



MOTOR VEHICLE REGISTRY (MVR)

Riding in the Northern Territory

January 2020



Motorcycle Riders' Handbook



**Motorcycle Riders' Handbook –
Riding in the Northern Territory**

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Published in Australia by the
Northern Territory Government

Second Edition January 2020

ISBN: 978-0-6487445-1-1

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disclaimer

This handbook is not intended to be used as a legal document. It is intended as a guide only, and its aim is to set out, in simple form, the main legal requirements in the Northern Territory that a motorcycle rider is required to observe in everyday riding, as well as other useful information for riders.

This handbook is not the law, but is a guide to some of the laws relating to motorcycle riding in the Northern Territory. Be aware that:

- The statements in this handbook are not precise legal interpretations of the road traffic laws.
- Any diagrams, pictures or examples are included for illustrative purposes only and are not intended to be definitive.
- Not every law is covered in this document.
- Laws are subject to change from time to time. The information in this book is believed to be correct at the time of original publication, but may not accurately reflect the current law.
- This document only covers the Northern Territory and while many laws and regulations are uniform across Australia, some laws are different in other places. When driving/riding interstate please familiarise yourself with other states' road rules and demerit point systems before you travel.

If you require a more detailed statement of the law, Northern Territory legislation can be found on the nt.gov.au website.

The information in this publication is provided in good faith and is believed to be accurate at the time of publication. The Territory will not be liable for any loss sustained or incurred by anyone relying on this information.

Other publications

- Good Gear Guide for Motorcycle and Scooter Riders
- Road Users' Handbook
- Heavy Vehicle Drivers' Handbook
- Learner Drivers' Guide

Introduction to motorcycle riding

Motorcycling can be fun, economical and safe, but we have to recognise that motorcycle riders are among our most vulnerable road users.

Motorcycle riders are less protected than car drivers and have a greater chance of being killed or injured in a crash.

You can become a safer rider by learning the necessary rider skills, having a good understanding of the road environment, riding to the conditions and by always being aware of other road users.

The procedures to obtain a motorcycle rider licence are designed to help you become a safe rider. The Motorcycle Riders' Handbook, training programs and the testing procedures are designed to teach you to be competent in the skills required to ride on Territory roads.

This handbook contains important information about riding techniques, how to cope with hazards and some road rules that are specific to motorcyclists. Please read it carefully.

Motorcycle riders must adhere to the same road rules as other road users, so make sure that you keep up to date with the different road rules, signs and markings by also reading the latest edition of the Road Users' Handbook.

Enjoy your riding, but, above all, ride to survive.

This publication is available for free on the nt.gov.au website.

Important information

Change of details

All licence holders and owners of registered vehicles must notify MVR within 14 days if any of the details recorded against their licence or registration changes. Some common examples are changes of name or address.

The MVR must also be notified if a licence card or vehicle number plates are lost, stolen, defaced or damaged, or if a vehicle is sold, disposed of or altered.

You can update your contact details online, over the phone, or in person at a MVR office or participating Australia Post outlet.

For more information, phone the MVR Contact Centre on **1300 654 628** or visit the nt.gov.au website.

Privacy

The Registrar of Motor Vehicles collects and retains your personal information such as photographic images, biometric data, registration and licensing history under the provisions of the *NT Motor Vehicles Act 1949*. The information you provide may be disclosed to government, law enforcement and other bodies as required by Australian law. Your information is also supplied to NEVDIS for the purpose of national exchange of vehicle and driver information.

Documents you provide may also be verified with the issuing authority through the Commonwealth Document Verification Service. All personal information is managed in accordance to information privacy principles under the *NT Information Act 2002*.

For more information on privacy, go to the Office of the Information Commissioner website.

Transferring an interstate licence

Riders visiting from other Australian jurisdictions are considered NT residents after living in the Northern Territory for three months and must transfer their interstate licence to an NT licence.

Exclusion from insurance or benefit reductions may apply if you are deemed a resident of the territory and have

not transferred your interstate licence. If your interstate licence is current, transferring your licence can be done at no cost. Any time remaining on the interstate licence will be transferred to your new NT licence, provided that the remaining time on your interstate licence is not a longer period than you could have an NT licence issued for.

In most cases, the same licence classes and conditions will apply between Australian states and territories; however, there may be individual cases where items such as provisional requirements or other licence conditions are not identical in all jurisdictions. In these cases, NT rules will be applied when you transfer your licence.

Any demerit points accrued in other jurisdictions may also affect your NT licence.

Demerit points

A demerit point scheme operates in the NT. All riders and drivers are subject to action against their licence if they reach their demerit point threshold:

- All riders have a threshold of 12 points in three years.
- Learner and provisional riders are also subject to a threshold of five points in one year.

If you have a full (unconditional) licence to drive another class of vehicle, such as a car, when you gain a rider learner licence your demerit point threshold will remain at 12 points in three years.

If you reach your demerit point threshold, your licence could be suspended. Go online to nt.gov.au to view your demerit point tally.

To check your current demerit point tally online you will need to have:

- your Northern Territory driver licence number
- your current licence card number
- your MVR Customer ID number – Located on your driver licence or vehicle renewal notice. You can call the MVR Contact Centre on **1300 654 628** during business hours to get your ID number.

For more information about the NT demerit point scheme call **1300 654 628**, or go to the nt.gov.au website.

Organ donation

The place to register your intention to be an organ donor is the Australian Organ Donor Register (AODR).

Organ donor information is available at www.humanservices.gov.au or call 1800 777 203 for a registration brochure.

If you would like more information before making your choice, please contact Donate Life NT (the organ donation agency for the Northern Territory) at www.donatelife.gov.au or phone 08 8922 8349.

Photographs

When you are issued with an NT driver licence, your photograph will be digitally stored by MVR. The stored image may be used for renewals of your licence for up to 10 years, as long as your appearance does not change significantly during this time. Your photograph will need updating every 10 years.

You must carry your licence

You must carry your current licence with you at all times when riding or driving.

Failure to produce your licence on demand is an offence.

Purchasing motorcycles – third party interests

Before you purchase a motorcycle it is recommended that you find out if there is any third party interest in it.

The Personal Property Securities Register (PPSR) is an Australian Government initiative where a third party (banks and financial institutions) can record a financial interest against personal property, such as motor vehicles.

The PPSR also provides current vehicle registration details and notes if the vehicle has been recorded as stolen or written off.

To check the third party interests registered against a motorcycle, visit the PPSR database at www.ppsr.gov.au and conduct a motor vehicle search by serial number (VIN, chassis).

how to use this handbook

The Motorcycle Riders' Handbook has been produced to help you become a safer, more considerate and more courteous rider. This will help to make our roads safer for all road users.

Reading this handbook thoroughly will help you to get a learner rider licence. Experienced riders can refer to the handbook to check current road rules or to refresh their understanding about road safety and low-risk riding techniques.

Do not forget to study the Road Users' Handbook just as carefully. It contains the rest of the information you will need to know to pass the rider knowledge test to qualify for a learner licence.

To make it easy to find what you are looking for, this handbook has been divided into the following sections:

- **Section 2 – Licensing:** licensing requirements for people to obtain a licence to ride on NT roads.
- **Section 3 – Rider safety:** important information on safety equipment and practices.
- **Section 4 – Road safety:** safe riding techniques and behaviours important for all riders.
- **Section 5 – Road rules for motorcycle riders:** the road rules specifically for motorcycle riders.
- **Section 6 – Motorcycle roadworthiness:** a brief overview on roadworthiness for motorcycles.
- **Section 7 – Penalties:** an overview of the penalties for traffic offences.
- **Section 8 – Makes and models:** an overview of motorcycle types.
- **Section 9 – Glossary:** definitions of terms used in this handbook.
- **MVR Offices:** provides contact information.



licensing

Getting a licence to ride is the first step to a lifetime of motorcycling, and it brings both opportunities and responsibilities.

The Northern Territory has different licence classes for the different types of motor vehicles that use NT roads.

To ride a motorcycle you must hold a **class R** licence.

Your responsibilities are clearly stated throughout this handbook, and it is expected that you will use any vehicle that you drive or ride with safety, efficiency, courtesy and common sense at all times.

Having a rider's licence brings responsibilities. If you lose your licence by failing to meet your responsibilities, the consequences could be serious and many opportunities will disappear.

Obligations of licence holders

Think of your licence as a 'contract' or an agreement between you as a rider and the rest of the community. The Motor Vehicle Registry and the Northern Territory Police administer this contract.

It is also an important identity document and should be kept safely at all times.

Do not abuse your licence or allow it to be misused. There are heavy fines if you fraudulently alter, use or lend a licence to another person or allow a licence to be used by another person.

Northern Territory roads are provided for riders to use if they meet certain conditions.

Riders must:

- show that they understand the road rules, most of which are written in this handbook and in the Road Users' Handbook in plain English

- show the skills necessary to ride safely
- obey the laws and ride responsibly
- pay a licence fee, which goes towards the administration of the licensing system
- show that they understand the community's concerns to reduce the impact of traffic on the environment and to use the road system efficiently.

The contract between you as a rider and the community can be broken by traffic offences that cause inconvenience, costs or suffering to others. These offences carry penalties such as fines, licence cancellation, disqualification or suspension. In extreme cases, the offence could lead to a prison sentence.

