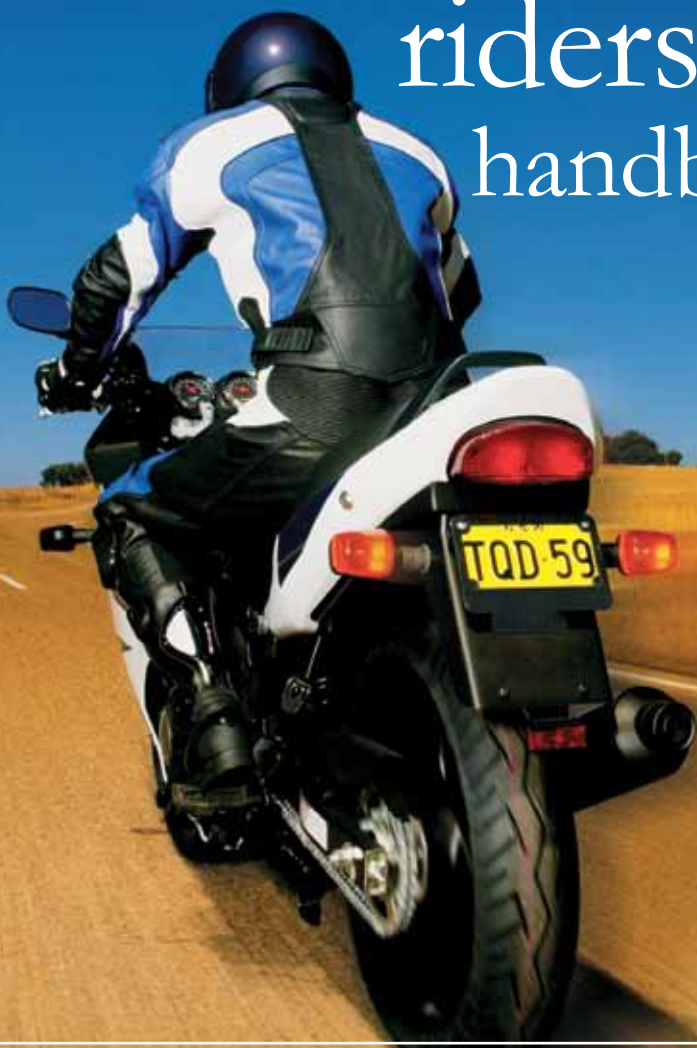




Transport
Roads & Traffic
Authority

Motorcycle riders' handbook



This handbook is only an interpretation of the law made easy to understand by using plain English. Laws change often so make sure you have the most recent handbook available on the RTA website at www.rta.nsw.gov.au

■ OTHER RTA PUBLICATIONS FOR MOTORCYCLE RIDERS

- *Braking habits*
- *Road Users' Handbook*

Introduction

Motorcycling can be fun, economical and safe. It may reduce your carbon footprint.

However, motorcycle riding can also be hazardous.

Motorcycle riders are less protected than car drivers and have a greater chance of being killed or injured in a crash.

You can become a safe rider through acquiring the necessary skills and understanding of the road environment, by always being alert and defensive and by accepting that the prime responsibility for your safety on the road is yours.

Our procedures for getting a motorcycle rider licence are designed to help you become a safe rider. The *Motorcycle riders' handbook*, our training programs and the testing procedures are designed to get you confident in the fundamental skills. We trust you will maintain and further develop these skills.

This handbook contains important information about riding techniques, how to cope with hazards and some road rules for motorcycles. Please read it carefully.

Enjoy your riding, but above all, ride to survive.

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How to use this handbook

The *Motorcycle riders' handbook* is a comprehensive information source for the rules and regulations, information and advice that you need to ride safely on NSW roads.

Learners must read it thoroughly to be able to get a learner licence. For experienced riders the handbook offers a way to check current road rules, or to understand more about road safety and low risk riding.

To make it easy to find what you want to know the handbook is divided into sections. At the end of each section is a summary that helps you remember or revise key points. To help test your knowledge there are also sample sets of questions taken from the Driver Knowledge Test. In addition, you will find an overview of penalties for traffic offences.

The back of the handbook contains the answers for each section, an index and glossary of terms.

Other useful RTA publications are shown on page 1. Most are available at your nearest motor registry or on the website at www.rta.nsw.gov.au

Do not forget to study the *Road Users' Handbook* just as carefully. It contains the rest of the information that you will need to know to pass the knowledge test.

■ SECTION 2: LICENCES

This section is essential reading for people wanting to obtain a licence to ride on NSW roads.

SECTION 2 EXPLAINS:

- The licensing system.
- The various steps you must take to obtain a full licence.
- The Rider Knowledge Test.
- Information on eyesight tests and proof of identity.
- The obligations of licence holders.

■ SECTION 3: RIDER MANAGEMENT

This section considers in detail how to increase your enjoyment and safety when riding on the road and how to take responsibility for your own wellbeing.

SECTION 3 EXPLAINS:

- Recognising and managing fatigue.
- Alcohol and other drugs.
- Protective clothing.

■ SECTION 4: SAFE RIDING

This section provides key safe riding behaviours which are useful for all riders.

SECTION 4 EXPLAINS:

- Observation, speed management and road positioning.
- The importance of crash avoidance space.

■ SECTION 5: GENERAL ROAD RULES

Every motorcyclist needs to know the rules that apply to riding. This section offers comprehensive coverage of the main rules governing motorcycles.

SECTION 5 EXPLAINS:

- Motorcycle specific road rules and signs.
- Carrying passengers and loads.
- Restrictions on where to ride.
- Parking restrictions.

■ SECTION 6: MOTORCYCLE ROADWORTHINESS

All motorcycles using NSW roads must be registered and roadworthy. This section provides a brief explanation of motorcycle safety and registration requirements.

SECTION 6 EXPLAINS:

- Registering your motorcycle.
- Requirements for displaying number plates.
- Tyres (pressure, tread and wear).
- Defect notices on unroadworthy motorcycles.

■ SECTION 7: PENALTIES

This section provides an overview of the penalties for traffic offences.

SECTION 7 EXPLAINS:

- The penalties for exceeding the speed limit, including demerit points, fines and licence suspension.
- The implications of serious, negligent and dangerous riding offences.
- How street and drag racing penalties can result in the loss of a motorcycle.
- The implications of not settling a traffic fine.
- The penalties for drink riding and unlicensed riding.

Licensing

Think of your licence as a ‘contract’, or an agreement between you as a rider and the rest of society. The RTA and the NSW Police administer this contract on behalf of the people of NSW. When you get your licence, look after it. Do not abuse it or allow it to be misused. There are penalties if you fraudulently alter, use or lend a licence to another person or allow a licence to be used by another person.

■ OBLIGATIONS OF LICENCE HOLDERS

The State provides the roads for riders to use if they meet certain conditions.

Riders must:

- Show that they understand the road rules, most of which are written in this and the *Road Users’ Handbook* in plain English.
- Show that they understand society’s concerns to reduce the impact of traffic on the environment and to use the road system efficiently.
- Show the skills necessary to ride safely.
- Obey the laws and ride responsibly.
- Pay a licence fee which goes towards maintaining the system.

The contract can be broken by significant traffic offences which cause inconvenience, costs or suffering to others. These offences carry penalties such as fines, licence cancellation, disqualification or suspension or, in extreme cases, imprisonment.

■ BRIBING PEOPLE IS AGAINST THE LAW

It is illegal to offer, request or accept gifts or other favours in order to get a licence without passing the required tests. Penalties are severe and include fines and imprisonment. All cases of corruption will be investigated and strong action will be taken against all those involved.

The only licence fees and charges you have to pay are set by the RTA. Do not pay any more or offer to pay more to get your licence.

If you know or believe that someone has received, or is about to receive, a NSW licence by offering, or responding to a request for a bribe – or if you suspect or know of any other corruption involving an RTA employee – telephone the RTA on 1800 043 642 (free call) or the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) on (02) 8281 5999.

■ HAVING THE CORRECT LICENCE

It is very important to have the correct licence when you ride. You must have:

- A current licence which is not expired, cancelled or suspended.
- The correct licence class for the type of motorcycle you are riding.
- A NSW licence if you have been a resident of NSW for more than three months.
- An interstate licence if you are a visitor from interstate.
- A current licence from another country if you are visiting from overseas. If your licence is not in English you must also carry an International Driving Permit or an English translation of your overseas licence.

In addition, you must not ride if you are disqualified from riding by a court in NSW or any State or Territory in Australia or overseas. Riders with licences from another State or Territory or overseas must not ride if their visiting rider privileges have been suspended by the RTA.

■ RIDING WITHOUT A LICENCE

Heavy penalties apply for riding without a licence, with an expired, cancelled, suspended or disqualified licence or a licence of the wrong class. See the Penalties section for more information.



There is a penalty for allowing an unlicensed or inappropriately licensed rider to ride your motorcycle. Before you allow someone to ride your motorcycle check that they have the correct licence and that their licence is valid.

