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# SAFETY WHITEPAPER

Mark Troy's "Tips for the Road"

## Chapter 3: Special Circumstances

- **Group Riding:**

- o When riding in a group, know your route in advance (including all scheduled stops), make sure everyone in the group is knowledgeable of and will be using standard hand and arm signals, and be sure to maintain an appropriate formation once the ride begins. A staggered formation should be utilized unless on a very curvy road or in other situations where an increased space cushion or maneuvering is needed.
- o Never ride in side-by-side formations as they reduce the space cushion.
- o Maintain visible contact with the rider to your rear.

- **Riding With Passengers:**

- o Although this should go without saying, you should only carry passengers on bikes designed to carry passengers.
- o Instruct your passenger to keep hands and feet away from hot or moving parts.
- o Instruct your passenger to limit movement and talking.
- o Remember that carrying a passenger will affect braking, acceleration, riding through corners and overall balance. Passing other vehicles will also require more time and space.





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- o Do not exceed the bike's weight limitations with a passenger.
- o Before heading out onto a high-speed and/or congested road with a passenger, practice maneuvering the bike with the passenger on board at a lower speed, controlled environment to ensure that both rider and passenger are comfortable with the bike's operation.
- o Make sure the passenger wears the same appropriate, colorful and protective clothing as the rider.
- o Avoid carrying children as passengers and never carry a child who is not mature enough to understand the risks involved and who cannot reach the footrests and firmly hold onto the rider or hand holds.

- **Riding in Rain:**

- o Being able to operate your bike in the rain competently and confidently are critical components to being a safe rider, generally, as you will, invariably, get caught in the rain during a ride and, thus, will be required to maintain control of your vehicle in wet conditions. Here are a few helpful hints for riding in the wet stuff:
- o When the dark clouds start to roll in and you are nearly certain to get caught in a downpour, pull off to the side of the road and wait it out if you are not comfortable with your wet weather riding skills or, in the alternative, go ahead and don your rain gear so that you will be ready for the rain once it hits.
- o Once the rain starts to fall:
  - o Increase following and stopping distances;
  - o Eliminate sudden movements;
  - o Take it easy in the turns; and



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- o Watch out for painted lines, tar patches, and metal bridge joints and other components as these become very slippery and dangerous when wet.
  - o Keep in mind that when rain first hits a road, the road surface can be particularly slippery—especially if it has not rained in the area for several days. It is, thus, a good idea to pull off the road when the rain begins and allow the rain from 30-45 minutes to wash away the oil, grease and other road grime that has accumulated since the last rainfall. If it has been several days or weeks since the last rainfall, it may take an hour or more for a solid rain to cleanse the road surface of accumulated oil and other hazardous debris.
  - o Practice is the only way for a rider to become truly skilled at riding in the rain. Accordingly, a rider should make every effort to improve his or her skills by riding in light to moderate rainfall on roadways where there is little to no traffic.
- **Riding in Cold Conditions:**
  - o Icy conditions can occur anytime the temperature is at or near the freezing point. If your bike does not have an air temperature thermometer, consider adding one. They are inexpensive, attach easily with 3M® tape, and will help you keep an eye on potentially dangerous roadway conditions.
  - o Keep in mind that bridges will ice over long before roadways, and stay icy longer, because they are not connected to the warmth of the ground.
  - o Be on the lookout for black ice, salt, gravel or fallen leaves—especially in the curves and shaded, low lying areas—during the cool months.
  - o If you hit a patch of ice or other slick spot, don't make any sudden moves and keep off the brakes. Pull in the clutch and let the bike coast over the slippery area.





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- o Dress in warm layers when riding in cool or cold conditions to avoid hypothermia. You should also stay hydrated by drinking plenty of water, as cold, dry air can pull large amounts of water out of the body and keep you from noticing that you are perspiring.
- **Intersections:**
  - o It is well-known that a high percentage of motorcycle accidents occur at intersections. Accordingly, it is important to be extremely vigilant and aware of the risks around you as you enter an intersection.
  - o As you enter an intersection, whether you are turning or proceeding through, remember that the highest priority is to check to your left. Thereafter, scan the intersection in a clockwise pattern, looking to the front and then to the right. If slowing or turning, check behind you, then back to the left again. No matter what, always check the left side twice because in the time it took you to check in the other directions, the situation to the left may have changed.
- If turning in an intersection, be sure to signal your intent to do so well in advance to make your intentions are known to other motorists. It is also a good idea to flash your brake lights to make other motorists aware of your intent to slow down or come to a stop.

If you are involved in an accident, it is likely you will need legal representation. Troy Law Firm focuses its practice on motorcycle accidents and the legal needs of riders. You can call me directly at (304) 546-2451 or contact our firm (304) 414-5691 and we will make sure that justice is served and that you are compensated fairly. We hope you don't need us, but if you do—we will be there for you.

