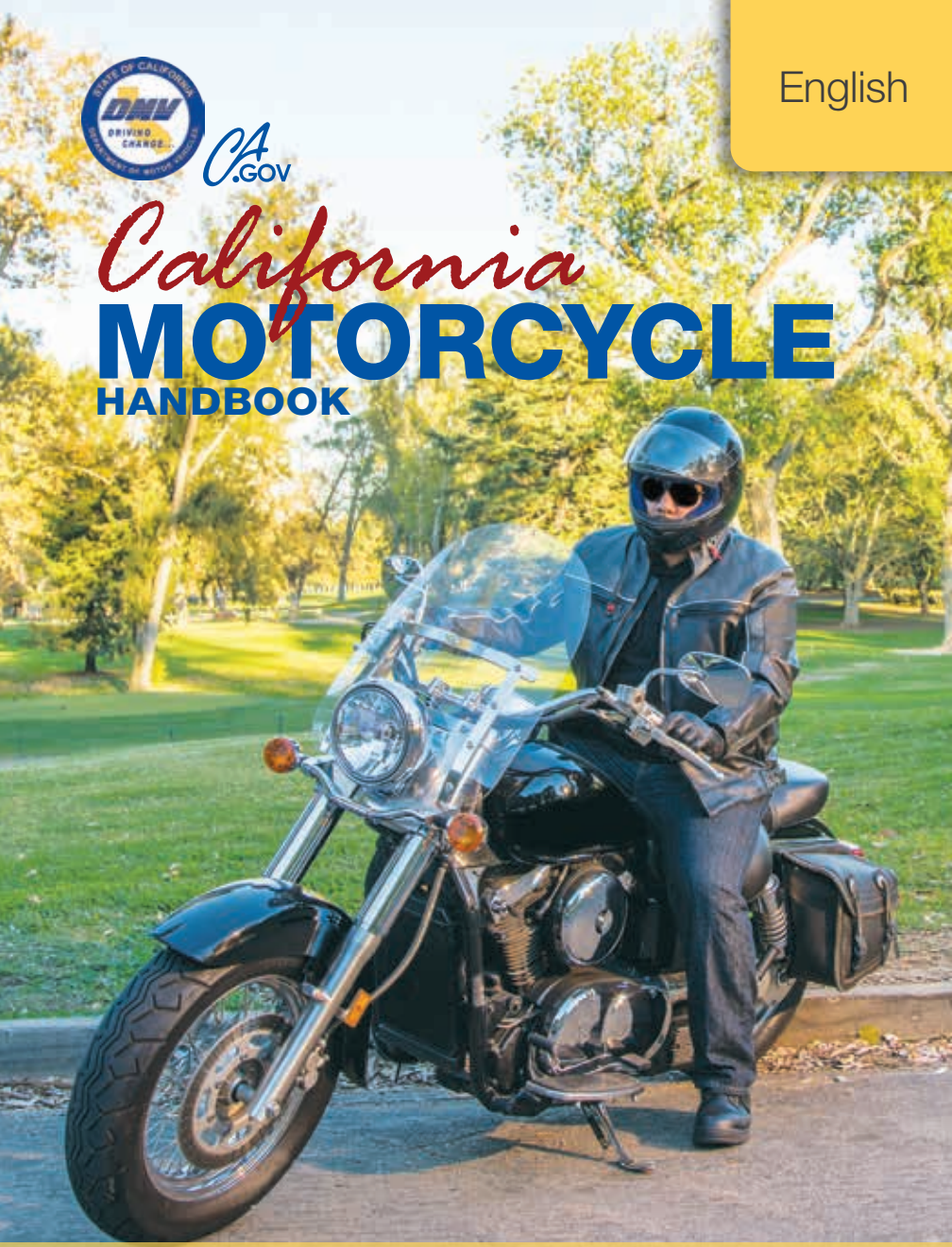
English

California MOTORCYCLE HANDBOOK



You can study this handbook plus use many other DMV online services at **dmv.ca.gov**.

Gavin Newsom, Governor
State of California

David S Kim, Secretary
California State Transportation Agency

Steve Gordon, Director
California Department of Motor Vehicles

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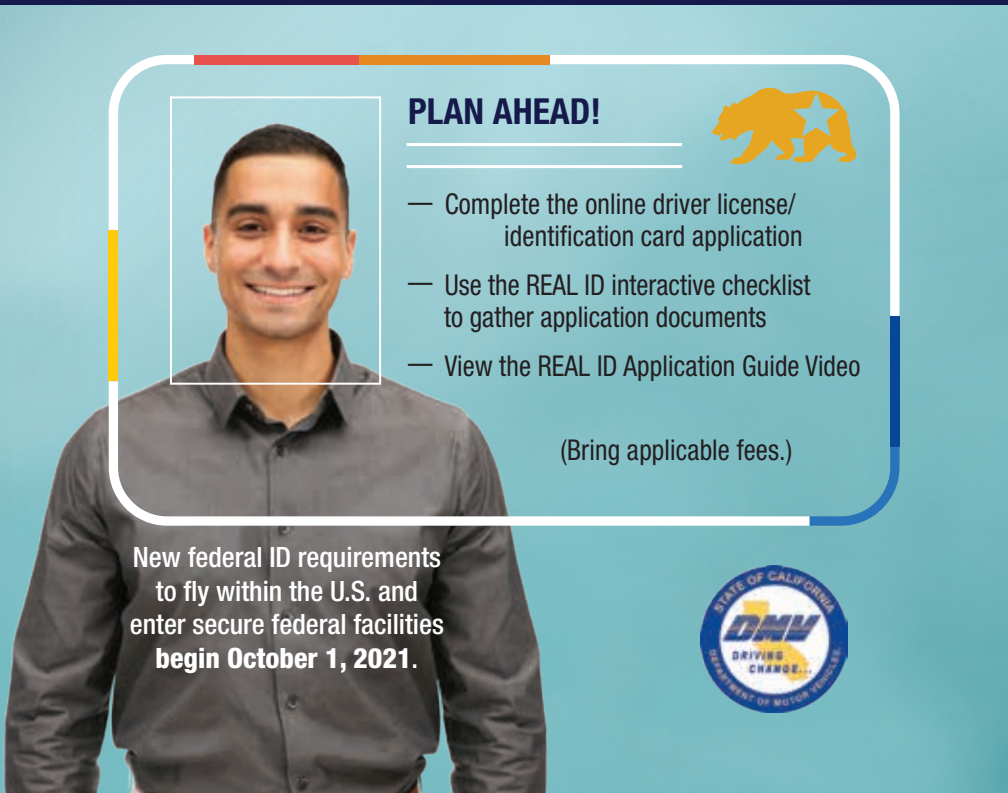
Bring the following documentation to your office visit:

1. **Identity/birth**
   (Ex: Original or certified birth certificate, US passport)
2. **Social Security number**
   (Ex: Social Security card, W-2 displaying entire SSN)
3. **California Residency**–2 different documents
   (Ex: Utility or cell phone bill, bank statement, lease agreement)

A name change document(s) is required if the name on your identity document is different than your current legal name.



PLAN AHEAD!

- Complete the online driver license/ identification card application
- Use the REAL ID interactive checklist to gather application documents
- View the REAL ID Application Guide Video

(Bring applicable fees.)

New federal ID requirements to fly within the U.S. and enter secure federal facilities **begin October 1, 2021**.

STATE OF CALIFORNIA DMV DRIVING CHANGE... DEPARTMENT OF MOTOR VEHICLES

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NEW LAWS 2016

Effective January 1, 2016

Electric Bicycle Classes

Three classes of electric bicycles have been created. All operators of a Class 3 (maximum speed of 28 miles per hour [mph]) electric bicycle must be 16 years old or older and are required to wear a bicycle helmet. There is no financial responsibility, driver license (DL), registration, or license plate requirement for these electric bicycles. More information on electric bicycles can be found in the *California Vehicle Code* (CVC) §§312.5, 12804.9, 21113, & 24016 and in this handbook.

Effective January 1, 2017

Increased Accident Reportability Threshold

The minimum damage threshold for collision reportability will increase from $750 to $1,000. A driver of a motor vehicle involved in a collision with property damages greater than $1,000 must submit a Report of Traffic Accident Occurring in California (SR 1) to DMV. DMV is authorized to impose sanctions following an uninsured reportable collision (CVC §§1656.2, 1808, 1808.1, 12517.1, 13369, 13558, 16000, 16000.1, 16020.1, 16020.2, 16075, 16251, 16430, & 16434).

Disclaimer

This handbook is only a summary of laws and regulations. DMV, law enforcement, and courts follow the full and exact language of the law contained in the *California Vehicle Code*. You may buy a copy of the *California Vehicle Code* at any DMV field office or visit our website at **www.dmv.ca.gov**.

Where to Write

If you have any comments or suggestions regarding this publication, please send them to:
Department of Motor Vehicles
Customer Communications Section MS H165
PO Box 932345, Sacramento, CA 94232-3450

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Department of Motor Vehicles
Legal Office MS C128
PO Box 932382
Sacramento, CA 94232-3820

DMV INFORMATION

FIELD OFFICE HOURS OF OPERATION	
Monday	8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Tuesday	8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Wednesday	9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Thursday	8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Friday	8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Saturday	Closed
Sunday	Closed

Some field offices may have extended hours and a few offer only driver license (DL) or vehicle registration services. To find a field office location and service options, go online or call the toll-free number listed below.

Go online at **www.dmv.ca.gov** for (to):

- Field office locations, hours, directions, and phone numbers.
- Make appointments to visit a field office or take a drive test (except for commercial drive tests).
- Order personalized plates.
- DL and identification (ID) card information.
- Vehicle/vessel registration information.
- Downloadable forms.
- Publications—handbooks, brochures, and sample tests.
- Senior driver information.
- Teen driver information.
- Links to other state and federal agencies.
- Renew your DL/ID or vehicle registration.

Call 1-800-777-0133 during normal business hours to:

- Obtain/request DL/ID and vehicle registration information, forms, and publications.
- Find office locations and hours.
- Make a drive test appointment.
- Speak to a DMV representative or request a call back.

Call 1-800-777-0133 for automated service 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to:

- Renew your vehicle registration with the renewal identification number (RIN) provided on your billing notice. You can pay with a credit card or e-check.
- Make an office appointment.

Make sure to have your DL/ID card number, vehicle license plate number and/or vehicle identification number (VIN) available.

Persons with speech or hearing impairments can call toll free, 1-800-368-4327 for assistance with DMV services. Only typed messages from another TTY are received and responded to at this number.

Advertising sponsorship helps defray the printing costs of this publication. The products and services provided by the advertising sponsors are not promoted or endorsed by DMV, but the significant contribution by the advertising sponsors is most appreciated.

If you would like to advertise in this publication, please call the Office of State Publishing Advertising Department at 1-866-824-0603.

Save Time

Fill Out Your Electronic DL/ID Card Application Online

To save time, DMV customers can use their computer, tablet, or smartphone to fill out an online electronic application for a driver license or identification (DL/ID) card before visiting a DMV office.

Available in the following 10 languages:

- English
- Chinese
- Japanese
- Korean
- Thai
- Spanish
- Hindi
- Khmer
- Tagalog
- Vietnamese

Learn more at dmv.ca.gov

STATE OF CALIFORNIA
DMV
DRIVING CHANGE...
DEPARTMENT OF MOTOR VEHICLES

INTRODUCTION

This handbook supplements the *California Driver Handbook* concerning traffic laws, safe driving rules, and driver licenses. Study the *California Driver Handbook* as well as this handbook.