WHEN YOUR LICENCE IS CHECKED

Police check that you have the correct licence when:

- You are involved in a crash, whether you were at fault or not.
- You have been stopped because of a traffic offence.
- You have been stopped for a random breath test either by a stationary breath testing unit or by a mobile breath testing unit.



CARRY YOUR LICENCE WHEN RIDING

You must carry your licence with you when riding.
Penalties apply for not having your licence with you.

■ MOTORCYCLE GRADUATED LICENSING SCHEME

The RTA has a Graduated Licensing Scheme (GLS) for new riders. To obtain a NSW rider licence you must complete various stages of training and testing. The training covers the key skills required for riding on the road and are taught in two stages – pre-learner and pre-provisional. If there is no training centre in your area, you are encouraged to do the rider training, but it is not compulsory.

HOW THE SCHEME WORKS

New riders are required to pass through three licensing stages before obtaining a full rider licence.

- Learner rider licence.
- Provisional rider licence, stage 1 (P1-red).
- Provisional rider licence, stage 2 (P2-green).

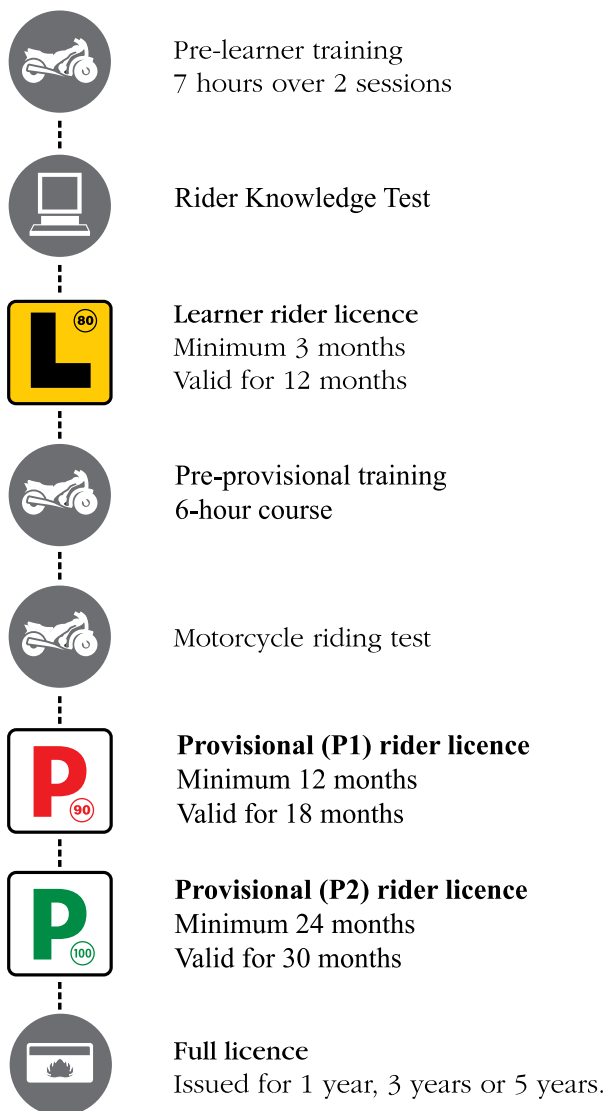
New riders will have at least 36 months of experience before graduating to a full rider licence.



ZERO TOLERANCE OF SPEEDING

Any provisional P1 rider caught speeding will have their licence suspended for a minimum of three months.

This flow chart shows how a new rider will progress through the licensing scheme.



Licence types

■ LEARNER RIDER LICENCE

To get a Class R (rider) learner licence you must complete a pre-learner training course and pass a Rider Knowledge Test (DKT). You must be at least 16 years and nine months to be issued with a learner licence. However, you can attend an RTA training course at the age of 16 years and six months. Learner rider licences are issued for 12 months.

It is not necessary to hold a current car driver licence to be eligible for a learner rider licence.

SUSPENSION OR CANCELLATION OF LEARNER RIDER LICENCE

A learner who commits driving offences may have their licence cancelled by a court or suspended or cancelled by the RTA. A learner licence can be suspended by the RTA for offences such as:

- Riding a motorcycle which is not approved for use by novice riders.
- Not wearing an approved motorcycle helmet.
- Carrying pillion passengers.



LICENCE RESTRICTIONS FOR LEARNERS

Automatic transmission motorcycle	You are restricted to riding automatic motorcycle if you completed your pre-learner training course on one.
Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC)	Your BAC must be zero.
Display of L plates	An L plate must be clearly displayed on the back of the motorcycle. The letter on the plate must not be hidden or covered.
Helmet	You must wear an Australian Standard AS 1698 motorcycle helmet.
Motorcycles	You must only ride motorcycles that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Are on the list of <i>Approved Motorcycle for Novice Riders</i> on the RTA website, and – Have an engine capacity not greater than 660ml, and – Have a power to weight ratio not greater than 150 kilowatts per tonne.
Passengers	You must not carry any pillion passengers.
Speed limit	You must not ride faster than 80 km/h and must observe the speed limit where it is below 80 km/h.
Towing	You must not tow a trailer or any other vehicle.
Location restrictions	You must not ride in Centennial Park when in Sydney.



When starting out you must not ride on a road or road related area until you have completed your training and have been issued with a learner rider licence.



When learning to ride a motorcycle it's a good idea to start on very quiet streets that you know well. Start off riding only in daylight. Only ride at night once you gain experience.

■ PROVISIONAL P1 RIDER LICENCE

To be issued with a provisional rider licence you must be aged at least 17 years. A provisional stage (P1) rider licence is issued after you complete pre-provisional training and pass a riding test. You must have held your learner rider licence for a minimum of three months before you are eligible to attend the training or attempt the riding test. You can book your training and test any time after gaining your learner rider licence. The P1 rider licence is issued for 18 months, but may be upgraded after 12 months.

SUSPENSION OR CANCELLATION OF PROVISIONAL LICENCE

A P1 licence will be suspended for a minimum of three months if you accumulate four or more demerit points. When a P1 licence is suspended because of offences, the period of suspension is not counted towards the minimum 12 months needed to progress to a full licence.

When a P1 licence is cancelled because of offences, the period the licence was held before the cancellation is not counted.



LICENCE RESTRICTIONS FOR P1 LICENCES

Automatic transmission motorcycles	You are restricted to riding automatic motorcycle if you completed your pre-provisional training course on one.
Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC)	Your BAC must be zero.
Demerit points	Your licence will be suspended if you incur four or more points.
Display of P plates	A red P plate must be clearly displayed on the back of the motorcycle. The letter on the plate must not be hidden or covered.
Helmet	You must wear an Australian Standard AS 1698 motorcycle helmet.
Motorcycles	You must only ride motorcycles that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Are on the list of <i>Approved Motorcycle for Novice Riders</i> on the RTA website, and – Have an engine capacity not greater than 660ml, and – Have a power to weight ratio not greater than 150 kilowatts per tonne.
Passengers	You must not carry any pillion passengers.
Speed limit	You must not ride faster than 90 km/h and must observe the speed limit where it is below 90 km/h.
Towing	You must not tow a trailer or any other vehicle.

■ PROVISIONAL P2 RIDER LICENCE

To be issued with a provisional rider licence you must be aged at least 18 years. A provisional stage (P2) rider licence is issued after you have held your P1 rider licence for a minimum of 12 months. The P2 rider licence is issued for 30 months, but may be upgraded after 24 months.

SUSPENSION OR CANCELLATION OF PROVISIONAL LICENCE

A P2 licence will be suspended for a minimum of three months if you accumulate seven or more demerit points. When a P2 licence is suspended because of offences, the period of suspension is not counted towards the minimum 24 months needed to progress to a full licence.

When a P2 licence is cancelled because of offences, the period the licence was held before the cancellation is not counted.



LICENCE RESTRICTIONS FOR P2 LICENCES

Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC)	Your BAC must be zero.
Demerit points	Your licence will be suspended if you incur seven or more points.
Display of P plates	A green P plate must be clearly displayed on the back of the motorcycle. The letter on the plate must not be hidden or covered.
Helmet	You must wear an Australian Standard AS 1698 motorcycle helmet.
Motorcycles	You must only ride motorcycles that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Are on the list of <i>Approved Motorcycle for Novice Riders</i> on the RTA website, and – Have an engine capacity not greater than 660ml, and – Have a power to weight ratio not greater than 150 kilowatts per tonne.
Speed limit	You must not ride faster than 100 km/h and must observe the speed limit where it is below 100 km/h.

■ HOW TO GET A RIDER LICENCE

LEARNER RIDER LICENCE

To obtain a learner rider licence you must:

- Pay the training fee and book a course either:
 - online at www.myRTA.com
 - by calling 13 22 13
 - or going to an RTA motor registry or agency.
- Attend and complete the pre-learner training course.

After completing the course, you will be issued with a pre-learner certificate of competency (green in colour) which is valid for three months.

