

## **CARRYING PASSENGERS & CARGO**

Experienced and responsible riders recognize that carrying passengers or heavy loads requires additional skills. The added weight significantly changes motorcycle handling, balance, acceleration, and stopping distance. Riders are encouraged to practice riding with lighter loads before attempting to carry passengers. This adjustment in riding strategy promotes safe riding and reduces the risk of serious injury to the rider or passengers.

### **PASSENGER SAFETY & INSTRUCTION**

Passenger safety starts with proper direction and instruction. Riders should not make the presumption that passengers are familiar with motorcycle handling, control, or balance. As a routine practice, good riders will instruct their passengers on cycling basics prior to starting their trip. Under Massachusetts law, all passengers are required to wear **US DOT** approved helmets. Passengers are encouraged to wear protective clothing and face protection. The following are recommended practices concerning passenger safety:

- Climb aboard the motorcycle after the engine has been started.
- Sit comfortably close to the rider without hindering rider control.
- Hold tightly to the rider's waist or hips for added balance.
- Keep feet firmly planted on the cycle's footpegs, even at stops.
- Remain directly behind and lean with the rider through turns and curves.
- Limit conversation and movement when the cycle is in operation.

### **PASSENGERS & EQUIPMENT**

Having the proper equipment is essential for safe and responsible riding. Riders should be certain that the cycle is properly equipped for carrying passengers. Riders should not have to adjust seating position to accommodate passengers. The cycle's seat should be large enough to hold both the rider and passenger without crowding. Passengers must be able to place their feet firmly on footpegs located at the rear of the

cycle. Proper footing helps to maintain passenger balance and prevents accidental falls from the rear of the cycle. A secure handle strap must be provided when carrying passengers. Riders and passengers should remain committed to wearing protective clothing and face protection while riding.

## **RIDING WITH PASSENGERS**

Carrying a passenger will cause the motorcycle to respond and handle in a different manner. The added weight of the passenger will require the rider to adjust operating speed on rougher surfaces, sloped terrain, and curved roadways. Minor adjustments to the cycle's suspension and tire pressure may



be required depending on passenger weight. Riders should incorporate a larger cushion of space when stopping or slowing the cycle. Warning passengers of approaching hazards will reduce the risk of injury and surprise. If the rider must speak with the passenger while riding, a slight head turn while maintaining focus on the road and traffic conditions ahead is suggested.

## **CARRYING LOADS**

Small loads can be carried safely if properly secured and fastened to the motorcycle. Riders are encouraged to secure loads low to the seat and not against rear seat frames. Loads mounted behind the rear wheel axle upset cycle balance and affect braking. Placing loads low and over wheel axles helps to maintain cycle stability and control.

If the motorcycle is equipped with saddlebags, make certain the load distribution in each bag is approximately the same. Failing to distribute the load evenly may cause the cycle to pull to one side. Overloading may also cause the bags to catch in the wheel or chain, locking the rear wheel and prompting the cycle to skid.

It is recommended that riders securely fasten the loads with elastic cords. Elastic cords help prevent the loads from shifting or falling while riding. Checking loads frequently for proper

balance and positioning will increase rider safety and reduce the risk of injury.

## **GROUP RIDING**

The size of your motorcycle makes it difficult for fellow motorists to recognize your presence. If done so in a manner that neither endangers nor interferes with the free flow of traffic, riding with other cyclists can help to increase rider visibility and safety. Concentration and communication are essential to group rider safety. The following recommendations will enhance safety and reduce the risk of injury for those cyclists riding together in groups.

## **SMALL GROUPS**

Traveling together in smaller groups will provide riders with the necessary time and space to adjust to traffic hazards or objects that may interfere with safe operation. Small group travel will also enable fellow motorists to safely pass while reducing the risk of rider separation. Should the number of cyclists traveling together exceed five or six, it is recommended that the riders split into two separate travel groups to ensure safety.

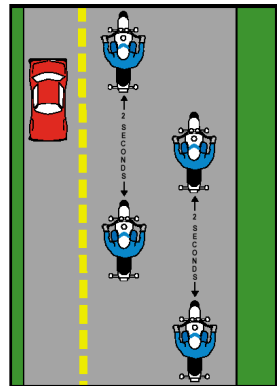
## **GROUP COHESION**

Communication and planning are essential to group cohesion and safety. Planning ahead will help reduce the risk of injury and rider separation. The following are recommended practices for group riding:

- Be certain that all riders know the route and destination ahead of departure. This knowledge will reduce rider anxiety and concerns of group separation.
- Place inexperienced riders towards the front of the group where they can be carefully watched by more experienced riders.
- If you are leading the group, aggressively scan ahead for obstacles or traffic hazards that may interfere with safe operation.
- Keep a sufficient amount of space between all riders traveling in the group. A closely configured group of riders is less prone to separation and easily recognized by fellow motorists.

- Adjust cycle speed to maintain group cohesion. Use your cycle's mirrors to recognize a change in pace or direction. Should a rider fall behind, slow group speed to prevent separation.
- Signal lane changes early to afford those riders traveling behind the opportunity to safely complete the lane change.
- Riders should avoid "pairing up" while traveling. Operating directly alongside another motorcycle is a dangerous practice and jeopardizes both rider and group safety.
- Group riders are encouraged to travel in a "staggered" formation. This staggered riding strategy places the lead rider to the left side of the travel lane with the second rider just behind and to the right side of the travel lane. The third rider would follow in behind the first rider, leaving a minimum two second travel cushion between the first rider. The fourth rider would follow in behind the second rider, leaving a minimum two second travel cushion between the second rider. Riders should break with formation and travel single file when approaching turns or curves and when entering or exiting freeways.

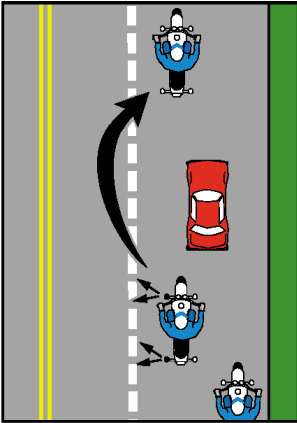
*Staggering*



## PASSING INFORMATION

Riders traveling in a staggered formation are directed to pass motor vehicles one rider at a time. When there is sufficient space, the lead rider should quickly pass the motor vehicle and promptly return to the original lane of travel. Once safely past, riders are encouraged to maintain their original lane positions. The remaining riders are directed to pass a motor vehicle in the same manner.

*Group Passing (Stage 1)*



*Group Passing (Stage 2)*

