



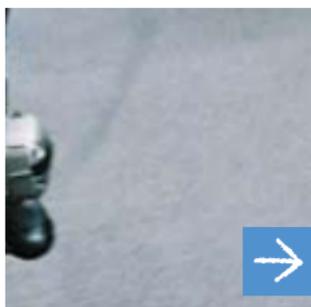
# Braking habits





'Braking habits' can help you become a better rider, and get more enjoyment out of your motorcycling. It can also be useful on the road, which is why it is similar in size to your owner's manual. Keep it in the same space on the bike – you might be glad you did.

But read it first!



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## Experience is the key

The training you get while going for your motorcycle licence is designed to teach you as much as possible about riding, and riding safely. However, there is something training can never provide and which only experience can give you.

It's like a kind of sixth sense that tells you when things are going well on a ride, and more importantly when they're not. To acquire it, what you have to do is ride with your eyes open and your mind on the job. It adds another layer to your training.

Unfortunately experience can also be a two-edged sword. Not all the habits you pick up to make that extra layer are good ones.

An occasional refresher can therefore be a good idea to keep your riding skills sharp and help you break bad habits.

## More control, more enjoyment

When a rider crashes in competition, people often say: "Looks like he just ran out of talent".

Accident figures suggest that many motorcyclists run out of talent when they're riding out alone on country roads.

While road and weather conditions contribute to single vehicle accidents, they are part of the environment that motorcyclists should be assessing as they ride.

Scanning and constantly checking your riding environment are vital to identify problems early.

There are two types of riders on the road. Riders who enter corners at a speed based on what they can see, and riders who enter corners hoping the road ahead is clear. Which type of rider are you?

Remember, if you ride with something in reserve, you will get maximum enjoyment from any ride. There's definitely no fun in sliding down the road behind your bike!



Scan for hazards.



If you can't see, slow down.



Leave something in reserve.

## Speeding matters

Firstly, remember that speeding is not just a matter of exceeding the speed limit and breaking the law. In many situations, you could be going too fast even though you're riding well below the speed limit.

Some riders would say that it's alright to speed while traffic is light and road conditions are good. However, it is worth noting that many speed-related motorcycle crashes happen in good conditions with no other vehicles involved.

You may be good at braking, but you need to take reaction time into account.

It takes three quarters of a second to make a decision to act once you see a hazard, and the same time again for the action to be effective. This means a second and a half before you even start braking, and at 60 km/h, you will travel 25 metres in that time.

It is also worth remembering that cars can stop faster than motorcycles. Tailgating can easily result in a crash. It's easy to think that speeding doesn't matter... but it does. The lower the speed, the lower the risk