Visit any motor registry and:

- Take your pre-learner certificate of competency.
- Take proof of identity documents.
- Complete an application form.
- Pass an eyesight test.
- Pass the knowledge test. (A fee will apply).
- Pay the licence fee.

You will then be issued with a learner rider licence.

PROVISIONAL P1 RIDER LICENCE

To obtain a provisional rider licence you must:

- Pay the training fee and book a course either:
 - online at www.myRTA.com
 - by calling 13 22 13
 - or going to an RTA motor registry or agency.
- Attend and complete the pre-provisional training course.
- Pass the riding test.

After completing the pre-provisional course and passing skill test, you will be issued with a pre-provisional certificate of competency (red in colour) which is valid for three months.

Go to any motor registry and:

- Take your pre-provisional course certificate of competency.
- Take your learner rider licence.
- Complete an application form.
- Pay the licence fee.

You will then be issued with a provisional P1 rider licence. The provisional P1 rider licence is issued for 18 months, but may be upgraded to a provisional P2 licence after a minimum of 12 months.

Failure to obtain a provisional rider licence within the three months of being issued with a pre-provisional certificate of competency will mean that you need to reattend and pass all training and tests again.



You can book all your rider training courses and tests online at www.rta.nsw.gov.au

PROVISIONAL P2 RIDER LICENCE

To qualify for a provisional P2 rider licence you must complete a minimum of 12 months on your P1 licence (not including any periods of licence suspension or cancellation).

Go to any motor registry and:

- Take your P1 rider licence.
- Pay the licence fee.

The provisional P2 rider licence is issued for 30 months, but may be upgraded to a full rider licence after a minimum of 24 months.

FULL RIDER LICENCE

To qualify for a full rider licence you must complete a minimum of 24 months on your P2 licence (not including any periods of licence suspension or cancellation).

Go to any motor registry and:

- Take your P2 rider licence.
- Pay the licence fee.

RIDERS OVER AGE 25

Riders over the age of 25 who meet RTA requirements may receive an exemption from the P2 phase. To be eligible for an exemption from the P2 phase, riders must:

- Be 25 years of age or older when they apply for the unrestricted licence.
- Hold a current Australian unrestricted driver licence.
- Have completed a minimum of 12 months on a P1 licence.
- Meet all other licensing requirements.

■ RIDER TRAINING COURSES

PRE-LEARNER COURSES

The pre-learner course is held over two days (three and a half hours each day). Motorcycles, helmets, gloves and tuition are provided at the training centre.

No motorcycle riding experience is necessary for the pre-learner course. However, learning to ride a motorcycle requires a high level of balance, coordination and concentration and some people may require extra training to develop these skills.

The course has pass/fail criteria and you must achieve all the competencies to pass. For your safety and the safety of others, the instructor may stop you from riding during the course. If this happens, the instructor will advise you of the best way to proceed with your training.



Clothing for rider training

- Sturdy long sleeve jacket.
 - Sturdy long trousers.
 - Sturdy enclosed footwear (preferably with ankle protection and a low heel).
 - Wet weather gear (training goes ahead regardless of weather).
- You will be turned away if you do not come properly equipped with appropriate protective clothing.**

PRE-PROVISIONAL COURSES

The pre-provisional course involves six hours of training and the motorcycle operator skills test, a further one hour. A motorcycle and protective clothing are not provided for the pre-provisional course or skills test.

If you have not passed the pre-provisional course and skills test by the time that your learner licence expires, you will have to attend the pre-learner course again. Licence extensions are not available.



Anyone who provides rider training to learner or provisional riders must hold a current NSW driving instructor licence for Class R. Heavy penalties apply for providing unlicensed instruction.



You can book all your rider training courses and tests online at www.rta.nsw.gov.au

Rider management

Riding a motorcycle can be great fun and is enjoyed by people of all ages. Riding on the road, however, means accepting responsibility for your own wellbeing and showing due care and consideration for all other road users.

Compared to driving other road vehicles, riding a motorcycle can place you at a higher risk from others. If you are involved in a crash, the chances of being injured are very high.

■ CONCENTRATION

Riding on the road requires your full concentration. Your survival depends on this ability.

Many factors will affect your ability to concentrate such as:

- Fatigue.
- Alcohol.
- Drugs.

It's in your own interest not to ride if you know you can't concentrate fully.

FATIGUE

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

Rider fatigue indicators include:

- 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).

If you have any signs of fatigue stop immediately and rest.

MANAGING FATIGUE

Riding a motorcycle is much more tiring than driving a car. Even if you are not tired, stop about every one and a half hours or 150 kilometres.

Here are some tips to help riders manage fatigue:

- Drink plenty of water to keep hydrated.
- Avoid too much coffee or sweet soft drinks.
- Stay away from alcohol at all costs.
- Eat small amounts frequently, simple foods like fruit, nuts, a muesli bar or a little chocolate.
- Avoid fatty foods and large meals before or during a ride.
- In winter, don't make yourself too snug and warm. It's good to be a little cool.

ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUGS

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.

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 2007, 20 per cent of the motorcyclists killed in NSW had alcohol in their blood.



All learner and provisional licence holders are restricted to a zero alcohol limit.

OTHER DRUGS

Many drugs affect your ability to ride a motorcycle safely and well. These include prescription drugs (drugs that you cannot buy unless your doctor gives you a script) as well as illegal drugs, and some drugs such as cold or allergy tablets. Such drugs can leave you weak, dizzy, drowsy or slow to react in an emergency. Make sure you know the effects of any drug before you attempt to ride. Check with your doctor or pharmacist and read the label to make sure the medication will not affect your riding. If any drug has an effect on your riding, you must not ride.

■ PROTECTIVE CLOTHING

As a motorcycle rider you are fully exposed to all the elements and in a crash you are also particularly vulnerable to injury, in a crash. Wearing the right protective clothing can:

- Significantly reduce injury in a crash.
- Protect you from the weather.
- Improve your comfort when riding.

HELMET

The most important piece of personal equipment for a motorcycle rider is a motorcycle helmet. The law requires all motorcyclists and their pillion (passengers) or sidecar passengers to wear an approved motorcycle helmet. The approved standard for helmets is Australian Standards AS 1698.

There are many types and styles of motorcycle helmets available. There are two key types: full face and open face helmets.

Full face helmets that feature a chin panel which incorporates an integrated face shield (visor) offer better eye, wind, sun and injury protection.



Light coloured helmets (eg. white, yellow) are generally cooler in summer than dark helmets and may also help to increase your chance of being seen.

HELMET CHECK LIST

- Your helmet must be Australian Standard AS 1698 approved.
- It must fit comfortably but not too tightly (avoid helmets that fit loosely).
- It must have the chin strap fastened and properly tightened.

Helmets should be:

- Replaced after a crash or a significant impact.
- Replaced if they become loose fitting, or the straps become worn.
- Only cleaned with mild soapy water. Some chemicals and cleaners may weaken the shell.



Never buy a second-hand helmet.

■ PROTECTIVE CLOTHING



Helmet: Must be Australian Standard AS 1698 approved.

Visor: Clear and shatterproof without scratches. Australian Standard AS 1609.

Back protector:
To protect the spine in the case of a crash.

Gloves: Gauntlet style with a strengthened palm area and knuckle protection. Zip or velcro fastening around wrist.

Jacket and pants: Must be highly abrasion and tear resistant and completely cover your arms, legs and body. They must be secured at the wrists, waist and ankles to prevent riding up and exposing skin.

Footwear: Boots must overlap the pants and provide shin, ankle and instep protection. Zipper or velcro fasteners required to prevent the foot sliding and a protective cover to protect against wear when changing gear.

EYE PROTECTION

Your eyes need protection from the wind, dust, rain, insects and stones thrown up by other vehicles. Only a visor attached to the helmet or goggles provide the eye protection necessary for riding.

Some motorcycles have screens or fairings to provide weather protection. These do not provide adequate protection for the eyes and you should still use a visor or goggles to protect your eyes.

Visor and goggle should:

- Be clean and not scratched.
- Be shatterproof (standard for helmet visors is Australian Standards AS 1609).
- Have clear lenses for use at night.

GLOVES

Gloves that are specifically designed for motorcycle riding will improve rider comfort and protection.

Motorcycle gloves generally have:

- A strengthened palm area shaped for riding.
- Knuckle protection.
- A fastener around the wrist to prevent sliding off (eg zipper and Velcro).
- An overlap with the jacket (gauntlet style).

JACKETS AND PANTS

Purpose-made motorcycle clothing provides better weather and crash protection than ordinary clothing. In proper motorcycle gear you will almost certainly feel more comfortable.

Jacket and pants should:

- Be highly abrasion and tear resistant.
- Be tailored for a riding position.
- Completely cover your arms, legs and body.
- Secure around wrist, waist and ankles to prevent sliding up and exposing skin.
- Have impact and abrasion protection for your back, shoulders, elbows, hips and knees.

FOOTWEAR

Like gloves, footwear designed for motorcycle riding will provide great comfort and protection.