The licensing system

The Northern Territory licensing system helps to make travel on our roads safer for all road users. It provides rules and conditions for licence holders and penalties for riders and drivers who do not meet their responsibilities. The licensing system also ensures that licence holders have the required knowledge and skills to safely operate the vehicle they are licensed to drive or ride.

To drive or ride on public roads in the NT you must be licensed and have the correct licence class for the type of vehicle you are driving.

To legally drive or ride on public roads in the NT:

- you must have the right class of licence for the vehicle you are operating
- you must hold a current NT licence if you are an NT resident
- you must hold a current interstate licence if you are visiting from interstate
- if you are visiting from overseas, you must hold a current licence from your country, and if your licence is not in English you must also carry an International Driving Permit or an official English translation of your overseas licence.

You cannot drive or ride on public roads in the NT if you have:

- a licence that is expired
- a licence that has been cancelled or suspended
- had your driving privileges withdrawn in the NT
- been disqualified from driving by a court of law in Australia or overseas.

Heavy penalties apply for driving or riding a vehicle without a licence.

If you have been in the NT for more than three months and wish to continue to ride or drive you must apply for an NT licence.

When your licence is checked

Police can check your licence at any time, and they will also check that you have the correct licence when:

- you are involved in a crash, whether you were at fault or not
- you have been stopped because you committed a traffic offence
- you have been stopped for a random breath test either by a stationary breath testing unit or by a mobile breath testing unit.

Medical fitness to hold a licence

All riders must be medically fit to ride a motorcycle and are subject to personal and legal responsibilities and liabilities.

Northern Territory laws require all riders or intending riders to notify the Registrar of Motor Vehicles if they have a medical condition (including disability, mental illness and eyesight) that may affect their ability to safely and legally ride a motorcycle. Health professionals are also required to notify the Registrar if they believe a patient's medical condition could affect their ability to ride a motorcycle.

The MVR is responsible for issuing, renewing, suspending or cancelling a person's licence (including a conditional licence), and decisions are based on a full consideration of relevant factors relating to health and riding performance.

A medical condition does not necessarily mean that you cannot be licensed. In reality, very few conditions prevent the issuing of a rider licence.

If you have any questions about medical fitness to hold a licence, please contact the MVR on 1300 654 628 or consult your health professional for advice.

R class motorcycle graduated licensing scheme

The Northern Territory has a graduated licensing scheme for new riders. To obtain a Northern Territory class R (rider-motorcycle) licence, you must complete the various licence stages.

You are encouraged to do rider training as rider training covers the key riding skills that are required for riding safely on the road.

There are two stages in obtaining your class R licence, the pre-learner stage and the pre-provisional stage.

The pre-learner stage comprises of a knowledge assessment and a base level practical evaluation of your riding capability.

The pre-provisional stage comprises of an evaluation of your knowledge, skills and attitude required for safe riding.

Stage 1 - Pre-learner



Once you have been issued your class R learner licence from MVR, you can commence riding.

A useful way for new riders to get on-road riding practice is to ride with another experienced motorcyclist or have lessons with a trained motorcycle riding instructor.

Stage 2 - Pre-provisional



To achieve either a provisional or restricted class R licence you must complete the pre-provisional stage by demonstrating your ability to safely and competently ride a motorcycle on the road.

Once you have completed the above, visit an MVR office to have your Provisional or Restricted rider licence issued.

Rider Training

The Registrar or Motor Vehicles has approved the Motorcyclist Education Training and Licensing (METAL) program for delivery in the Northern Territory.

The Pre-Learner riding course and Pre-Provisional courses from the METAL program are delivered by Approved Rider Training Providers.

METAL courses are designed to provide riders with the practical skills and road-craft knowledge to be as safe as possible on our roads.

All METAL courses are competency based and have pass/fail criteria. You must demonstrate all of the competencies for the course to pass.

Course outcomes are valid for 12 months from the date of course completion. If you do not attend an MVR office to obtain your licence within 12 months, you will need to complete the course again.

Pre-Learner riding course

The Pre-Learner riding course gives the student the knowledge, skills and road safety information they need as a rider. When combined with the Rider Knowledge Test, a motorcycle learner licence will be issued.

You must be at least 16 years of age to enrol in the Pre-Learner course and be eligible to obtain a class R learner licence.

No motorcycle riding experience is needed to take part in the Pre-Learner riding course.

You should be aware that learning to ride a motorcycle requires a high level of balance, coordination and concentration and some people may require extra training to develop these skills.

Not everyone that takes part in the Pre-Learner rider course will pass on their first attempt. If you are not successful on your first attempt, your course provider will let you know why and the best way for you to proceed with your training.

Pre-Provisional riding course

The Pre-Provisional riding course is designed to enhance motorcycle control and road-craft skills.

To enrol in a Pre-Provisional riding course you must have held your class R learner licence for a continuous period of six months.

If you are successful in completing the Pre-Provisional riding course, you will be eligible for upgrade to a provisional or restricted motorcycle licence.

Dress standard for rider training

For your own safety, when you attend a Pre-Learner or Pre-Provisional riding course you must wear suitable protective clothing. You will not be allowed to take part in the course if you do not have the right clothing and equipment.

- Eye protection: this is essential. Sunglasses are the minimum standard.
- Footwear: enclosed footwear is essential. Shoes should cover and protect your entire foot. Sandshoes or joggers in good condition are acceptable as a minimum, but riding boots are strongly encouraged.
- Gloves: leather 'rigger' style gloves are the minimum standard. Students are strongly urged to purchase their own gloves prior to the course.
- Shirt: a long-sleeved shirt made of heavy duty material is the minimum standard. The shirt must be able to be fastened at the front and wrists. A riding jacket is preferred.
- Trousers: You must wear jeans or similar that must be ankle length.

See page 17 for further information on protective clothing and equipment.

You will not be allowed to join the course if you are not wearing appropriate protective clothing.

Learner Approved Motorcycle Scheme

The Northern Territory Learner Approved Motorcycle Scheme (LAMS) allows novice riders to get experience riding motorcycles that are moderately powered before they are allowed to ride a high-powered motorcycle.

The LAMS motorcycle restriction applies to all novice riders. It is the rider's responsibility to ensure they ride only LAMS motorcycles.

To be included on the list of approved motorcycles, the motorcycle must have an engine capacity of up to and including 660cc and must not exceed a power-to-weight ratio of 150 kilowatts per tonne.

How to obtain a class R learner licence

Become an MVR customer

The first step to getting your class R learner licence is to make sure you are an MVR customer. If you are not already an MVR customer you will need to:

- be at least 16 years of age
- provide evidence of your identity (prove who you are)
- provide evidence of your residency (prove that you live in the NT)
- have your photo taken by an MVR officer.

For information about evidence of identity and residency requirements, please contact MVR on 1300 654 628 or visit the nt.gov.au website.

Applying for a class R learner licence

To apply for a class R learner licence in the NT you must:

- be an MVR customer
- be at least 16 years of age
- pass an eyesight test
- pass a rider knowledge test at an MVR office
- pass a practical assessment
- pay the learner licence fee

Learner licences are valid for two years. If you do not upgrade your learner rider licence before it expires, you will need to reapply for your learner rider licence as a new applicant.

Rider Knowledge Test

To prepare for the Rider Knowledge Test (RKT) you should study this handbook and the Road Users' Handbook carefully; all the information you need to pass the test is covered in these guides.

When studying the handbooks, be careful not to skip any sections. All the information is relevant to you.

You can test your knowledge of the road rules by taking the practice RKT on the mvr.nt.gov.au website.

Study! Each attempt of the RKT incurs a fee.

Where to go for the Rider Knowledge Test

A RKT can be taken at any MVR office and the RKT can be started up to one hour before MVR closes.

How the Rider Knowledge Test works

The RKT consists of 30 questions, randomly selected from a question bank of over 300 questions.

During the test you are not allowed to:

- receive any assistance
- refer to any resource materials that would help you to pass the test (such as this handbook, other books, notes, websites etc.)
- use a mobile phone or other communication device
- speak or signal to any other person (except the registry officer when necessary)
- leave the test area.

People caught cheating will fail the test immediately and be banned from taking another RKT for two weeks.

Unsuccessful Rider Knowledge Test

If you do not pass the RKT, you can try again as many times as you need to in order to pass it. You cannot attempt the RKT more than once per day.

The next time you attempt a RKT you will be given a different set of questions to answer.

You should only re-attempt the test when you are ready. To check if you are ready, test your knowledge by taking the practice Rider Knowledge Test on the mvr.nt.gov.au website.

Applicants requiring assistance

Special needs

If you have special needs, such as a physical or mental impairment, you or your representative should discuss your needs for taking the test with the MVR before booking a RKT. This allows time for the necessary arrangements to be made for you on the day of the test.

Difficulty reading and writing English

If you have difficulty reading or writing English, you can choose to attempt a verbal (spoken) test, with or without an interpreter.

An interpreting service is provided by Interpreting and Translating Service NT (ITSNT). If you are not an Australian resident or citizen, you may need to pay a fee directly to ITSNT for this service.

Arrangements for verbal testing services can be made by calling 1300 654 628.