This handbook provides information for both beginner and experienced riders of two-wheel vehicles. Portions of this handbook dealing with safe driving practices (rather than traffic laws) were developed initially by the National Public Services Research Institute in cooperation with the Motorcycle Safety Foundation (MSF).

The MSF, California Highway Patrol (CHP), California Motorcyclist Safety Program (CMSP), various motorcyclist enthusiast groups, and the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) agree that combining quality motorcycle rider education and increased public awareness, has the potential to reduce the number and severity of motorcycle collisions.

When using this handbook, remember it is only a summary of laws and regulations. DMV, law enforcement, and courts follow the full and exact language of the law contained in the *California Vehicle Code* (CVC).

TWO-WHEEL VEHICLE OPERATION

The basic rules of the road contained in the *California Vehicle Code* apply to all two-wheel vehicles including, but not limited to, motorcycles, motor-driven cycles, mopeds, or motorized bicycles. Minibikes, tote-goats, trail bikes, and similar vehicles may fall within the definition of motorcycle, motor-driven cycle, or motorized bicycle. If any of these vehicles are operated on a highway, they must meet applicable equipment, registration, financial responsibility, licensing, and operational requirements, if appropriate.

It is illegal to ride a motor-driven cycle, moped, motorized bicycle, or electric bicycle on a freeway or expressway if signs are posted to prohibit operation. Additionally, it is illegal to ride a moped, motorized bicycle or a Class 3 electric bicycle on a bicycle path or trail, equestrian (horse) trail, hiking trail, or recreational trail unless that path or trail is on or next to a road, or permission to use the trail or roadway is granted by local law.

MOTORCYCLES

A motorcycle is a motor vehicle with a seat or saddle for the rider designed to travel on not more than three wheels.

Motor-Driven Cycles

A motor-driven cycle is a motorcycle with **less than** a 150 cc motor size.

NOTE: You may not operate a motor-driven cycle on a freeway or expressway if signs are posted to prohibit motor-driven cycle operation.

Motorized Bicycles or Moped

A motorized bicycle or moped is a two-or three-wheeled device, capable of no more than 30 miles per hour (mph) on level ground, and equipped with:

- Fully operative pedals for human propulsion.
- A motor producing less than four gross brake horsepower and an automatic transmission.
- No pedals if powered solely by electrical energy (CVC §406(a)).
- Motorized bicycles may ride in a bicycle lane **if** authorized by local authority or ordinance.

Electric Bicycles

An electric bicycle is a bicycle equipped with fully operable pedals and an electric motor of less than 750 watts. Three classes of electric bicycles have been established:

- Class 1: A low speed pedal-assisted electric bicycle equipped with a motor which provides assistance only when the rider is pedaling and ceases to provide assistance when a speed of 20 mph is reached.
- Class 2: A low speed throttle-assisted electric bicycle equipped with a motor used exclusively to propel the bicycle and NOT capable of providing assistance when a speed of 20 mph is reached.
- Class 3: A low speed pedal-assisted electric bicycle equipped with a speedometer, and a motor which provides assistance only when the rider is pedaling and ceases to provide assistance when a speed of 28 mph is reached.

The operator of a Class 3 electric bicycle:

- **Must** be 16 years old or older.
- **Must** wear a bicycle safety helmet.
- **Must** not transport passengers.
- **May** ride an electric bicycle in a bicycle lane **if** authorized by local authority or ordinance.

All electric bicycle classes are exempt from the motor vehicle financial responsibility, DL, and license plate requirements (CVC §24016).

Motorized Scooter

A motorized scooter is defined as any two-wheeled “device” with:

- A motor, handlebars, and a floorboard for standing on when riding, and
- The options of having:
  - A driver seat which cannot interfere with the operator's ability to stand and ride.
  - The ability to be powered by human propulsion.

NOTE: A motorized scooter may be driven with any class DL. A motorized scooter may not be used to take a skills test.

A motorized scooter's exhaust system must not be modified or altered.

LICENSE REQUIREMENTS

California issues the following DL classes for two-wheel vehicle operation:

- Class M1—You may operate any two-wheel motorcycle, motor-driven cycle, or motorized scooter and all vehicles listed under Class M2.

  NOTE: The permit and DL requirements in this handbook pertain to two-wheel vehicles and are referenced in CVC §12804.9.
- Class M2—You may operate any motorized bicycle, moped, or motorized scooter.

NOTE: Class C licensees may operate a motorcycle with a side car attached, three-wheel motorcycle, or motorized scooter.

EARNING YOUR LICENSE

Safe riding requires knowledge and skill. Testing two-wheel vehicle operators is the best measurement of the skills necessary to operate safely in traffic because people often overestimate their own abilities. DMV's licensing tests are designed to be scored objectively.

You may apply for a Class M1 or M2 DL at any DMV field office which provides DL services. To obtain your DL, refer to the Requirements for a Motorcycle M1 or M2 License section (see page 5). You will be required to pass the driver knowledge test, motorcycle knowledge test, knowledge test(s) for any other license class(es) requested, and pass a motorcycle skills test or obtain a Certificate of Completion of Motorcycle Training (DL 389) as defined in the California Motorcyclist Safety Program Training Course section (see page 6).

Knowledge test questions are based on information in this handbook and the *California Driver Handbook*. The motorcycle skills test is conducted in either an actual traffic environment or in a controlled off-street area.

Motorcycle Type - License Class Chart

Type of Vehicle	California Vehicle Code Sections (§§)	Class of License	Vehicle Description
Motorcycle	400, 12804.9(b)(4)	M1	A motorcycle is a motor vehicle with a seat or saddle for the rider and is designed to travel on not more than three wheels.
Motor-driven cycle	405, 12804.9(b)(4)	M1*	A motor-driven cycle is a motorcycle with less than a 150 cc motor size. A motor-driven cycle does not include motorized bicycle.
Motorized bicycle or moped (capable of no more than 30 mph)	406(a), 12804.9(b)(5)(A)(i)	Any class of license**	A two- or three-wheeled device, capable of no more than 30 mph on level ground, and equipped with fully operative pedals for human propulsion or having no pedals if powered solely by electrical energy, a motor producing less than four gross brake horsepower, and an automatic transmission.
Electric bicycle	312.5(a), 12804.9(b)(5)(A)(i)	Not required	A bicycle equipped with fully operable pedals and an electric motor of less than 750 watts. There are three electric bicycle classes: Class 1 and 2 are capable of speeds of no more than 20 mph. Class 3 is capable of speeds of no more than 28 mph.
Motorized scooter **NOTE**: Cannot be used for a skills test.	407.5, 12804.9(b)	Any class of license***	A motorized scooter is defined as any two-wheeled device with an electric motor, handlebars, a floorboard for standing on when riding, and the option of having a driver seat which cannot interfere with the operator's ability to stand and ride and/or the ability to be powered by human propulsion.

*Motor vehicles with less than a 150 cc motor size do not have the engine capability to be safely driven on a freeway or expressway.
** A person holding a valid California driver license of any class may operate a short-term (48 hrs. or less) rental motorized bicycle without taking any special examination for the operation of a motorized bicycle, and without having a class M2 endorsement on that driver license.
*** A person holding a valid driver license of any class may operate a motorized scooter.

Requirements for a Motorcycle M1 or M2 License

To Obtain an M1 or M2 License			
REQUIREMENTS	**MINORS AGE 15½ to 17 (See NOTE 1)**	**ADULTS AGE 18 to 20 (See NOTE 2)**	**ADULTS AGE 21 and OVER (See NOTE 3)**
Driver education and behind-the-wheel driver training certificates of completion	✓	N/A	N/A
Certificates of Completion of Motorcycle Training (DL 389)	✓	✓	N/A
Complete a Driver License or Identification Card Application (DL44 or DL44C)	✓	✓	✓
Parent(s) or guardian(s) signature (if a minor)	✓	N/A	N/A
Pass a vision exam	✓	✓	✓
Fingerprint(s)	✓	✓	✓
Pay required fees	✓	✓	✓
Have your photograph taken	✓	✓	✓
*Pass the applicable knowledge and skills tests	✓	✓	✓
Have an instruction permit for at least 6 months	✓	✓	N/A
Permit restrictions	(See **NOTE 4**)	(See **NOTE 4**)	(See **NOTE 4**)

*Tests include at least the driver knowledge, motorcycle knowledge, and motorcycle skills. An observation road test is required for applicants who have never been licensed for any class of motor vehicle and apply for a motorcycle only license.

NOTE 1: Minors 15½ years old or older, but under 17½ years old, must submit a DL 389, bring proof of completion of both driver education and driver training or have a Class C driver license, and pass both the driver knowledge and the motorcycle driver knowledge test.
NOTE 2: Applicants 18 years old or older, but under 21 years old, must submit a DL 389, and pass both the driver knowledge and the motorcycle driver knowledge test.
NOTE 3: While not a requirement, motorcycle license applicants 21 years old or older, are encouraged to enroll in the California Motorcyclist Safety Program (CMSP) training course.
NOTE 4: The Class M1/M2 instruction permit includes the following restrictions:

- No carrying passengers.
- No freeway driving.
- No nighttime driving.

NOTE: The DL 389 is valid for 12 months from the issue date. To locate a DMV field office that offers the motorcycle skills test and/or to schedule an appointment, visit **www.dmv.ca.gov** or call 1-800-777-0133.

California Motorcyclist Safety Program Training Course

Motorcycle applicants under 21 years old are **required** to complete a CMSP training course **before** receiving a motorcycle instruction permit.

Motorcycle applicants 21 years old and older are **encouraged** to enroll in the CMSP training course. The CMSP training course provides hands-on motorcycle knowledge and skill training for beginner and experienced riders. The DMV motorcycle skills test may be waived upon completion of the CMSP training course and submission of the Certificate of Completion of Motorcycle Training (DL 389). DMV will not waive the motorcycle skills test based on an out-of-state motorcycle training program or in-state/out-of-state course completion card for insurance purposes. For more information, contact CMSP at 1-877-RIDE-411 or visit **www.californiamotorcyclist.com**.

NOTE: The DL 389 is valid for 12 months from the issue date.

Cheating

The use of testing aids is strictly prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to, the *California Motorcycle Handbook*, *California Driver Handbook,* cheat sheets, or electronic communication devices such as a cell phone, computer, tablet, etc. If any testing aid(s) are used during the knowledge test, the knowledge test will be marked as a "failure." An action may also be taken by DMV against your driving privilege or the driving privilege of anyone who assists you in cheating during the examination process.

Motorcycle Skills Test

Basic vehicle control skills are included in the motorcycle skills test to determine your ability to maneuver in normal traffic situations. The skills test may be waived for a person presenting a valid DL 389; however, you may be required to perform an observation test when applying for a motorcycle only (Class M1/M2) license.

The motorcycle skills test allows the rider to demonstrate his or her ability to control the motorcycle through several skills. Applicants taking the motorcycle skills test should consider the size of the motorcycle they plan to operate. The motorcycle skills test is a pass/fail test.

