

*A safety guide for you  
and your motorcycle or scooter.*



## Proposed Government Changes

It is proposed over the course of the Second Government Strategy for Road Safety 2004 – 2006 to introduce compulsory initial practical training for motorcyclists before they are permitted to drive on the public road.

In the area of licencing regulations it is also intended to introduce a requirement that motorcyclists with provisional licences must display L-plates.

The proposed measures outlined above should lead to a reduction in the level of deaths and serious injuries currently being experienced among this vulnerable group.

Motorcycles represent less than 2% of the total vehicle fleet in this country yet are over represented in road collision statistics (on average each year motorcyclists and pillion passengers account for 12% of fatalities).

## Acknowledgements

The National Safety Council and MAG Ireland – The Irish Motorcyclists' Action Group Ltd. would like to thank Mr. Ray Murray Local Training Officer, Star Rider Motor Cycle Training, Fingal Co. Co for his invaluable assistance in developing this booklet.

Thanks also to Mr. Seamus Kelly, Road Safety Officer, and Mr. Tom Kelly, Local Training Officer, Star Rider Motor Cycle Training, Fingal Co. Co; Mr. Martin Reilly, Sergeant-in-Charge, Garda Motorcycle Driving School and Mr. Mark O'Loideoin, Irish Rider Training Association.

The National Safety Council and MAG Ireland are grateful to Hibernian General Insurance for the support and generous sponsorship of this booklet.

An advertisement for the Motorcycle Ignition course. The background is a close-up of a motorcycle's front fairing in shades of blue and white. The text is in a bold, white, hand-drawn style. At the bottom right is the "motorcycle ignition" logo, which is a blue rectangle with a white border containing a yellow star and a gear icon, with the tagline "The key to safer riding and lower premiums" below it.

GET 15% OFF YOUR  
MOTORCYCLE  
INSURANCE  
AND BECOME A  
SAFER RIDER

motorcycle  
ignition  
*The key to safer riding and lower premiums*

You can get 15% off your private motorcycle insurance premium if you successfully complete our Motorcycle Ignition course. This is a one-day rider-training course for less experienced motorcyclists, run by the Institute of Advanced Motorists. To qualify for Motorcycle Ignition you must meet certain conditions, including that you must have passed your motorcycle-riding test in the last 5 years and you must own your own roadworthy motorcycle, insured with Hibernian for private use only.



If you are interested in applying for Motorcycle Ignition, please contact the Hibernian Ignition Team at **1850 235 435**.

*You're safe in the hands of Hibernian*

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# Introduction

This booklet aims to provide you with basic advice on motorcycle safety, bike maintenance and proper procedures, whether you are new to biking, already experienced or thinking about getting on two wheels.

As millions of trained motorcyclists around the world prove every day, biking can be a fun, safe and satisfying activity provided you are competent<sup>‡</sup> in what you do. The following competencies are critical for the safe operation of any motorcycle, regardless of the experience level of the rider:

- 1 **The right attitude**
- 2 **The benefit of education and training**
- 3 **Appropriate skills**

There are huge variations in the competencies of other road users. This presents a major challenge for anyone using a powered two wheeler on Irish roads today. Only if you are competent in what you do on your bike can you overcome the challenges presented by your own limitations, the actions of other road users and the environment in which you operate.

**‡ Competency can be described as having an appropriate balance of skill, attitude, ability, behaviour, experience and education.**



## Vulnerability

**You have less stability and crash protection on a bike than in a car.** These disadvantages are slightly offset by having better visibility, hearing and manoeuvrability on a bike (apart from the fact that your bike is generally more environmentally friendly, time and fuel efficient and easier to park).

**2 out of 3 (66%) motorcycle crashes involve a car.** This is not surprising as 9 out of 10 (86%) of all crashes involve cars\*.

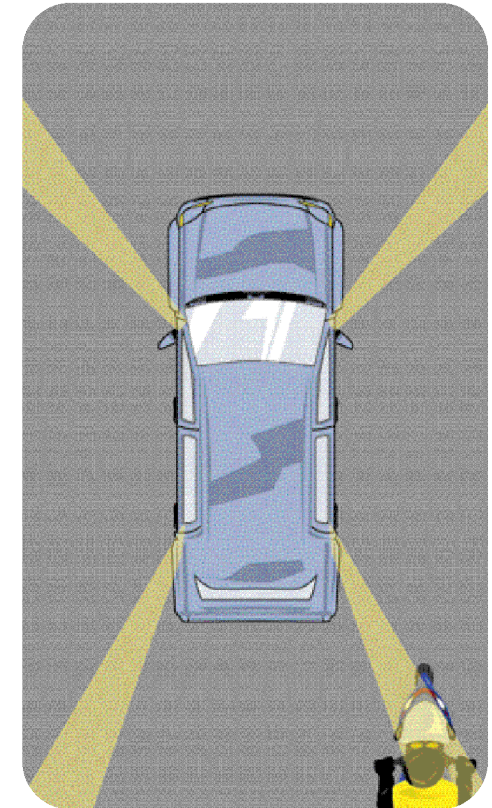
**20 motorcyclists are killed or injured on Irish roads each week\*** Irrespective of who is at fault the motorcyclist will more than likely suffer worst in a collision with another vehicle.

So, how can we address our vulnerability in relation to other road users?

Good question. We believe this booklet will provide you with most of the answers.

*Read on.*

\* National Roads Authority, 2002



*Blind spots in the average car*

# Attitude & Behaviour



## Control

Ask yourself the following questions.

### Am I in control.....

**....of myself?** Do I concentrate when I am on the bike, observe all around and anticipate the actions of others? Do I refrain from riding if I have drink taken or I am taking medication that could impair my performance? Is my gear appropriate for the weather conditions and personal protection?

**....of the bike?** Is the machine properly maintained and roadworthy? Have I taken a training course to develop the skills needed to handle a motorcycle on the road?

