks should be your normal scanning routine, also. Only by knowing what is happening all around you are you fully prepared to deal with it.

#### 5.11.7 - Horn

Be ready to use your horn to get someone's attention quickly. It is a good idea to give a quick beep before passing anyone that may move into your lane.

*Here are some situations:*

- **A driver** in the lane next to you is driving too closely to the vehicle ahead and may want to pass.
- **A parked car** has someone in the driver's seat.
- **Someone is in the street**, riding a bicycle or walking.

In an emergency, press the horn button loud and long. Be ready to stop or swerve away from the danger.

Keep in mind that a motorcycle's horn isn't as loud as a car's — therefore, use it, but don't rely on it. Other strategies may be appropriate along with the horn.

#### 5.11.8 - Riding At Night

At night it is harder for you to see and be seen. Picking your headlight or taillight out of the car lights around you is not easy for other drivers. To compensate, you should:

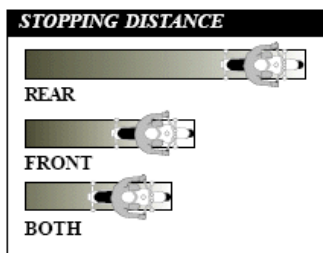
- **Reduce Your Speed** — Ride even slower than you would during the day — particularly on roads you don't know well. This will increase your chances of avoiding a hazard.
- **Increase Distance** — Distances are harder to judge at night than during the day. Your eyes rely upon shadows and light contrasts to determine how far away an object is and how fast it is coming. These contrasts are missing

or distorted under artificial lights at night. Open up a three-second following distance or more. And allow more distance to pass and be passed.

- **Use the Car Ahead** —The headlights of the car ahead can give you a better view of the road than even your high beam can. Taillights bouncing up and down can alert you to bumps or rough pavement.
- **Use Your High Beam** — Get all the light you can. Use your high beam whenever you are not following or meeting a car. Be visible: Wear reflective materials when riding at night.
- **Be Flexible About Lane Position.** Change to whatever portion of the lane is best able to help you see, be seen and keep an adequate space cushion.

## 5.12 - Crash Avoidance

No matter how careful you are, there will be times when you find yourself in a tight spot. Your chances of getting out safely depend on your ability to react quickly and properly. Often, a crash occurs because a rider is not prepared or skilled in crash-avoidance maneuvers.



Know when and how to stop or swerve, two skills critical to avoiding a crash. It is not always desirable or possible to stop quickly to avoid an obstacle. Riders must also be able to swerve around an obstacle. Determining the skill necessary for the situation is important as well.

*Studies show that most crash-involved riders:*

- **Under brake** the front tire and over brake the rear.
- **Did not** separate braking from swerving or did not choose swerving when it was appropriate.

The following information offers some good advice.

### 5.12.1 - Quick Stops

To stop quickly, apply both brakes at the same time. Don't be shy about using the front brake, but don't "grab" it, either. Squeeze the brake lever firmly and progressively. If the front wheel locks, release the front brake immediately, then reapply it firmly. At the same time, press down on the rear brake. If you accidentally lock the rear brake on a good traction surface, keep it locked until you have completely stopped. Even with a locked rear wheel, you can control the motorcycle on a straightaway *if it is upright and going in a straight line.*

Always use both brakes at the same time to stop. The front brake can provide 70% or more of the potential stopping power. If you must stop quickly *while turning or riding a curve*, the best technique is to straighten the bike upright first

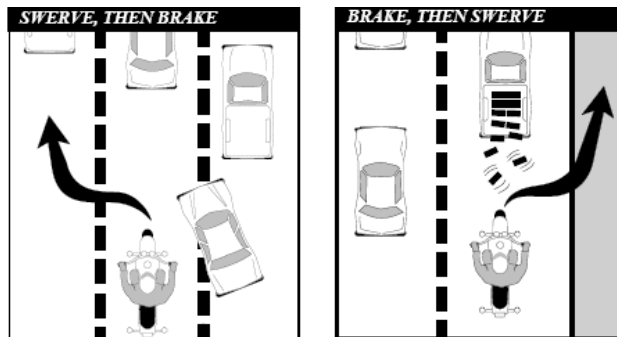
and then brake. However, it may not always be possible to straighten the motorcycle and then stop. If you must brake while leaning, apply brakes lightly and reduce the throttle. As you slow, you can reduce your lean angle and apply more brake pressure until the motorcycle is straight and maximum brake pressure is possible. You should "straighten" the handlebars in the last few feet of stopping. The motorcycle should then be straight up and in balance.