The motorcycle skills test includes the following:

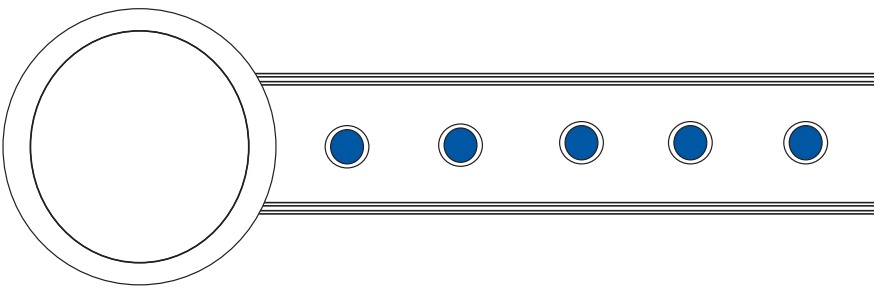
Pre-trip Inspection - You will be asked to identify the following items on your motorcycle:

- Starter
- Kill switch
- Clutch (if equipped)
- Throttle
- Gear selector
- Headlight dimmer switch
- Brakes
- Turn signals
- Horn

You will be asked to demonstrate the following skills:

- **Riding in the tracking paths** (the area within and including the tracking lines)
- **Serpentine Ride** – Beginning on the right of the first cone, weave through a row of five traffic cones. At the end of the row of cones, begin the circle ride.
- **Circle Ride** – Ride around the circle twice in a clockwise direction keeping the front wheel within the tracking path, and weaving once more through the row of five cones as you return to the starting point.
- **Slow Ride** – Ride slowly between two parallel lines keeping the front tire within the tracking path. At the end of the tracking path, begin the circle ride twice in a counter-clockwise direction.
- **Gear Shift Ride** – Ride in a straight path, shift gears up and then down, complete a U-turn and return, shift gears up and then down, and end in a smooth stop at the starting point. This is only performed on motorcycles with a clutch and gears.

  A. The width inside of the parallel ride lane is one foot.
  B. The width inside the circle ride lane is two feet.
  C. The diameter of the outside circle is twenty-four feet.
  D. The cones are spaced twelve feet apart. The width of the area for the cones is eight feet.



Observation Test (if applying for a motorcycle only license) – An observation road test is required for applicants who have never been licensed for any class of motor vehicle and who apply for a motorcycle only license. The examiner will observe you operating the motorcycle from a preselected vantage point, usually on the corner, near the DMV field office. They will instruct you to follow a route that will keep you in view for the longest period of time.

PREPARING TO RIDE

Wear the Right Gear

When you ride, you have a far better chance of avoiding serious injury when wearing protective gear and apparel.

By law, you must wear:

- A U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) compliant motorcycle safety helmet.

It is highly suggested you wear:

- Face and/or eye protection.
- Protective apparel, such as a leather or long sleeve jacket with reflective material, long heavy pants, over the ankle closed-toe boots, and full-fingered leather gloves.

More information on wearing the right gear and protective apparel is covered in the following pages.

Helmet Use

All riders and passengers are required per CVC §27803 to wear a U.S. DOT compliant motorcycle safety helmet when riding a motorcycle, motor-driven cycle, or motorized bicycle. The motorcycle safety helmet must be certified by the manufacturer stating the helmet complies with the U.S. DOT Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard (FMVSS) 218. Head injuries account for the majority of serious and fatal motorcyclist injuries and, with few exceptions, head injuries are reduced by properly wearing a motorcycle safety helmet. Here are some facts to consider:

- Most collisions happen on short trips (less than five miles long).
- Most riders are riding slower than 30 mph when a collision occurs. At these speeds, a U.S. DOT compliant motorcycle safety helmet can cut both the number and the severity of head injuries by 50 percent.
- A **non**-U.S. DOT compliant helmet generally has very thin liners and protective padding. These types of helmets lack the strength, size, and ability to protect the rider during a collision.
- A **non**-U.S. DOT compliant helmet may look like U.S. DOT

compliant helmets and may be sold alongside U.S. DOT compliant helmets. Make sure the U.S. DOT certification is on the helmet you wish to purchase. **Non**-U.S. DOT compliant helmets may be referred to as novelty helmets, rain bonnets, lids, loophole lids, beanies, or brain buckets.

A U. S. DOT compliant helmet may be decorated by the owner with stick-on items such as decals, Mohawks, Viking horns, etc. and will not affect the safety properties of the helmet. In a collision, regardless of speed, if you are wearing a U.S. DOT compliant motorcycle safety helmet you are three times more likely to survive a head injury than if you are not wearing a U.S. DOT compliant motorcycle safety helmet.

Helmet Selection

There are four types of helmets to consider: A half shell, three-quarters, modular, or full-face helmet. The full-face helmet with a lock-in visor, offers the best coverage and protection to the back and sides of your head.

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

- Meets U.S. DOT safety standards and has the manufacturer-applied DOT lettering on the back of the helmet.

  NOTE: DOT lettering should not be a stick-on label or easily removed.
- Fits snugly, all the way around.
- Has no obvious defects such as cracks, loose padding, or frayed straps.
- Is securely fastened on your head when you ride. Otherwise, if you are involved in a collision, it may come off your head before it gets a chance to protect you.

Face, Eye, and Ear Protection

A plastic shatter-resistant face shield can help protect your whole face in a collision. Face shields, when lowered and locked-in, offer protection from wind, dust, dirt, rain, insects, pebbles, and other debris.

Face shields, when lowered and locked-in, protect your face. Goggles only protect your eyes.

A windshield is not a substitute for a face shield or goggles. Most windshields will not protect your eyes from wind, nor will eyeglasses or sunglasses. Glasses will not keep your eyes from watering, and they might blow off when you turn your head.

To be effective, eye or face shield protection must:

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

NOTE: Tinted eye protection or tinted face shields should not be worn at night or when little light is available.

To protect against the elements of nature, such as wind which can cause hearing loss, you may want to use ear protection. CVC §27400 states a person may not wear a headset covering, earplugs, or earphones in both ears, unless the protectors (earplugs or molds) are specifically designed to reduce harmful (injurious) noise levels. The headset coverings, earplugs, or earphones must not inhibit the wearer's ability to hear a siren or horn from an emergency vehicle or another motor vehicle.

Clothing

The right clothing is an integral part of your protective apparel and will help protect you in a collision. It provides comfort, and protection from heat, cold, and debris, along with the hot, moving parts of the motorcycle. Recommended clothing and protective apparel:

- A jacket that covers your arms and fits snugly enough to keep from flapping in the wind, yet allows you to move freely. Leather or sturdy synthetic materials with integrated body armor offers, the most protection. You should consider a jacket that is brightly colored or reflective. Either of these will aid in your visibility so other motorists can see you.
- Long pants offer greater protection than short pants. Denim jeans provide the best protection. Chaps (leather pants without a seat) worn over long pants offer an extra layer of protection for your legs.
- Over-the-ankle boots or closed-toe shoes should be high and sturdy enough to cover and support your ankles. Soles should be made of a hard, durable, slip-resistant material. The heels should be short

so they do not catch on rough surfaces. Tuck in the laces so they will not catch on your motorcycle. Shoes, such as flip flops or sandals, are not recommended protective apparel.

- Gloves allow a better grip and help protect your hands. Gloves should be made of leather or similar durable material offering maximum hand and finger protection.
- Wearing a jacket, long pants, sturdy shoes or boots, and gloves (even in warm weather) can prevent dehydration, and sun/wind burn. Many of these items are designed to protect without making you overheat, even on summer days.

Riding for long periods in cold weather can cause severe chill, dehydration, and fatigue. Numbness can make it difficult to control a motorcycle. In cold or wet weather, layer clothes to keep yourself warm and dry, as well as protect you from injury. 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.

Know Your Motorcycle

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

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

The Right Motorcycle

First, make sure your motorcycle "fits" you. Your feet should comfortably reach the ground while you are seated on the motorcycle. At a minimum, your street-legal motorcycle must have:

- Tires with sufficient tread and air pressure for safe operation.
- Operable headlights, taillight, brake light, and turn signals.
- Front and rear brakes.
- A horn and mirror(s).

Get Familiar With the Motorcycle Controls

Be completely familiar with the motorcycle before you take it out on the street. Get familiar with any motorcycle new to you, preferably in a controlled area. (No matter how experienced you may be, ride extra carefully on

any motorcycle new or unfamiliar to you.) Remember more than half of all collisions occur by motorcycle riders with less than six months experience.

If you use an unfamiliar motorcycle:

- Make all the safety and maintenance checks you would on your own motorcycle.
- Find out where everything is located, particularly the turn signals, horn, headlight dimmer switch, fuel-supply valve, and engine cut-off switch. You should be able to find them 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 your surroundings. Accelerate gently, take turns slowly, and leave extra room for stopping.

Check Your Motorcycle

A motorcycle needs more frequent attention than a car. If something is wrong with the motorcycle, find out about it before you get in traffic or operate the motorcycle at freeway speeds. Make the following checks before every ride:

- **Tires**—Check the air pressure, general wear, and tread.
- **Fluids**—Oil and fluid levels. At a minimum, check hydraulic fluid and coolant weekly. Look under the motorcycle for signs of fluid leaks.
- **Headlights and Taillight**—Check them both for proper operation and burned out bulbs.
- **Turn Signals**—Turn on both right and left turn signals. Make sure all front and rear signal lights work properly.
- **Battery**—Check the battery condition and electrolyte level; ensure the terminals are clean and tight, and that the battery is fastened securely.
- **Brake Light**—Try both brake controls and make sure each one turns on the brake light.
- **Chain or Belt**—Check the tension, lubrication, and sprockets.
- **Kick-Stand**—Check the kickstand for cracks, bent springs, and tension to hold position.

Once you are on 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 the mirror(s) before starting. Adjust the mirror(s) so you can

see the lane behind you 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 of you that is 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**—Make sure the horn works.

In addition to the checks before every trip, check the following items at least once a week: wheels, cables, fasteners, and fluid levels. Follow the manufacturer's recommendations.

Collisions are fairly common among new riders. Riding an unfamiliar motorcycle adds to the problem. Get familiar with any motorcycle new to you, preferably in a controlled area. (No matter how experienced you may be, ride extra carefully on any motorcycle new or unfamiliar to you.) Remember more than half of all collisions occur by motorcycle riders with less than six months experience.

Know Your Responsibilities

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

Blame does not matter when someone is injured in a collision. There is rarely a single cause of any collision. The ability to be aware, make critical decisions, and carry them out separates responsible riders from all the rest. It is up to you to keep from being the cause of, or an unprepared participant in, any collision.

As a motorcycle rider, you cannot be sure that others will see you or yield the right of way. To reduce the chances of a collision:

- **Be visible**. Wear bright or reflective clothing, use your headlight and running lights, if equipped, and 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**. Allow yourself enough space when following, being followed, lane splitting, passing, and being passed.
- **Be aware.** Monitor vehicle traffic in front and approaching

traffic from behind while maintaining an escape route.

- **Scan your path of travel**. Look at least 10 to 15 seconds ahead.
- **Identify and separate multiple hazards**.
- **Be prepared to act**. Remain alert. Know how to carry out proper collision-avoidance techniques.

RIDE WITHIN YOUR ABILITIES

This handbook cannot teach you how to control direction, speed, or balance. You learn this by taking professionally taught motorcycle rider courses, practicing, knowing your abilities, and riding within them.

BASIC VEHICLE CONTROL

Body Position

To control a motorcycle:

- **Posture**—Sit so you can use your arms to control the motorcycle rather than to hold yourself up.
- **Seat**—Sit far enough forward so your arms are slightly bent when holding the handlegrips. Bending your arms permits you to press on the handlebars without having to stretch and reduces arm fatigue.
- **Hands**—Hold the handlegrips firmly. Start with your right wrist flat so you will not accidentally use too much throttle. Also, adjust the handlebars so your hands are even with or below your elbows. This allows you to use the proper muscles for precision steering.
- **Knees**—Keep your knees against the gas tank to help with your balance as you turn the motorcycle.
- **Feet**—Keep your feet firmly on the footrests for balance. Do not drag your feet; you could lose control of the motorcycle. Keep your feet near the controls. Do not point your toes downward—they may get caught between the road and the footrests.