**....of my immediate surroundings?** Am I aware of the dangers posed by the actions of others, variations in the road surface and weather conditions? Do I know how to deal with hazards<sup>‡</sup>? Have I been trained to recognise, assess and manage hazards?

The answers to these questions are critically important for your future well-being. If you answer in the negative to anything just mentioned, who do you have to blame?

The best helmet in the world will not protect you if you do not have the right mix of skills, good attitude and education/training.

<sup>‡</sup>A hazard can be defined as anything that contains actual or potential danger to you, such as;

- Physical features such as junctions, hillcrests, roundabouts, bends
- Risks arising from the movement and position of other road users
- Problems arising from variations in road surface, weather conditions and visibility

So what is a good or appropriate attitude in the context of riding a motorcycle?

It is recognising the responsibilities you have to yourself and others and taking them seriously.

Your attitude towards riding your motorcycle is absolutely critical in determining the likelihood of you having a crash.

## Responsibility

### Responsibility to yourself

Do you wear appropriate clothing while on your bike?

Have you taken the time to get proper training?

Do you refrain from drinking or taking drugs before riding?

### Responsibility to your family

Every time you go out on your bike your ultimate aim is to return home safely. Apart from the fact that there may be people who are socially and financially

dependent on you, the manner in which you ride may cause unnecessary stress and anxiety to those close to you. Have you ever thought about this? Doing a proper training course and changing your attitude would go some way towards alleviating those concerns.

### Responsibility to pillion

#### Are you legally entitled to carry a pillion?

It is a tragic fact that pillion passengers account for a disproportionately high number of motorcycle fatalities and serious injuries each year. If you carry a pillion do you ensure their gear offers adequate protection? Do you brief them before the ride and show consideration to them during the ride?

### Responsibility to other road users

Have you read the owners handbook for your bike?

Have you been shown how to operate the bike properly or are you just winging it? Is your bike properly maintained? Do you know the Rules of the Road? Can you form an accurate assessment of what are safe, legal and considerate actions on a



motorcycle? If you were taking up any activity you would learn the rules and find out what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour in relation to others.

Motorcycling is fundamentally different from most other activities in that your life depends on knowing the rules.

How noisy is your exhaust? The frosty reception you get from the neighbours may be to do with the fact that sleeping infants and unsilenced machines at 1am do not make a good mix.

Attempting to use the full potential of a powerful machine on today's crowded roads is stupid, selfish, irresponsible and dangerous. With power comes responsibility.

The greater the performance capability of your machine the greater your responsibility upon deciding when to use it. Any fool can ride a bike fast in a straight line. If you want to go fast, do it under controlled conditions such as a track day, or simply go racing legitimately!

You should develop a well-honed awareness of your own vulnerability.

In today's world, none of us operate in isolation. We interact with family, friends, work colleagues and other road users practically every day.

**Recognise and accept your responsibilities.**

## Training

If people ever got to the stage where they actually knew it all, they would sell the bike and move on to something else. Ask any experienced rider and he or she will confirm you never stop learning. The interaction of road users, combined with the dynamics of machine control and constant changes in your surroundings result in millions of different scenarios, no two exactly alike.

From the first time you move away on a motorcycle, you are building up a store of knowledge and information which you will constantly refer to throughout your motorcycling career. The more you ride the more experience you gain. You can also increase your store of knowledge by taking advantage of the experience of others. This is where good quality training can contribute hugely to your enjoyment of and safety on your motorcycle.

A good training course should allow you to explore the dynamics of machine control and some of the capabilities of the machine in a controlled environment.

Proper training will enable you to spot, assess, prioritise and manage the many and various dangers which arise on our roads every day, in a systematic manner. You will learn to leave nothing to chance.

Involvement in such a course will allow you to find out about the most appropriate clothing to wear and inform you as to basics of machine maintenance.

**The more you know the better it gets. Motorcycling can be magic, especially if you get properly trained.**

Contacts for training are listed at the back of the publication.

**Your friends may have experience but the information they provide may be fatally wrong. Learn from trained professionals.**



## Filtering

Filtering can be defined as overtaking slow moving or stationary traffic and more than any other activity illustrates both the versatility and vulnerability of motor cycle usage.

**It should only be carried out by trained and experienced motorcyclists and should never be attempted by novices or newcomers.**

It requires intense concentration and awareness, high levels of observation, machine handling and anticipatory skills and should be done in a considerate manner.

The questions any rider should ask before embarking on a filtering manoeuvre are;

- Have I been instructed in the pitfalls and dangers of filtering? (e.g. Raised white lines affecting the stability of the machine, doors opening, cars changing lanes, pedestrians emerging between cars etc.).
- Is it safe and is it legal?

- Can I see where I can rejoin the traffic flow before I leave my position?
- What is my contingency or escape route if the situation changes or things go wrong?
- Will I cause other road users to alter course or speed to accommodate my manoeuvre?
- Will I at any stage be completely reliant on the goodwill of another road user for my safety?

More than any other activity on the road, inconsiderate filtering by a rider can result in leaving a trail of resentment in his or her wake.

**The golden rule of filtering is that it should be safe, legal and should be performed at a speed that the rider can stop the machine within the distance he/she can trust to remain clear.**



## Pillion Passengers

Pillion passengers deserve to be adequately protected while riding on the back of a motorcycle. It is the motorcyclist who ultimately must take responsibility for anyone riding pillion. It is arguable that given their disproportionate representation in motorcycle fatality figures, pillions deserve more protection than the rider.