### 5.12.2 - Swerving or Turning Quickly

Sometimes you may not have enough room to stop, even if you use both brakes properly. An object might appear suddenly in your path or the car ahead might make a sudden stop. The only way to avoid a crash may be to turn quickly, or swerve around it. A swerve is any sudden change in direction. It can be two quick turns, or a rapid shift to the side. Apply a small amount of hand pressure to the handle grip located on the side of your intended direction of escape. This will cause the motorcycle to lean quickly. The sharper the turn(s), the more the motorcycle must lean.

Keep your body upright and allow the motorcycle to lean in the direction of the turn while keeping your knees against the tank and your feet solidly on the pegs. Let the motorcycle move underneath you. Make your escape route the target of your vision. Press on the opposite handle-grip once you clear the obstacle to return you to your original direction of travel. To swerve to the left, press the left handle-grip, then press the right to recover. To swerve to the right, press right, then left.

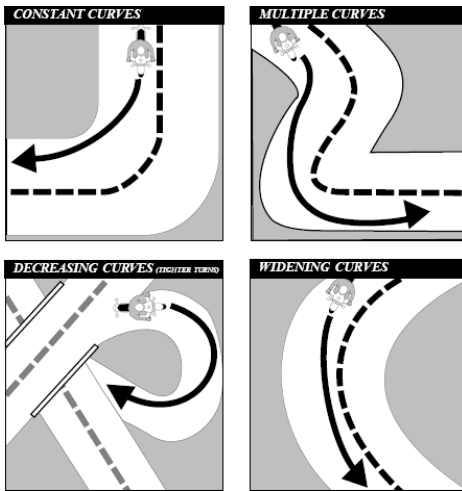
IF BRAKING IS REQUIRED, SEPARATE IT FROM SWERVING. Brake before or after — never while swerving.



### 5.12.3 - Cornering

A primary cause of single-vehicle crashes is motorcyclists running wide in a curve or turn and colliding with the roadway or a fixed object. Every curve is different. Be alert to whether a curve remains constant, gradually widens, gets tighter or involves multiple turns. Ride within your skill level and posted speed limits. Your best path may not always follow the curve of the road. Change lane position depending on traffic, road conditions and curve of the road. If no traffic is present, start at the outside of a curve to increase your line of sight and the effective radius of the turn. As you turn, move toward the inside of the curve, and as you pass the center, move to the outside to exit. Another alternative is to

move to the center of your lane before entering a curve — and stay there until you exit. This permits you to spot approaching traffic as soon as possible. You can also adjust for traffic “crowding” the center line, or debris blocking part of your lane.



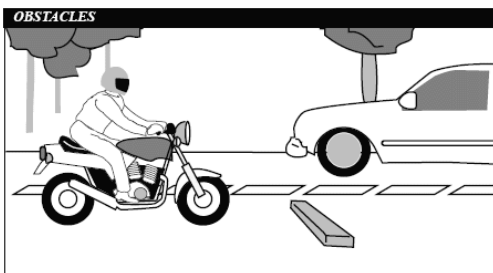
## 5.13 - Handling Dangerous Surfaces

Your chance of falling or being involved in a crash increases whenever you ride across:

- **Uneven surfaces or obstacles**
- **Slippery surfaces**
- **Railroad tracks**
- **Grooves and gratings**

### 5.13.1 - Uneven Surfaces and Obstacles

Watch for uneven surfaces such as bumps, broken pavement, potholes or small pieces of highway trash. Try to avoid obstacles by slowing or going around them. If you must go over the obstacle, first determine if it is possible. Approach it at as close to a 90° angle as possible. Look where you want to go to control your path of travel. If you have to ride over the obstacle, you should:



- **Slow down** as much as possible before contact.
- **Make sure** the motorcycle is straight.
- **Rise slightly** off the seat with your weight on the foot pegs to absorb the shock with your knees and elbows and avoid being thrown off the motorcycle.

- **Just before contact**, roll on the throttle slightly to lighten the front end. If you ride over an object on the street, pull off the road and check your tires and rims for damage before riding any farther.