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 stopped so you can move out quickly, if needed.

Ride slowly enough when you shift into a lower gear or the motorcycle will lurch and the rear wheel may skid. When riding downhill or shifting into

first gear you may need to slow to downshift safely. Work toward a smooth, even clutch release especially when downshifting.

It is best to change gears before starting a turn. However, sometimes you may need to shift while in the turn. Remember to shift smoothly because a sudden change in power to the rear wheel can cause a skid.

Braking

Your motorcycle has two brakes: one for the front wheel and one for the rear wheel. When making a normal, nonemergency stop, use both brakes at the same time and downshift. The front brake has more stopping power, providing three-quarters of your total stopping power. The front brake is safe to use when used properly.

REMEMBER:

- Use both brakes every time you slow or stop. Using both brakes for "normal" stops helps you develop the proper habit and skill of using both brakes correctly, which you may need in an emergency. Squeeze the front brake and press down on the rear brake. Grabbing at the front brake or jamming down on the rear brake can cause the brakes to lock and result in control problems.
- If you know the technique, using both brakes in a turn is possible, although it should be done very carefully. When you lean the motorcycle, some of the traction is used for cornering and 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 gently squeeze the brake lever, never "grab" it.
- Some motorcycles have integrated braking systems that link the front and rear brakes together when you apply the rear brake pedal (consult your owner's manual).

Turning

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

Use four steps for better control:

1. **Slow**—Reduce your speed before the turn by rolling off the throttle and, if necessary, applying both brakes.
2. **Look**—Look through the turn to where you want to go. Turn only your head, not your

shoulders, and keep your eyes level with the horizon.

3. **Press**—To turn, the motorcycle must lean. To lean the motorcycle, press on the handlegrip 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.
4. **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 tight turns, the rider should keep his or her body straight and only lean the motorcycle.

U-turns

Completing U-turns on a motorcycle requires you to maintain control and balance to maneuver through a tight U-turn. Here are some tips for completing U-turns successfully:

- **Look**—Look through the turn to where you want to go. Turn only your head, not your shoulders, and keep your eyes level with the horizon.
- **Friction Zone**—The friction zone is the area of the clutch between completely engaged and completely released. Riding within the friction zone will give you more control through the turn.
- **Dragging the Rear Brake**—Dragging the rear brake is the practice of utilizing the rear brake to control the bike speed and maintain stability, such as in a U-turn. The front brake should not be used as it could cause the bike to tip over.
- **Centralize Weight**—A motorcycle will be easier to maneuver when the weight is kept close to the bike. Keep your feet on the footrests and, if necessary, apply weight to the outside footrest to equalize balance.
- **Practice**—Practice executing U-turns in an empty open parking lot. Start with wide U-turns and gradually tighten the turning radius. Also, practice U-turns in both directions by *riding* in figure 8 *patterns* until you are comfortable with U-turns in both right and left directions.

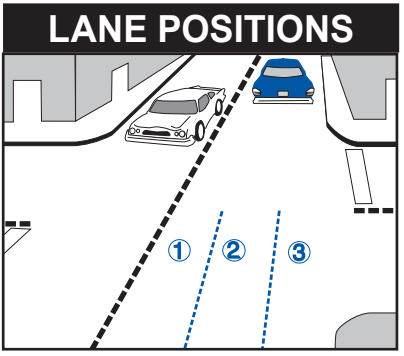
Keeping Your Distance

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

- Time to react.
- Space to maneuver.

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.
- Protect your lane from other drivers.
- Communicate your intentions.
- Help you avoid wind blasts from other vehicles.
- Provide an escape route.

Select the appropriate lane position to maximize your space cushion and make yourself more visible to others.

In general, there is no "best lane position" for motorcycle riders to be seen and maintain a space cushion around the motorcycle. Position yourself in the lane that allows the most visibility and space around you. Change your lane position as traffic situations change. Ride in paths 2 or 3 if vehicles and other potential problems are on your left side. If vehicles are on both sides of you, the center of the lane (path 2) is usually the best option. Riding closer to the center portion of your lane helps to keep other vehicles from sharing the lane.

The oily strip in the center portion of the lane is usually no more than two feet wide. You can ride just to the left or right of the oily strip and still be within the center of the lane. Avoid riding on oil and grease buildups.

Carpool/High-Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) Lanes

A carpool lane is a special freeway lane used only for carpools, buses, motorcycles, or decaled low-emission vehicles. The pavement in this lane is marked with a diamond symbol ◊ and the words "Carpool Lane." These lanes are also known as high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes. Do not cross over double parallel lines to enter or exit any carpool lane except at designated entry or exit places. Motorcyclists are allowed to use carpool/HOV lanes, unless otherwise posted.

Toll Highways and Vehicle Crossings: Using Transponders or Electronic Payment Devices

In California, high-occupancy toll (HOT) lanes and toll highways are fee-paid roadways used in heavily traveled areas to relieve traffic congestion.

Commuters traveling on toll highways or using HOT lanes may purchase transponders, which track their vehicle's usage of these roadways. Transponders allow drivers to pay toll fees through electronic billing.

When using a transponder or other electronic payment device, motorcyclists are allowed to place the payment device in five locations (on the motorcycle or carried by the rider), as long as the toll reader can detect the device.

The locations are:

- In the motorcyclist's pocket.
- Inside a cycle net draped across the gas tank of the motorcycle.
- On the license plate device, if the toll operator provides such a device.
- In a storage compartment on the motorcycle.
- On the windshield of the motorcycle.

Following Another Vehicle

"Following too closely" (tailgating) could be a factor in collisions involving motorcyclists. In traffic, motorcycles need as much distance to stop as other vehicles. Normally, you should maintain a two-second following distance.

To gauge your following distance:

- Ahead of you pick out a marker, such as a pavement marking or lamp post.
- When the rear bumper of the vehicle ahead of you passes the marker, count off the seconds: "one-thousand-one, one-thousand-two." If you reach the marker before you reach "one-thousand-two," you are following too closely.
- A two-second following distance gives you a minimum amount of space to stop or swerve, if the driver ahead stops suddenly. It also gives you a better view of potholes and other road hazards.
- Increase following distance when the motorcycle is towing a trailer as increased stopping distance is required.
- You will need a larger space cushion if your motorcycle takes longer than normal to stop. Open up a three-second or more following distance when the pavement is slippery, you cannot see through the vehicle ahead, or traffic is heavy.
- When you are stopped, keep well behind the vehicle ahead

of you. This provides an escape route if a driver behind you is traveling too quickly or the vehicle ahead starts to back up.

- When behind a vehicle, ride where the driver can see you in his or her rearview mirror.

If you ride in the left or right portion of the lane, the driver **may** see you in his or her side view mirror. If the traffic situation allows, the center lane position is usually the best place for you to be seen by the driver in his or her rearview mirror and to prevent other vehicles from sharing your lane.

Being Followed

When you speed up to lose a tailgater, you only end up with someone tailgating you at a higher speed.

A better way to handle tailgaters is to allow them to pass you. If you cannot do this, slow down and open up extra space ahead of you. This will allow space for both you and the tailgater to stop. This will also encourage the tailgater to pass. But if the tailgater does not pass, you have at least given yourself and the tailgater more time and space to react in case an emergency develops.

Passing and Being Passed

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

Passing

1. Ride in the left portion of your 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 vehicle you are passing and provides space to avoid hazards in your lane.
3. Ride through the driver's blind spot as quickly as possible.
4. Signal again and complete mirror and head checks before returning to your original lane. Then cancel your turn signal.

Remember, passing must be completed within posted speed limits, and only where permitted.

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 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 their mirrors hang out farther than their fenders.
- **Objects thrown from windows**
- **Blasts of wind from larger vehicles**—The blast of wind from a passing vehicle or truck can affect your control. You have more room for error if you are in the middle portion of the lane when hit by this blast than if you are on either the left or right portions of the lane.

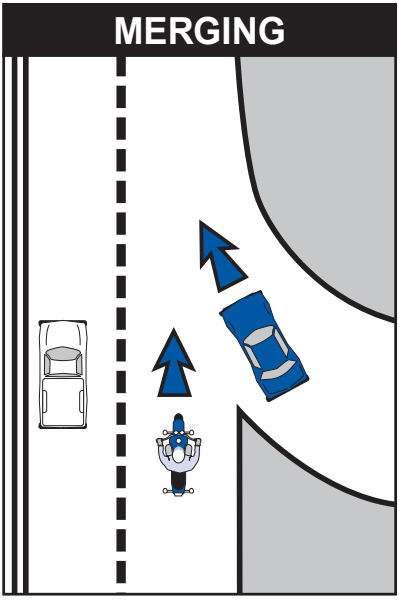
Do not move into the portion of the lane farthest from the passing vehicle. It might invite the other driver to move back into your lane too early.

Lane Splitting

The term "lane splitting", also known as lane sharing, filtering, or white-lining refers to the process of a motorcyclist riding between lanes of stopped or slower-moving traffic or moving between lanes to the front of traffic stopped at a traffic light. Vehicles and motorcycles each need a full lane to operate safely. Riding between rows of stopped or moving vehicles in the same lane can leave you vulnerable. A vehicle could turn suddenly or change lanes, a door could open, or a hand could come out a window.

Merging Vehicles

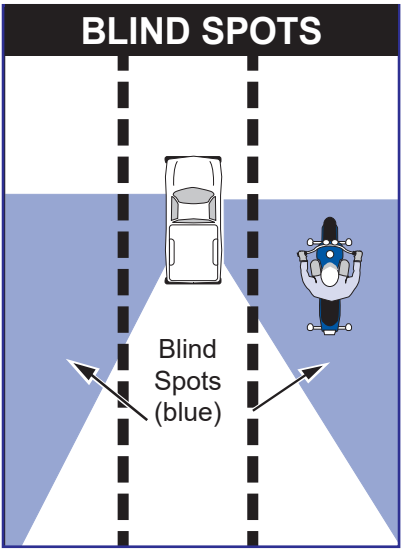
Drivers on an entrance ramp may not see you on the highway. Give them plenty of room. Change to another lane if one is open. If there is no room for a lane change, adjust your speed to open up space for the merging driver and stay near the center of your lane.



Vehicles Alongside

Do not ride next to passenger vehicles or trucks in other lanes *if you do not have to* because you might be in the driver's blind spot. The driver could change lanes without warning.

Also, vehicles in the next lane can 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.



Search, Evaluate, and Execute (SEE)

Experienced motorcycle riders remain aware of what is going on around them. They improve their riding strategy by using SEE, a three-step process for making appropriate judgments and applying them correctly in different traffic situations. SEE stands for, **S**earch, **E**valuate, and **E**xecute.

Search

Actively search ahead, to the sides, and behind you to help you avoid potential hazards. How 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, schools or construction zones.

Search for factors such as:

- Oncoming traffic that may turn left in front of you.
- Traffic coming from either the left, right, or behind.
- Pedestrians coming out from between parked vehicles.
- Hazardous road conditions.

Evaluate

To predict how a hazard may affect you, it is important to know the speed, distance, and direction the hazard may be moving. Think about how hazards can create risks for you. Anticipate potential problems and have a plan to reduce risks.

- Road and surface characteristics, such as potholes, guardrails, bridges, telephone poles, and trees will not move into your path but may influence your riding strategy and escape routes.
- Traffic control devices such as traffic signals, regulatory signs, warning signs, and pavement markings will help you evaluate circumstances ahead.
- Vehicles and other traffic may move into your path and increase the likelihood of a collision.

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.