Motorcycle footwear generally has:

- Strengthening in the instep between the ball of the foot and the heel.
- Ankle protection.
- Shin protection.
- A fastener around the leg to prevent sliding off (eg zipper and Velcro).
- An overlap with the pants (boot style).
- Gear change cover to prevent wear.

FURTHER PROTECTION

Other rider specific protective clothing includes:

- Back protectors to protect your spine in a crash.
- Kidney belts to support your lower back and reduce fatigue.

■ WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT RIDER MANAGEMENT

This section has explained the importance of rider management when riding on the road. After reading this section you should know:

- Some factors which affect your ability to concentrate.
- How to recognise and manage fatigue.
- The effect that alcohol and drugs have on your ability to ride safely.
- Why protective clothing is important for a rider.

NOTES

Safe riding

Riding is never risk free, but you should aim to ride 'low risk'. A low risk rider has good observation, speed management, road positioning, decision making and hazard perception skills.

Observation

The road environment is constantly changing and this requires high levels of observation and concentration. The key to good observation is scanning.

■ SCANNING

Scanning, is keeping your eyes moving, checking in one area for a couple of seconds, then moving your eyes to another area.

When scanning look:

- In the distance.
- At the road surface.
- To your left and right.
- Regularly at your mirrors and instruments.

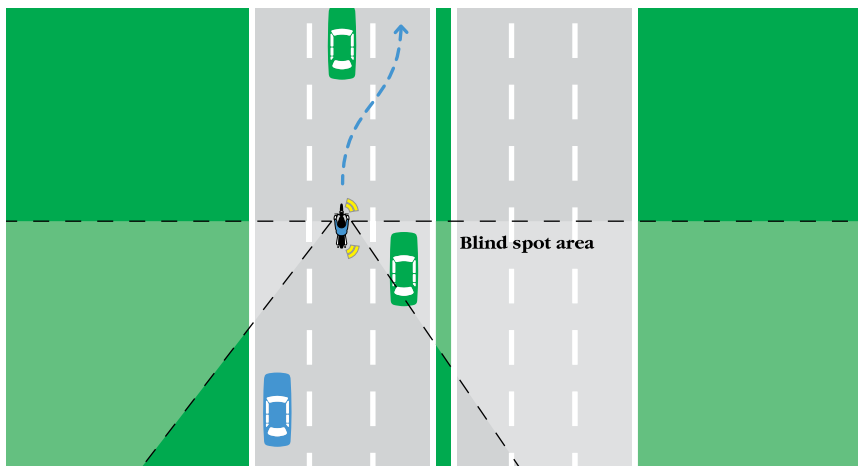


Before moving off from traffic lights check all directions to make sure the traffic has stopped.

MIRRORS

You should check your mirrors every few seconds so you always know what is behind you. There are also particular times when it is very important for you to use your mirrors:

- Check your mirrors before making any change to your speed or road position.
- When preparing to turn or change lanes, watch carefully for any cars behind you, especially if you plan to turn where others may not expect it, such as at lane ways, driveways and side streets.
- When you are stopped behind another vehicle, leave plenty of space in front of you to move. Watch vehicles approaching from behind. Remain in first gear, with a brake applied and be able to move off to avoid being hit from behind.



Check blind spots before changing your road position.

HEAD CHECKS

Motorcycles have 'blind spots' just as cars do. A blind spot is the area next to you that you are unable to see in your mirrors. When you are about to change your position on the road (eg make a turn, exit a roundabout, move off or change lanes), make sure you turn your head and look over your shoulder to see if it is clear. This is called a 'head check' and is the only sure way to see objects that are in your blind spot.



Have a head check before turning right into a street or driveway, just in case a following vehicle has not seen your indicator and is overtaking you.

HEAD POSITION FOR TURNS

Looking through a corner will help with your coordination and balance when cornering. Use your peripheral vision to scan the road surface while keeping your head pointed in the direction you want to go.



Speed management

Low risk riders manage their speed and road position to maintain a crash avoidance space completely around their motorcycle.

To determine the crash avoidance space to the front of your motorcycle you need to take into account two key factors – reaction time and response time.

Reaction time is the time the rider needs to:

- See the information.
- Perceive what it means.
- Decide on a response.
- Instigate that response.

A rider who is fit, concentrating, alert and not affected by alcohol, drugs, fatigue or a distraction, will require about one and a half seconds to react to a sudden and unexpected change in traffic conditions.

Response time is the time required to take action. Generally a minimum of one and a half seconds is needed to respond. In many situations braking may be the only possible response. Swerving is rarely appropriate and is likely to result in a more severe crash, for example a head on collision.

A total of three seconds crash avoidance space is needed to react and respond to a situation in front of you. You may need even longer in poor conditions such as rain and darkness.

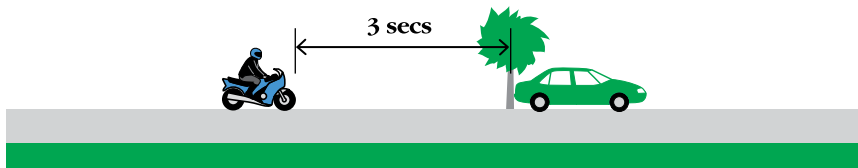
The three-second rule, explained below, can be used when following another vehicle or if there is potential for something to accelerate or steer into your crash avoidance space.

■ MAINTAIN SPACE TO THE FRONT

To calculate a three-second crash avoidance space when following another vehicle, use this basic technique: as the rear of the vehicle in front of you passes a stationary object at the side of the road, such as a power pole, tree or sign, start a three-second count ‘one thousand and one, one thousand and two, one thousand and three’.

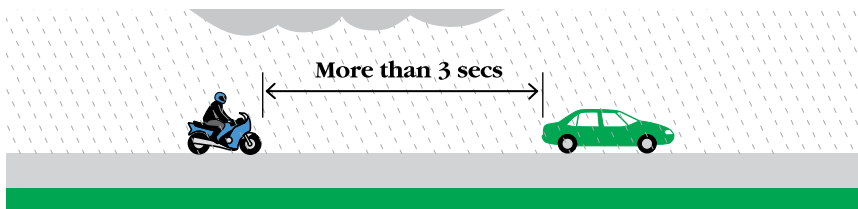


Be aware that in most situations cars can stop in a shorter distance than motorcycles, due to the greater grip provided by four tyres.



Stay at least 3 seconds behind the vehicle ahead.

If your motorcycle passes the point you picked before you finish the count, you are following too closely. Your crash avoidance space is not large enough. Slow down and repeat the count again until the three-second crash avoidance space is achieved.



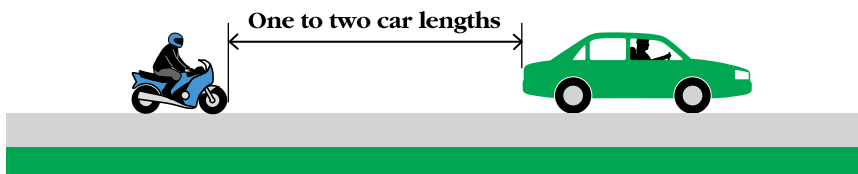
Increase following distance in poor conditions.

In poor conditions such as rain, night and gravel roads, it may be necessary to increase your crash avoidance space to four or more seconds.

To reduce the risk of riding into the back of another vehicle, the three-second crash avoidance space is essential, as the vehicle in front has the ability to stop very quickly, especially if it collides with another vehicle or a stationary object.

■ MAINTAIN SPACE WHEN STOPPED

When you stop behind another vehicle leave at least one car length between your front wheel and the back of the vehicle in front. This will provide some space in case they roll back or if you need to ride around them.



Leave one to two car lengths in front when stopped.

■ MAINTAIN SPACE BEHIND YOU

It is difficult to maintain a crash avoidance space behind you, as another driver or rider controls the space.

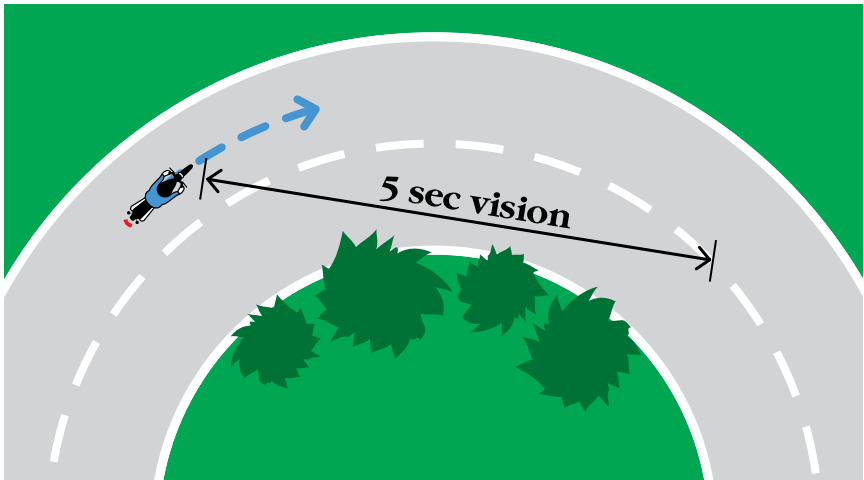
If a vehicle behind is travelling too closely, slow down slightly to increase the space you have in front of you. This will enable you to brake more gradually if you spot a hazard in front, which will enable the following vehicle more time to stop as well.