### 5.13.2 - Slippery Surfaces

Motorcycles handle better when ridden on surfaces that permit good traction.

Surfaces that provide poor traction include:

**Wet pavement**, particularly just after it starts to rain and before surface oil washes to the side of the road.

**Gravel roads**, or where sand and gravel collect.

**Mud, snow, and ice**

**Lane markings**, steel plates and manhole covers, especially when wet.

*To ride safely on slippery surfaces:*

- **Reduce Speed** — Slow down before you get to a slippery surface to lessen your chances of skidding. Your motorcycle needs more distance to stop; it is particularly important to reduce speed before entering wet curves.
- **Avoid Sudden Moves** — Any sudden change in speed or direction can cause a skid. Be as smooth as possible when you speed up, shift gears, turn or brake.
- **Use Both Brakes** — The front brake is still effective, even on a slippery surface. Squeeze the brake lever gradually to avoid locking the front wheel. Remember, gentle pressure on the rear brake.
- **The center of a lane** can be hazardous when wet. When it starts to rain, ride in the tire tracks left by cars. Often, the left tire track will be the best position, depending on traffic and other road conditions as well.
- **Watch for oil spots** when you put your foot down to stop or park. You may slip and fall.
- **Dirt and gravel** collect along the sides of the road — especially on curves and ramps leading to and from highways. Be aware of what’s on the edge of the road, particularly when making sharp turns and getting on or off freeways at high speeds.
- **Rain dries and snow melts faster** on some sections of a road than on others. Patches of ice tend to crop up in low or shaded areas and on bridges and overpasses. Wet surfaces or wet leaves are just as slippery. Ride on the least slippery portion of the lane and reduce speed.

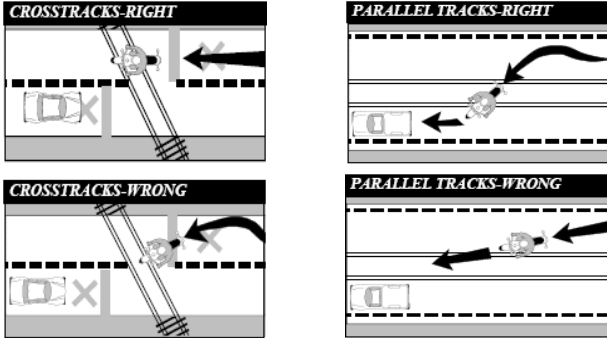
Cautious riders steer clear of roads covered with ice or snow. If you can’t avoid a slippery surface, keep your motorcycle straight up and proceed as slowly as possible. If you encounter a large surface so slippery that you must coast, or travel at a walking pace, consider letting your feet skim along the surface. If the motorcycle starts to fall, you can catch yourself. Be sure to keep off the brakes. If possible, squeeze the clutch and coast. Attempting this maneuver at anything other than the slowest of speeds could prove hazardous.



### 5.13.3 - Railroad Tracks, Trolley Tracks and Pavement Seams

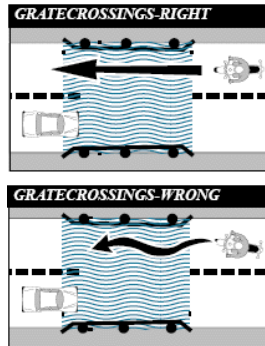
Usually it is safer to ride straight within your lane to cross tracks. Turning to take tracks head-on (at a 90° angle) can be more dangerous — your path may carry you into another lane of traffic.

For track and road seams that run parallel to your course, move far enough away from tracks, ruts, or pavement seams to cross at an angle of at least 45°. Then make a quick, sharp turn. Edging across could catch your tires and throw you off balance.



### 5.13.4 - Grooves and Gratings

Riding over rain grooves or bridge gratings may cause a motorcycle to weave. The uneasy, wandering feeling is generally not hazardous. Relax, maintain a steady speed and ride straight across. Crossing at an angle forces riders to zigzag to stay in the lane. The zigzag is far more hazardous than the wandering feeling.



## 5.14 - Mechanical Problems

You can find yourself in an emergency the moment something goes wrong with your motorcycle. In dealing with any mechanical problem, take into account the road and traffic conditions you face. Here are some guidelines that can help you handle mechanical problems safely.

