

# Sharing the Road with Motorcycles

## Pre-reading

Questions: What do you know about the subject of this reading?

Definitions: Fatality – a death that occurs suddenly or by accident

Blind spot – an area of the road that cannot be seen by looking forward or through side or rearview mirrors



## Reading

We share the roads with many types of vehicles. Motorcycles are one of the most unique.

16 They are unlike any other vehicle. While motorcycles are about as likely as cars to be involved in  
34 crashes, motorcyclists are almost three times as likely to be injured and five times more likely to be  
52 killed in a crash.

56 In recent years, motorcycling has become more popular. Motorcycles are fun and relatively  
69 inexpensive to own and insure. They also get excellent gas mileage. More motorcycles in traffic  
84 create a need for greater awareness among those who share the road.

96 Motorcycle crashes are on the rise. In Minnesota, the number of motorcycle crashes,  
109 injuries, and fatalities have risen about 37 percent since 1996. In many car-motorcycle crashes,  
124 drivers claimed they didn't see the motorcycle, or didn't see it until it was too late. Motorcycles  
141 are smaller and harder to see. Great care needs to be taken to watch for them.

157 Drivers should expect to see motorcycles at any time. A motorcycle's headlight is on at all  
173 times. This helps them be seen during the day and night. However, a motorcycle can easily be  
190 hidden behind a car or truck. It's important for a driver to check his/her mirrors and blind spot  
209 before merging or changing lanes. Look for a helmet above, tires below, or a shadow alongside a  
226 vehicle that you can't see around.

232 Riders need to make themselves as **conspicuous** as possible. They need to be careful not to  
248 hide in traffic. It is recommended that riders maintain a large space cushion when following  
263 another vehicle and use their entire lane (right, left, and center) to see and be seen. Brightly  
280 colored protective gear and helmets help riders be more visible. Colors like, red, yellow, orange,  
295 and white help a rider be noticed. Some riders also use reflective tape and stickers.

310 Riders should use turn signals for every turn or lane change, even if they think no one will  
328 see it. Some use a combination of both hand signals and turn signals to draw more attention to  
346 themselves. Flashing the brake light two or three times before slowing down or stopping also helps  
362 drivers take notice.

365 All drivers and riders need to be **alert** and **aware** of who is sharing the road with them.  
383 This will result in safer roads and highways.

391 Source: Minnesota Motorcycle Safety Center - *Safety Tips*

**Level 7.0**

## Understanding

1. Why are motorcycles difficult to see? \_\_\_\_\_  
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2. Why are they so popular? \_\_\_\_\_  
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3. How are motorcycles and cars similar? And, how are they different? \_\_\_\_\_  
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4. What does it mean to be **alert** and **aware**? \_\_\_\_\_  
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5. How can motorcyclists be more visible? (List at least three ways.) \_\_\_\_\_  
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6. How can drivers be more aware? (List at least two ways.) \_\_\_\_\_  
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7. What does the word **conspicuous** mean? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Writing

Option A: Summarize the reading in your own words.

Option B: What is your experience with motorcycles? Do you ride one? If yes, how do you make sure people see you? Have you ever crashed or had a near-crash experience? What happened?

Option C: Write about how you safely share the road with others.

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