■ REDUCE SPEED

You must slow down if you do not have a clear view of the road ahead. Situations where your vision may be reduced include:

- Blind corners.
- Blocked intersections.
- Crests.
- Poor weather conditions.

Slow down if you cannot see five seconds ahead.



Slow down if you cannot see 5 seconds ahead.

To calculate five-second vision in a curve, pick a fixed point in the oncoming lane that has just come into view and start a count 'one thousand and one, one thousand and two... one thousand and five'. If you reach the point before five seconds you are riding too fast for the available vision.

Road positioning

Traffic and road situations are constantly changing and so does the safest position on the road. Low risk riders aim to be in the right place all the time.

■ SPACE, SURFACE AND SIGHT

Three key things must be considered when choosing your position on the road. These are: space, surface and sight.

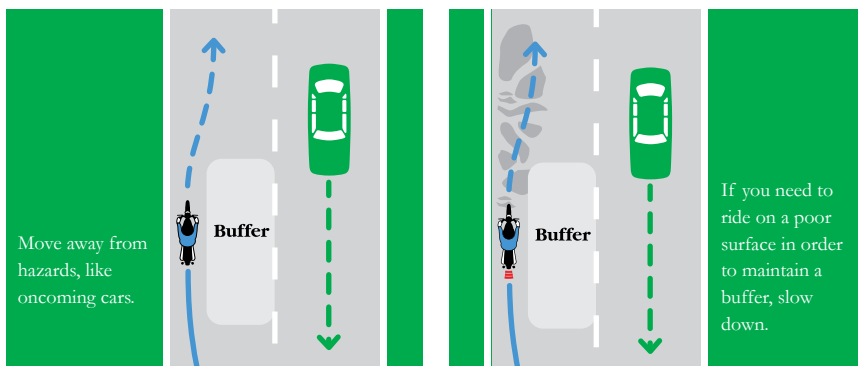
SPACE

As a motorcycle rider you have very little to protect you in a crash other than your riding gear. The more space from other vehicles and pedestrians the better. Creating space from hazards is referred to as buffering. Moving away from hazards can also increase the likelihood of being seen.

SURFACE

As the operator of a two-wheel vehicle motorcycle riders need to be very aware of the road surface. Paint, oil, water, sand, gravel, pot holes and metal plates are all examples of different road surfaces that a rider needs to manage. For a motorcycle rider a relatively small change in road position can result in a significant change in the quality of road surface.

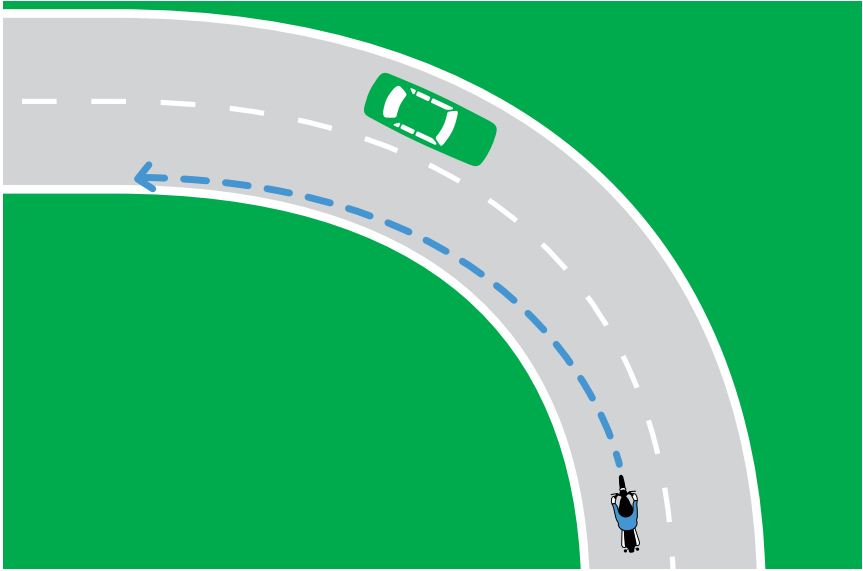
Although it is best to avoid riding on a poor surface, sometimes this is not possible, for example when buffering an oncoming vehicle the best road position may be the left side of the lane. The left side of the road may be bumpy and broken up, however it may be preferable to ride on this surface to get a safe buffer from the oncoming hazard. The solution is easy, if you need to ride on a poor surface to buffer a hazard, just slow down.



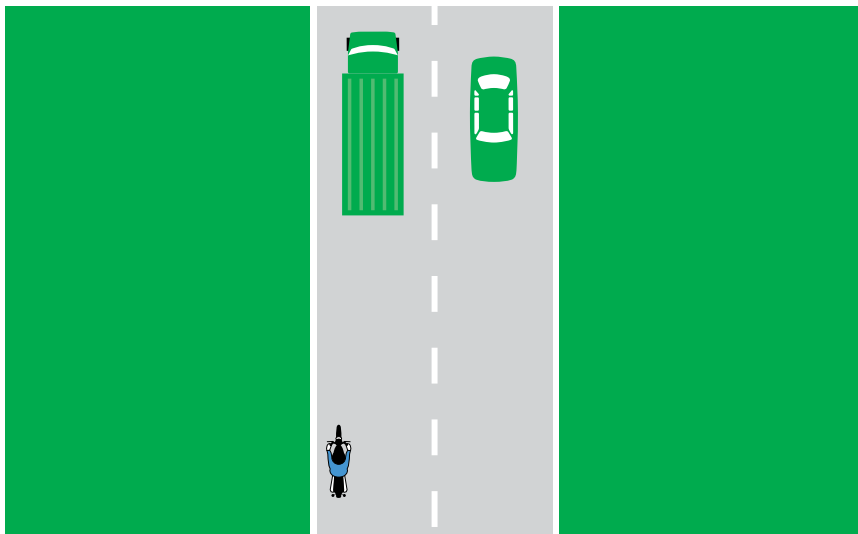
SIGHT

A good road position can allow you to see further and get more information about what is happening up ahead. Generally the right side of the lane provides good vision up the road, to the sides and also behind you. However the right side of the lane is a dangerous position to be in if there is oncoming traffic. Try to choose a road position that provides good vision without compromising your buffer from hazards. This is particularly true when following large vehicles or when taking left bends.

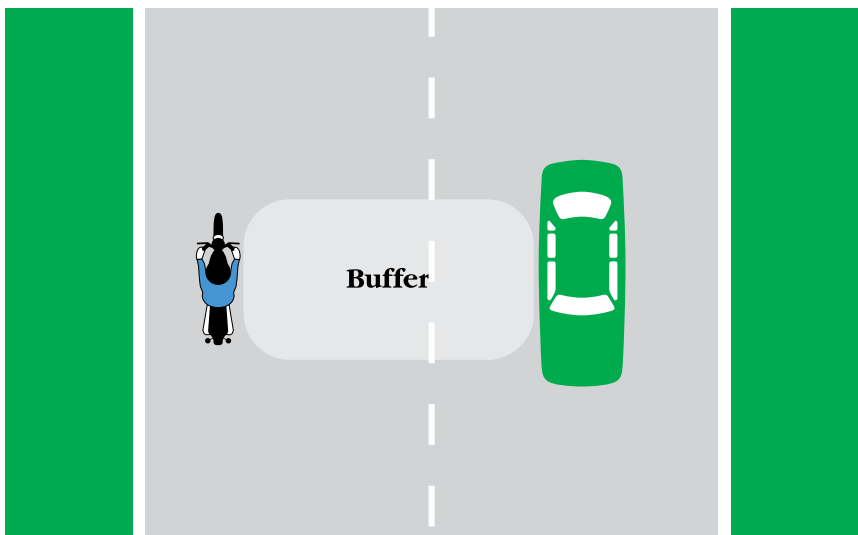
By actively managing space, surface and sight a rider can significantly reduce the risk of crashing.



Maintain a buffer from hazards and slow down if vision is limited.

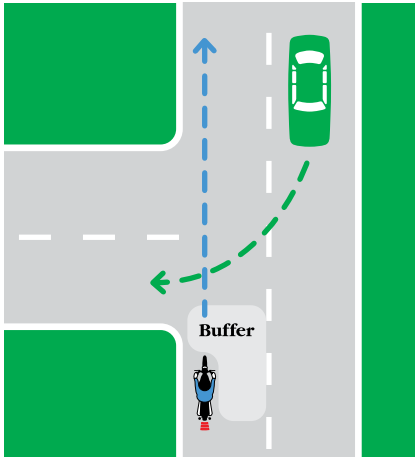


Maintain a buffer from hazards and a good following distance when vision is limited.