Pillions can have a serious effect on the balance and stability of a motorcycle. They affect;

- Balance (by changing the centre of gravity of the machine)
- Braking (the increased weight will increase stopping distance)
- Steering (the steering of the machine can become unpredictable with a pillion)
- Acceleration (the extra weight will decrease acceleration performance, perhaps critically on a smaller machine during an overtaking manoeuvre)

- Ground clearance (the extra weight may cause the machine to come in contact with the road, startling the rider and resulting in loss of concentration)

Most importantly; a motorcycle relies on balance for stability. If a pillion fidgets, moves about or leans the opposite way to the bike while cornering - this creates a hazard that may become so severe, the rider cannot compensate, resulting in a crash.

**Are you licenced?**

**Are you legally entitled to carry a pillion passenger?**

**Are you insured to carry a pillion passenger?**



Do you have enough experience and confidence to deal with the previously mentioned effects on your machine caused by carrying a pillion?

**Pillions must not;**

- Move about unnecessarily
- Put their feet down in corners or when the machine is stationary
- Lean against the direction the machine is banked towards
- Mount or dismount the machine without alerting the rider of their intention

**The rider should ensure;**

- A pillion passenger wears appropriate clothing
- Their helmet is securely fastened (legally this is the riders responsibility)
- They lean with the machine
- They hold onto the rider or to a grab rail or saddle strap
- That you both agree a range of signals before the journey (for instance, a tap on the shoulder if they want to stop)

**You are not permitted to carry a pillion passenger if you have a provisional licence.**

Taking somebody on the back of your bike is a huge responsibility and is probably the reason why many motorcyclists travel solo.

If you are intending to carry a pillion, let them know what to expect and what is expected of them. Above all, show some consideration and address their concerns.

**Maintenance**

Experienced riders use the following learning aid to help them perform safety checks in a systematic manner;

**P.O.W.D.E.R.**

Petrol   Oil   Water   Damage  
Electrics   Rubber

**Petrol** - make sure you have enough fuel for the journey. Does your machine have a reserve tank switch or just a warning light? Can you turn the fuel tap to reserve while on the move, without taking your eyes off the road? Do you know where the tap is?

**Oil** - How do you check the oil level on your machine? Most dry sump machines require you to check the oil when the engine is hot, while most wet sump machines should have their oil level checked with the engine cold. Which type is yours? The owners handbook will tell you how to perform this check correctly.

Is your machine a two stroke or a four stroke? Of course you know that on a two stroke machine the two stroke oil should be checked every time you fill up with petrol. On a four-stroke machine the procedure for checking the oil level varies - dipstick or sight glass? Engine - hot or cold? If you are not sure what type your machine is, you had better find out otherwise you may be looking at a major repair bill for an engine seizure and/or crash damage.

**Water** - How do you check the coolant level? Where is the filler cap? Of course you know that to open the radiator cap when the engine is hot is inviting the risk of serious scalding. Is your machine water or air cooled? Best to find out now.

**Damage** - Check the bike for signs of obvious damage. Are the extremities of the machine scuffed, such as indicators, bar-end weights and levers? Are the light lenses or mirrors cracked or broken? Any noticeable buckles in the rims? Any drips or pools under the bike? Check for damage to the tyre walls and rim. Your machine could have been knocked over while





unattended or it could have been borrowed during the day without your knowledge. Better to check and be safe than sorry!

**Electrics** - Are you sure all your lights and signals are clean and working? Finding out the horn doesn't work just when you need it is no use. Is your faulty brake light inviting a rear end shunt? Do you know where the fuses are and can you replace them?

**Rubber** - Your tyres form a contact patch with the road no bigger than the palm of your hand and are thus an essential component of motorcycle safety. Too much air in your tyres reduces grip by making the tyre stand proud of the road surface. Too little air promotes instability because it allows the side walls of the tyres to flex. Do you know what your tyre pressures are and the legal minimum tread depth? (see page 30)

Remember, if you are going to pull a nail out of one of your tyres, do it outside a Motorcycle shop that is open and fixes punctures!

Finally, you must ensure the maintenance schedule for your machine is adhered to. If you cannot do it yourself get a professional to do it or show you how. For instance, a badly maintained chain may snap or jump off and cause you to crash. Could you spot one?

Check local colleges for courses.

## Clothing

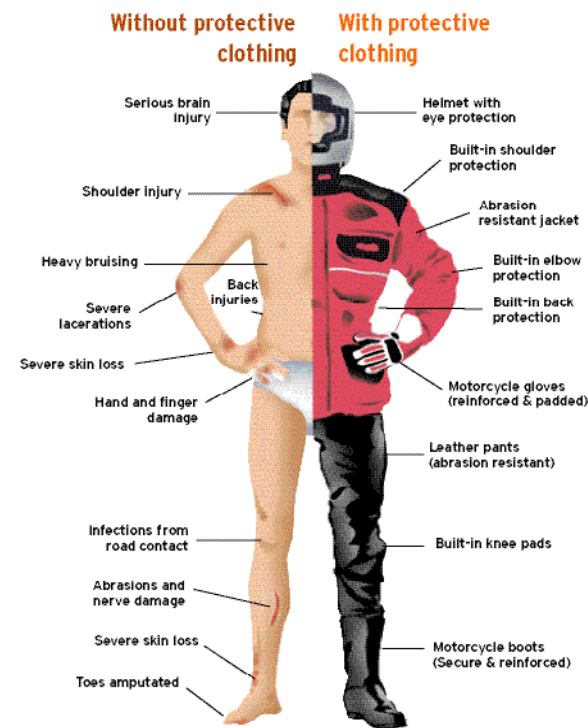
74% of motor cycle crashes occur in built up areas\*. Most motorcyclists live in urban areas therefore you are more likely to be involved in a crash close to home. What this means for us is that we should wear appropriate clothing every time we get on the bike.

The price of a good helmet is the cost of living. Think about how much you use your head everyday and how useful it is to you and then decide how much you are going to spend on protecting it!