Execute

Carry out your decision. To create more space and minimize harm from any hazard:

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

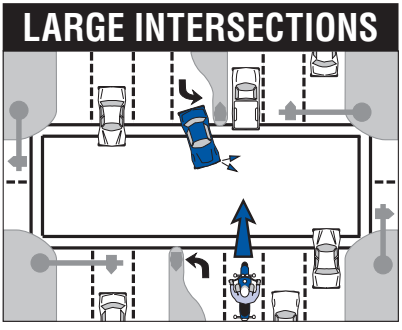
Apply the old saying "one step at a time" to handle two or more hazards. Adjust your speed so you can deal with each hazard separately. Then deal with them one at a time as single hazards. Decision-making becomes more complex with three or more hazards. Weigh the consequences of each and give equal distance to the hazards.

In high-risk areas, such as intersections, shopping areas, schools, or construction zones, reduce your speed, and cover the clutch and both brake levers to reduce your reaction time.

INTERSECTIONS

The greatest potential for conflict and a chance of collision between you and other traffic is at intersections. An intersection is anywhere traffic may cross your path. It can be in the middle of an urban area or at a driveway on a residential street. Over one-half of motorcycle/passenger vehicle collisions are caused by drivers entering a rider's right-of-way. Vehicles turning left in front of you, including those illegally turning left from the wrong lane, and vehicles on side streets pulling into your lane, are the biggest dangers. Your use of the SEE process at intersections is critical (see page 21).

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



Increase the chances of being seen at intersections. Ride with your headlight on, and in a lane position that provides the best view of oncoming traffic. Maintain enough space around your motorcycle that permits you to take evasive action.

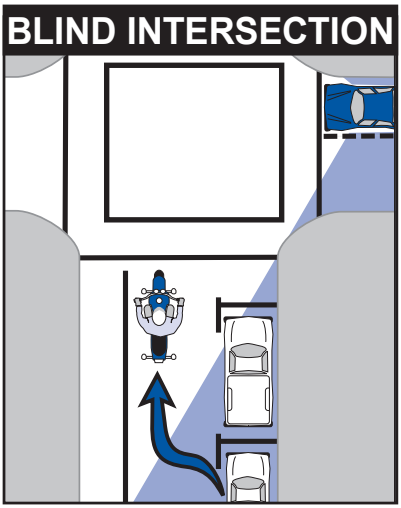
As you approach an intersection, select a lane position that increases your visibility to the driver. Cover the clutch and both brakes to reduce reaction time.

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 you are preparing to turn.

Blind Intersections

When you approach a blind intersection, move to the lane position that brings you into another driver's field of vision at the earliest possible moment. In this picture, the motorcycle rider has moved to the left portion of the lane, away from the parked vehicle, so the driver on the cross street can see him or her as soon as possible.

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 this position, lean your body forward and look around buildings, parked vehicles, or bushes to see if anything is coming. Make sure your front wheel stays out of the cross lane of travel while you are looking.



Passing Parked Vehicles

When passing parked vehicles, stay toward the left portion of your lane. This way, you can avoid problems caused by doors opening, drivers getting out of vehicles, or people stepping from between vehicles. If oncoming traffic is present, it is usually best to remain in the center portion of the lane to maximize the space around you.

A bigger problem can occur if a driver pulls away from the curb without checking for traffic from behind. Even if the driver looks, he or she may fail to see you.

DRIVERS

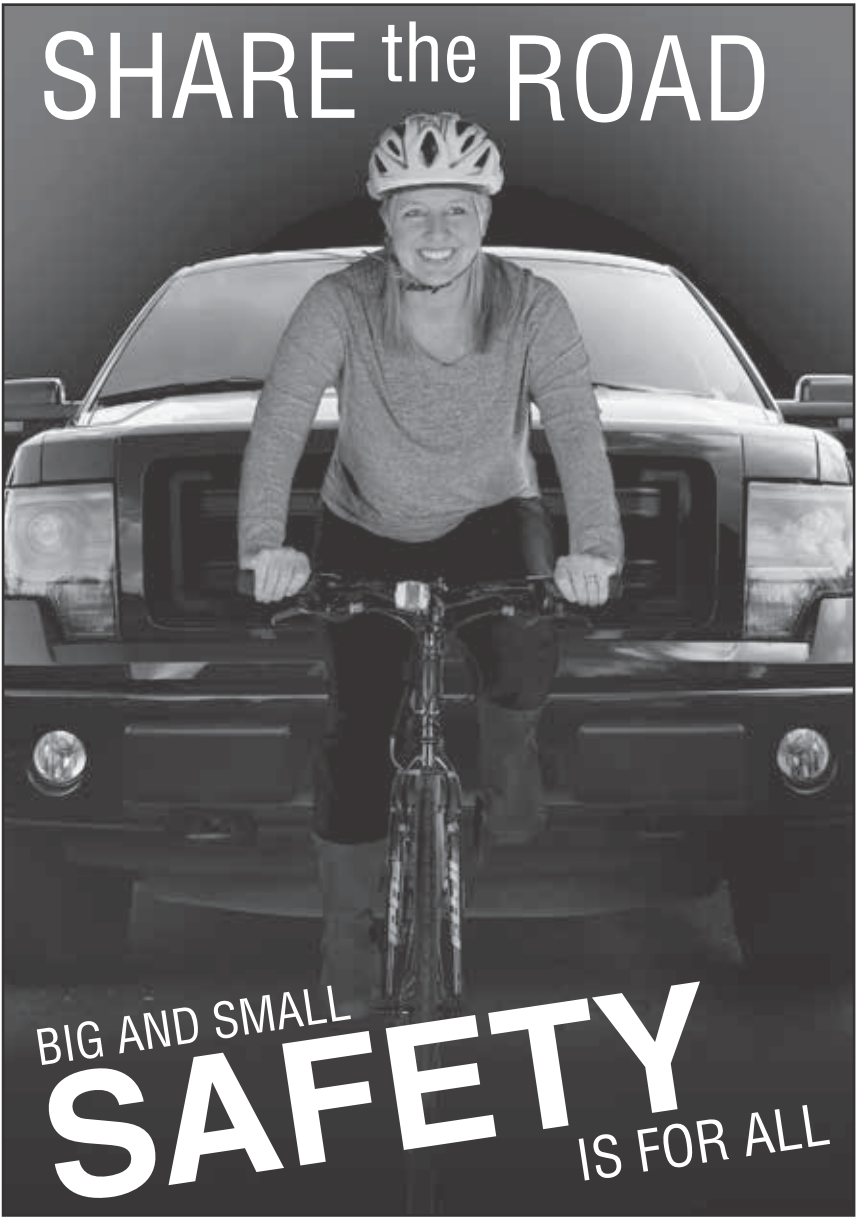
- Slow down.
- Drive alert. Look for pedestrians.
- Never pass a car stopped for pedestrians.

PEDESTRIANS

- Be predictable. Cross at crosswalks or intersections whenever possible.
- Be safe, be seen. Wear bright colors during the day; wear reflective material or carry a light at night.
- Make eye contact. Never assume drivers see you.

SHARE THE ROAD

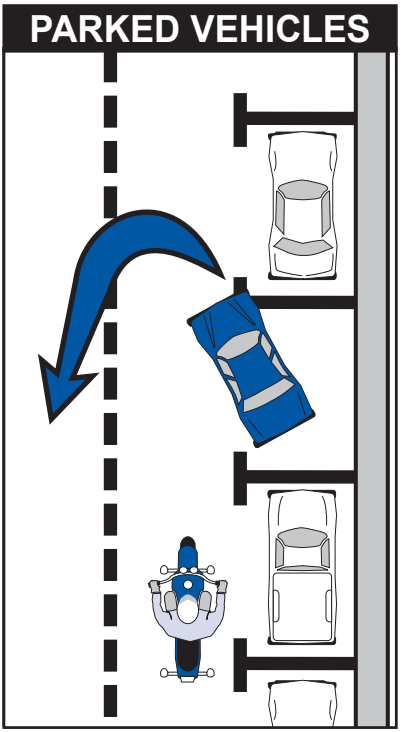
CALIFORNIA OFFICE OF TRAFFIC SAFETY



- Slow down. Drive cautiously.
- Expect bike riders.
- Pass with care.

Funding for this program was provided by a grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety, through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

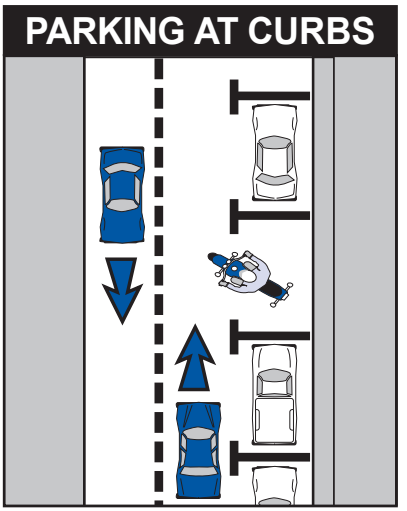
In either event, the driver might enter your path. Slow down or change lanes to make room for someone to enter.



Vehicles 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 cannot 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 an angle of 45 to 90 degrees to the curb with a wheel or fender touching the curb.



Increasing Visibility

In collisions with motorcyclists, drivers often say that they never saw the motorcycle. From ahead or behind, a motorcycle's outline is much smaller than a passenger vehicle's. Also, it is 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 vehicles that may pose a problem to them.

Even if a driver does see you coming, you are not 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 motorcycle.

Clothing

Most collisions occur in broad daylight. Wear brightly-colored or reflective clothing to increase your chances of being seen.

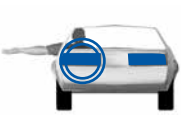
Bright orange, red, yellow, or green jackets or vests are the best for being seen. Brightly-colored helmets can also help others see you. Reflective material on a vest and on the sides of the helmet will help drivers see you from the side. Reflective material can also be a big help for drivers coming toward you or from behind. Remember, your body is half of the visible surface area of the rider/motorcycle unit.

Headlight

The best way to help others see your motorcycle is to always keep the headlight and, if equipped, running lights on. A motorcycle with its light on is twice as likely to be noticed. Using your high beam during the day and at night increases the chances that oncoming drivers will see you. Use your high beam when it is legal and safe to do so. When it is foggy, use the low beam.

Turn Signals

The turn signals on a motorcycle are similar to those on a vehicle. They tell others what you plan to do.



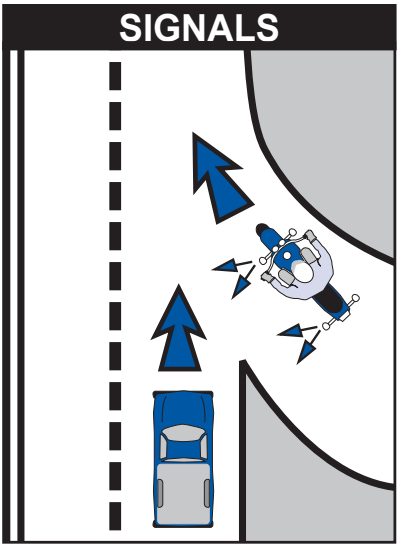
LEFT TURN

RIGHT TURN

SLOW or STOP

However, due to a rider's added vulnerability, turn signals are even more important. Use them anytime you plan to change lanes or turn. Signal your left or right turn during the last 100 feet before reaching the turning point. At highway speeds, it is best to signal at least five seconds before changing lanes. Use your turn signals even when you think no one else is around. Your turn signals also make you easier to see. If bright sunlight makes your turn signal lights hard to see, use hand signals.

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



Using your turn signals before each turn reduces confusion and frustration for the traffic around you. Once you complete your turn, be sure to turn them off or a driver may pull directly into your path, thinking you plan to turn again.

