

Pennsylvania Driver's Manual

SPEED
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pennsylvania

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Bureau of Driver Licensing

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Sharing the Road with Motorcycles and Vehicles

Today's motorcycle riders are friends, relatives and neighbors. The motorcyclist has the same rights and responsibilities on the roadway as drivers of other vehicles. Motorists should recognize this and not attempt to crowd motorcycles or take the right-of-way from motorcyclists.

Approximately 4,000 motorcycle crashes occur on Pennsylvania roads each year. Half of these involved a crash between a motorcycle and another type of vehicle. And almost two-thirds of these crashes are caused not by the motorcyclist but by the driver of the other vehicle.

Look out for motorcyclists Be aware that motorcycles are small and may be difficult to see. Motorcycles have a much smaller profile than other vehicles, which can make it more difficult to judge the speed and distance of an approaching motorcycle.

Anticipate a motorcyclist's maneuver. Road conditions, which are minor annoyances to vehicle drivers, pose major hazards to motorcyclists.

Allow more following distance Leave three or four seconds when following a motorcycle, so the motorcyclist has enough time to maneuver or stop in an emergency. In dry conditions, motorcycles can stop more quickly than a vehicle.

Signal your intentions Before changing lanes or merging with traffic, signal your intentions allowing the motorcyclist to anticipate traffic flow and find a safe lane position.

Don't be fooled by a flashing turn signal on a motorcycle – motorcycle signals usually are not self canceling and riders sometimes forget to turn them off. Wait to be sure the motorcycle is going to turn before you proceed.

Respect a motorcycle A motorcycle is a full-size vehicle with the same privileges as any vehicle on the roadway. Allow a motorcyclist a full lane width. Although it may seem as though there is enough room in the traffic lane for a vehicle and a motorcycle, remember the motorcycle needs room to maneuver safely. Do not share the lane.



CRASHES ARE MOST LIKELY TO OCCUR IN THESE HIGH-RISK SITUATIONS:

Left turns

Approximately one-half of all motorcycle crashes involve another motor vehicle. Nearly 40 percent were caused by the other vehicle turning left in front of the motorcyclist.

Vehicle's blind spot

Remember, motorcyclists are often hidden in a vehicle's blind spot or missed in a quick look due to their smaller size. Always make a visual check for motorcycles by checking mirrors and blind spots before entering or leaving a lane of traffic and at intersections.

Hazardous road conditions

Motorcyclists may change speed or adjust their position within a lane suddenly in reaction to road and traffic conditions such as potholes, gravel, wet or slippery surfaces, pavement seams, railroad crossings and grooved pavement.

Weather conditions

When the road surface is wet or icy, motorcyclists' braking and handling abilities are impaired.

Strong winds

A strong gust of wind can move a motorcycle across an entire lane if the rider is not prepared for it. Wind gusts from large trucks in the other lane can be a real hazard.

Large vehicles

A large vehicle, such as a van or truck, can block a motorcycle from a driver's view. The motorcyclist may seem to suddenly appear from nowhere.

Sharing the roadway is a good indication motorists and motorcycles both recognize the importance of cooperation. By curbing aggressive behavior and operating vehicles in accordance with common sense, courtesy and the law, motorists and motorcyclists can ride together on the road.