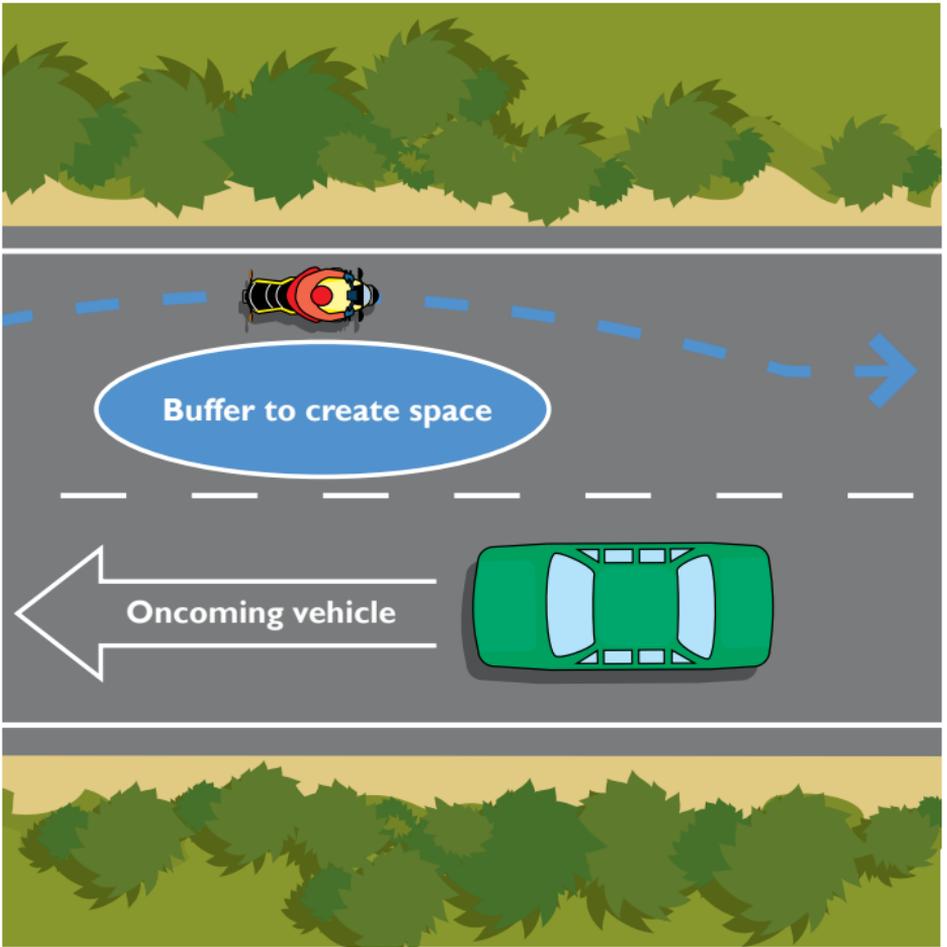


Ride at a speed where you have time to react to unexpected hazards.

## Safe riding

Following are some safe riding tips that can help you be in control of your own safety

- **Scanning** is constantly moving your eyes to collect as much information as possible about your riding environment.
- **Setting up** means applying your brakes lightly as you approach potential hazards. This can greatly reduce your response time and therefore your stopping distance.
- **Buffering** is simply positioning your bike to create maximum space around you, away from hazards. Moving away from danger may also increase the likelihood that you'll be seen.



Scan for hazards.



Slow down.



Move away from hazards.

## Around corners

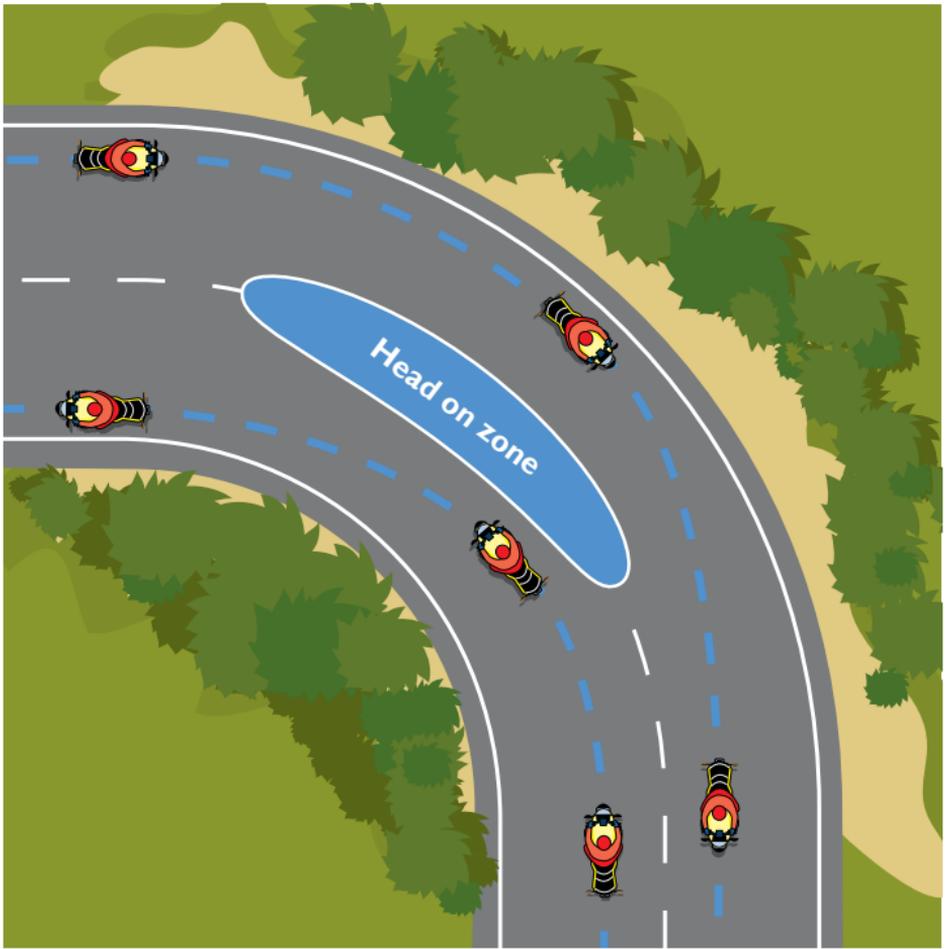
Every time you come around a blind corner you are at risk. 51% of motorcycle deaths occur on bends. Nine out of ten rider fatalities occur when the motorcycle crosses into the oncoming lane or runs off the road. That's a warning sign for all of us to slow down and not become a statistic.