Brake Light

Your motorcycle's brake light is usually not as noticeable as a vehicle's, especially when the taillight is on. If the situation permits, 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:

- For a tight, fast turn off a high-speed highway.
- Where others may not expect it (in the middle of a block or at an alley).

If you are being tailgated, it is a good idea to flash your brake light before you slow.

Using Your Mirrors

While it is most important to know what is happening ahead, you cannot ignore situations behind you. Traffic conditions change quickly. To make safe decisions about how to handle trouble ahead, you must know what is going on around you.

Frequent mirror checks should be part of your normal searching routine. Make a special point of using your mirror(s):

- **When you are stopped at an intersection**. Watch vehicles coming up from behind. If the driver is not paying attention, he could be on top of you before he sees you.
- **Before you change lanes**. Make sure no one is about to pass you. Check the mirror(s) and turn your head to check over your shoulder, on the side of the lane you want to move in to.
- **Before you slow down**. The driver behind you may not expect you to slow down, or may be unsure about where you will slow down. 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 mirrors provide a wider view of the road behind than flat mirrors. They also make vehicles seem farther away than they really are. If you are not used to convex mirrors, you can get familiar with them by:

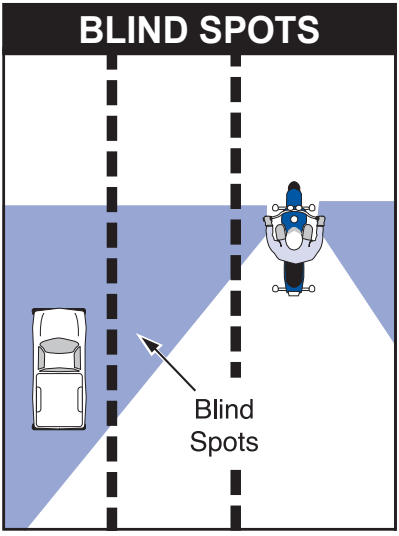
- Picking out a parked vehicle in your mirror (while you are stopped).
- Forming a mental image of how far away it is.
- Then, turning around and looking to see how close you came.
- Practicing with your mirror(s) until you become a good judge of distance.
- Allowing extra distance before you change lanes.

Head Checks

Checking your mirror(s) is not enough. Motorcycles have "blind spots" just like other vehicles. Before you change lanes, turn your head and check that lane 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 drive into the same space you plan to take.

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



Horn

Be ready to use your horn to get someone's attention quickly.

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

Remember, a motorcycle's horn is not as loud as other vehicles', so use it, but don't rely on it.

Riding at Night

At night it is harder for you to see and be seen. Wear reflective clothing when riding at night. Picking a motorcycle's headlight or taillight out of the other lights is not easy for drivers. To make up for this, you should:

- **Reduce your speed**. Ride even slower than you would

during the day, particularly on roads you do not know well. This increases 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 at night. Open up a three-second or more following distance. Allow more distance to pass and be passed.
- **Use the vehicle ahead**. The headlights of the vehicle ahead can give you a better view of the road than your high beam. 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 approaching another vehicle. Be visible. Wear reflective clothing materials when riding at night.
- **Be flexible** about lane position. Change to the lane position that helps you see, be seen, and keep an adequate space cushion.

Collision 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 collision occurs because a motorcycle rider is not prepared or skilled in collision-avoidance maneuvers.

Two critical skills in avoiding a collision are knowing when and how to stop or swerve. You cannot always stop quickly to avoid an obstacle. You must also be able to swerve around an obstacle.

Most collisions involve riders who:

- Underbrake the front tire and overbrake the rear.
- Did not separate braking from swerving or did not choose to swerve when it was appropriate.

Quick Stops

To stop quickly, apply both brakes at the same time. Do not be shy about using the front brake, but do not "grab" it either. Squeeze the brake lever firmly with continuing steady pressure. If the front wheel locks, release the front brake immediately and 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, you can keep it locked until you have completely stopped.

NOTE: Even with a locked rear wheel, you can control the

motorcycle on a straightaway if it is upright and going in a straight line.

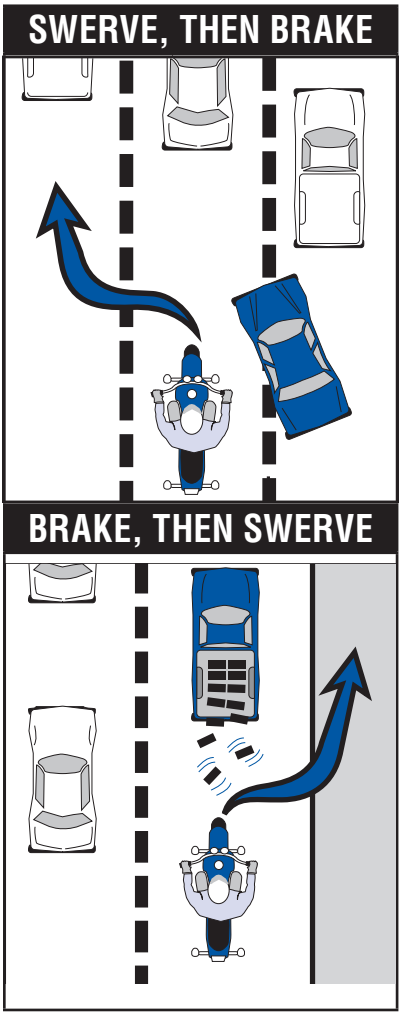
Always use both brakes at the same time to stop. The front brake can provide three-quarters of your stopping power.

If you must stop quickly while turning or riding a curve, the best technique is to straighten the motorcycle 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 the brakes lightly and reduce the throttle. As you slow, reduce your lean angle and apply more brake pressure until the motorcycle is straight and maximum brake pressure is possible. Then in the last few feet of stopping, you should "straighten" the handlebars. The motorcycle should now be straight up and in balance.

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 vehicle ahead might stop abruptly. The only way to avoid a collision 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. To swerve, apply a small amount of hand pressure to the handlegrip on the side of your intended direction of escape. This causes 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. Keep your knees pressed against the tank and your feet solidly on the footrests. Let

the motorcycle move underneath you. Make your escape route the target of your vision. Press on the opposite handlegrip once you clear the obstacle and are ready to return to your original direction of travel.

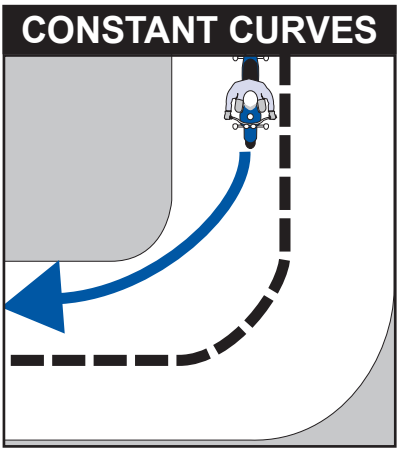
To swerve to the left, press the left handlegrip, then press the right to recover. To swerve to the right, press right, then left. Then press the left or right handlegrip to recover.

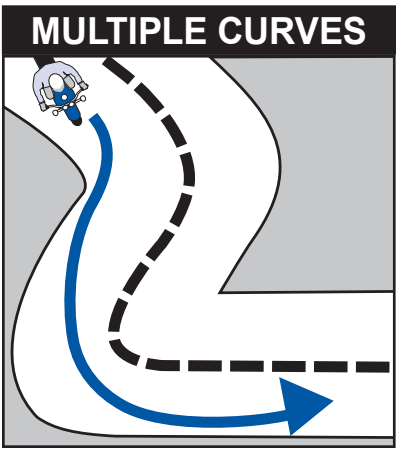
If braking is required, separate it from swerving. Brake before or after, never while swerving, especially the front brake as this may cause the motorcycle to fall over.

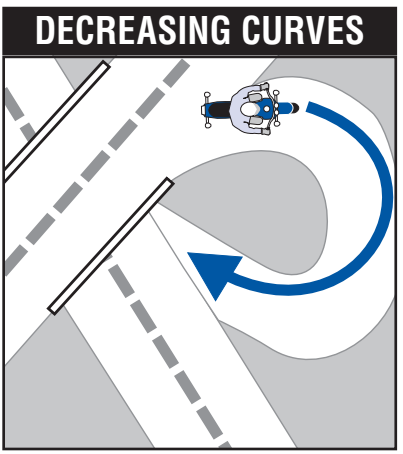
Cornering

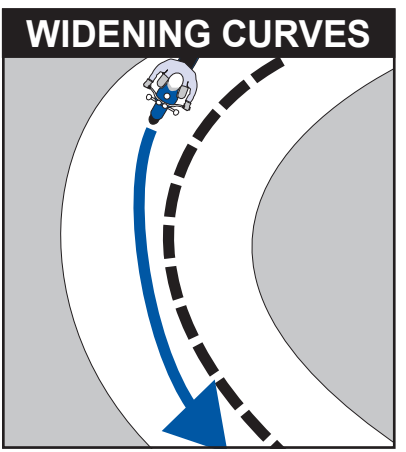
A primary cause of single-vehicle collisions is motorcyclists running wide in a curve or turn causing the motorcycle to leave the roadway or collide with an object.

Every curve is different. Be alert to whether a curve remains constant, gradually widens,









gets tighter, or involves multiple turns. Shaded curves keep ice from melting and moisture from evaporating. Also, be aware of leaves.

Ride within your skill level and posted speed limits. Your best path may not always follow the curve of the road.

Change your lane position based on traffic, road conditions, and curve of the road. If there is no traffic, 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 choice is to move to the center of your lane before entering a curve and stay there until you exit. This allows you to see approaching traffic as soon as possible. You can also adjust for traffic "crowding" the center line or debris blocking part of your lane.

Handling Dangerous Surfaces

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

- Uneven surfaces or obstacles.
- Slippery surfaces, such as shaded icy areas, leaves, pine needles, and standing water. Be careful of standing water and puddles as you do not know how deep the water is.
- Railroad tracks or pavement seams.
- Grooves and gratings.

Uneven Surfaces and Obstacles

Watch for uneven road surfaces, such as bumps, broken pavement, potholes, roadway resurfacing where one lane is slightly higher than the other lane, or trash on the highway and shoulders.

Avoid obstacles by slowing or going around them. However, if you must go over the obstacle, first determine if it is possible. Approach it at as close to a 90-degree angle as possible. Look in the direction 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 footrests to absorb the shock with your knees and elbows and avoid being thrown off the motorcycle.
- Just before contact, roll on the throttle slightly (increase

engine power) to lighten the front end.

If you ride over an object, pull off the road and check your tires and rims for damage before riding any farther. Make sure nothing is caught in the drive chain or belt.

Slippery Surfaces

Motorcyclists may find it challenging to maintain safe control on surfaces with poor traction, such as:

- **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, leaves, snow, and ice**.
- **Lane markings** (painted road arrows and crosswalks), steel plates, brick paver crosswalks, and manhole covers, especially when wet.