If in doubt, ask around. Look at the riders of clean, well maintained bikes and see

\* National Roads Authority, 2002

## Motorcyclist's Clothing



Transport Accident Commission, Australia, 2001

what they are wearing. Look at motorcycle racers and see what their preferred style and brands are. They crash a lot so head protection is a priority for them.

**If you have a €10 head buy a €10 helmet!**

- Buy from reputable dealers. Try several different sizes and makes. Make sure the dealer knows how to assess proper fit.
- Never buy or use second hand.

# Skills



- Never loan your helmet to someone else. It is an item of personal clothing. Do you really want an incurable scalp disease from someone else?
- If your helmet is damaged, replace it.
- Read the manual and follow the care instructions.
- An unsecured helmet is useless in a crash and is also illegal. Helmets must be worn at all times and must be securely fastened.
- Clean your visor gently with warm soapy water. Replace it if it is scratched.

Oil on a wet road is almost impossible to spot through a dark visor. But of course you knew that, didn't you?

Jackets and trousers should offer adequate protection against impact and abrasion.

In summertime it's tempting to leave motorcycle gear off in favour of t-shirts and shorts. Remember it's easier to have a shower than to have a skin graft!

Clothing should also protect against the cold and the wet. Purchase clothing with

removable winter liners so you can use them in the summer. Body armour on exposed areas such as the back, knees, elbows, shoulders, hips and shins should be adjustable so it fits snugly and does not move in a crash.

A good reflective jacket will make you more visible on the road, increasing your profile. It will also keep road dirt off your motorbike jacket.

**If you are ever lying injured in the middle of a badly lit road at night and hear the noise of a car approaching at high speed you may have just enough time to question the wisdom of wearing black clothing in the dark.**

Always wear protective gloves and footwear that at least comes over the ankle. Use ear protection on long journeys.

If you wear an open face helmet (one without a chin bar) make sure you wear eye protection.

**Do your research before you buy!  
Does the protection meet EU standards?**

The skills necessary to ride a motor cycle well can be divided into;

1. Machine handling skills
2. Hazard management skills

## Machine handling skills

Your tyres provide you with grip for three critical activities on your bike. These are;

## Acceleration Braking Cornering

The ABC of motorcycling. None of these activities should overlap on the road.

**Acceleration** should be done when the machine is upright or returning to the upright position to take advantage of the maximum amount of tyre contact patch with the road.

### During acceleration\*



The rear tyre gains grip

The grip of the front tyre reduces

### During deceleration



The grip of the rear tyre reduces

The front tyre gains grip

\* Adapted from Motorcycle Roadcraft, The Police Foundation, London, 2002



**Braking** should always be done with the machine in the upright position, once again ensuring maximum tyre grip is available.

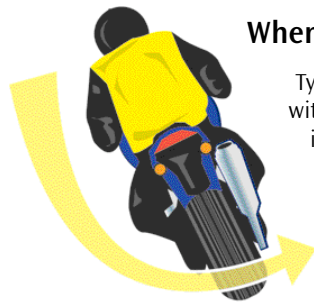
**Cornering** should be done in isolation from the other two activities because the machine is obviously not upright, has reduced tyre contact with the road and needs all available grip for cornering alone.

When cornering, the throttle position should be positive. That is, the machine should be driving through the bend, ensuring a slight bias in the balance of the machine towards the rear and the greater tyre grip available there.

Acceleration should be commenced as you leave the corner and should be directly proportional to the reduction in the angle of lean of the machine.

**Remember, your tyres have a contact patch on the road no bigger than the palm of your hand.** The amount of grip available is not unlimited. Braking and cornering simultaneously will soon see the grip level of the tyres exceeded and will probably result in a crash. Harsh

acceleration and cornering will see the grip level of the rear tyre being exceeded with possibly disastrous consequences. The difficulties involved in braking and accelerating simultaneously are obvious!



### When cornering

Tyre contact with the road is greatly reduced

## Braking

Never use the front brake when turning, cornering or on a loose or hazardous surface. If your machine is not upright, travelling in a straight line or is on a slippery surface, you have less grip.

On a good dry surface with the machine upright, travelling in a straight line, your front brake should provide 70% of your total braking effort while the rear provides the remaining 30%. The front brake should be applied just before the rear, to ensure maximum advantage is made of the grip available from the front tyre.

On a wet or hazardous surface it takes longer to stop, so obviously more distance should be given over to braking. The total braking effort should be divided equally, 50% between each brake, again the front applied just before the rear. This is to ensure that the upset to the balance of the machine under braking is minimised as much as possible and that the grip available from both tyres is maximised, given the lower level of grip available on wet roads.

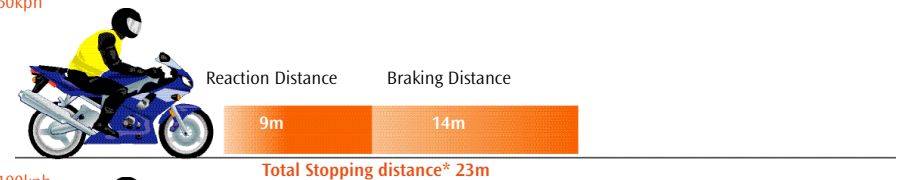
All braking should be done smoothly and consistently, to ensure a progressive weight transfer to the tyres. Harsh application of the brakes, particularly the

front, will not allow the tyre to push into the road and gain maximum grip, possibly resulting in a locked or skidding front wheel and the rider falling off.

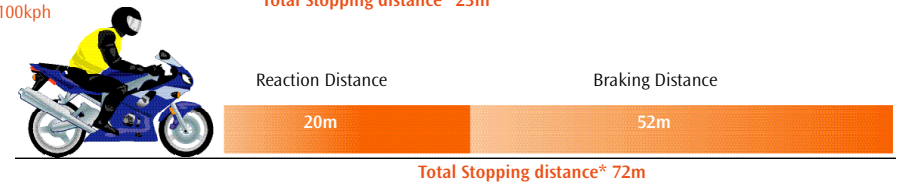
Good forward observation and planning will ensure you do not get yourself into these circumstances in the first place!

