

Motorcycle Riding Tips

by Ron Arieli

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Riding to close to the line:

Inside the lines...a little motorcyclist common sense for the road. Kimmy asked me to add my two cents in on this subject. There seems to be a disturbing trend that we are seeing more and more.

Riders straddling the centerline and riding side by side two in a lane.

They are both bad ideas.

If you are riding to close to the center line in the roadway there are a few things that need to be kept in mind.

- Is any part of your bike close or over the centerline, handlebars, mirrors, saddlebags etc...?
- Are you leaving room (= time) to react if a vehicle from the other direction (lane) crosses the center line?

Now imagine that any part of your bike is hanging over the centerline and for the briefest of moments you do not pay attention or misjudge the distance from an oncoming vehicle and they clip the bar end, mirror or saddlebag. Not a pretty picture. The only reason to even get that close to the centerline is to set up to pass another vehicle. In that case you are in that position very briefly and totally focused on the road ahead. Sharing a lane side by side is also a dangerous practice for numerous reasons. Riding in a group can pose a variety of safety challenges.

The proximity of other riders, as when you are close to any other vehicle, presents a potential risk. If you wander into each other's zones, you can cause one or both to crash. I have observed riders run onto the shoulder by other riders in their group who overlooked them or wandered off their intended paths while distracted, I have seen riders rear-ended by people they were riding with. I have heard of several riders who were injured when two or more bikes in a group collided. In one case, the lead rider slowed to make a left turn, but the riders following him did not signal and then got on their brakes hard. A rider farther back in the group was taken by surprise when they suddenly jumped on their brakes. He couldn't stop and side-swiped the bike in front of him as he tried to avoid it. A rider on the inside lane sharing position road over a rock, the bike stepped out into the rider on the outside (close to the centerline), hit the rider who got knocked into the oncoming traffic lane. In most of these examples riding in a staggered formation and leaving a few bike lengths between the riders would leave enough room to negotiate emergency situations.

My suggestions.

- Ride in a staggered formation.
- Go through corners single file. Keep a few bike lengths (two second rule) between riders.
- Keep at least a two second following distance between you and the rider in front of you (pick out a fixed object in your riding line of sight that the rider ahead of you will pass, as they do count out slowly one one thousand, two one thousand. You should not pass that same object until after your count.)
- Stay away from the centerline unless setting up for a pass

I will be happy to come and speak to your riding group or club about group riding or individual riding techniques and practices in a very relaxed Q+A format.

The more we know and practice the safer and more enjoyable our ride will be!

Have a great ride! Ron