To ride safely on slippery surfaces:

- **Reduce speed**. Slow down before you get to a slippery surface to reduce your chances of skidding. When the **roadway is slippery, your motorcycle needs more distance to stop. It is especially 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 on a slippery surface. Squeeze the brake lever gradually to avoid locking the front wheel. Remember to use gentle pressure on the rear brake.
- **Remember the center of a lane can be hazardous when wet**. When it starts to rain, ride in a vehicle's tire tracks. Often, the left tire track will be the best lane position, depending on traffic and other road conditions as well.
- **Watch for oil spots**. The center portion of the lane is where most oil, anti-freeze, and other vehicle fluids collect. Position yourself on either side of the center strip and be careful when you put your foot down to stop or park. You may slip and fall.
- **Be cautious of the edge of the road**. Dirt and gravel collect along the sides of the road, especially on curves and ramps leading to and from highways.
- **Remember rain dries and snow melts faster on some sections of a road than on others**. Patches of ice tend to develop in low or shaded areas, bridges, and overpasses. Wet

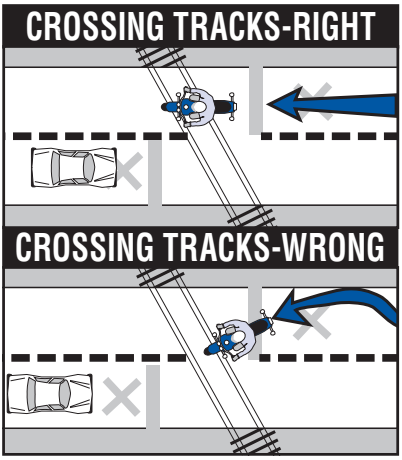
leaves are just as slippery as wet road surfaces. Ride on the least slippery portion of the lane and reduce your speed.

Cautious riders steer clear of roads covered with ice or snow. If you cannot avoid an icy or snowy 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.

Railroad or Trolley Tracks and Pavement Seams

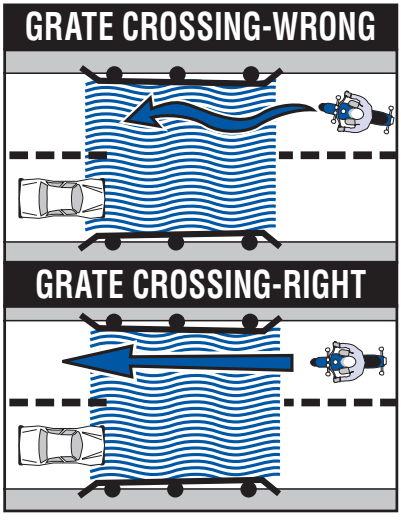
Usually it is safer to ride straight within your lane to cross tracks. Turning to take tracks head-on (at a 90-degree angle) can be more dangerous because your path may carry you into another lane of traffic.

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 degrees. Then, make a quick, sharp turn. Edging across could catch your tires and throw you off balance.



Grooves and Gratings

Riding over rain grooves or bridge gratings may cause your motorcycle to weave. This uneasy, “wandering” feeling is generally not hazardous. Relax and 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.



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.

Tire Failure

You will seldom hear a tire go flat. If the motorcycle starts handling differently, it may be a tire failure. You must be able to tell from the way the motorcycle reacts if you have tire failure. If one of your tires suddenly loses air, react quickly to keep your balance. Stop riding and check the tires as soon as possible.

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 the handlegrips firmly, ease off the throttle, and keep a straight course.
- If braking is required, gradually apply the brake of the tire that is not flat, if you are sure which one it is.
- When the motorcycle slows, ride to the side of the road, squeeze the clutch, and stop.

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," leave the road and stop.

After you have stopped, check the throttle cable carefully to find the trouble. Make certain the throttle works freely before you start riding again.

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 cannot lighten the load, shift it. Center the weight lower and farther forward on the motorcycle.

Make sure the tire pressure, shock spring preload, air shocks, and dampers are at the recommended settings for the weight. Make sure windshields and fairings are mounted properly.

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

Trying to "accelerate out of a wobble" will only make the motorcycle more unstable. Instead:

- Grip the handlebars firmly, but do not fight the wobble.
- Roll off (decrease engine power) 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.
- Leave the road as soon as you can to fix the problem.

Chain Problems

A drive belt or chain that slips or breaks while you are riding could lock the rear wheel and cause your motorcycle to skid. Belt or chain slippage or breakage can be avoided by proper maintenance.

- **Slippage** — If the belt/chain slips when you try to speed up or ride uphill, pull off the road. Check the belt/chain and sprockets. Tightening the belt/chain may help. Replace the belt/chain, sprockets, or both before riding again, if needed.
- **Breakage** — You will notice an instant loss of power to the rear wheel. Roll off the throttle and brake to a stop.

Engine Seizure

When the engine "locks" or "freezes", it is usually low on oil. If the engine's moving parts cannot move smoothly against each other, 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, add oil 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.

Animals

Do everything you safely can do to avoid hitting an animal. If you are in traffic; however, remain in your lane.

Flying Objects

From time to time riders are struck by insects, cigarettes

thrown from vehicles, or pebbles kicked up by the tires of the vehicle ahead. Avoid following closely behind dump trucks, waste management vehicles, livestock haulers, agricultural vehicles, construction vehicles, or any vehicle towing or hauling items. Debris such as hay, trash, tree limbs, and other loose items being hauled can fall from the vehicles placing you in an unavoidable dangerous situation. 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.

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 roadside is firm enough to ride on. If it is soft grass, leaves, loose sand, or if you are 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 and changing direction. Check your mirror(s) 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 see a motorcycle by the side of the road. You do not want someone else leaving the road at the same place you are.
- **Park carefully**. Loose or sloped shoulders, as well as soft ground, can make setting the side or center kickstand difficult.

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.

Equipment

- Equip and adjust your motorcycle to carry a passenger.
- A proper seat large enough to hold both of you without crowding. You should not sit any farther forward than you usually do.
- Footrests for the passenger. Firm footing prevents your passenger from falling off and pulling you off, too.

- The same protective apparel and gear recommended for riders.

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(s) and headlight according to the change in the motorcycle's angle.

Motorcycles Towing Trailers

Motorcycles towing trailers:

- **Must** not exceed 55 mph.
- **Must** remain in the right lane unless it is a four lane highway, then the right two lanes, except when passing.
- Are not allowed in carpool lanes.

For more information, see CVC §§630 and 22406 or the *Recreational Vehicles and Trailers Handbook* (DL 648) available online at **www.dmv.ca.gov** or obtain a copy at your local DMV field office.

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 start the engine.
- Sit as far forward as possible without crowding you.
- Hold firmly to your waist, hips, or belt.
- Keep both feet on the footrests, even when stopped.
- Keep legs away from the muffler(s), belts, chains, or moving parts.
- Stay directly behind you leaning as you lean and looking over your shoulder in the direction of the turn.
- Avoid unnecessary talk or motion. The motorcycle will sway with the passenger's movement.

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

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

Riding With Passengers

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

on a light-duty motorcycle. Your braking distance will increase due to the added weight.

- Ride a little slower, especially when taking curves, corners, or bumps.
- Begin slowing sooner 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 with traffic.

Warn your passenger of these special conditions: starting, stopping quickly, turning sharply, or riding over bumps. Turn your head slightly to make yourself understood, but keep your eyes on the road ahead.

Child Passengers

Riding with child passengers should only be done when the proper precautions are taken. The motorcycle should be equipped with passenger footrests and the child's feet **must** be able to reach them.

Children should wear a full-faced, U.S. DOT compliant, properly-fitted motorcycle safety helmet. It should fit snugly so, in the event of an accident, it does not come off.

Children should wear appropriate clothing, such as long pants, closed-toe shoes, a jacket made from a heavy material, and protective gloves that aid in the child's protection in an accident or fall. Shoes should also be durable, and fastened tight enough to not come off in the event of a fall.

Restraint systems are available to secure a child passenger to the rider by means of a belt or harness. In the event of a fall, the child passenger will remain secured to the rider instead of being thrown free.

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. Stacking loads against a sissybar or frame on the back of the seat raises the motorcycle's center of gravity and shifts its balance.
- **Keep the load forward**. Place the load over, or in front of, the rear axle. Tank bags keep loads forward, but use caution when loading hard or sharp objects. Make sure the tank bag does not interfere with handlebars or controls. Mounting a load behind the rear axle affects 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 will not catch in the wheel or chain, causing it to lock up and skid. Ropes tend to stretch and knots can 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.

Group Riding

If you ride with others, do it in a way that promotes safety and does not interfere with the flow of traffic. Assign a lead and a drag (tail) rider. Both riders should be experienced and familiar with group riding. CVC §21461 requires all vehicles to observe official traffic control devices before entering or crossing the highway. When riders travel in groups and approach an intersection with a stop sign or traffic light, the riders must obey the traffic control devices.

Keep the Group Small

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

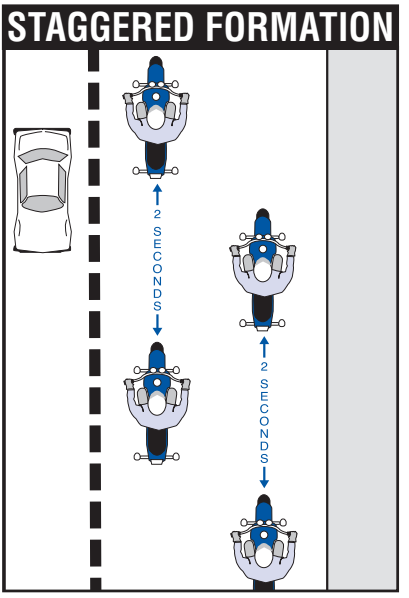
Keep the Group Together

- **Brief**. Perform a preride overview of the route, hand signals for single-file formation and what to do if a hazard is encountered.
- **Plan**. The leader should look ahead for changes and signal early so there is plenty of time for everyone to follow. Start lane changes early to permit everyone to complete the lane change safely.
- **Put beginners up front**. Place inexperienced riders behind the leader so the more experienced riders can watch them.
- **Monitor those behind**. Let the last rider set the pace. Use your mirror(s) to keep an eye on the rider behind. If a rider falls behind, everyone should slow down a little to stay together.
- **Know the route**. Make sure everyone knows the route. Plan frequent stops on long rides.

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, this formation must be done properly.

- **Do not pair up**. Never operate directly alongside another rider. There is no place to go to avoid a vehicle or a hazard on the road. Wait until you are both stopped to talk.
- **Staggered formation**. This is the best way to keep ranks close and maintain an adequate space cushion. The leader rides in the left portion of the lane while the second rider stays one second behind in the right portion of the lane. A third rider rides in the left portion of the lane two seconds behind the first rider. The fourth rider keeps 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 pulls out and passes when safe. After passing, the leader returns to the left portion of the lane and continues riding at "passing speed" to open room for the next rider.
  - After the first rider passes safely, the second rider moves up to the left portion of the lane and watches for a safe chance to pass. After passing, this rider returns to the right portion of the lane and opens up room for the next rider.
  - Some people suggest the leader should move to the right portion of the lane after

passing a vehicle. This is not a good idea. It encourages the second rider to pass and return to the lane before there is a large enough space cushion in front of the passed vehicle. It is 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**. Move into a single-file formation when riding curves, turning, and entering or leaving a highway.

BEING IN SHAPE TO RIDE

Riding a motorcycle is a demanding and complex task. Skilled riders pay attention to their riding environment while 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, affect your ability to think clearly and to ride safely. As little as one alcoholic drink can have a significant effect on your performance.

Blood Alcohol Concentration

Blood alcohol concentration (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.

Important factors that play a major part in determining BAC:

- The amount of alcohol you consumed.
- How fast you drank.
- Your body weight.

"One drink" is a $1^1/_2$-ounce shot of 80-proof liquor (even if mixed with nonalcoholic drinks), a 5-ounce glass of 12 percent (%) wine, or a 12-ounce glass of 5% beer. These "one drink" equivalents change if you drink ale, malt liquors, or fortified wines or if you drink on an empty stomach, are tired, sick, upset, or have taken medicines or drugs.