Licence restrictions for learner riders

As well as complying with all road rules and traffic laws, there are some additional requirements for class R learner licence holders:

- **Blood/Breath Alcohol Concentration (BAC/BrAC):** Your BAC/BrAC must be zero. This means you cannot have any alcohol in your system when you ride.
- **Displaying L plates:** An L plate must be clearly displayed on the back of the motorcycle.
- **Licence:** You must carry your licence at all times while riding.
- **LAMS motorcycle:** As a learner rider you can only ride motorcycles that are listed under the Learner Approved Motorcycle Scheme (LAMS). Refer to LAMS on page 7.
- **Passengers:** You must not carry any pillion passengers.
- **Speed limit:** You must not ride faster than 80 km/h at any time, regardless of the sign posted speed limit, and you must observe the speed limit where it is below 80 km/h.
- **Helmet:** You must wear an approved motorcycle helmet at all times while riding.
- **Mobile phone:** You must not use any function of a mobile phone while riding, including hands-free or loudspeaker options.

Next stage - Provisional or Restricted rider licence

Once you have held your learner rider licence for a minimum of six continuous months, you can move to the next stage of your rider licence.

If you already hold an unconditional licence of another class, such as a full car licence, you will be issued a restricted class R licence once you have successfully completed your pre-provisional assessment.

You must hold your restricted licence for at least one year before you can upgrade to a full licence.

If you do not hold a licence of another class, once you have completed your pre-provisional assessment, you will be issued a provisional class R licence.

If you are under 25 years of age, you must hold your provisional licence for at least two years before you can upgrade to a full licence.

If you are 25 or older, you must hold your provisional licence for at least one year.

Suspension or cancellation during provisional or restricted period

If your licence is suspended or cancelled during your provisional or restricted period, your provisional or restricted rider licence period may be extended, or you might need to start the provisional/restricted period again.

Obtaining a full (unrestricted) rider licence

At the end of your provisional or restricted period you can apply for a full licence. Phone the MVR Contact Centre on 1300 654 628 or visit your nearest MVR office. Fees may apply for the issue of a full class R licence.

Remember that learning to ride well requires lots of experience that will only come with time and lots of practice in different riding situations and conditions. Use every time you ride as an opportunity to learn.

How to obtain a class R provisional licence

To be eligible for your provisional riders licence (your 'Ps') you must have:

- held your learner rider licence for a minimum of six continuous months
- passed the pre-provisional assessment
- paid the provisional licence fee.

Licence restrictions for class R provisional riders

As well as complying with all road rules and traffic laws, there are some additional requirements for provisional licence holders:

- **Blood/Breath Alcohol Concentration (BAC/BrAC):** Your BAC/BrAC must be zero. This means you cannot have any alcohol in your system when you ride a motorcycle.
- **Displaying P plates:** A P plate must be clearly displayed on the back of the motorcycle.
- **Licence:** You must carry your licence at all times while riding.
- **LAMS motorcycle:** You must only ride motorcycles that are listed under the Learner Approved Motorcycle Scheme (LAMS). Refer to LAMS on page 7.
- **Passengers:** You must not carry any pillion passengers.
- **Speed limit:** You must not ride faster than 100 km/h at any time, regardless of the sign posted speed limit, and you must observe the speed limit where it is below 100 km/h.
- **Helmet:** You must wear an approved motorcycle helmet at all times while riding.
- **Mobile phone:** You must not use any function of a mobile phone while riding, including hands-free or loudspeaker options.

How to obtain a class R restricted licence

If you have already completed a provisional period on another licence class, (for example if you already have a full unconditional class C licence) you will upgrade to a restricted class R licence once you have:

- held your learner rider licence for a continuous period of at least six months
- passed the pre-provisional assessment
- paid the licence upgrade fee.

Licence restrictions for restricted riders

As well as complying with all road rules and traffic laws, the following requirements apply to restricted class R licence holders:

- **Blood/Breath Alcohol Concentration (BAC/BrAC):** Your BAC/BrAC must not exceed 0.05.
- **Licence:** You must carry your licence at all times while riding.
- **LAMS motorcycles:** You must only ride motorcycles that are listed under the Learner Approved Motorcycle Scheme (LAMS).
- **Passengers:** You must not carry any pillion passengers.
- **Helmet:** You must wear an approved motorcycle helmet at all times while riding.
- **Mobile phone:** You must not use any function of a mobile phone while riding, including hands-free or loudspeaker options.



rider safety

Motorcycle riders are at a greater risk on the road than drivers of other vehicles. If you are involved in a crash, the chance that you will be injured is very high.

As a motorcyclist, there are steps that you can take to protect yourself better when you are on the road.

Concentration

Riding on the road requires your full concentration. Your survival depends on this ability.

Many factors will affect your ability to concentrate, such as:

- fatigue
- alcohol
- drugs
- your mental / emotional state.

Do not put yourself and others at risk by riding if you know you cannot concentrate fully.

Fatigue

Fatigue can affect a rider's ability to concentrate.

Signs that you are fatigued when riding include:

- running a bit wide on a corner
- a couple of rough gear changes
- not seeing a sign
- day dreaming
- dry mouth
- stiff joints (neck, knees and wrists).

Stop and rest if you have any signs of fatigue.

Managing fatigue

Riding a motorcycle is much more tiring than driving a car. Even if you do not feel tired, stop every one and a half hours or 150 kilometres.

Here are some tips to help manage fatigue:

- Be aware of your posture when riding and maintain a good riding position at all times.
- Drink plenty of water to keep hydrated.
- Avoid too much caffeine, soft drinks and energy drinks.
- Do not drink alcohol.
- Eat small amounts frequently—simple foods like fruit, nuts, a muesli bar or a little chocolate.
- Avoid fatty foods and large meals before or during a ride.
- In cooler months, do not make yourself too snug and warm. It's good to be a little cool.

Alcohol and other drugs

It is illegal to ride while under the influence of alcohol or drugs, including some over-the-counter and prescription medicines.

Alcohol, drugs and medications can significantly affect your riding skills and increase your risk of having a crash.

There have been many tests on the way alcohol and other drugs affect reflexes, coordination, depth perception and risk-taking behaviour. The results are always the same—increased risk due to reduced capability.

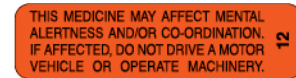
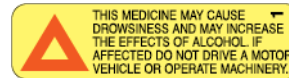
It is not just your own mistakes that become dangerous. When you've been drinking, you may also not be able to react properly to other peoples mistakes.

Many drugs affect your ability to ride a motorcycle, including:

- prescription drugs (drugs that you cannot buy unless your doctor gives you a script)
- illegal drugs
- some over-the-counter drugs, such as cold or allergy tablets.

Make sure you know the effects of any drug you've taken before you attempt to ride.

Check with your doctor or pharmacist and read the label to make sure the medication will not affect your riding. As a general guide, if the label on the drug or medication has a warning about either driving or operating machinery, you should not ride while affected by the drug.



If any drug has an effect on your riding, you must not ride.

Protective clothing and equipment

As a motorcycle rider you are fully exposed to the elements. In a crash you are also particularly vulnerable to injury.

Wearing the right protective clothing can:

- significantly reduce injury in the event of a crash
- protect you from the weather
- improve your comfort when riding
- increase your visibility on the road.

Helmets

The most important piece of personal equipment for a motorcycle rider is a motorcycle helmet.

The law requires all motorcyclists and their pillion (passengers) or sidecar passengers to wear an approved motorcycle helmet.

There are many types and styles of motorcycle helmets available. There are two key types: full face and open face helmets.

Full face helmets, which feature a chin panel and an integrated face shield (visor), offer better eye, wind, sun, and injury protection.



Light coloured helmets (white, yellow) are generally cooler than dark helmets and may also help to increase your chance of being seen.

Helmets must:

- fit comfortably but not too tightly (avoid helmets that fit loosely)
- have the chin strap fastened and properly tightened
- have a clear and shatterproof visor without scratches
- be replaced after a crash or a significant impact
- never be second-hand.

Helmets should be:

- replaced if they become loose fitting, the straps become worn or you notice cracks or loose padding in your helmet
- only cleaned with mild soapy water. Some chemicals and cleaners may weaken the shell.

Helmets are designed to absorb only ONE impact or drop, so make sure you replace your helmet if it has been dropped or sustained any damage that will impact on your safety.

Penalties apply to riders and passengers for:

- not wearing a helmet
- wearing a helmet that is not approved or is deteriorated
- not securing the helmet correctly
- carrying a pillion or sidecar passenger that is not wearing a helmet.

Visors and goggles

Your eyes need protection from the wind, dust, rain, insects and stones thrown up by other vehicles.

Only a visor attached to the helmet or goggles provide the eye protection necessary for riding.

Some motorcycles have screens or fairings to provide weather protection. These do not provide adequate protection for the eyes, and you should still use a visor or goggles to protect your eyes.

Visors and goggles should:

- be clean and not scratched
- be shatterproof
- have a clear lens.



Sunglasses or prescription spectacles can be worn under a visor but do not replace a proper visor or goggles.

Gloves

Gloves that are specifically designed for motorcycle riding will improve rider comfort and protection.

Gloves should have:

- a strengthened palm area shaped for riding
- knuckle protection
- a fastener around the wrist to prevent sliding off (zipper and Velcro)
- an overlap with the jacket (gauntlet style).

Jackets and pants

Purpose-made motorcycle clothing provides better weather and crash protection than ordinary clothing. In proper motorcycle gear you will almost certainly feel more comfortable.

