

SEE

Search Evaluate Execute

These are the keys to safe motorcycle riding that are taught in many basic and advanced riding courses and must be practiced at all times no matter if you just started riding or have been riding for years. To become proficient in these skills they must be practiced on a daily basis even when driving in your car. Remember that motorcycle riding requires the rider to be an active participant at all times. Danger is everywhere and riders must be aware of and be able to recognize these hazards, create a plan of action, and take action on that plan. You must not be timid in your actions and be decisive at all times and act as if no one can see you. You must **SEARCH** out the dangers, **EVALUATE** these dangers and plan your actions and then **EXECUTE** the plan or **SEE**. Here are some of the things you should consider.

Search

Searching involves being seen by everyone around you and seeing everything in front of you, to the right, to the left, behind you on your right and left, and behind you. You must take in to consideration every vehicle, road sign, road condition, intersection, road debris, and potential wildlife.

To be seen is critical to your survival and the following can improve your chances on the streets. I will break this down to two categories, **Being Seen** and **Actively Seeing**.

Being Seen

- Bright colored or reflective shirts, vest and riding jackets help draw other driver's attention to you.
- LED stop lights and turn signals, reflectors and reflective tape will help make your motorcycle more visible.
- Turn signal used in conjunction with hand signals will draw the driver's attention to you.

- Lightly touching your brakes several times before coming to a stop will also attract attention.

Actively Seeing

- Scan ahead of you about 12 seconds looking for oncoming traffic, vehicles approaching intersections or merging.
- Be aware of cars backing out of driveways or businesses. These drivers may enter your path of travel without looking.
- Check mirrors of cars behind you and be aware at stop signs.
- Scan for animals especially at dawn and dusk, which may cross your path.
- In residential areas watch for domestic animals that may try to chase you.
- Be aware of tractor trailers and their blind spots.
- Look as far as possible through curves in roads.
- Observe all warning and directional signs.
- Scan the road surface for rocks, gravel, pieces of truck tires, holes, dips, leaves, and other debris.
- Look for signal lights are changing.
- Look for blocked views that could hide dangers or signs.
- Riding into the sun may block view of roads, centerlines, oncoming traffic, or stopped traffic.
- Positions and paths of travel of other riders.
- Look for escape routes

Evaluate

All of the factors we identified in the previous section must be processed constantly. These factors are ever changing. Each must be evaluated for their danger level and a plan must be made on how to react to each. Here are some possible questions to consider.

- Which lane position when passing tractor trailers gives me my best option?

- Am I looking in the direction of travel and through turns and not fixating on a target?
- Why are cars slowing, what do they see?
- Are drivers around paying attention, not talking or texting on the phone, eating, or otherwise distracted?
- Am I in their blind spot?
- What would you do if cars are approaching from behind at a stop sign?
- What would I do if a car is backing out of a driveway?
- Is the car in the turn lane going to turn in front of you?
- Is something like a car, truck, or trees blocking your view of a hazard or sign?
- It is a clear day now but it has been raining lately, are there new pot holes, gravel, leaves or mud on the road?
- Are the riders around me keeping in their lanes and exhibiting good riding skills?
- Am I riding in area where wildlife live, can I see along the fence lines, gullies, and tree lines, and what would I do if I see an animal?
- What are your options when riding into the sun?
- Is the signal light about to change, and what if the driver in cross traffic runs the light?
- Am I riding at the proper speed for the conditions?
- Where would my escape route be?
- Am I in a good position to take advantage of my escape route?

Execute

Once the dangers are identified and evaluated and a plan to minimize these hazards is formulated, you must execute that plan swiftly and decisively. Here are some options to consider, and remember every situation is different.

- As hazards are identified use hand signals to relay the hazard to others as soon as you see it, even if you just passed the hazard because other riders will be scanning for hazards far ahead.
- Adjust speed before or after entering turns, not while in turns.
- Leave motorcycle in first gear, position yourself in either the first or third portion of the lane, and use your quick escape route if necessary.
- Slow down and increase awareness in areas where wildlife is present.
- Proper lane positioning when passing will help keep you out of blind spots.
- When passing a tractor trailer, signal your intentions, move to a single file formation, move to the far third of the lane, adjust speed to safely pass and give room for the following riders, and mentally prepare yourself for load noises if a tire explodes. After passing move back to a staggered formation.
- Make turns on gravel or slick surfaces slow and as upright as possible using the rear brake only.
- Look as far thru a curve as possible, do not fixate on a single danger or oncoming traffic.
- Use exaggerated head turns while doing turns, especially u turns.
- Give distracted drivers more space.
- Adjust speed to allow cars to merge, use patience and don't get frustrated with other drivers.
- Do not run red lights when riding with a group, and watch for other drivers who may.
- Use sunglasses or tinted windshield, or a free hand to block the sun from your view.
- Ride in a lower gear to give you the advantage of quick acceleration on demand.
- Approach cars that are backing out of driveways with caution and at a speed that you can react to them and have a viable escape route.

For more reading on this topic you can do an internet search for the Motorcycle Safety Foundation at www.msf-usa.org/ or SEE Search Evaluate and Execute. For reading materials the Rider Edge Handbooks or the Motorcycle Safety Foundation Riders Education are excellent sources.