The faster you drink, the more alcohol accumulates in your body. If you consume two drinks in an hour, at the end of that hour, at least one drink will remain in your bloodstream.

GET A DUI – LOSE YOUR LICENSE!

It is illegal to drive with a Blood Alcohol Content (BAC) of .08% or more (.04% for commercial vehicle drivers and .01% if under 21). Other factors, such as fatigue, medications or food may affect your ability to legally operate a vehicle. The table below gives an estimate of blood alcohol levels based on the number of drinks consumed, gender and body weight. **REMEMBER:** Even one drink is likely to affect your ability to drive safely!

BLOOD ALCOHOL CONTENT (BAC)
Table for Male (M) / Female (F)

Number of Drinks		Body Weight in Pounds								Driving Condition
		100	120	140	160	180	200	220	240	
0	M	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	Only Safe Driving Limit
	F	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	
1	M	.06	.05	.04	.04	.03	.03	.03	.02	Driving Skills Impaired
	F	.07	.06	.05	.04	.04	.03	.03	.03	
2	M	.12	.10	.09	.07	.07	.06	.05	.05	
	F	.13	.11	.09	.08	.07	.07	.06	.06	
3	M	.18	.15	.13	.11	.10	.09	.08	.07	
	F	.20	.17	.14	.12	.11	.10	.09	.08	Legally Intoxicated
4	M	.24	.20	.17	.15	.13	.12	.11	.10	
	F	.26	.22	.19	.17	.15	.13	.12	.11	
5	M	.30	.25	.21	.19	.17	.15	.14	.12	
	F	.33	.28	.24	.21	.18	.17	.15	.14	

Subtract .01% for each 40 minutes of drinking.
1 drink = 1.5 oz. 80 proof liquor, 12 oz. 5% beer, or 5 oz. 12% wine.

Fewer than 5 persons out of 100 will exceed these values.

Alcohol and the Law

In California, it is illegal for a person under 21 years old to drive with a BAC of 0.01% or above; for people under 21 years old, there is ZERO tolerance for alcohol use. It is illegal for a person 21 years old or older to drive with a BAC of 0.08% or above. It does not matter how sober you may look or act; a breath or blood test is what determines whether you are riding legally or illegally.

NOTE: The *California Driver Handbook* (DL 600) has additional information regarding driving under the influence (DUI) of alcohol and/or drugs. Law enforcement is being stepped up across the country in response to the senseless deaths and injuries caused by drinking drivers and riders.

Minimize the Risks

Minimize the risks of drinking and riding by following the steps below:

- **Do not drink**. Once you start drinking, your resistance becomes weaker.
- **Do not ride**. If you are or have been drinking, **do not** ride your motorcycle.

Fatigue

Riding a motorcycle is more tiring than driving a vehicle, especially on a long trip. Avoid riding when tired. Fatigue can affect your control of the motorcycle.

- **Limit your distance**. Experienced riders seldom ride more than about six hours a day.
- **Take frequent rest breaks**. Stop and get off the motorcycle at least every two hours.
- **Do not drink alcohol or use drugs.** Artificial stimulants often result in extreme fatigue or depression as they start to wear off. You will not be able to concentrate on the task at hand.

MOTORCYCLE INSURANCE FACTS

The financial responsibility sections of the *California Vehicle Code* (CVC) apply to motorcycle owners and operators.

If you, as a motorcycle rider, are involved in a collision which causes more than $750 in property damage to one person, including yourself, or anyone else is injured, no matter how slightly, you (or your insurance agent, broker, or legal representative) must report the collision to DMV or your DL may be suspended. CHP or the police will not make this report.

You must make this report within 10 days on the Report of Traffic Accident Occurring in California (SR1). The SR1 is also available on the DMV website at **www.dmv.ca.gov** and at any DMV field office or CHP office. Refer to the *California Driver Handbook* for more information.

Check with your insurance company about your coverage before you buy or ride a motorcycle.

EVADING A PEACE OFFICER

Any person who willfully flees or attempts to evade a peace officer performing his or her duties is guilty of a misdemeanor punishable by imprisonment in a county jail for not more than one year (CVC §2800.1).

If a person is convicted of causing serious bodily injury during the course of a police pursuit (CVC §2800.3(a)), he or she is subject to:

- Imprisonment in a state prison for three, five, or seven years or in a county jail for not more than one year.
- A fine between $2,000 and $10,000.
- Both a fine and imprisonment.

If a person is convicted of killing anyone during the course of a police pursuit (CVC §2800.3(b)), he or she is subject to imprisonment in a state prison for four, six, or ten years.

TREAD LIGHTLY!

- The U.S. Forest Service (USFS), Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and California Department of Parks and Recreation would like you to TREAD LIGHTLY! **Obtain a travel map** from your local USFS or BLM office, or regulations from other public land agencies. Learn the rules and follow them.
- **Avoid running over young trees**, shrubs, and grasses—this can damage or kill them.
- **Stay off soft, wet roads** and trails readily torn up by vehicles.
- **Travel around meadows**, steep hillsides, stream banks, and lake shores easily scarred by churning wheels.
- **Resist the urge to pioneer** a new road or trail, or cut across a switchback.
- **Stay away from wild animals** rearing young, or suffering from food shortages. The stress uses up their limited energy reserves.
- **Obey gate closures** and regulatory signs.
- **Stay out of designated wilderness areas**. Know where the boundaries are. Vandalism costs tax dollars.
- **Get permission to travel across private lands**. Respect landowner rights**.**

For more information, contact the Off-Highway Vehicle Division of the California Department of Parks and Recreation at **www.ohv.parks.ca.gov**.

Connect with us

KNOWLEDGE TEST SAMPLE 1

1. What are the requirements for wearing a helmet?
   a. Passengers only are required to wear helmets.
   b. All motorcycle riders and passengers are required to wear helmets at all times.
   c. Helmets are not required while driving on city streets.

2. Grabbing the front brake or jamming down on the rear brake:
   a. Can cause the brakes to lock.
   b. Is the best way to stop in an emergency.
   c. Is the best way to slow down when the streets are wet.

3. Passengers on motorcycles should:
   a. Put their feet on the ground when the motorcycle is stopped.
   b. Not ride without a back rest.
   c. Sit as far forward as possible without crowding you.

4. When riding with a group of motorcyclists, a staggered formation:
   a. Is recommended at all times.
   b. Should not be used when entering or exiting a highway.
   c. Should be used when riding on curves.

5. Eye protection:
   a. Is not needed if your motorcycle is equipped with a windshield.
   b. Is only needed when riding in bad weather.
   c. Should give a clear view to either side.

6. A primary cause of single vehicle motorcycle collisions is:
   a. Motorcyclists' tendency to drive too fast for weather conditions.
   b. Motorcyclists running wide in a curve or turn and colliding with an object.
   c. Motorcyclists running off the road while trying to avoid a collision with another vehicle.

7. The best lane position for a motorcycle:
   a. Is in the left part of the lane, next to the center line.
   b. Is in the right part of the lane, next to the curb.
   c. Can vary depending on road and/or traffic conditions.

8. When riding at night you should:
   a. Move closer to the vehicle in front of you to use its lights to see farther down the road.
   b. Keep driving at your normal speed because slowing down would increase the chance of being struck from behind.
   c. Reduce your speed because it is harder to see something lying in the road.

9. You should operate the engine cut-off switch and pull in the clutch when:
   a. The throttle is stuck and you cannot free it.
   b. You start to lose control in a curve.
   c. The motorcycle starts to wobble.

10. To operate a moped you must have at least a _____ license.
   a. Class M1
   b. Class M2
   c. Class C

ANSWERS: 1b, 2a, 3c, 4b, 5c, 6b, 7c, 8c, 9a, 10b

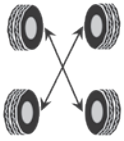
T.I.R.E. Tips

T. Tread

Place an upside down penny in the tire tread. If you can see all of Lincoln's head, the tread is too low and you need a new tire.

I. Inflate

Check air pressure once a month. Low tire pressure can cause tire wear and poor gas mileage.



R. Rotate

Rotate your tires every 3,000–5,000 miles to increase tire tread life.

E. Evaluate

Evaluate your tires everyday for any abnormal wear, cracks, and nails.

A few minutes a month is all it takes to be tire safe.

STATE OF CALIFORNIA
DMV
DRIVING CHANGE...
DEPARTMENT OF MOTOR VEHICLES

KNOWLEDGE TEST SAMPLE 2

1. Upshifting or downshifting in a curve:
   a. Should only be done if it can be done smoothly.
   b. Is better than shifting before the curve.
   c. Is the best way to control your speed.

2. To avoid confusing other drivers, you should:
   a. Increase the following distance between your motorcycle and the vehicle in front of you if you are being tailgated.
   b. Make sure your turn signal turns off after you finish a turn.
   c. Use your horn only in emergency situations.

3. _____ is a major factor in collisions caused by motorcycles.
   a. Following too closely.
   b. Lane sharing.
   c. Not being seen by other drivers.

4. If your motorcycle starts to wander back and forth while riding over metal bridge gratings you should:
   a. Downshift immediately to a lower gear to improve traction.
   b. Proceed in a zigzag pattern until you cross the bridge.
   c. Relax, stay on course, and ride straight across.

5. If you must carry a load, it should be:
   a. Either over or in front of the rear axle.
   b. Carried on the gas tank in front of the driver.
   c. Piled up against a sissy bar or frame on the back of the seat.

6. Grabbing the front brake or jamming down on the rear brake:
   a. Can cause the brakes to lock.
   b. Is the best way to stop in an emergency.
   c. Is the best way to slow down when the streets are wet.

7. What is the best way to stay out of trouble while riding a motorcycle?
   a. To see it coming by looking well ahead.
   b. By avoiding high density traffic areas.
   c. By increasing the following distance between your motorcycle and the vehicle in front of you.

8. A motorcycle rider has an advantage over an automobile driver when passing parked vehicles because:
   a. A motorcycle can accelerate faster than a car.
   b. A motorcycle rider can avoid the problems of opening doors and people stepping out from between vehicles by driving in the left part of the lane.
   c. Motorcycles have a shorter stopping distance.

9. Brightly-colored, reflective helmets and clothing:
   a. Should only be worn while riding at night.
   b. Can make motorcycle riders easier to see.
   c. Do not increase a motorcycle rider's safety.

10. To execute a turn safely, a motorcycle rider should always:
   a. Lean the motorcycle in the direction of the curve or turn.
   b. Slow down in the turn.
   c. Turn using the handle bars only.

ANSWERS: 1a, 2b, 3a, 4c, 5a, 6a, 7a, 8b, 9b, 10a

GET TRAINED
GET LICENSED
SURVIVE THE RIDE

CALIFORNIA HIGHWAY PATROL

CALIFORNIA MOTORCYCLIST SAFETY PROGRAM

CMSP

California Motorcyclist Safety Program

A Program of the California Highway Patrol

www.californiamotorcyclist.com

1.877.RIDE.411

COMPLETION OF THE PROGRAM WAIVES DMV SKILLS TEST

California has the nation's highest number of pedestrian and bicyclist fatalities. When you drive, take extra care around people walking and biking. It's the human thing to do.

- Look twice for people walking or biking before you make a turn. Always come to a complete stop before making a right turn on red.
- Stop for people in crosswalks. Every intersection is a crosswalk, even if it's unmarked.
- If another car is stopped at a crosswalk, you should stop, too. There may be someone crossing that you can't see.

SCAG

SHARE THE ROAD

OTS CALIFORNIA OFFICE OF TRAFFIC SAFETY

#GoHumanSoCal /GoHumanSoCal

AD PLACEMENT