### 5.14.1 - Tire Failure

You will seldom hear a tire go flat. If the motorcycle starts handling differently, it may be a tire failure. This can be dangerous. You must be able to tell from the way the motorcycle reacts. If one of your tires suddenly loses air, react quickly to keep your balance. Pull off and check the tires.

If the front tire goes flat, the steering will feel “heavy.” A front-wheel flat is particularly hazardous because it affects your steering. You have to steer well to keep your balance. If

the rear tire goes flat, the back of the motorcycle may jerk or sway from side to side.

*If either tire goes flat while riding:*

- **Hold handle grips firmly**, ease off the throttle, and keep a straight course.

### 5.14.2 - Stuck Throttle

Twist the throttle back and forth several times. If the throttle cable is stuck, this may free it. If the throttle stays stuck immediately operate the engine cut-off switch and pull in the clutch at the same time. This will remove power from the rear wheel, though engine noise may not immediately decline. Once the motorcycle is “under control,” pull off and stop. After you have stopped, check the throttle cable carefully to find the source of the trouble. Make certain the throttle works freely before you start to ride again.

### 5.14.3 - Wobble

A “wobble” occurs when the front wheel and handlebars suddenly start to shake from side to side at any speed. Most wobbles can be traced to improper loading, unsuitable accessories or incorrect tire pressure. If you are carrying a heavy load, lighten it. If you can’t, shift it. Center the weight lower and farther forward on the motorcycle. Make sure tire pressure, spring pre-load, air shocks and dampers are at the settings recommended for that much weight. Make sure windshields and fairings are mounted properly.

Check for poorly adjusted steering; worn steering parts; a front wheel that is bent, misaligned, or out of balance; loose wheel bearings or spokes; and swing arm bearings. If none of these are determined to be the cause, have the motorcycle checked out thoroughly by a qualified professional.

Trying to “accelerate out of a wobble” will only make the motorcycle more unstable.

Instead:

- **Grip the handlebars firmly**, but don’t fight the wobble.
- **Close the throttle gradually** to slow down. Do not apply the brakes; braking could make the wobble worse.
- **Move your weight** as far forward and down as possible.
- **Pull off the road** as soon as you can to fix the problem.

### 5.14.4 - Chain Problems

A chain that slips or breaks while you’re riding could lock the rear wheel and cause your cycle to skid. Chain slippage or breakage can be avoided by proper maintenance.

- **Slippage** — If the chain slips when you try to speed up quickly or ride uphill, pull off the road. Check the chain and sprockets. Tightening the chain may help. If the problem is a worn or stretched chain or worn or bent sprockets, replace the chain, the sprockets or both before riding again.
- **Breakage** — You will notice an instant loss of power to the rear wheel. Close the throttle and brake to a stop.



### 5.14.5 - Engine Seizure

When the engine “locks” or “freezes” it is usually low on oil. The engine’s moving parts can’t move smoothly against each other, and the engine overheats. The first sign may be a loss of engine power or a change in the engine’s sound. Squeeze the clutch lever to disengage the engine from the rear wheel. Pull off the road and stop. Check the oil. If needed, oil should be added as soon as possible or the engine will seize. When this happens, the effect is the same as a locked rear wheel. Let the engine cool before restarting.

## 5.15 - Unavoidable Hazards

### 5.15.1 - Animals

Naturally, you should do everything you safely can to avoid hitting an animal. If you are in traffic, however, remain in your lane. Hitting something small is less dangerous to you than hitting something big — like a car.

Motorcycles seem to attract dogs. If you are chased, downshift and approach the animal slowly. As you approach it, accelerate away and leave the animal behind. Don’t kick at an animal. Keep control of your motorcycle and look to where you want to go. For larger animals (deer, elk, cattle), brake and prepare to stop — they are unpredictable.

### 5.15.2 - Flying Objects

From time to time riders are struck by insects, cigarettes thrown from cars or pebbles kicked up by the tires of the vehicle ahead. If you are wearing face protection, it might get smeared or cracked, making it difficult to see. Without face protection, an object could hit you in the eye, face or mouth. Whatever happens, keep your eyes on the road and your hands on the handlebars. When safe, pull off the road and repair the damage.