Jackets and pants should:

- be highly abrasion and tear resistant
- be tailored for a riding position
- completely cover your arms, legs and body
- secure around your wrist, waist and ankles to prevent sliding up and exposing skin
- have impact and abrasion protection for your back, shoulders, elbows, hips and knees.



Footwear

Like gloves, footwear designed for motorcycle riding will provide great comfort and protection.

Motorcycle footwear should have:

- strengthening in the instep between the ball of the foot and the heel
- ankle protection
- shin protection
- a fastener around the leg to prevent sliding off (zipper and Velcro)
- an overlap with the pants (boot style)
- gear change cover to prevent wear.

Other protective items

Other rider-specific protective clothing includes:

- back protectors to protect your spine in a crash
- kidney belts to support your lower back and reduce fatigue.



road safety

Riding is never risk free, but you should aim to ride 'low risk'. A low-risk rider has good observation, speed management, road positioning, decision making and hazard perception skills.

Observation skills

The road environment is constantly changing, and this requires high levels of observation and concentration. The key to good observation is 'scanning'.

Scanning

Scanning is keeping your eyes moving, and checking for hazards in one area for a couple of seconds and then moving your eyes to another area.

When scanning, look:

- in the distance
- at the road surface
- to your left and right
- regularly at your mirrors and instruments.

Before moving off from traffic lights, check all directions to make sure the traffic has stopped.

Mirrors

Properly adjusted mirrors will allow you to see the lane behind you and as much as possible of the lane next to you. When properly adjusted you may be able to see your arm or shoulder, but it is the road behind and to the side that you are interested in.

You should check your mirrors every few seconds so you always know what is behind you.

There are also particular times when it is very important for you to use your mirrors:

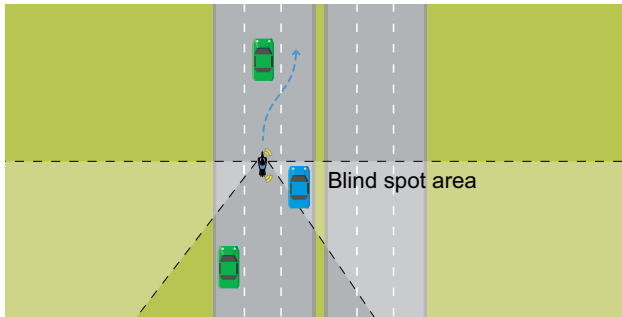
- before making any change to your speed or road position
- when preparing to turn or change lanes
- when you are stopped behind another vehicle and preparing to move out into traffic.

Check blind spots before changing your road position.

Head checks

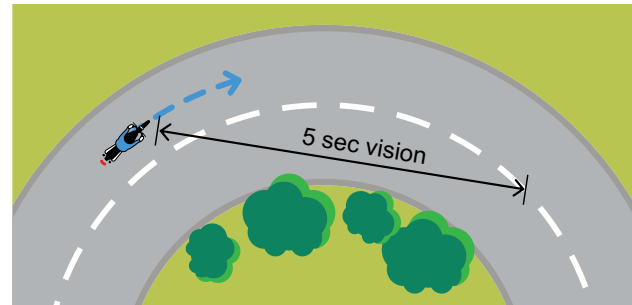
Motorcycles have 'blind spots' just as cars do. A blind spot is the area next to you that you are unable to see in your mirrors. When you are about to change your position on the road (e.g. make a turn, exit a roundabout, move off, or change lanes), make sure you turn your head and look over your shoulder to see if it is clear. This is called a 'head check' and is the only sure way to see objects in your blind spot.

Perform a head check before turning right into a street or driveway, just in case a following vehicle has not seen your indicator and is overtaking you.



Head position for turns

Looking 'through' a corner will help with your coordination and balance when cornering. To do this, use your peripheral vision to scan the road surface while keeping your head pointed in the direction you want to go.



Crash avoidance space (road positioning)

A low-risk rider maintains what is called a 'crash avoidance space' around their motorcycle at all times. Crash avoidance space is simply the clear space needed around a vehicle to reduce or avoid the risk of a crash.

The crash avoidance space is managed by the rider adjusting the vehicle's speed and position on the road.

A safe, low risk rider, experienced in maintaining a three-second following distance is able to mentally judge a three-second crash avoidance space in front of their motorcycle. If there is a chance that a hazard will enter

your crash avoidance space, reduce your speed to create a buffer.

It is necessary to maintain the crash avoidance space for all potentially hazardous situations, including blind corners and crests.

Always check your mirrors before making any changes to your speed.

Front crash avoidance space

To determine the crash avoidance space to the front of your motorcycle, you need to take into account two key factors: reaction time and response time.

Reaction time is the time you as the rider needs to:

- see the information (the hazard)
- recognise what the information means
- decide on a response
- activate that response.

A rider who is fit, concentrating and alert, and not distracted or affected by alcohol, drugs or fatigue, will still require about 1.5 seconds to react to a hazard.

Response time is the time required to take action to respond to a situation or avoid the hazard. Generally, at least 1.5 seconds is needed to respond.

In most situations, braking should be the only possible response. Swerving is rarely appropriate because it can result in a more severe crash, such as a head-on collision if the rider swerves into oncoming traffic

Therefore, you need a total of three seconds crash avoidance space – a three-second gap between your motorcycle and the vehicle you are following – to react and respond to a situation in front of you. You will need even longer in poor conditions, such as in rain and darkness.

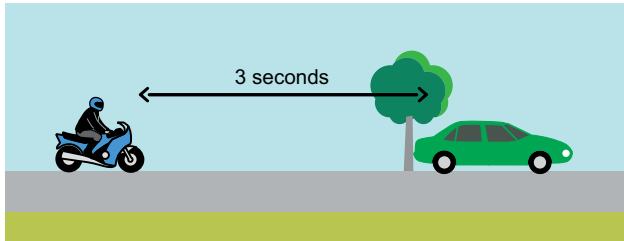
How to calculate your crash avoidance space

To calculate a three-second crash avoidance space when following another vehicle, use this basic technique:

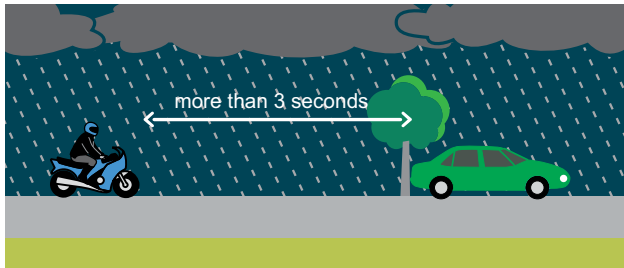
As the rear of the vehicle in front of you passes an object at the side of the road, such as a power pole, tree or sign, start a three-second count of 'one thousand and one, one thousand and two, one thousand and three'.

There should be three seconds before your motorcycle reaches the same object.

Be aware that in most situations cars can stop in a shorter distance than motorcycles.



If your motorcycle passes the point you picked before you finish the count, you are following too closely, and your crash avoidance space is not large enough. Slow down and repeat the count again until the three-second crash avoidance space is achieved.



In poor conditions, such as rain, darkness and on gravel roads, it may be necessary to increase your crash avoidance space to four or more seconds.

To reduce the risk of riding into the back of another vehicle, the three-second crash avoidance space is essential, because the vehicle in front can stop very quickly, especially if it collides with another vehicle or a stationary object.

Rear crash avoidance space

It is difficult to maintain a crash avoidance space behind you because another driver or rider controls the space.

If a vehicle behind is travelling too closely, slow down slightly to increase the space you have in front of you. This will enable you to brake more gradually if you spot a hazard in front, which will also give the following vehicle more time to stop.

Crash avoidance space when stopped

When you are stopped it is important to leave a crash avoidance space between vehicles. Making sure that there is a clear space between vehicles will reduce the risk of a crash from being pushed forward into the vehicle in front or from rolling backwards.

Stop in a position behind other vehicles that allows you enough space to ride around the vehicle in front if needed. This will not always be practical. In some cases it might be safer to stop closer to the vehicle in front, such as when stopped in a turning lane to prevent blocking the flow of traffic in continuing lanes and avoid rear-end collisions.

Reduce speed

You must slow down if you do not have a clear view of the road ahead. Situations where your vision may be reduced include:

- blind corners
- blocked intersections
- crests
- poor weather conditions.

Road positioning (buffering)

A motorcycle rider can legally use any part of their lane.

Traffic and road situations are constantly changing and so does the safest position on the road. Low-risk riders aim to be positioned in the right place all the time.

By actively managing space, surface and sight, a rider can significantly reduce the risk of crashing.

Space

As a motorcycle rider you have very little to protect you in a crash other than your riding gear. The more space between you, other vehicles and pedestrians the better. Position your vehicle on the road to increase your crash avoidance space around all sides of your motorcycle and reduce the risk of a crash (referred to as 'buffering').

Buffering is a simple concept that really just means moving away from hazards.

Surface

You must be aware of the road surface when riding a motorcycle. Paint, oil, water, sand, gravel, pot holes and metal plates are all examples of different road surfaces that a rider needs to manage. For a motorcycle rider, a relatively small change in road position can result in a significant change in the quality of road surface.

