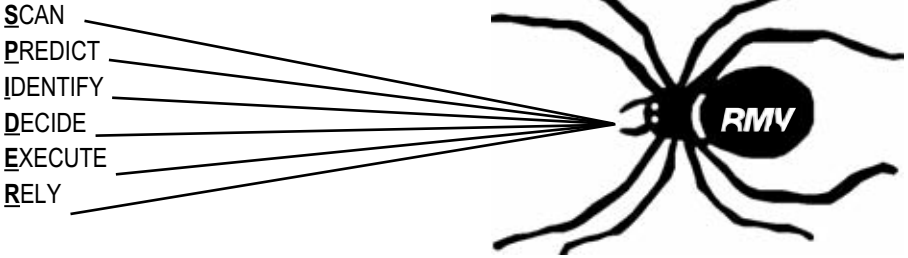


LOOKING FOR TROUBLE

Despite the many precautions a motorcycle rider can take, there is no guarantee that a motorist will see you. A safe and responsible rider is always “looking for trouble” to avoid. This defensive riding strategy helps to reduce the probability of being seriously injured or killed in an accident. SPIDER is an acronym for the process detailing how a rider accomplishes creating this safe riding environment.

Let us examine the process:



SCAN — Monitor and aggressively search for potential hazards while riding. Maintain an adequate space cushion between vehicles to enhance rider safety. Anticipate and formulate a strategy for escaping a hazardous situation.

PREDICT — The distance, speed, and direction of a hazard significantly impacts the overall strategy employed by the rider. It is important for the rider to anticipate and consider the effect a hazard may have on fellow motorists. Recognizing and estimating the consequences of your actions are steps a safe and responsible rider takes in ensuring safety.

IDENTIFY — Locate hazards and the potential for danger. Awareness and visibility will assist the rider in making a safe and responsible decision given the following circumstances:

- Vehicles sharing the road with you may move quickly and unexpectedly. A rider’s reaction to uncertain traffic conditions must be both quick and accurate to minimize the likelihood of an accident.
- Animals and pedestrians create additional stress for riders and increase the potential for danger. Their unpredictable nature may influence and alter riding strategy.
- Stationary objects include potholes, guardrails, bridges, roadway signs, hedges, and vegetation. These objects will not move into your path but may complicate your riding strategy.

DECIDE — Make a decision on how to act based upon the types of hazards or conflicts you may encounter. The following measures can be taken to help minimize the hazard or conflict:

- Communicate your presence to fellow motorists with the assistance of vehicle lighting, equipment, and clothing.
- Adjust vehicle speed to the traffic conditions and hazards which are present. The traffic environment will dictate whether to accelerate, slow down, or come to a stop.
- Adjusting vehicle position will depend upon the nature of the hazard and space cushion available to the rider. Changing lanes, lane position, or direction may minimize the potential for being injured in an accident.

EXECUTE — Follow through on the decision you have made. Make a commitment to riding within your ability or skill level.

RELY — Rely on this process to create a safe riding environment. Riders are encouraged to routinely incorporate the SPIDER process and defensive riding strategy to avoid potentially dangerous or fatal driving situations.

THE ROAD AHEAD

Experienced and responsible riders focus their attention on the road ahead. This practice of routinely looking well ahead limits the rider's exposure to dangerous or hazardous driving conditions. In the city, it is recommended that a rider look from one-half (½) block to one full block ahead. On the highway, it is recommended that a rider look as far ahead as possible while maintaining cycle control. Establishing an adequate space cushion between vehicles gives the rider plenty of time to adjust to the traffic environment. Having an adequate space cushion helps the rider avoid panic stops or sudden swerves that can pose an even greater danger. It is recommended that a rider keep the following travel tips in mind:

- Constantly check road surfaces for slippery spots, bad bumps, broken pavement, loose gravel, wet leaves, or objects lying in the road. Pay particular attention on curves and ramps where oil and gravel are known to collect.
- Use vehicle size to your advantage and make the necessary adjustments. Looking past and through vehicles traveling ahead which are stopping or attempting to turn limits the potential for an injury or accident.
- Use added caution when approaching intersections and areas of heavy congestion. Monitor pedestrian and vehicle traffic that may enter your path of travel from side streets or driveways. In heavy traffic where the potential for injury increases, focus on finding an escape route which offers the most protection.

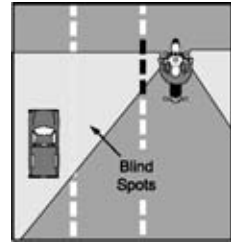
THE ROAD BEHIND

While it is important to monitor vehicle traffic and hazards ahead, a rider cannot afford to ignore situations that may develop behind. Vehicles traveling behind the rider pose an equally grave danger. The rider must recognize the potential for being struck from behind and seriously injured. Responsible riders must do more than simply checking vehicle mirrors. The ability to anticipate vehicle lane changes while safely adjusting riding behavior comes only through riding experience. However, riders of all skill levels can reduce the risk of being seriously injured or killed by riding defensively.

USING YOUR MIRRORS

Checking vehicle mirrors is a critical component in riding safety. It is recommended that riders frequently check mirrors as part of their on-road riding routine. Like passenger motor vehicles, all motorcycles have “blind spots” that can impair or distort vehicle visibility. Checking vehicle mirrors every few seconds will enable the rider to respond appropriately and safely when traffic conflicts or hazards arise. Traffic conditions are constantly changing so it is important that a rider recognize and use vehicle mirrors in the following situations:

- Pay particular attention when slowing the cycle or coming to a sudden stop, as vehicles following behind may be unaware of the action a rider has taken. If the vehicle following behind is dangerously close, it may be best for the rider to continue moving forward to avoid serious injury.
- Intersections pose the greatest danger for the motorcycle rider and should be approached with extreme caution. An intersection is any location where traffic may cross a rider’s path of travel. Vehicles following closely behind may be unaware of the hazard or danger facing the rider, thereby reducing the space cushion available and jeopardizing rider safety.
- Prior to changing lanes, a responsible rider exercises caution and incorporates a head turn to visually check for vehicles that may be approaching or attempting to pass. An experienced rider recognizes that vehicles traveling behind may not be expecting a sudden turn at locations such as intersections, side streets, and driveways.



Using Mirrors



Slowing



Blind Intersections

Many motorcycles are equipped with rounded “convex” mirrors. These mirrors allow greater visibility of the road behind but conversely make objects appear farther away than they actually are. If your motorcycle has convex mirrors and you are unfamiliar with their use, practice until you become a good judge of distance.



Convex Mirrors