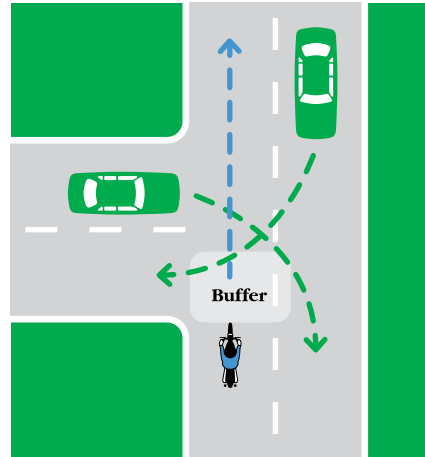


Create space (buffer) oncoming vehicles.

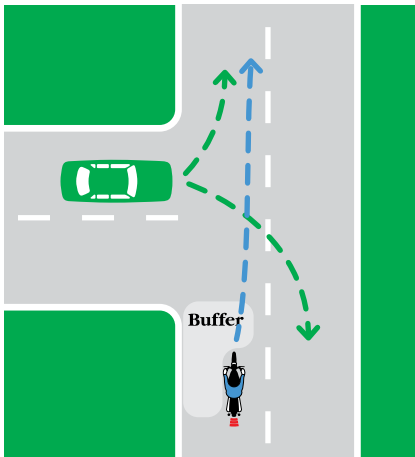
■ EXAMPLES OF BUFFERING



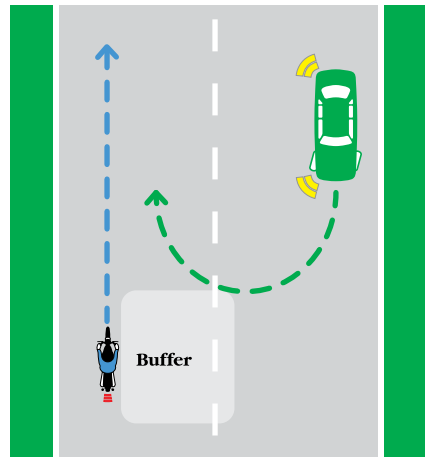
Slow down and buffer when a vehicle could turn across your path.



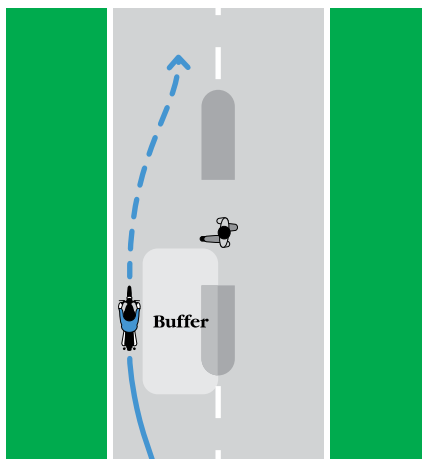
Buffer both vehicles and slow down.



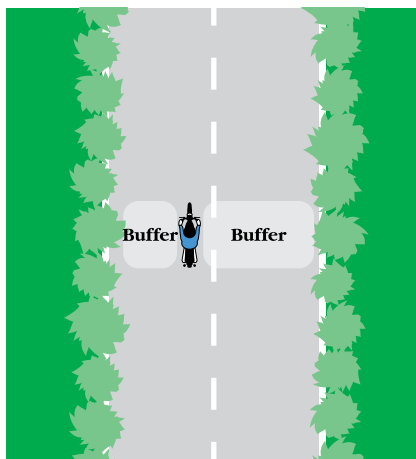
Slow down and buffer when a vehicle could turn across your path or enter the lane you are in.



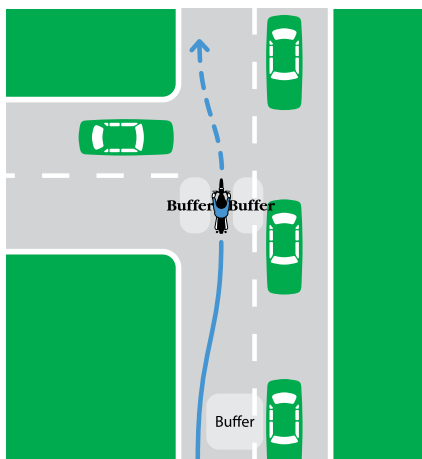
You may need to buffer hazards even when they are on the other side of the road.



Buffer all hazards including pedestrians.



On country roads staying on the right side of your lane can provide space from wildlife and improve vision. However, you must remember to buffer oncoming vehicles and be in the correct position for crests and curves.

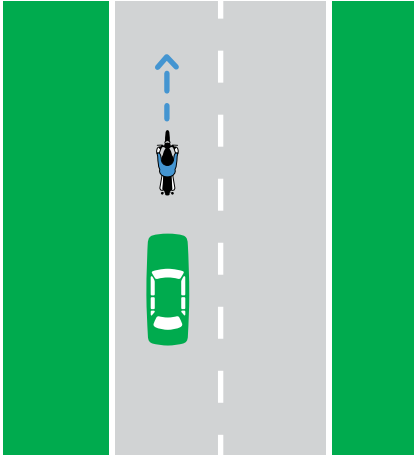


In busy traffic you may be in the left side of the lane for most of the time only moving right to buffer vehicles in side streets.

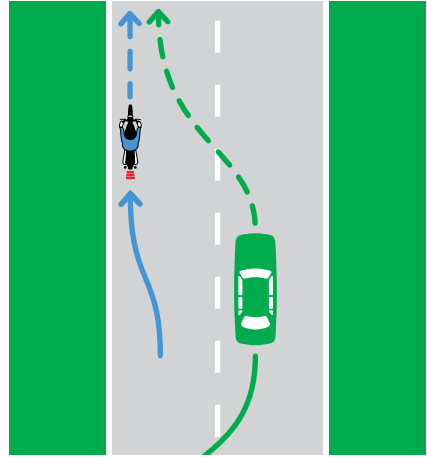


A motorcycle rider can legally use any part of their lane.

■ VEHICLES FOLLOWING

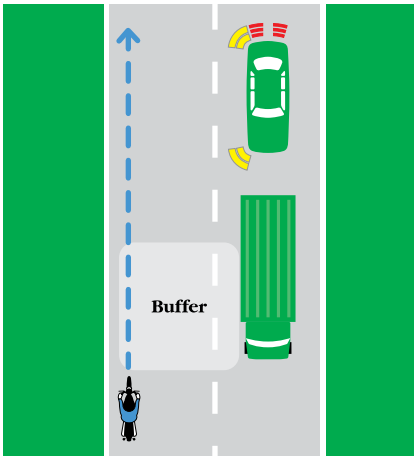


If vehicles are following close behind it is sometimes better to select the middle of the lane.



Maintain a buffer from vehicles as they pass you.

■ VISION

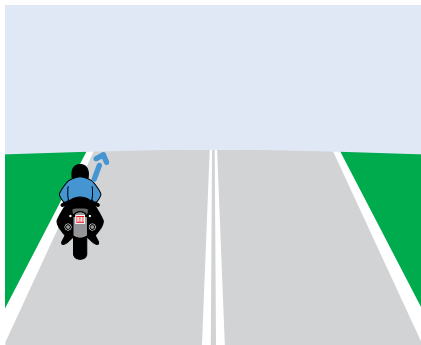


Buffering can improve your vision and make it easier for others to see you.

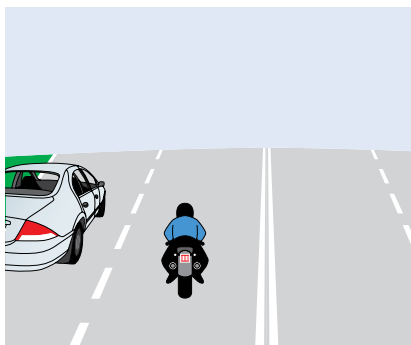


The further back you follow other vehicles the better you can see around them.

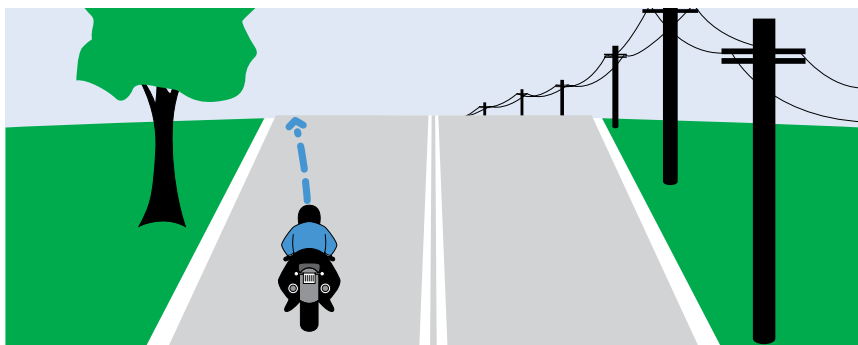
■ BLIND CRESTS



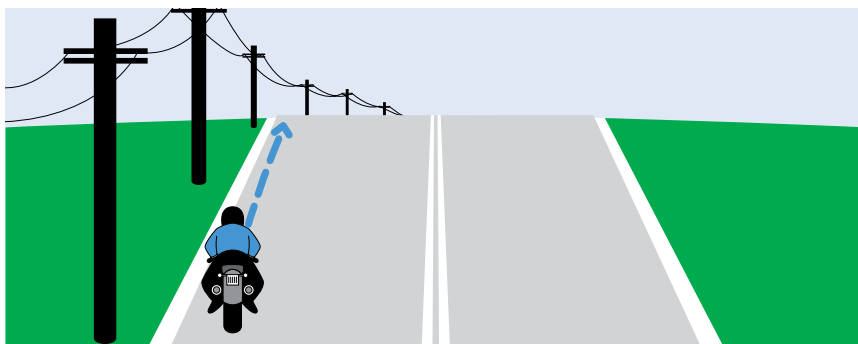
Approaching blind crests create a buffer from possible oncoming traffic.



