

SAFETY CORNER

By Dave Esposito, AKA Cabbie

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Greetings Everyone ! See you in September has got here quicker than a NY taxi !

It's been noticeably cooler these recent mornings too!

This month I'd like to point out a few tips to help you increase your riding proficiency and safety awareness.

A

1. Keep your bike in top condition. We don't have a state inspection in Florida so it's of the utmost importance to know all you can about your units condition.
2. Check your tires at least every week for proper air pressure and tread depth. Look for the wear bars in the groove. Don't ride until the wear bars are the same level as the tire's surface.
3. Check all your lights and turn signals before every ride.

B

1. Wear appropriate riding clothes. Not loose fitting clothes that will fly in the breeze. Don't wear cammo for obvious reasons!
2. Wear clothing that will catch the attention of other drivers, lighter reflective clothes.
3. Add lights or reflectors to the rear of your bike.
4. Avoid riding in blind spots ! Remember, if you can't see the mirrors of the vehicle, that driver can't see you!

C

1. Ride defensively and confidently. If your fearful or nervous , perhaps more training would be advised.
2. Find a vacant parking lot and practice slow maneuvering .
3. Ride within your skill level. Don't try to keep up with that one crazy friend if you're not comfortable.
4. Continuously scan your environment. Don't stare out at the road ahead of you. Check mirrors every 5 to 7 seconds. Watch for that speed demon gaining on you quickly.
5. Keep watch for poorly secured loads. Car top carriers, bicycles hung on a rear mount. I've seen a kyack fly off a roof once! Dust and stones blowing out of an uncovered dump truck can ruin your day. Get it behind you or stay way back if you can't.

D

I saw an article about mental imagery that I felt was worth mentioning. Putting yourself in a potentially fatal riding scenario is not something we can practice. Yet, every time we ride, we could find ourselves in such a situation. Think about what to do should that bus camper drift across the double yellow into your path of travel. What are your options?

You've got to think quick and react quicker ! It's difficult to say what to do without being on that stretch of road with you. Our automatic response is often opposite to the action we need to take. For example, if you go into a curve too quickly, your brain will tell you to cut the throttle. For your brain, slowing down means getting to a safer place. But that will result in transferring the weight forward and throwing balance off, possibly causing a crash. An easy ride on a perfect day can easily turn into a life and death situation that requires practiced skills, mental acuity, and the psychological mettle to handle the sudden hazard. As much as all of us love riding, motorcycling can be very unforgiving of our slightest error.

For mental imagery to work, it has to be clear, precise, and accurate. You have to know the correct motor response. Repeatedly visualized, it will create the same natural pathways as if you were doing live practice. As a result, the next time you encounter the imagined hazard on the street, you will be better prepared.

Remember, when under stress, in a crisis, you will instinctively revert to the manner in which you have been trained.

Keep the shiny side towards the sun!
I welcome your questions or comments!
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See you on the staggered trail!

Dave

Safety is of the Lord proverbs 21:31