

# CARRYING A PASSENGER

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As the weather becomes awesome for motorcycling, it may be time to address an important issue most of us experience but probably spend little time thinking about: passengers! In fact, it may be a good time to talk about passengers

from both perspectives, the operator and the passenger. Riding two-up can bring a couple closer together. I think Paul, Fred, and Dallas are exchanging Christmas presents this year after their trip to Sturgis.

Anyway, communication is important. Let them know what is expected of them and what their role is on the motorcycle. Of course, they should have all of the necessary equipment; helmet, eye protection, etc. Let them know that they should not try to lean in a curve, but just look over your shoulder in the direction of the turn. You should be aware that the motorcycle will handle differently. It will take longer to accelerate and require a longer braking distance. Your passenger can also pass along hand signals when you are slowing or turning as an added measure to make other motorists aware of your presence. And they have a job! In exchange for the excitement of riding behind you, they are required to wave at other bikers, police officers, and anyone caught admiring your beautiful motorcycle.

As any man who has ridden with a woman on the back will tell you, the rider, not the passenger, controls the motorcycle. What they will also tell you is that the passenger controls the rider. You go where they want you to take them. You stop where they want to stop. You buy what they want to buy. You get the idea. Thus far, I don't think I have said anything that anyone who has

ridden with a passenger does not already know but just may have not considered lately.

But what about your passenger? Have the two of you given any consideration to what would happen should you suffer a medical emergency while riding and the passenger has to take over? It is far better to contemplate that scenario over supper somewhere than over the road. The passenger can rise up over the driver and take over the controls. There are enough controls on the handgrips to be able to safely stop the motorcycle with both hands on the grips and without incurring any road rash. The bike will want to stay upright because of the gyroscopic effect of the wheels turning, so that will assist the passenger. Once the passenger has the controls, they can squeeze in the clutch and apply the front brake to bring the bike to a stop in a safe area. Don't

forget the engine cutoff switch is by the right thumb. As the motorcycle is nearly stopped, it is entirely likely it will fall over. But because of the dramatically reduced speed, any injuries incurred will be dramatically reduced, if they occur at all.



You can do more than talk about what to do, you can actually practice with the motorcycle on its sidestand. And the engine off, of course. The passenger should press their weight down on the driver, helping to hold him in position until the bike has stopped. Going through the routine a couple of times can help establish a feel for what will happen and instill confidence in controlling the bike from the back seat.

One more thing, once the motorcycle is stopped and you are both safe, call an ambulance! I'll weep and pace.

Head and eyes!

Mark