

Motorcycle Safety tips for riders and information for car and truck drivers!

It is spring – the time of year we find more motorcycles returning to the roads for the warmer weather season. The following tips are from the Motorcycle Safety Foundation.

Based on actual experience responding to motorcycle crashes and seeing first-hand the death and injuries, the firefighter/paramedics of your Sylvania Fire Department strongly encourages all motorcycle operators and any riders to wear their safety helmets, it is a life saving device! Think of your loved ones when you head out for your next ride.

General Guidelines for Riding a Motorcycle Safely

Be visible:

- Remember that motorists often have trouble seeing motorcycles and reacting in time.
- Make sure your headlight works and is on day and night.
- Use reflective strips or decals on your clothing and on your motorcycle.
- Be aware of the blind spots cars and trucks have.
- Flash your brake light when you are slowing down and before stopping.
- If a motorist doesn't see you, don't be afraid to use your horn.

Dress for safety:

- Wear a quality helmet and eye protection.
- Wear bright clothing and a light-colored helmet.
- Wear leather or other thick, protective clothing.
- Choose long sleeves and pants, over-the-ankle boots, and gloves.
- Remember – the only thing between you and the road is your protective gear.

Apply effective mental strategies:

- Constantly search the road for changing conditions. Use MSF's Search, Evaluate, Execute strategy (**SEESM**) to increase time and space safety margins.
- Give yourself space and time to respond to other motorists' actions.
- Give other motorists time and space to respond to you.
- Use lane positioning to be seen; ride in the part of a lane where you are most visible.
- Watch for turning vehicles.
- Signal your next move in advance.
- Avoid weaving between lanes.
- Pretend you're invisible, and ride extra defensively.
- Don't ride when you are tired or under the influence of alcohol or other drugs.
- Know and follow the rules of the road, and stick to the speed limit.

Know your bike and how to use it:

- Get formal training and take refresher courses.
- Call 800.446.9227 or visit www.msf-usa.org to locate the Motorcycle Safety Foundation hands-on *RiderCourseSM* nearest you.
- Practice. Develop your riding techniques before going into heavy traffic. Know how to handle your bike in conditions such as wet or sandy roads, high winds, and uneven surfaces.

Remember: Give yourself space. People driving cars often just don't see motorcycles. Even when drivers do see you, chances are they've never been on a motorcycle and can't properly judge your speed.

Ten Things All Car & Truck Drivers Should Know About Motorcycles

1. There are a lot more cars and trucks than motorcycles on the road, and some drivers don't "recognize" a motorcycle; they ignore it (usually unintentionally). Look for motorcycles, especially when checking traffic at an intersection.
2. Because of its small size, a motorcycle may look farther away than it is. It may also be difficult to judge a motorcycle's speed. When checking traffic to turn at an intersection or into (or out of) a driveway, predict a motorcycle is closer than it looks.
3. Because of its small size, a motorcycle can be easily hidden in a car's blind spots (door/roof pillars) or masked by objects or backgrounds outside a car (bushes, fences, bridges, etc). Take an extra moment to thoroughly check traffic, whether you're changing lanes or turning at intersections.
4. Because of its small size a motorcycle may seem to be moving faster than it really is. Don't assume all motorcyclists are speed demons.
5. Motorcyclists often slow by downshifting or merely rolling off the throttle, thus not activating the brake light. Allow more following distance, say 3 or 4 seconds. At intersections, predict a motorcyclist may slow down without visual warning.
6. Turn signals on a motorcycle usually are not self-canceling, thus some riders, (especially beginners) sometimes forget to turn them off after a turn or lane change. Make sure a motorcycle's signal is for real.
7. Motorcyclists often adjust position within a lane to be seen more easily and to minimize the effects of road debris, passing vehicles, and wind. Understand that motorcyclists adjust lane position for a purpose, not to be reckless or show off or to allow you to share the lane with them.
8. Maneuverability is one of a motorcycle's better characteristics, especially at slower speeds and with good road conditions, but don't expect a motorcyclist to always be able to dodge out of the way.
9. Stopping distance for motorcycles is nearly the same as for cars, but slippery pavement makes stopping quickly difficult. Allow more following distance behind a motorcycle because it can't always stop "on a dime."
10. When a motorcycle is in motion, don't think of it as motorcycle; think of it as a person.