Road conditions can change instantly. Just consider the effect a smear of diesel fuel will have on the grip of your tyres. Good riders can deal with poor surfaces, but only once they have the experience to deal with them.

Conditions change on every road. The road surface is part of your riding environment, just like the weather or the traffic density, and you need to give it attention.

The simple reality is that you will inevitably encounter difficult road surfaces, and for your own sake you need to be ready for them. The discipline of good observation helps you to see, assess and then deal with these kinds of risks.

Starting corners wide will improve your vision. Planning to finish them in tight will help you get your speed right and leave you room for slight errors. Most importantly, keep away from the head on zone. Taking corners this way will slow you down a little on the approach but will allow you to accelerate out much earlier, when you have a clear view.



Start wide for vision.



Plan to finish in tight.



Keep away from the head-on zone.

## If you're tired, you're in trouble

Many people think that fatigue involves going to sleep, but for motorcyclists the real problem is lapses in concentration.

### Rider fatigue indicators

- Running a bit wide on a corner.
- A couple of rough gear changes.
- Not seeing a sign.
- Day dreaming.
- Dry mouth.
- Stiff joints (neck, knees and wrists).

There's no way you'll enjoy your ride when you're battling fatigue.

It is very tempting to think that you can go just that little bit further. But the more tired you are the more likely you'll be going down the road, not along it. One in five fatal road accidents in NSW involves fatigue. Better to stop before you're included in that figure.



Even if you are not tired, stop about every one and a half hours or 150 kilometres. Riding takes more concentration than driving.



## On the road riding tips

- ➔ Keep hydrated, ideally by drinking lots of water. Fruit juice and sports drinks are alright in limited quantities. Avoid too much coffee or sweet soft drinks, and stay away from alcohol at all costs.
- ➔ Have a snack. Eat small amounts frequently, simple foods like fruit, nuts, a muesli bar or even a little chocolate. Avoid fatty foods and large meals before or during a long ride.
- ➔ In winter, don't make yourself too snug and warm. It's good to be a little cool.



## Drinking and riding don't mix

There have been many tests on the way alcohol and various other drugs affect reflexes, coordination, depth perception and risk taking behaviour. The results are always the same – increased risk due to reduced capability. Keep in mind that it is not just your own mistakes that become dangerous – when you've been drinking, you may not be able to react properly to others' mistakes either. And the ride most worth doing, is the one you do well.

It's worth remembering that alcohol has an effect on you at much lower levels than the legal blood alcohol limit and even two drinks can take you to 0.05. In the period 2004-2008, 27% of the motorcyclists killed in NSW had alcohol in their blood. Next time your ride takes you to a pub, consider a soft drink instead.

It's worth keeping in mind that a motorcycle casualty is four times as likely to be fatal if the rider has an illegal blood alcohol level.



Alcohol: less skill, more risk.

## Dress for success

Some riders claim that all you have to do to make sure it doesn't rain on a ride is bring your wet weather gear with you. It doesn't hurt to adopt the same reasoning and always wear protective gear. Then, if you do have a fall, you're still better off because you're protected.

Modern protective gear is actually quite hard to resist. Not only is it usually very good at its job due to the hi-tech materials, but it also looks good and feels comfortable.

Venting makes it cool and comfortable in summer; zip-in quilted linings make it cosy in winter.

The choice is huge, from denim jeans with kevlar threads woven into them to make them abrasion resistant to leather suits which are not only protective but also waterproof.

Best of all, good protective gear can turn what might have been a hospital stay into a minor injury.

And it comes in great, bright colours too but don't get too carried away with matching the colours of your preferred brand. You might change your mind next time you buy a bike.

If you value your brain you will replace your helmet fairly frequently. Also, if your helmet gets a hard knock it's damaged and it can't protect you so replace it.



→ Dress to be seen.

→ Protect yourself, wear the right gear.