If there is a possibility of multiple hazards, slow down and buffer both sides.

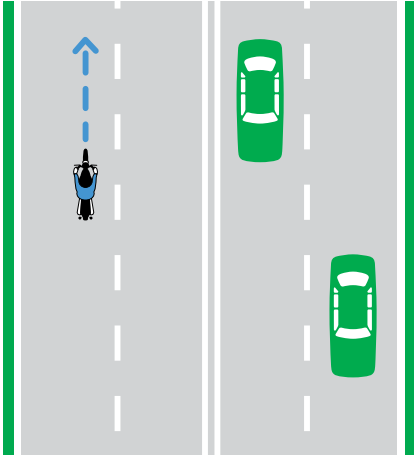


Approaching blind crests look for clues as to where the road goes. Slow down and select a road position to suit.

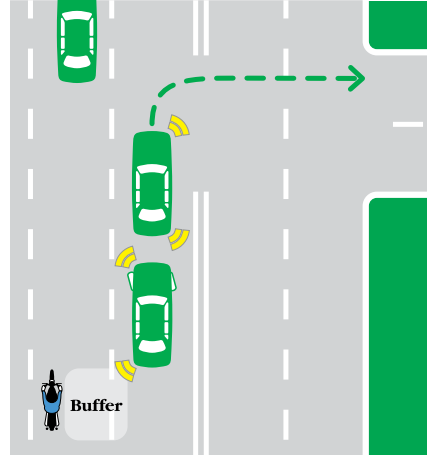


Approaching blind crests look for clues as to where the road goes. Slow down and select a road position to suit.

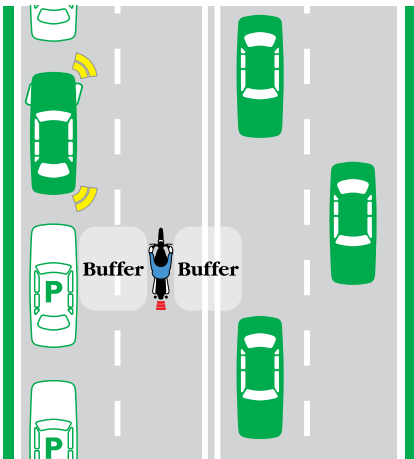
■ MULTI-LANED ROADS



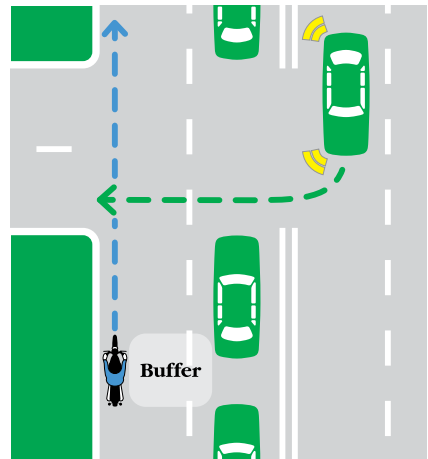
On multi-laned roads, reduce the risk of a head on crash by choosing a lane away from the oncoming traffic.



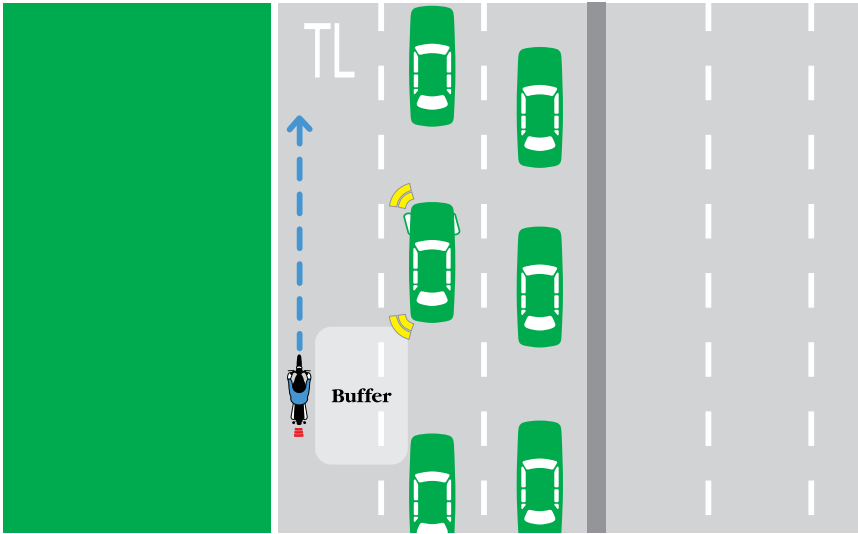
Create a buffer from turning vehicles in case not all the vehicles are turning.



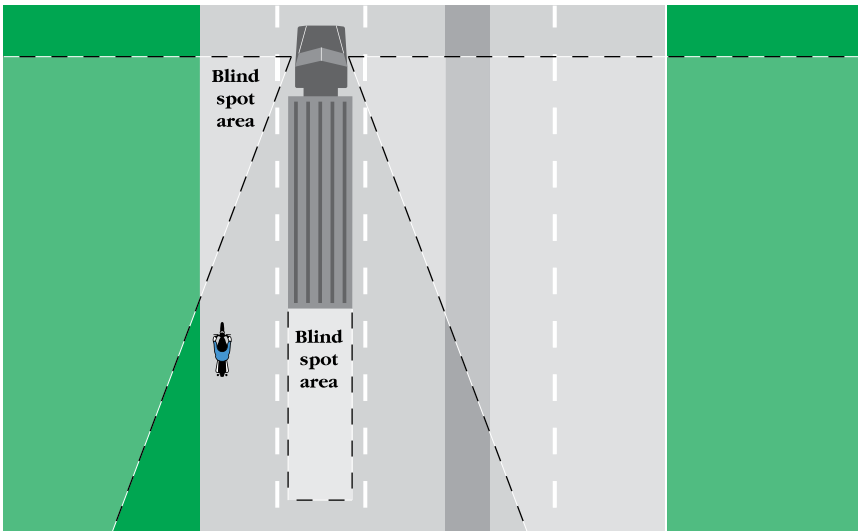
Buffer both parked and oncoming vehicles.



Slow down and buffer slow moving or stopped traffic, they may be blocking the view of a turning vehicle.

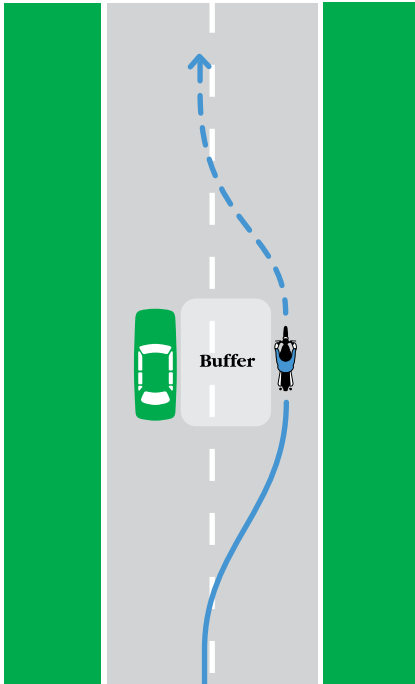


When using BUS or TRANSIT LANES keep a buffer from the other traffic in case they change lanes to make a turn..

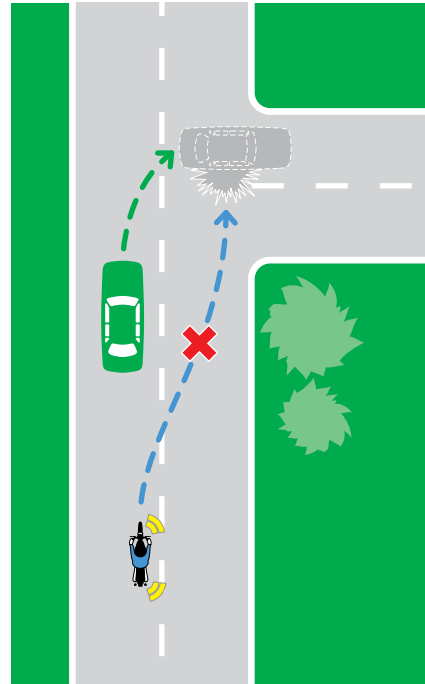


Do not ride beside other vehicles or in their blind spots.