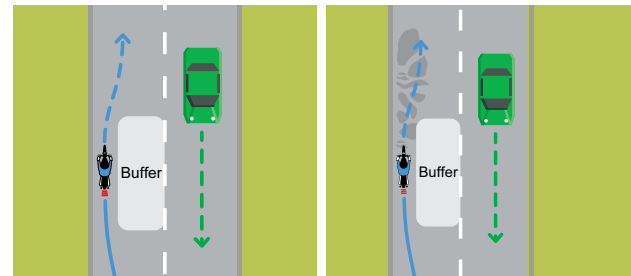
It is best to avoid riding on a poor surface, but sometimes this is not possible. For example, when buffering an oncoming vehicle, the best road position may be the left side of the lane. The left side of the road may be bumpy

and broken up; however, it may be preferable to ride on this surface to get a safe buffer from the oncoming hazard.

If you need to ride on a poor surface to buffer a hazard, slow down and avoid sudden or quick movements.

Sight

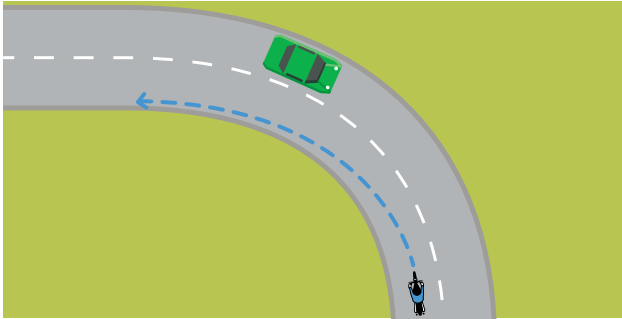
A good road position can allow you to see further and get more information about what is happening up ahead. Generally, the right side of the lane provides good vision of the upcoming road, to the sides and also behind you. However, the right side of the lane is a dangerous position to be in if there is oncoming traffic. Try to choose a road position that provides good vision without compromising your buffer from hazards. This is particularly true when following large vehicles or when taking left bends.



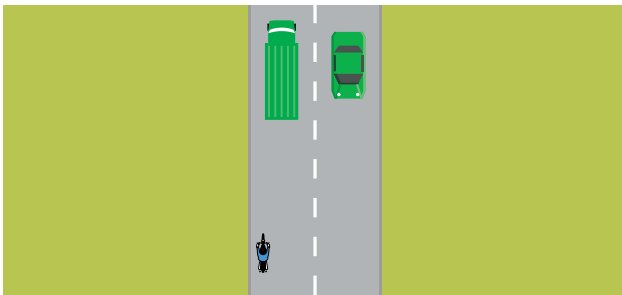
Move away from hazards, like oncoming cars.

If you need to ride on a poor surface in order to maintain a buffer, slow down.

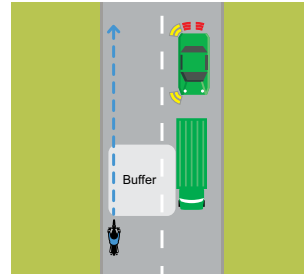
If your vision is limited, slow down and maintain a buffer from hazards.



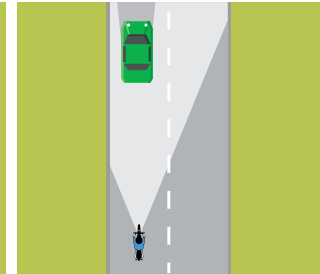
Maintain a buffer from hazards and a good following distance when vision is limited.



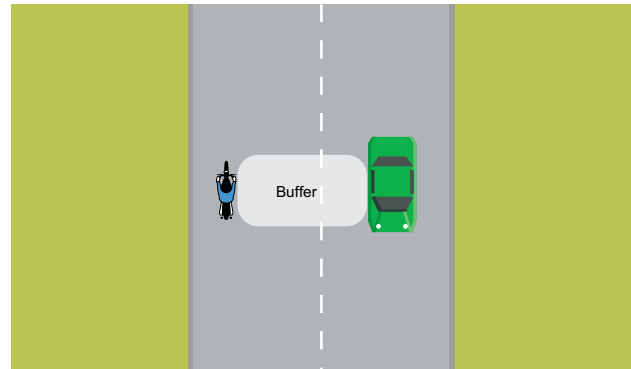
Buffering can improve your vision and make it easier for others to see you. The further back you follow other vehicles, the better you can see around them.



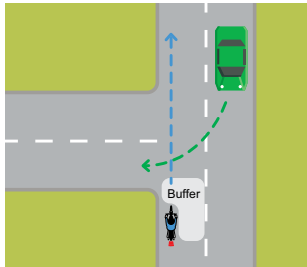
Buffer between rider and oncoming vehicle.



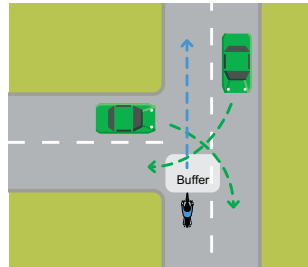
Travelling further behind another vehicle allows you to see around them better.



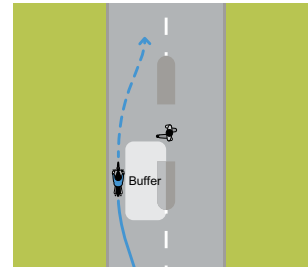
Create space (buffer) between oncoming vehicles.



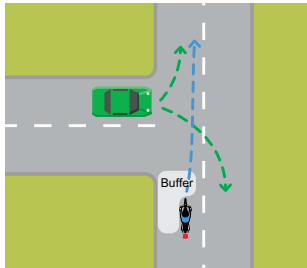
Slow down and buffer when a vehicle could turn across your path.



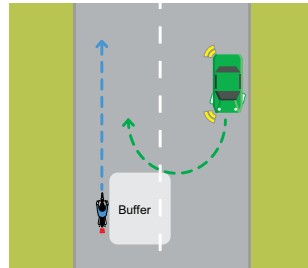
When there are two vehicles, buffer both vehicles and slow down.



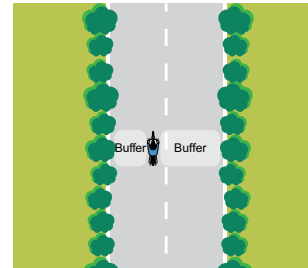
Buffer all hazards, including pedestrians.



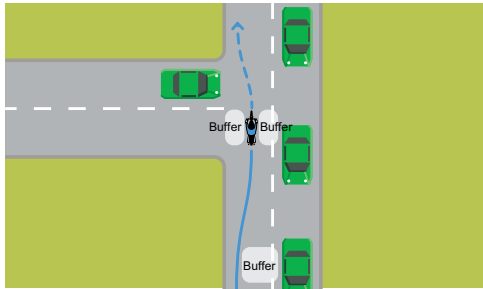
Slow down and buffer when a vehicle could turn across your path or enter the lane you are in.



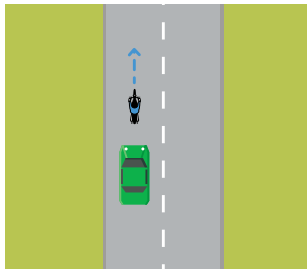
You may need to buffer hazards even when they are on the other side of the road.



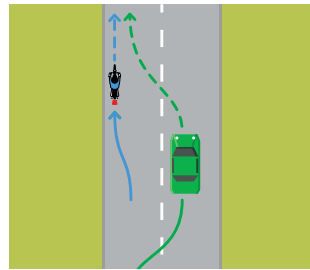
On rural and outback roads and highways, staying on the right side of your lane can provide space from wildlife and improve your vision. However, you must remember to buffer oncoming vehicles and be in the correct position for crests and curves.



In busy traffic you may be in the left side of the lane for most of the time, only moving right to buffer vehicles in side streets.

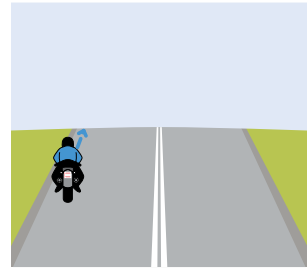


If vehicles on the other side of the road are following close behind each other it is sometimes better to select the middle of the lane.

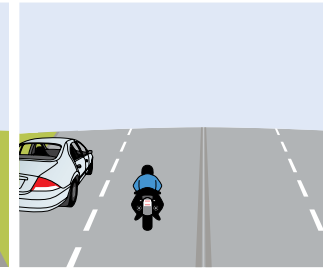


Maintain a buffer from vehicles as they pass you.

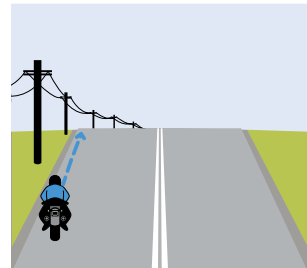
Blind crests



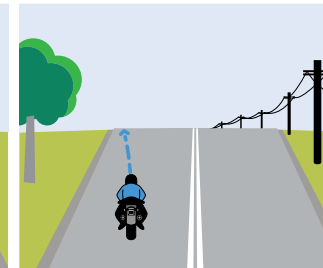
When approaching blind crests, create a buffer from possible oncoming traffic.

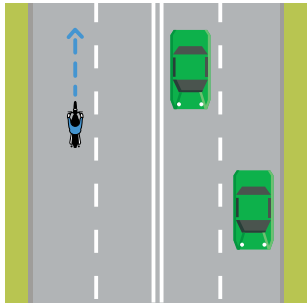


If there is a possibility of multiple hazards, slow down and buffer both sides.