The rear brake only should be used on loose or hazardous surfaces, or in an emergency when cornering or turning. Remember, the rear tyre is generally wider than the front and certainly has more weight over it, making it more stable than the front in these situations.

50kph



100kph



When speed is doubled, braking distance quadruples

\*Rules of the Road DOELG: Estimated stopping distances based on dry road conditions. For guidance only.

## Gears & Braking

Automatic scooters can range in size from 50cc shoppers to 650cc touring machines, capable of embarking on a high mileage European holiday. They are relatively easy to learn to ride, in that there is generally only one gear to deal with. Motor cycles with gears are a different matter entirely.

People often ask, what gear should I be in? The answer is - the correct gear for the given situation! Gear selection is dependent on your speed at that particular time and the likely demands you might be about to place on the machine in the short term.

Your machine should always respond readily to the throttle, that is, if you open the throttle the bike should accelerate, if you close it the machine should slow down. This is called engine braking and is far more noticeable on large capacity four stroke machines than on low capacity two strokes. Most small scooters are two strokes. Different machines have different engine braking characteristics, for

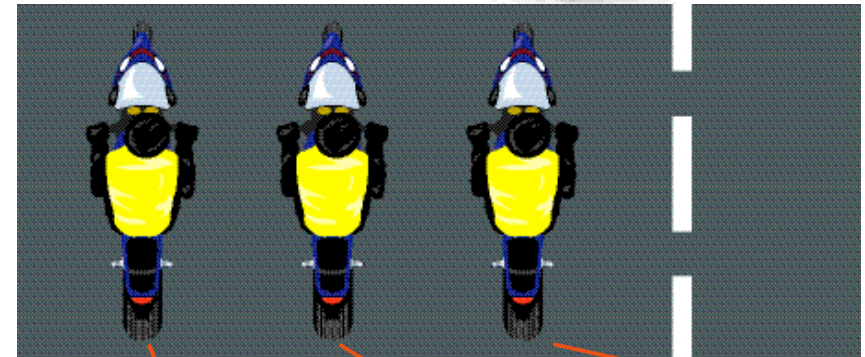
instance, big single cylinder four strokes (usually dirtbike style machines) have tremendous engine braking while small scooters usually have very little.

The main benefit of engine braking is that it enables you to adjust the speed of the machine without using the brakes, thus minimising the disruption to the balance of the machine. It is particularly useful when riding on loose or hazardous surfaces.

## Positioning

Motorcyclists have more flexibility when choosing road position on their own side of the road. **When choosing a road position, never sacrifice safety for any other advantage.**

The best road position to take should be based on your safety, visibility (to see and be seen), observation, road and traffic conditions, road layout, manoeuvrability, assisting traffic flow and making your intentions clear.



### The Nearside Position

Benefits:

- Provides a clear view through right hand bends
- Provides clearer nearside view past goods vehicles
- Generally the best position for left-hand turns as long as there are no nearside hazards

Risks:

- Vehicles emerging from junctions
- Conflicting with pedestrians and pedal cyclists
- Parked cars (doors opening)
- Danger posed by road debris and drains

### The Central Position (The Command Position)

Benefits:

- Provides good margins of safety left and right
- Allows the rider to change position to left or right
- Provides clearance to nearside hazards

Risks:

- Be aware of the dangers posed by accumulation of oil and diesel especially in wet weather near junctions and on approach to bends

### The Offside Position

Benefits:

- Provides a clearer view on the approach to left-hand bends
- Provides added clearance to nearside hazards
- Generally a good position to take on the approach to junctions in rural areas as vision is improved into the mouth or opening of minor roads left and right
- Generally the best position for right-hand turns

Risks:

- Conflicting with oncoming traffic and vehicles crossing from the offside

## Hazard management skills

Any time you ride your bike you must be confident that the road space you occupy is safe and that the road space you are about to enter is also safe. This may seem like a tall order, but all you have to ask yourself is;

### Do I or will I have space and time to deal with an emergency?

If the answer is no, then find out why very quickly!



The reasons why you do not have enough space and time to deal with hazards may include;

**Inappropriate speed** (for the grip available, the capabilities of the machine, your own abilities and the volume of traffic at that time).

**Lack of awareness** (of the movement and position of other road users, the road surface and the condition of your bike or the Rules of the Road). You may have little or no training in the detection, assessment, prioritisation and management of hazards.

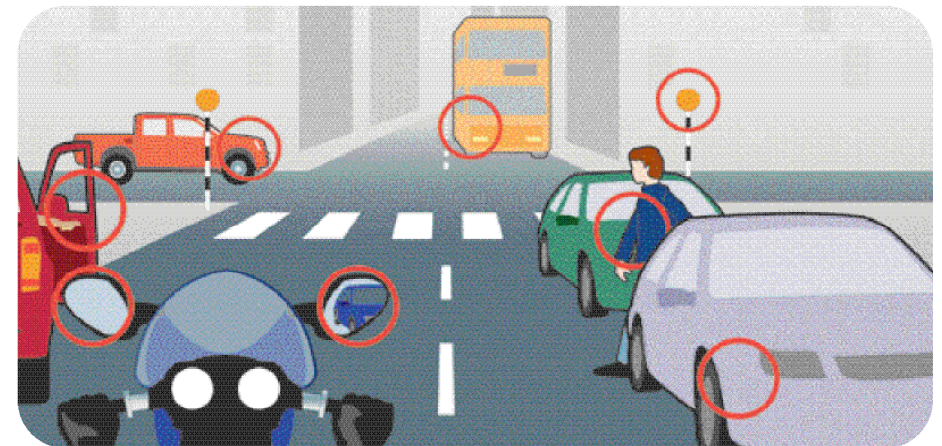
**Lack of anticipation** (not being able to predict the possible future actions of others or changes on the road layout and condition ahead).



