

SAFETY TIPS FROM RAY HARDYMAN - YOUR CHAPTER SAFETY OFFICER

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EVALUATING YOUR STREET RIDING SKILLS

If you consider that every time you get on your motorcycle to go for a ride, you are entering a combat zone, you would be correct. Several areas that will assist you in evaluating your street riding skills are:

- How to look for hazards
- Where to be looking for hazards
- Once you have identified hazards, how to reduce or prioritize them

HOW TO LOOK FOR HAZARDS

First, have a plan of action already formulated for street riding. Stay focused on what you are doing and where you are going. Keep your head and eyes up. Keep your head on a swivel, scanning from 3 o'clock to 9 o'clock as you ride. Be ready to cover your controls if a hazardous situation arises.

WHERE TO LOOK FOR HAZARDS

Look several vehicles ahead of you, staying alert for brake lights. Watch for merging traffic entering your lane. Look for construction zone signs. Pay attention to potentially unsecured loads on vehicles in front of you. Pay attention to large trucks or buses in front of you or beside you. Watch for inattentive or distracted drivers. Pay attention to the road surface.

ONCE YOU HAVE IDENTIFIED HAZARDS, HOW TO REDUCE OR PRIORITIZE THEM

Maintain a safe distance between yourself and the vehicle in front of you. This allows you a larger field of vision and increases your braking distance. At 50 mph your braking distance is 93 feet. (source Motorvikeing.com)

Try to avoid riding in merging traffic lanes if possible. Traffic merging over into your lane may attempt to "beat you to the draw" and create a hazardous situation for you.

If possible, avoid riding beside or behind large semi-trucks or other high profile vehicles. It is often safer to change lanes and pass them, rather than ride behind or beside them. Your view, as well as that of the truck driver, is limited, when you ride beside or behind them. It is common for large tractor trailers to have been parked in lots for long periods of time creating a higher likelihood of a tire blowout on a trailer.

Pay attention to potentially unsecured loads

Look for loads with tarps or covers that are not tied down or are flapping in the wind, tailgates that do not appear to be properly secured or closed or items in the rear of the vehicle that are blowing around. This should be a red flag for you. Change lanes as soon as safely possible.

Pay attention to the road surface

Look for potholes, railroad tracks, debris or gravel on the road surface. Is the road wet or icy? As you ride through cities, you may notice that a large amount of debris tends to collect in the HOV lane. Another hazard of riding in the HOV lane is that it reduces your escape routes by 50%.

"Enjoy your Ride and Stay Safe"