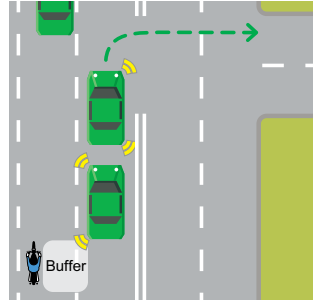


When approaching blind crests, look for clues about where the road goes. Slow down and select a road position to suit.

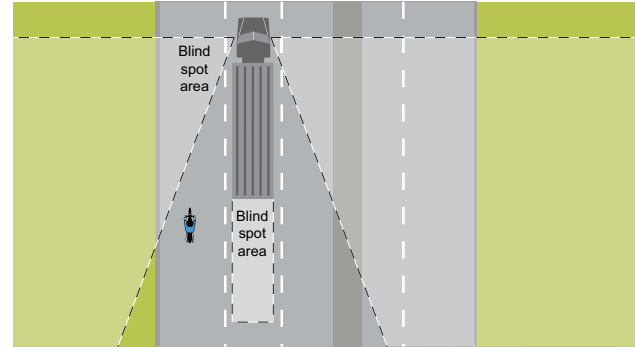




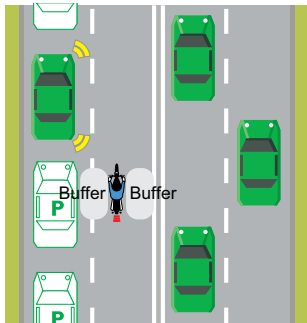
On multi-lane roads, reduce the risk of a head-on crash by choosing a lane away from the oncoming traffic.



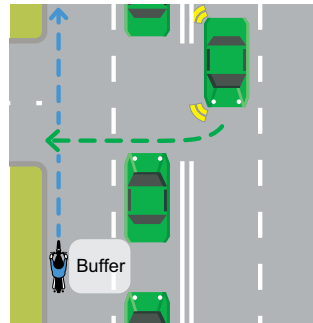
Create a buffer from turning vehicles in case not all the vehicles are turning.



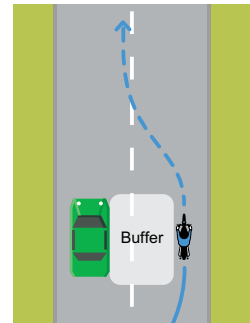
Do not ride beside other vehicles or in their blind spots.



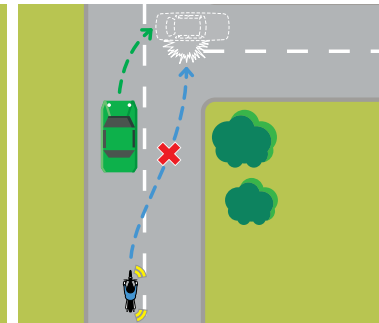
Buffer both parked and oncoming vehicles.



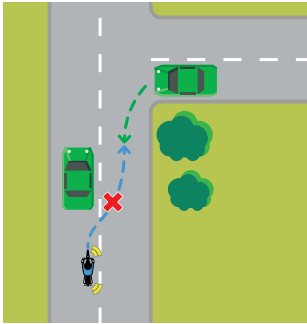
Slow down and buffer slow-moving or stopped traffic; they may be blocking the view of a turning vehicle.



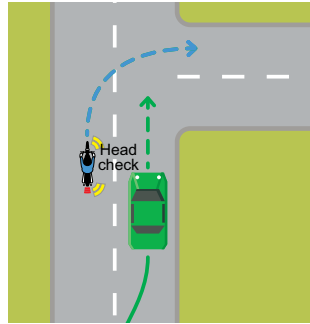
When overtaking, create a buffer from the vehicle you are passing.



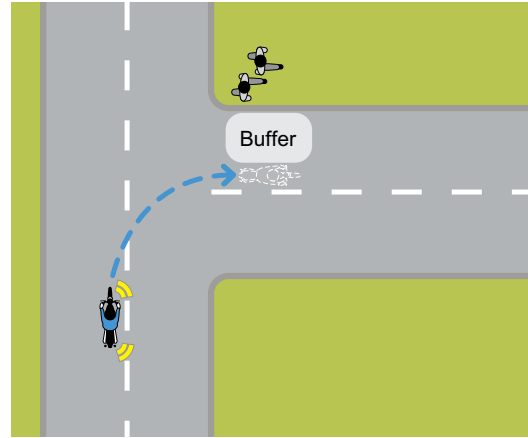
Before overtaking a slow-moving vehicle, check for side streets and driveways that they may be turning into.



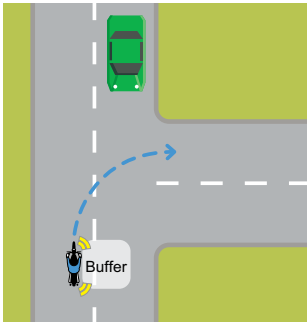
Before overtaking, check for side streets and concealed driveways.



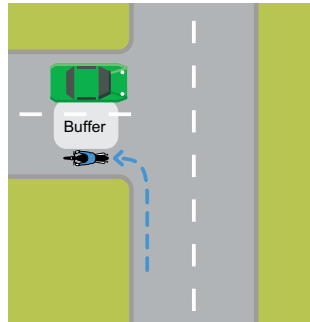
Before turning into a street or driveway, perform a head check for vehicles that may be overtaking you.



If turning right from a single lane, start the turn as near as possible to the far right of the lane or middle of the road, buffering hazards as you exit the turn.



Maintain a buffer from oncoming traffic while you are waiting to turn right.



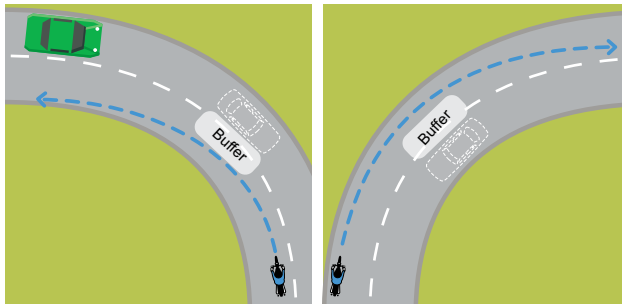
When turning left from a single lane, start the turn as near as possible to the far left side of the road. Buffer hazards as you exit the turn.

When turning left or right you must give way to any pedestrians crossing the road into which you are turning.

Positioning for curves and bends

Starting curves wide will improve your vision. Planning to finish them in tight will help you get your speed right and leave you room for slight errors.

Most importantly, keep away from the area where oncoming vehicles are likely to cross the centre of the road (the head-on zone). Taking curves and bends this way will slow you down a little on the approach but will allow you to accelerate out much earlier when you have a clear view.



On blind left curves, slow down and begin to move left as vision becomes limited.

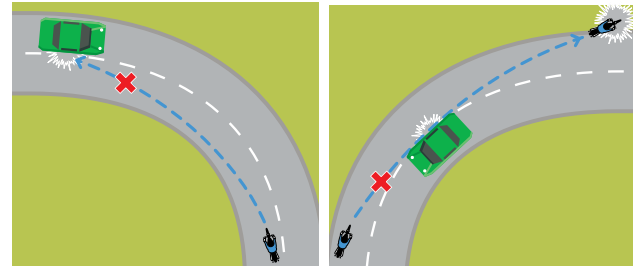
On right curves, slow down and keep to the left until you see the road is clear of oncoming traffic.

When cornering:

- plan to start curves wide for optimal vision
- plan to finish in tight
- keep away from the head-on zone.

The danger of exiting wide

Many riders try to straighten turns, which results in the motorcycle exiting the curve out wide. This is a particularly dangerous practise because it allows no room for error. If the curve 'tightens up' or changes direction, the rider will need additional effort to complete the turn. Furthermore, on right curves the risk of a head-on collision is greatly increased.



Exiting wide can result in a crash.

Turning in too early can result in a head-on collision or a crash on the exit of the curve.

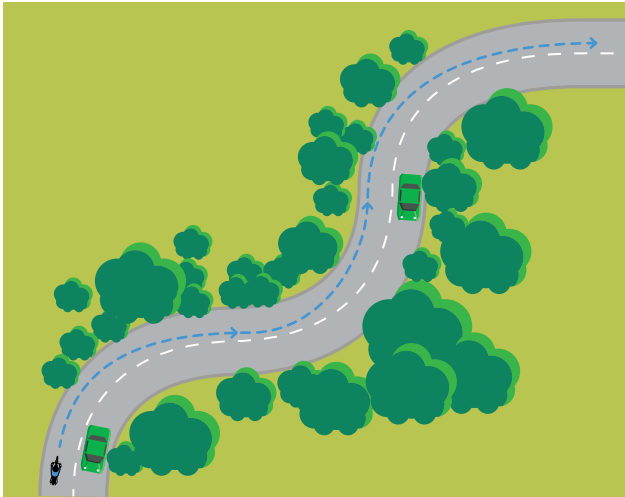
Many crashes happen because riders run wide on the exit of a turn. When a rider finishes a curve wide there is no room for error.

Planning a series of curves

Starting curves wide and planning to finish them in tight allows you to link a series of curves together.