**Lack of concentration** (distracted, cold, wet, drunk, drugged). Cars are a lot like people. If one of them is going to hit you they will show all the signs. Are you paying enough attention?

**Lack of observation** (you may see things on the road, but their significance escapes you). What do you think will follow a ball out onto the road?

We cannot control the actions of other road users but we can manage hazardous situations as they arise.



*Routine scanning enables you to spot all areas of risk, which you should then check and re-check.*



**Scenario 1** - You are on a main road. 200 metres ahead there is a junction on the left hand side with a car in it, stationary, waiting to emerge. The best way to manage this hazard is to create space and time for yourself. You can do this by:

Changing position to put more space on your left hand side between the hazard and the machine (offside position). If you are going to change position, you must ensure the new area is safe for you to enter. Have you checked behind? What about oncoming traffic?

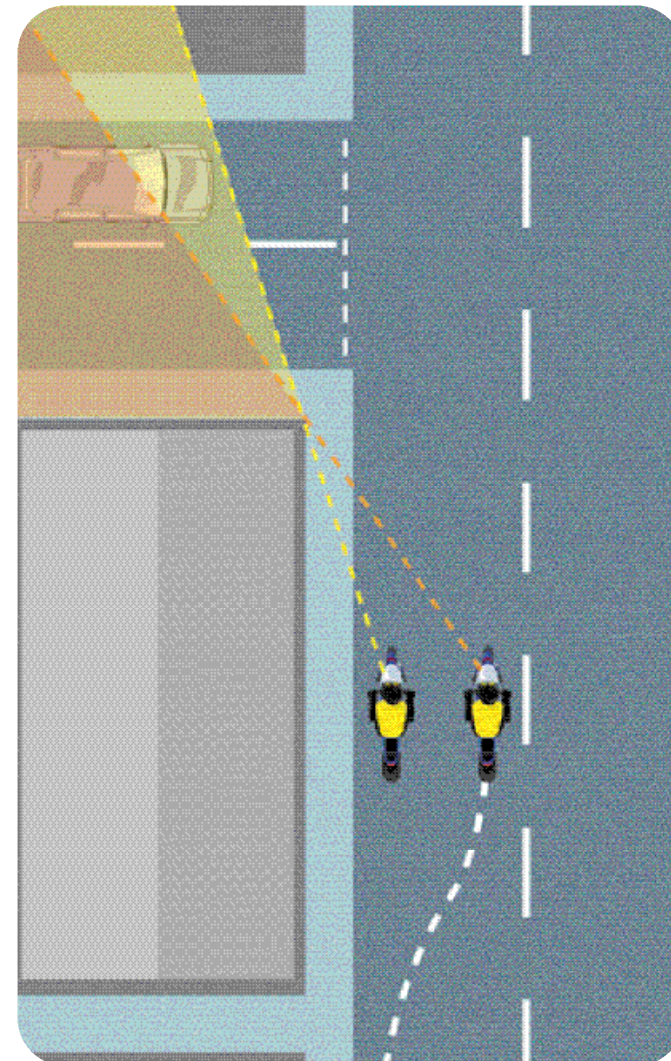
Reduce speed to ensure you can stop on your own side of the road in the distance you can see to be clear in case the car pulls out. Check your own indicator is not on in error. This could be disastrous!

Check out the surface and assess the grip level available.

Watch the wheels of the car. If they start to move you may have problems. If you look at the driver he or she will probably look you straight in the eye before pulling out in front of you.

Monitor traffic movement ahead, to the sides and behind. You want to be sure of an escape route and developing hazards.

By reacting in this manner, you will have displayed most of the skills outlined earlier.



1. Information - look into the hazardous area. Don't forget to look behind. Constant reassessment gives you time to react.
2. Position - take up the correct position for the hazard(s).
3. Speed - is it suitable? Adjust to a speed appropriate for the situation.
4. Gear - select a responsive gear, that will provide positive acceleration or deceleration.
5. Acceleration - once the situation is fully assessed, use the appropriate acceleration to leave the hazard.

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Minimum line of sight

-----  
Maximum line of sight

**Scenario 2** - You wish to turn left, 200 metres ahead, from a major road to a minor road. Position yourself so that your intention is clear, towards the nearside (left hand side) of the road, taking into account any hazards (e.g. Parked cars, pedestrians, cyclists). This allows following traffic to overtake on the offside (right hand side) and reduces the opportunity for overtaking on the nearside. Assess traffic movement to the front, sides and rear.