## 5.16- Getting Off the Road

If you need to leave the road to check the motorcycle (or just to rest for a while), be sure you:

- **Check the roadside** — Make sure the surface of the roadside is firm enough to ride on. If it is soft grass, loose sand or if you’re just not sure about it, slow way down before you turn onto it.
- **Signal** — Drivers behind might not expect you to slow down. Give a clear signal that you will be slowing down and changing direction. Check your mirror and make a head check before you take any action.
- **Pull off the road** — Get as far off the road as you can. It can be very hard to spot a motorcycle by the side of the road. You don’t want someone else pulling off at the same place you are.
- **Park carefully** — Loose and sloped shoulders can make setting the side or center stand difficult.

## 5.17 - Carrying Passengers and Cargo

Only experienced riders should carry passengers or large loads. The extra weight changes the way the motorcycle handles, balances, speeds up and slows down. Before taking a passenger or a heavy load on the street, practice away from traffic.

### 5.17.1 - Equipment

*To carry passengers safely:*

- **Equip and adjust** your motorcycle to carry passengers.
- **Instruct the passenger** before you start.
- **Adjust your riding** technique for the added weight.

*Equipment should include:*

- **A proper seat** — large enough to hold both of you without crowding. You should not sit any farther forward than you usually do.
- **Foot pegs** — for the passenger. Firm footing prevents your passenger from falling off and pulling you off, too.
- **Protective equipment** — the same protective gear recommended for operators.

Adjust the suspension to handle the additional weight. You will probably need to add a few pounds of pressure to the tires if you carry a passenger. (Check your owner’s manual for appropriate settings.) While your passenger sits on the seat with you, adjust the mirror and headlight according to the change in the motorcycle’s angle.

### 5.17.2- Instructing Passengers

Even if your passenger is a motorcycle rider, provide complete instructions before you start. Tell your passenger to:

- **Get on** the motorcycle only after you have started the engine.
- **Sit as far forward** as possible without crowding you.
- **Hold firmly** to your waist, hips or belt.
- **Keep both feet** on the pegs, even when stopped.
- **Keep legs away** from the muffler(s), chains or moving parts.
- **Stay directly behind you**, leaning as you lean.
- **Avoid unnecessary** talk or motion.

*Also, tell your passenger to tighten his or her hold when you:*

- **Approach** surface problems.
- **Are about to start** from a stop.
- **Warn that you** will make a sudden move.

### 5.17.3 - Riding With Passengers

Your motorcycle will respond more slowly with a passenger on board. The heavier your passenger, the longer it will take to slow down and speed up — especially on a light motorcycle.

- **Ride a little slower**, especially when taking curves, corners or bumps.
- **Start slowing earlier** as you approach a stop.

- **Open up a larger cushion** of space ahead and to the sides.
- **Wait for larger gaps** to cross, enter or merge in traffic. Warn your passenger of special conditions — when you will pull out, stop quickly, turn sharply or ride over a bump. Turn your head slightly to make yourself understood, but keep your eyes on the road ahead.

#### 5.17.4 - Carrying Loads

Most motorcycles are not designed to carry much cargo. Small loads can be carried safely if positioned and fastened properly.

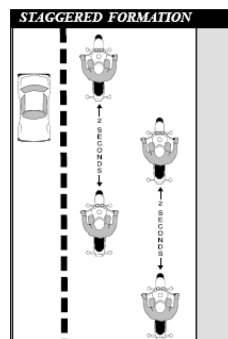
- **Keep the Load Low** —Fasten loads securely, or put them in saddlebags. Piling loads against a sissy-bar or frame on the back of the seat raises the motorcycle's center of gravity and disturbs its balance.
- **Keep the Load Forward** — Place the load over, or in front of, the rear axle. Tankbags keep loads forward, but use caution when loading hard or sharp objects. Make sure the tankbag does not interfere with handlebars or controls. Mounting loads behind the rear axle can affect how the motorcycle turns and brakes. It can also cause a wobble.
- **Distribute the Load Evenly** — Load saddlebags with about the same weight. An uneven load can cause the motorcycle to drift to one side.
- **Secure the Load** —Fasten the load securely with elastic cords (bungee cords or nets). Elastic cords with more than one attachment point per side are more secure. A tight load won't catch in the wheel or chain, causing it to lock up and skid. Rope tends to stretch and knots come loose, permitting the load to shift or fall.
- **Check the Load** — Stop and check the load often to make sure it has not worked loose or moved.