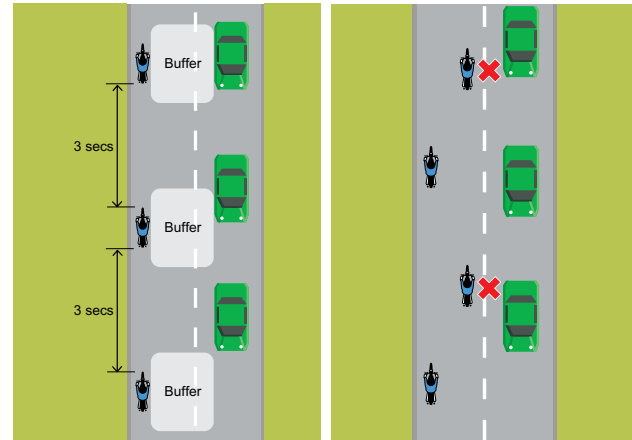
By exiting each curve in tight you will be perfectly positioned for the entry into the next curve.

Planning to finish in tight will position you for the next curve.



If you see an oncoming vehicle, remember, it is very important to create a buffer.

Riding in groups



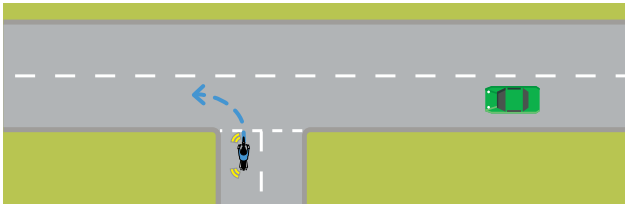
Riding 'single file' allows every rider to buffer hazards, and if a three-second following distance is maintained vision is less affected.

Riding 'staggered file' can be dangerous, particularly if riders maintain a fixed position within the lane. Riders are unable to buffer hazards and vision is reduced by the other motorcycles in the group.

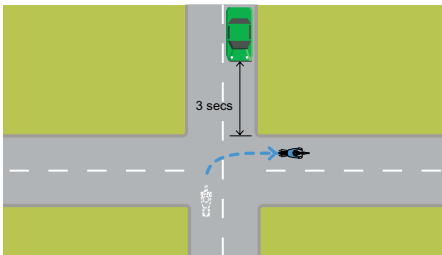
Gap selection

Selecting a safe gap when turning, overtaking or changing lanes is a critical skill to safe riding. Gap selection is also very important at intersections where the chance of colliding with another vehicle is very high if the gap you select is too small.

A safe gap is one that allows you to turn, overtake, change lanes or cross an intersection without affecting the crash avoidance space of other road users.



Choose a safe gap so that other vehicles are not forced to change speed or road position.



Plan to be clear of the intersection for three seconds before other vehicles arrive.

A safe gap ensures that other vehicles do not need to change their speed or position. When turning across traffic, make sure your motorcycle is clear of the intersection by at least three seconds before the approaching vehicles arrive. When joining a traffic stream, select a gap that allows you to reach the traffic speed before the approaching vehicles are within three seconds of your motorcycle.

Overtaking

Overtaking other vehicles is hazardous. You must be able to judge the gap between your motorcycle and an oncoming vehicle, and you must also have enough space between your motorcycle and the vehicle you are overtaking.

When overtaking, maintain a buffer zone between your motorcycle and the vehicle you are overtaking.

On rural and outback roads and highways there are often overtaking lanes at regular intervals that allow you to safely overtake.

Hazard avoidance

When riding a motorcycle, good hazard perception is important and responding to hazards correctly is essential.

A hazard is something that may place you and/or others in danger and is within your crash avoidance space or has the potential to move into that space.

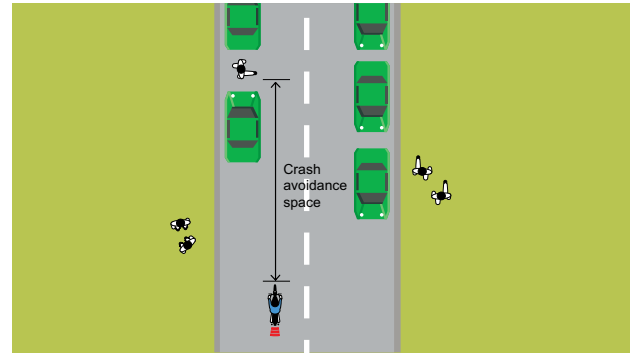
The three-second rule can also be used for situations where there is potential for something to accelerate or steer into the space. For example, a vehicle in an adjacent street could fail to give way and accelerate out. Or a vehicle approaching could turn without warning into an intersection and steer across your path.

Experienced riders are able to mentally judge a three-second crash avoidance space in front of their motorcycle.

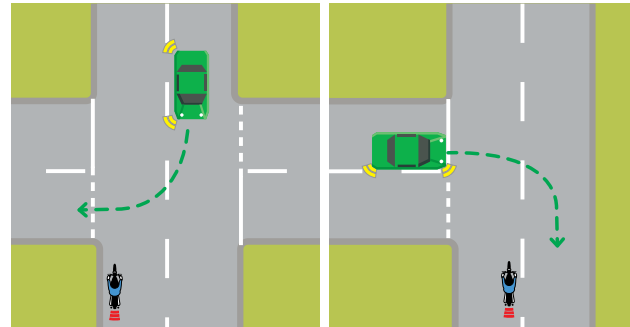
Your increased time allowance means that you can respond before reaching the hazard.

If there is potential for a hazard to enter this crash avoidance space, your response should be to:

- slow down ('setting up' or covering the brakes)
- move away, creating a 'buffer' from the hazard by changing your position on the road or changing lanes.

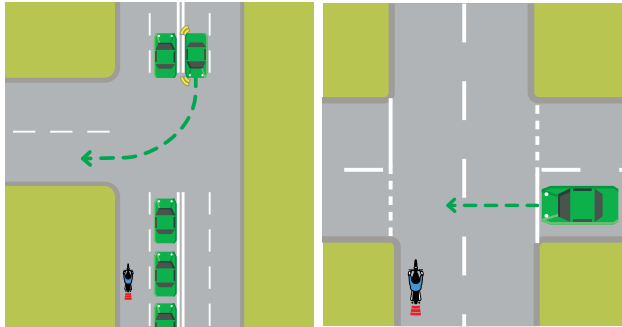


Examples of situations that require a hazard avoidance response



A vehicle waiting to turn in front of your path.

A vehicle waiting to pull out from the left side.



Stopped traffic obscuring vision at an intersection.

A vehicle waiting to pull out from the right side.

Basic riding techniques

The key to good riding technique is smoothness, and the key to smoothness is good preparation and practice.

Riding posture

When you first get on a motorcycle, take the time to adjust the controls to suit your height and build. Correct riding posture reduces fatigue and improves control.

A good riding position should feel comfortable and allow you to use the controls effectively without affecting the balance of the motorcycle.

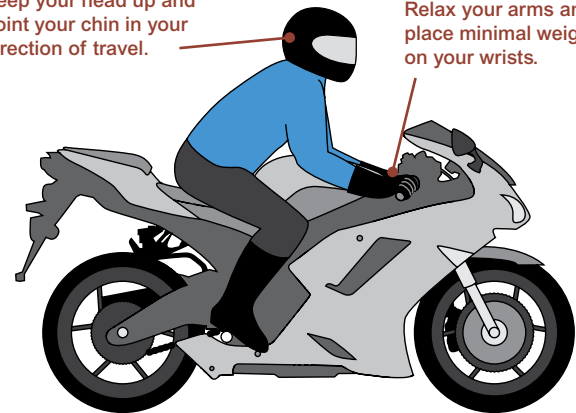
Five key points of posture

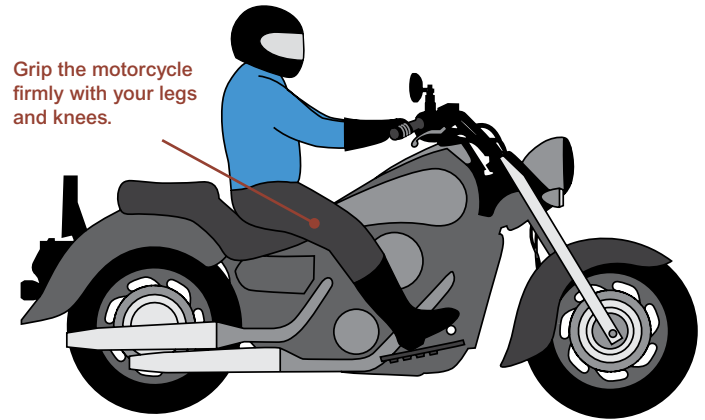
To control a motorcycle well, your body must be in the correct position:

- Sit well forward. Sitting too far back on the seat will affect your weight distribution on the motorcycle and could make the steering very light.
- Keep your back relaxed and support your weight with your stomach muscles.
- Keep your head up and point your chin in your direction of travel.
- Relax your arms and place minimal weight on your wrists.
- Grip the motorcycle firmly with your legs and knees.

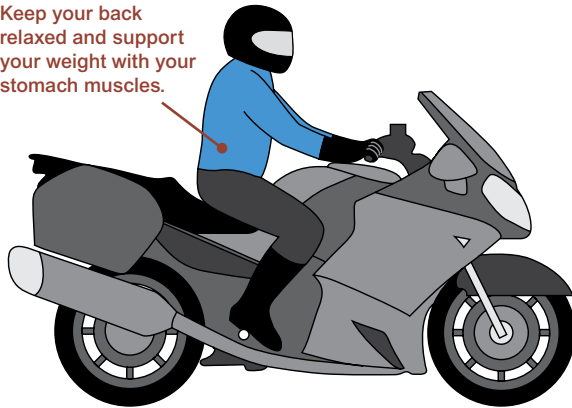
Keep your head up and point your chin in your direction of travel.