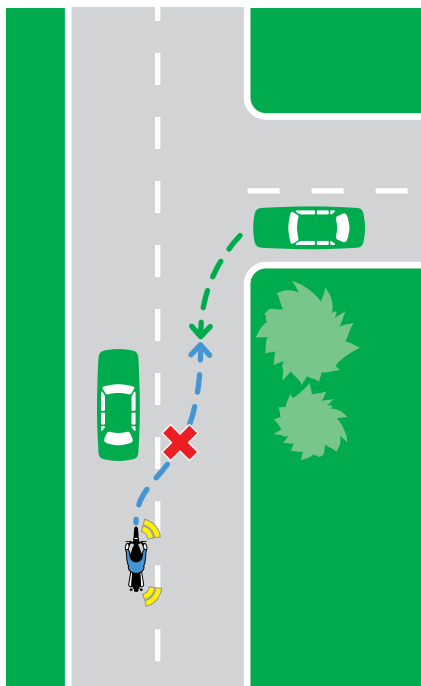
■ OVERTAKING



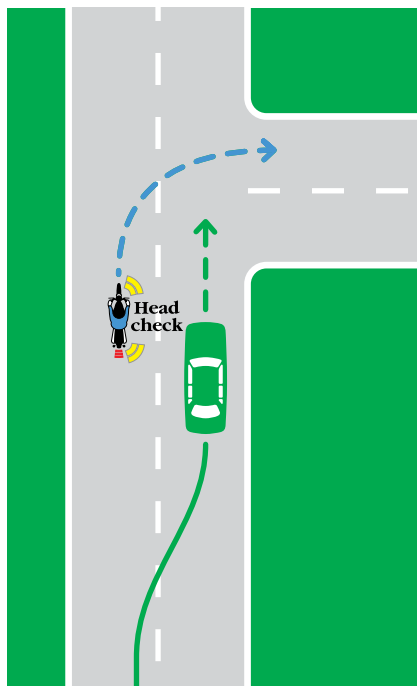
When overtaking create a buffer from the vehicle you are passing.



Before overtaking a slow moving vehicle check for side streets and driveway that they may be turning into.

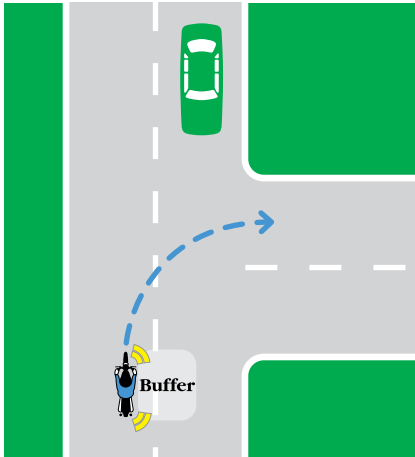


Before overtaking check for side streets and concealed driveways, particularly in country areas.

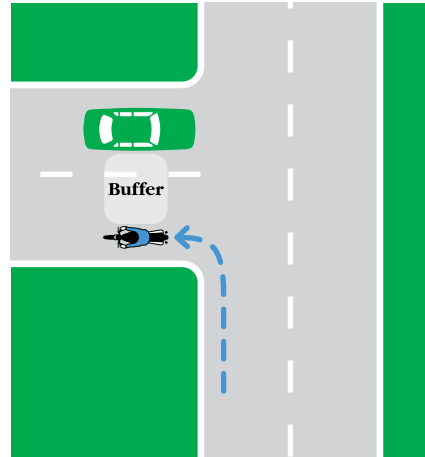


Before turning into a street or driveway have a head check for vehicles that may be overtaking you.

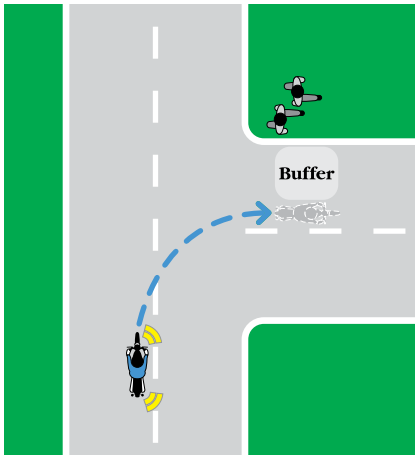
■ TURNS AT INTERSECTIONS



Maintain a buffer from oncoming traffic while you are waiting to turn right.



When turning left from a single lane, start the turn as near as practicable to the far left side of the road. Buffering hazards as you exit the turn.



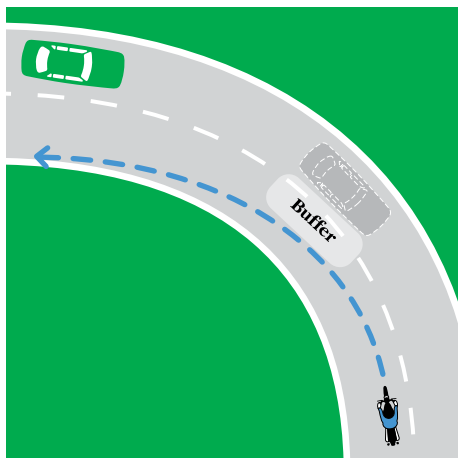
When turning right from a single lane, start the turn as near as practicable to the far right of the lane or middle of the road, buffering hazards as you exit the turn.



When turning left or right you must give way to any pedestrians crossing the road into which you are turning.

■ POSITIONING FOR CURVES AND BENDS

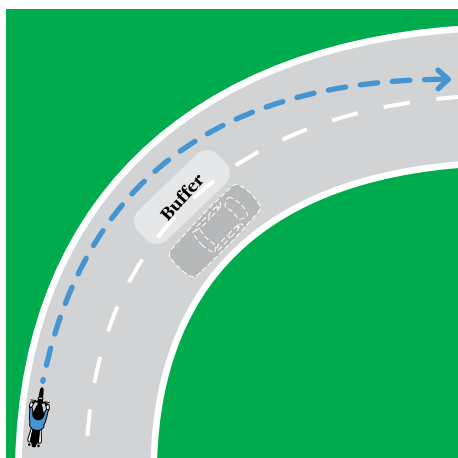
Starting curves wide will improve your vision. Planning to finish them in tight will help you get your speed right and leave you room for slight errors. Most importantly, keep away from the area where oncoming vehicles are likely to cross the centre of the road (the head on zone). Taking curves and bends 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.



On blind left curves slow down and begin to move left as vision becomes limited.



**Plan to start curves wide for vision.
Plan to finish in tight.
Keep away from the head-on zone.**



On right curves slow down and keep to the left until you see the road is clear of oncoming traffic.

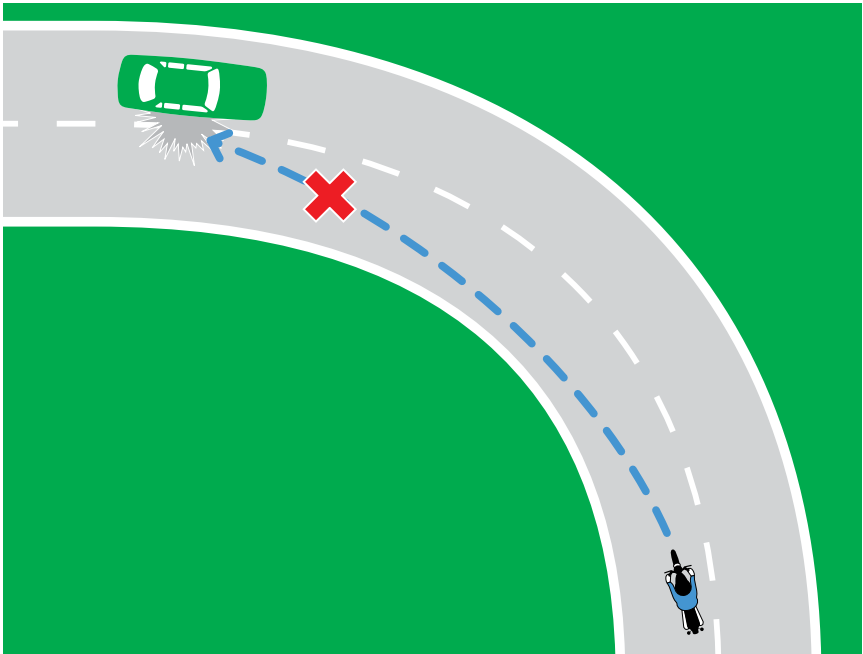


Many crashes happen because riders run wide on the exit of a turn.

■ THE DANGER OF EXITING WIDE

Many riders try to straighten turns resulting in the motorcycle exiting the curve out wide.

This is a particularly dangerous practice as it allows no room for error. If the curve 'tightens up' or changes direction the rider will need additional effort to complete the turn. Furthermore, on right curves the risk of a head-on collision is greatly increased.



Exiting wide can result in a crash.