## Look after your bike

Modern motorcycles are very reliable. Perhaps they're too reliable. In the days when a bike needed constant maintenance and repair, it would have been rare that a rider didn't notice that tyre pressures were low. Today that can happen quite easily. After all, you press the button and go and think that's all you need to know about the bike... but it's not.

There are some parts of a motorcycle that need to be looked at fairly frequently. Check:

- Tyre pressures and tread.
- Fluid levels, engine, coolant and brakes.
- Nut and bolt tightness.
- Lights and indicators.
- Brake pads.
- Chain and sprockets.

Make sure the bike is serviced regularly and properly, and you can face the road with a lot of confidence, and also ride better. Much better than wobbling around on near-flat tyres or having the gear lever fall off.



Look after your bike and it will look after you.



## Rider training

Rider training has made an enormous difference to the level of skill in the NSW motorcycle community. New riders are better and far safer than they would have been in the past.

Motorcycling is not a static skill so further training is a good idea too.

Whether you are one of those new riders or an experienced motorcyclist, think about doing a roadcraft course to update your practical knowledge and skills.

Explore the types of on-road courses that are on offer, and go have some fun while you learn even more about your favourite pastime.



Learning to ride never ends,  
further training is a good idea.

## Educating drivers

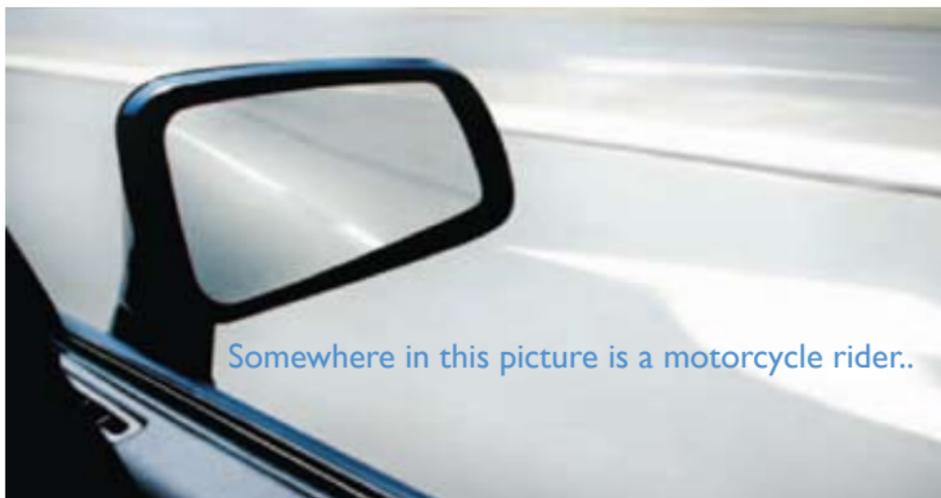
As riders we tend to look out for motorcycles. However not everybody rides, and not everyone has the same interest in motorcycles as we do. Often drivers don't see us simply because they are not looking for motorcycles. In addition, motorcycles are harder to see than other vehicles. Motorcycles are small, they easily blend into the background, can accelerate faster than other vehicles and it's hard to judge their approaching speed.

It is easy to understand why some drivers seem to pull straight out without looking. If you follow some of the tips in this book about scanning, buffering and setting up, you will be able to look after yourself most of the time.

However, if motorcycle riders educated drivers in some basic observation techniques a lot of these situations might never eventuate. Listed below are some tips you can share with your friends who drive. You might find they come in handy for you too.

- Remember to scan the road environment, and keep a special eye out for motorcycles.
- Cars do have blind spots which can be large enough for motorcycles to disappear in. Look over your shoulder before you make a move of any kind.
- Check your mirrors and blind spots often, and give motorcycles room in traffic.
- When you're getting out of a parked car, check for motorcycles before you open the door.

- When you're pulling out from the kerb, look especially for motorcycles. They have a narrower profile than cars, and they can come up very quickly.
- Do the same during any manoeuvre. Motorcycles can turn up in the most unexpected places.
- Give motorcycles space. They may have to avoid an obstacle that wouldn't matter to you, but that could be a serious problem for them.



- Check blind spots.
- Look out for motorcyclists.
- Give motorcyclists space.

## Going places

NSW has some of the greatest bike roads in the world.