### 5.18 - Group Riding

If you ride with others, do it in a way that promotes safety and doesn't interfere with the flow of traffic.

#### 5.18.1 - Keep the Group Small

Small groups make it easier and safer for car drivers who need to get around them. A small number isn't separated as easily by traffic or red lights. Riders won't always be hurrying to catch up. If your group is larger than four or five riders, divide it up into two or more smaller groups.



#### 5.18.2 - Keep the Group Together

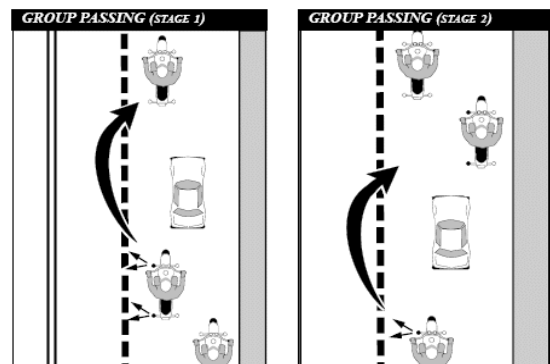
- **Plan** — The leader should look ahead for changes and signal early so "the word gets back" in plenty of time. Start lane changes early to permit everyone to complete the change.
- **Put Beginners Up Front** — Place inexperienced riders just behind the leader. That way the more

experienced riders can watch them from the back.

- **Follow Those Behind** — Let the tail-ender set the pace. Use your mirrors to keep an eye on the person behind. If a rider falls behind, everyone should slow down a little to stay with the tail-ender.
- **Know the Route** —Make sure everyone knows the route. Then, if someone is separated they won't have to hurry to keep from getting lost or taking a wrong turn. Plan frequent stops on long rides.

#### 5.18.3 - Keep Your Distance

Maintain close ranks but at the same time keep a safe distance to allow each rider in the group time and space to react to hazards. A close group takes up less space on the highway, is easier to see and is less likely to be separated. However, it must be done properly.



- **Don't Pair Up** — Never operate directly alongside another rider. There is no Place to go if you have to avoid a car or something on the road. To talk, wait until you are both stopped.
- **Staggered Formation** —This is the best way to keep ranks close yet maintain an adequate space cushion. The leader rides in the left side of the lane, while the second rider stays one second behind in the right side of the lane. A third rider maintains in the left position, two seconds behind the first rider. The fourth rider would keep a two-second distance behind the second rider. This formation keeps the group close and permits each rider a safe distance from others ahead, behind and to the sides.
- **Passing in Formation** —Riders in a staggered formation should pass one at a time.
- **First, the lead rider should pull out** and pass when it is safe. After passing, the leader should return to the left position and continue riding at passing speed to open room for the next rider.
- **After the first rider passes safely**, the second rider should move up to the left position and watch for a safe chance to pass. After passing, this rider should return to the right position and open up room for the next rider. Some people suggest that the leader should move to the right side after passing a vehicle. This is not a good idea.

It encourages the second rider to pass and cut back in before there is a large enough space cushion in front of the passed vehicle. It's simpler and safer to wait until there is enough room ahead of the passed vehicle to allow each rider to move into the same position held before the pass.

- **Single-File Formation** — It is best to move into a single-file formation when riding curves, turning, entering or leaving a highway.

Riding a motorcycle is a demanding and complex task. Skilled riders pay attention to the riding environment and to operating the motorcycle, identifying potential hazards, making good judgments and executing decisions quickly and skillfully. Your ability to perform and respond to changing road and traffic conditions is influenced by how fit and alert you are. Alcohol and other drugs, more than any other factor, degrade your ability to think clearly and to ride safely. As little as one drink can have a significant effect on your performance.

## 5.19 - Riding While Impaired

Let's look at the risks involved in riding after drinking or using drugs. What to do to protect yourself and your fellow riders is also examined.

### 5.19.1 - Why This Information Is Important

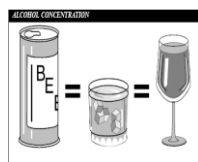
Alcohol is a major contributor to motorcycle crashes, particularly fatal crashes. Studies show that 40% to 45% of all riders killed in motorcycle crashes had been drinking. Only one-third of those riders had a blood alcohol concentration above legal limits. The rest had only a few drinks in their systems—enough to impair riding skills. In the past, drug levels have been harder to distinguish or have not been separated from drinking violations for the traffic records. But riding “under the influence” of either alcohol or drugs poses physical and legal hazards for every rider.