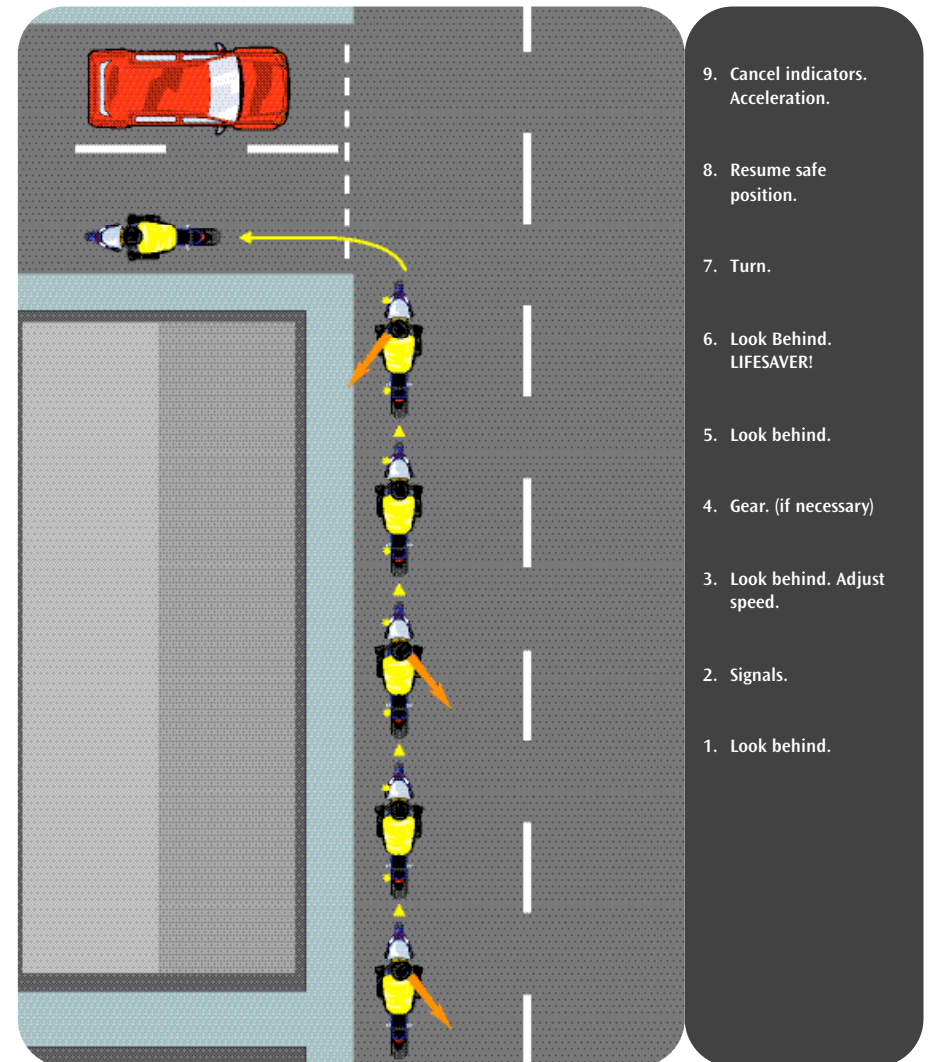
Signal your intention using your indicators. You realise that indicators do not confer right of way, but only show intention. Early signalling allows other road users to react and change position if necessary.

Reduce speed to that appropriate to the hazard. (Is the surface good/wet/dry, is anyone already turning in the junction, are there pedestrians crossing, is the turn very tight?).

Just before you turn, turn your head to check your blind spot - the area not covered by your mirror - on the side you are turning. This is called a "Lifesaver". This will alert you to traffic (other motorbikes, cars, push bikes, etc.) already in your blind spot. If it is safe, you can turn. If it is not safe, stop the machine (upright and in a straight line) let the hazard pass, check again and if safe, turn.

The timing for this check is as follows. Quickly check in your blind spot, look forward and only when you have done this, say the word "Safe" and then turn, providing of course that it is safe! Looking and turning at the same time will simply confirm to you that you are about to be hit side on. Make sure the machine does not veer off line as you look over your shoulder!

Allow yourself time to react to what you see. Expect the unexpected.



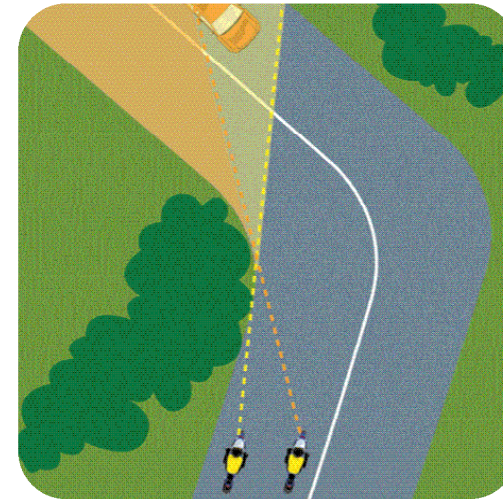


**Scenario 3** - You are approaching a left-hand bend. Concentrate and observe! Assess the level of grip available (is it dry, wet, grippy or shiny tarmac) and the severity of the bend. Look at the tops of the trees, hedges or telegraph poles, or use the limit point (the point where both verges meet and you cannot see any further. If this point comes towards you the bend is tightening up. If it rushes away, then the bend is opening out).

**Position** yourself for maximum visibility so you have as great a range of vision around the bend as possible. This generally means moving towards the crown or middle of the road. You will also be seen earlier by oncoming traffic. Ensure that your **speed** is appropriate to the bend. Can you stop if necessary, on your side of the road? Are you in the right **gear**? Stay two to three feet from the crown of the road and when you see the road open out, **accelerate** gently out of the bend, returning to your original position in the road.

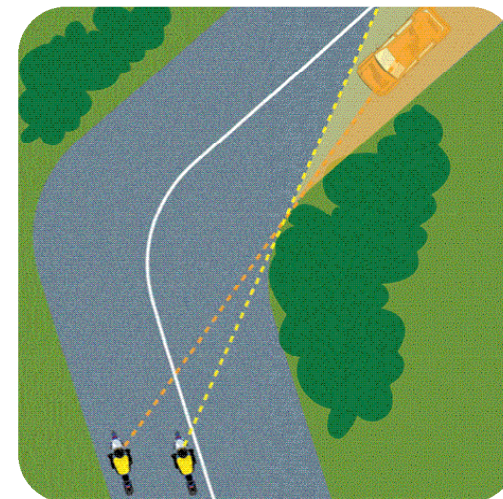
Vision dictates speed. If vision is restricted by a bend in the road or fog, rain, high sided vehicle, darkness etc. then you have no option but to reduce speed until you have adequate **SPACE AND TIME**.