The Gwydir Highway, the Waterfall Way and the Oxley Highway are all great bike roads that connect the New England Highway to the Pacific Highway on the coast. Closer to Sydney, the Old Pacific Highway, the Putty Road and Bell's Line of Road can make you forget you're even near a city.

A little to the south are Macquarie Pass and Kangaroo Valley, and further south again are Brown Mountain and the Mt Imlay Road.

All of these roads have something in common. They are hilly and twisting, and they demand a rider's full attention. To get the most enjoyment out of them, give them that attention and leave something in reserve. After all, you want to be able to ride them again.



## St John's first aid tips

Like any high velocity sport, riding a motorcycle has the potential to cause multiple and life threatening injuries including head, neck and back injuries, heavy blood loss, severe burns and unconsciousness.

In a situation where an individual is seriously injured, skilled and immediate first aid can be the difference between survival and death.

With all serious injuries sustained by motorcyclists, these factors are vital for survival: ability to breathe effectively, stopping all blood loss, protection of the head, neck and back, and the quick arrival of medical attention. These are all achievable by a skilled and confident first aider:

### Casualties wearing helmets

A full-faced helmet should only be removed if the injured rider does not have a clear airway and cannot breathe. In all other circumstances the helmet should remain in place unless the rider chooses to remove it him/herself. In the situation where a casualty requires expired air resuscitation and is wearing a full-faced helmet, the helmet must be removed by at least two people.

The first person must ensure that the head and neck are completely stabilised and supported to avoid any further damage. The second person must carefully remove the helmet in a way that minimises all movement to the head and neck.

Once the helmet has been removed, the first aiders can perform expired air resuscitation.



## Casualties encased in leathers

Bleeding wounds can be hidden from view or disguised by riding leathers. Often the puncture made in the leathers is not a true indication of the severity of a wound. Heavy and life-threatening blood loss requires that the wound be exposed to the first aider so that direct pressure can be applied with bandages or clothing.

In the case of motorcyclists wearing leathers it is vital that the leathers be removed from the wound. This may require the leathers to be torn or cut away with shears, scissors or a knife.

Stop any bleeding by applying direct pressure to the wound with bandages or clothing. If possible, elevate the bleeding part above the level of the chest and keep the injured person as still as possible.

## Severe burns

In the event of an accident, it is possible that a rider can be trapped underneath his/her bike. Extreme heat from exhausts and engine parts can be conducted and contained in leathers, burning the rider.

For all burns it is vital to expose the wound and cool it with running water until the affected area returns to a normal temperature.

Remove clothing if possible from the burnt area. If it is stuck, cut around it; don't attempt to pull it off.

Remove jewellery to prevent restricting circulation due to swelling. Protect the burnt area with a sterile or non-stick dressing or closely woven material.

## St John DRABC action plan

When you come across an accident follow the St John DRABC action plan to effectively manage casualties and the accident scene.

The first thing to do is to direct someone to call 000 for an ambulance.

### **D** Danger

Check to see if it is safe to approach the injured person.

### **R** Response

Check if the person is conscious or unconscious. Shake them lightly and shout to them. If they don't respond they are unconscious.

### **A** Airway

The airway must be protected, roll them onto their side, being aware that their neck may be injured and needs to be stabilised whilst they are being rolled.

### **B** Breathing

Once on their side check that the mouth is clear of any obstructions such as blood or vomit and make sure that they are breathing.

### **C** Circulation

Stop any bleeding by applying direct pressure with bandages or clothing. If possible, elevate the bleeding part above the level of the chest. Keep the injured person as still as possible by packing clothing and equipment around them to prevent movement to the spine and any broken bones.



NSW St John Ambulance also conducts motorcycle training and provides first aid training with specialised first aid kits available for motorcyclists.

## Useful contacts



- Police and other emergency services: 000.
- Reporting road surface damage: 131 700.
- RTA customer service: 13 22 13.
- Rider training bookings: 13 22 13.
- NSW St John Ambulance: 1300 360 455



Visit the RTA website [www.rta.nsw.gov.au](http://www.rta.nsw.gov.au) to find out more about the following:

- Learner Approved Motorcycle (LAM) Scheme list.
- The Rider Training Scheme.
- Road conditions update.
- TA Motorcycle Riders' Handbook.
- RTA Hazard Perception Handbook.





For further enquiries



13 22 13



[www.rta.nsw.gov.au](http://www.rta.nsw.gov.au)

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**Roads and Traffic Authority**