Drinking and drug use is as big a problem among motorcyclists as it is among automobile drivers. Motorcyclists, however, are more likely to be killed or severely injured in a crash. Injuries occur in 90% of motorcycle crashes and 33% of automobile crashes that involve abuse of substances. On a yearly basis, 2,100 motorcyclists are killed and about 50,000 seriously injured in this same type of crash. These statistics are too overwhelming to ignore.

By becoming knowledgeable about the effects of alcohol and other drugs you will see that riding and substance abuse don't mix. Take positive steps to protect yourself and prevent others from injuring themselves.

### 5.19.2 - Alcohol and Other Drugs in Motorcycle Operation

No one is immune to the effects of alcohol or drugs. Friends may brag about their ability to hold their liquor or



perform better on drugs, but alcohol or drugs make them less able to think clearly and perform physical tasks skillfully. Judgment and the decision-making processes needed for vehicle operation are affected long before legal limitations are reached. Many over-the-counter, prescription and illegal drugs have side effects that increase the risk for riders. It is difficult to accurately measure the involvement of particular drugs in motorcycle crashes. But we do know what effects various drugs have on the process involved in riding a motorcycle. We also know that the combined effects of alcohol and other drugs are more dangerous than either is alone.

### 5.19.3 - Alcohol in the Body

Alcohol enters the bloodstream quickly. Unlike most foods and beverages, it does not need to be digested. Within minutes after being consumed, it reaches the brain and begins to affect the drinker. The major effect alcohol has is to slow down and impair bodily functions — both mental and physical.

### 5.19.4 - Blood Alcohol Concentration

Blood Alcohol Concentration or BAC is the amount of alcohol in relation to blood in the body. Generally, alcohol can be eliminated in the body at the rate of almost one drink per hour. But a variety of other factors may also influence the level of alcohol retained. The more alcohol in your blood, the greater the degree of impairment.

*Three factors play a major part in determining BAC:*

- **The amount** of alcohol you consume.
- **How fast** you drink.
- **Your body weight.**

Other factors also contribute to the way alcohol affects your system. Your sex, physical condition and food intake are just a few that may cause your BAC level to be even higher. But the full effects of these are not completely known. **Alcohol may still accumulate in your body even if you are drinking at a rate of one drink per hour.** Abilities and judgment can be affected by that one drink.

A 12-ounce can of beer, a mixed drink with one shot of liquor and a 5-ounce glass of wine all contain the same amount of alcohol. The faster you drink, the more alcohol accumulates in your body. If you drink two drinks in an hour, at the end of that hour, at least one drink will remain in your bloodstream.

Without taking into account any of the other factors, the following formula illustrates the **LEAST** amount of drinks remaining in the bloodstream:

Total		# hours		drinks
drinks	LESS	since last	EQUALS	left
consumed		drink		in body
_____	-	_____	=	_____

- **8 drinks in 4 hours** would have at least 4 drinks remaining in their system.
- **7 drinks in 3 hours** would have at least 4 drinks remaining in their system.

There are times when a larger person may not accumulate as high a concentration of alcohol for each drink consumed. They have more blood and other bodily fluids. But because of individual differences it is better not to take the chance that abilities and judgment have not been affected. Whether or not you are legally intoxicated is not the real issue. Impairment of judgment and skills begins well below the legal limit.

### 5.19.5 - Alcohol and the Law

In most states, a person with a BAC of .08 or above is considered intoxicated. It doesn't matter how sober you may look or act. The breath or urine test is what usually determines whether you are riding legally or illegally.

Your chances of being stopped for riding under the influence of alcohol are increasing. Law enforcement is being stepped up across the country in response to the senseless deaths and injuries caused by drinking drivers and riders.

### 5.19.6 - Consequences of Conviction

Years ago, first offenders had a good chance of getting off with a small fine and participation in alcohol-abuse classes. Today the laws of most states impose stiff penalties on drinking operators. And those penalties are mandatory, meaning that judges must impose them.