Left hand bend



For left hand bends the offside position generally provides a clearer view

Right hand bend



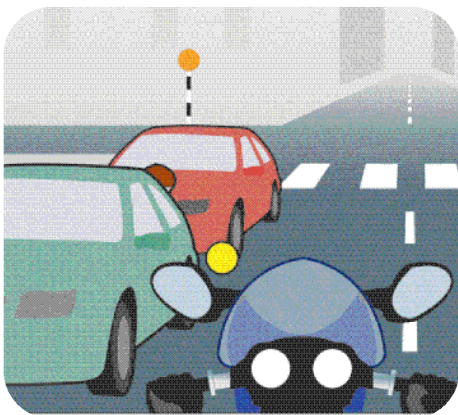
For right hand bends a position towards the nearside (left) of the road provides a clearer view





**Scenario 4** - You are travelling along a main road when you see some children playing close to the roadway on your side. The children are close to the edge of the road. In the event of play acting or a stumble, one of them could fall into your path. So how do we manage this situation?

You need **SPACE AND TIME**. Adjust your speed to enable you to stop in the event of an emergency. Consider changing position, giving yourself more space between the machine and the children. Make sure you alert other traffic (behind, to the front and the sides) using indicators or arm signals as to your intentions. Ensure the space you intend to move into is safe by observing the speed and position of other road users and anticipating their possible actions.



**Remember, before you**

- Turn right;
- Turn left;
- or overtake another vehicle;

**You should**

- Take rear observation to assess following traffic
- Signal (use your arm to supplement indicator if necessary and appropriate)
- Move onto the correct course in a safe manner (give a “lifesaver” as appropriate)
- Adjust your speed if necessary and select appropriate gear
- Give lifesaver look before turning

**In summary;**

- Concentrate on what you are doing
- Take effective observation to the front, rear and sides
- Communicate effectively with other road users with appropriate signals.
- Manage the hazard!



# Legal Issues

**Remember, pillions deserve at least as much protection as you.**

You must satisfy the following legal requirements before you can drive on the road;

- Read and understand the Rules of the Road.
- You must hold a valid licence for your age and the type of machine being driven
- You must have a minimum of third party insurance
- Your machine must have a valid tax disc displayed
- You must wear a securely fastened helmet
- It is your responsibility to ensure your pillion also wears a securely fastened helmet

Your machine must be roadworthy. Mirrors fitted , all lights working and clean, number plate legal and clean. Your

tyres must have a tyre tread depth of 1mm. This is the legal minimum depth but you should replace them long before they get to 1 mm.

**If you hold a provisional licence and a pillion is badly injured while on the back of your bike you may be:**

- **Convicted in the courts (irrespective of whether anyone is injured or not).**
- **Held personally liable for repaying any compensation awarded by the courts.**

**Remember, if you have a provisional driving licence you are not legally entitled to carry a pillion.**

# The Crash Scene

See the Rules of the Road for responsibilities and advice if involved in a crash.

**If you arrive at the scene of a crash –**

- Summon assistance – ambulance, doctor, An Garda Síochána, fire brigade as quickly as possible
- Do **NOT** attempt to remove a helmet from a motorcyclist unless you have been trained to do so safely
- Keep any victims warm (coats, rugs should be placed round them)
- Do **NOT** move a victim unless they are in a life threatening situation
- Do **NOT** give a victim anything to drink
- Do **NOT** stay at the scene if there is adequate control and assistance
- Do **NOT** smoke

**Do a recognised First Aid Course**



# Useful Contacts

National Safety Council  
4 Northbrook Road  
Ranelagh  
Dublin 6  
Phone: locall 1890 200 844  
Fax: 01 – 496 3306  
Email: [info@nsc.ie](mailto:info@nsc.ie)  
Web: [www.nsc.ie](http://www.nsc.ie)

MAG Ireland – The Irish Motorcyclists’  
Action Group  
1b Ring Terrace  
Inchicore  
Dublin 8  
Phone: 01 – 453 0797  
Fax: 01 – 453 3643  
Email: [office@magireland.org](mailto:office@magireland.org)  
Web: [www.magireland.org](http://www.magireland.org)

Irish Rider Training Association  
PO Box 71  
Coolgreany P.O.  
Gorey  
Co. Wexford  
Phone: 086 389 5763  
Email: [irta@eircom.net](mailto:irta@eircom.net)  
Web: [www.irishridertraining.com](http://www.irishridertraining.com)

Garda National Traffic Bureau  
An Garda Síochána  
Garda Headquarters  
Phoenix Park  
Dublin 8  
Phone: 01 – 666 0000  
Email: [gntb@iol.ie](mailto:gntb@iol.ie)  
Website: [www.garda.ie](http://www.garda.ie)

The Department of Transport  
Transport House  
44 Kildare St.  
Dublin 2  
Phone: 01 – 670 7444 or  
Locall 1890 443 311  
Email: [info@transport.ie](mailto:info@transport.ie)  
Web: [www.transport.ie](http://www.transport.ie)

Institute of Advanced Motorists (IAM)  
11 Patrick’s Court  
Patrick Street  
Kilkenny  
Phone: 056 – 777 1778  
Fax: 056 – 777 1779  
Email: [Ireland@iamfleet.com](mailto:Ireland@iamfleet.com)  
Web: [www.iam.org.uk](http://www.iam.org.uk)

Star Rider Motorcycle Training  
Fingal County Council  
County Hall  
Main Street  
Swords  
Co. Dublin  
Tel: 01 8905000

Motorcycling Ireland (Motorsport)  
B.E.A.T. Centre,  
Stephenstown Business Park  
Balbriggan  
Co. Dublin  
Ireland  
Phone: 01 802 0480  
Fax: 01 802 0481  
E-mail: [office@motorcycling-ireland.com](mailto:office@motorcycling-ireland.com)

Further reading  
Rules of the Road  
Motorcycle Roadcraft (available from  
bookshops or MAG Ireland)  
How to pass your advanced motorcycling  
test (IAM)