If you are convicted of riding under the influence of alcohol or drugs, you may receive any of the following penalties:

- **License Suspension** — Mandatory suspension for conviction, arrest or refusal to submit to a breath test.
- **Fines** — Severe fines are another aspect of a conviction, usually levied with a license suspension.
- **Community Service** — Performing tasks such as picking up litter along the highway, washing cars in the motor-vehicle pool or working at an emergency ward.
- **Costs** — Additional lawyer's fees to pay, lost work time spent in court or alcohol-education programs, public transportation costs (while your license is suspended) and the added psychological costs of being tagged a "drunk driver."

### Don't Drink

- **Don't Drink** — Once you start, your resistance becomes weaker.
- **Or Don't Ride** — If you haven't controlled your drinking, you must control your riding.
- **Leave the motorcycle** — so you won't be tempted to ride. Arrange another way to get home.
- **Wait** — If you exceed your limit, wait until your system eliminates the alcohol and its fatiguing effects.

### 5.19.7 - Step In To Protect Friends

People who have had too much to drink are unable to make a responsible decision. It is up to others to step in and keep them from taking too great a risk. No one wants to do this — it's uncomfortable, embarrassing and thankless. You are rarely thanked for your efforts at the time. But the alternatives are often worse.

*There are several ways to keep friends from hurting themselves:*

- **Arrange a safe ride** — Provide alternative ways for them to get home.
- **Slow the pace of drinking** — Involve them in other activities.
- **Keep them there** — Use any excuse to keep them from getting on their motorcycle. Serve them food and coffee to pass the time. Explain your concerns for their risks of getting arrested or hurt or hurting someone else.
- **Get friends involved** — Use peer pressure from a group of friends to intervene. It helps to enlist support from others when you decide to step in. The more people on your side, the easier it is to be firm and the harder it is for the rider to resist. While you may not be thanked at the time, you will never have to say, "If only I had..."

### 5.19.8 - Fatigue

Riding a motorcycle is more tiring than driving a car. On a long trip, you'll tire sooner than you would in a car. Avoid riding when tired. Fatigue can affect your control of the motorcycle.

- **Protect yourself** from the elements — Wind, cold, and rain make you tire quickly. Dress warmly. A windshield is worth its cost if you plan to ride long distances.
- **Limit your distance** — Experienced riders seldom try to ride more than about six hours a day.
- **Take frequent rest breaks** — Stop and get off the motorcycle at least every two hours.
- **Don't drink or use drugs** — Artificial stimulants often result in extreme fatigue or depression when they start to wear off. Riders are unable to concentrate on the task at hand.

### 5.19.9 - Be Smart

Follow the law and use caution. Failing to follow the law will result in serious consequences and may risk your life.

- A person riding a motorcycle shall keep both wheels on the ground at all times. A person violating this law shall be cited for a Moving violation.
- The fine for exceeding the speed limit by more than 50 mph is raised to \$1,000 for the 1<sup>st</sup> offense and \$2,500 for the second. In addition, a second offense will result in a 1-year driver license suspension.

## **Section 6**

### **Florida Rider Training Program Course Sponsors**

The Florida Rider Training Program (F RTP) uses curriculum developed by the Motorcycle Safety Foundation. F RTP Course providers offer a 15-hour MSF Basic Rider Course TM (BRC), which provides an introduction to the fundamentals of safe, responsible motorcycling. This includes the knowledge and skills necessary to ride safely on the streets and highways.

The BRC provides basic entry-level skills for a new rider. BRC RiderCoach TM coach riders to develop the physical skills of a basic control that include straight line riding, stopping, turning/shifting, and then move on to more advanced skills like stopping quickly, cornering, and swerving. Insurance, motorcycle, helmet and student handbook are provided for the course. Students must provide eye protection, gloves (full hand coverage), pants, long sleeved shirt or jacket, and sturdy over-the-ankle footwear.

Completion of this course is required for anyone who applies for a motorcycle endorsement or motorcycle only license. Upon successful completion of this course, graduates may be entitled to insurance premium discounts through participating insurance companies.

Many F RTP course providers also offer MSF Experienced Rider Course TM Suite. This is a one-day rider course for experienced riders who have a motorcycle endorsement but want to refresh or enhance their skills. These courses cover riding strategies to handle traffic hazards and works on developing cornering, braking, and swerving skills. ERC Suite participants provide their own motorcycle, proof of insurance and protective riding equipment.

An up to date list of approved course providers can be found on our web site at <http://motorcycles.hsmv.state.fl.us/SponsorSearch.cfm>.