Relax your arms and place minimal weight on your wrists.





Keep your back relaxed and support your weight with your stomach muscles.



Braking technique

The best braking is achieved when your motorcycle is upright and travelling in a straight line. Be aware of the road ahead and plan your movement as much as possible to avoid braking when cornering or turning.

To stop a motorcycle safely you should always use both the front and rear brakes together.

Correct braking is done in two stages. First, put light pressure on the brake levers and pause ('set up' the brakes). Then progressively apply the necessary braking pressure (squeeze).

Two-stage braking (set up and squeeze) improves braking effectiveness, reduces the likelihood of skidding and provides better control. When releasing the brakes, ease them off gently to maintain the stability of the motorcycle. Easing off the brakes gently is particularly important when entering curves.

Harsh or excessive braking pressure may cause skidding and a loss of control, particularly on wet or gravel roads.

If the front wheel begins to skid due to incorrect braking, or in an emergency situation, quickly release the front brake and then reapply it gently.

If the rear wheel skids, release the rear brake gently and then reapply it gently.

Steering technique

A motorcycle can be steered using a number of different inputs. Handle bar pressure, body weight and changes in speed all have an effect on a motorcycle's direction of travel. Good riders use a combination of these inputs to achieve smooth and precise turns.

Handle bar pressure

A motorcycle can be steered by direct steering or counter steering.

With direct steering, the motorcycle goes in the direction to which the handle bars are turned.

With counter steering, the motorcycle goes in the opposite direction to which the handle bars are turned; for example, a slight forward pressure on the left handle bar will make the motorcycle turn left.

Direct steering is only used for very low speed turns, such as U-turns and turns at intersections. Counter steering has more effect as speed increases.

Body weight

How a rider uses their body weight will have a significant effect on a turning motorcycle. Leaning with the motorcycle in a curve allows the motorcycle to be more upright, thereby giving the tyres better grip and the motorcycle greater ground clearance. With low speed turns, leaning out from the turn can help balance the motorcycle.

Changing gears

Your motorcycle should always be in a gear appropriate to the speed that you are travelling.

When changing up or down gears (up-shifting or down-shifting), you should always plan to do so smoothly and when the motorcycle is in an upright position (not while cornering or manoeuvring the motorcycle).

Effect of speed

The faster a motorcycle is travelling, the harder it is to turn. Reducing speed before turning is essential. After turning, wait until the motorcycle begins to straighten before accelerating. Accelerating will stand a motorcycle up and too much acceleration will make the motorcycle run wide.

During very low speed turns, such as U-turns, a gentle use of the throttle, clutch and rear brake can be used to control speed.

Leaning with the motorcycle in a curve

In curves, point your chin through the turn and scan the road with your eyes.

- Head and eyes level with chin pointed in the direction of the turn.
- Arms relaxed with slight pressure on the inside handle bar.
- Body weight on the inside of the turn.
- Knees firmly gripping the motorcycle.

Avoid using the front brake on a curve, which can make the motorcycle run wide.



Head and eyes level with chin pointed in the direction of the turn.

Arms relaxed with slight pressure on the inside handle bar.

Body weight on the inside of the turn.

Knees firmly gripping the motorcycle.

When learning to ride, or practicing as a new rider, the conditions you practice in are important. It is recommended that you select a low-level traffic area to start and only move to heavier traffic areas when your confidence and ability improve.

Summary

This section has explained the principles of low-risk riding and how to reduce the likelihood of being involved in a crash. After reading this section you should know:

- how to calculate a three-second crash avoidance space
- the two stages of effective braking
- the most appropriate road position to take based on space surface and sight
- how to steer a motorcycle
- the most effective riding posture
- how to plan a series of curves.

Your notes:



road rules for motorcycle riders

Motorcycle riders must adhere to the same road rules as other road users. Make sure you keep up to date with the different road rules, signs and markings by reading the latest edition of the Road Users' Handbook available on the nt.gov.au website

There are also some specific road rules that apply to motorcycle riders in the Northern Territory. Motorcycle specific road rules are covered in this section.

Riding on a motorcycle

The motorcycle rider must:

- sit astride the rider's seat facing forwards
- wear a correctly fitted and securely fastened approved motorcycle helmet
- keep at least one hand on the handlebars
- keep both feet on the foot pegs (designed for use by the rider), when the motorcycle is moving.

Helmets

Northern Territory law states that riders and passengers must wear an approved motorcycle helmet when riding.

Keeping left

Generally, when a vehicle travels on a single-lane road, the vehicle must drive as near as practicable to the far left side of the road. However, due to the importance of lane positioning for rider safety, this rule does not apply to motorcycles, which can legally use any part of the lane.

Hand signals

Motorcycle riders can use hand signals for stopping, slowing or turning. Hand signals can improve rider safety in situations where very bright light conditions make it difficult for the motorcycle's brake and indicator lights to be seen.

To give a hand signal for stopping or slowing, the rider must extend either arm at a right angle with a flat palm. Turning is signalled by a straight arm with flat palm pointing in the direction of the turn.



Hand signal to turn left.



Hand signal to stop or slow down.

Lending or borrowing a motorcycle

A large number of fatal motorcycle crashes occur on motorcycles that have been borrowed. It is an offence to allow another person to ride a motorcycle if they are not properly licensed to ride that particular class of motorcycle.

Even if they have the right licence and you know them very well, every motorcycle handles differently and it is easy to make mistakes on an unfamiliar motorcycle. The best solution is not to lend or borrow motorcycles.

If you must ride a borrowed motorcycle, take your time to get to know how the motorcycle handles, ride cautiously, allow extra space between yourself and any vehicles in front, and maintain a larger crash avoidance space/buffer around the motorcycle.

Motorcycle warning signs

This warning sign indicates to motorcycle riders that additional caution is required on the road ahead.



Riding at night

Riding at night, particularly on rural and outback roads and highways, is considerably more dangerous for motorcyclists. The risks of hitting an animal, misjudging a curve or not seeing a problem on the road surface are greatly increased at night. If you must ride at night, slow down to a speed that takes into account these risks and the effective range of the motorcycle's headlight.

You must not ride any motorcycle at night if the lights are not working.

Restrictions on where to ride

To ride a motorcycle on a road or road-related area, a rider must hold a current rider licence and the motorcycle must have current registration. Road and road-related areas mean any area that is publicly accessible to vehicles. This includes:

- roads
- the shoulder of the road
- car parks
- fire trails / fire breaks
- state forests, national parks and reserves
- recreation areas.

Riding on footpath

A motorcycle must not be ridden on a footpath. Exemptions apply for postal delivery officers.

Bicycle lanes

Motorcycle riders are not allowed to use a bicycle lane, except for 50 metres when entering or leaving a driveway or intersection.

Lane filtering

Lane filtering is when a motorcyclist rides at low speed, less than 30km/h, between vehicles that have either stopped or are moving slowly and travelling in the same direction.

Lane filtering requires a high level of technical ability, road awareness and hazard perception. Without these skills, lane filtering can be dangerous and put motorcycle riders, as well as other road users at risk.

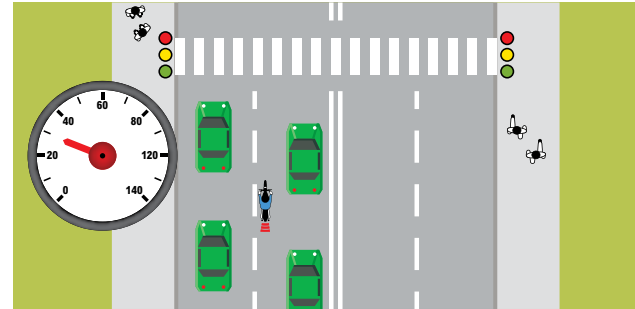
To minimise safety risks, lane filtering is not allowed:

- in school zones during school zone hours
- next to the kerb or parked vehicles
- when travelling at speeds faster than 30km/h
- if you hold a learner, provisional or restricted rider licence

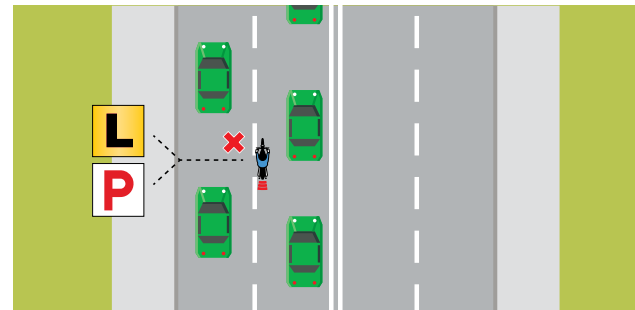
Only riders that hold an unrestricted motorcycle licence may lane filter in the Northern Territory.

Motorcycle riders are also advised to:

- not lane filter near heavy vehicles or buses as the drivers of these larger vehicles find it harder to see motorcyclists.
- always look out for pedestrians and cyclists.



You can only lane filter when you are travelling no more than 30km/h.



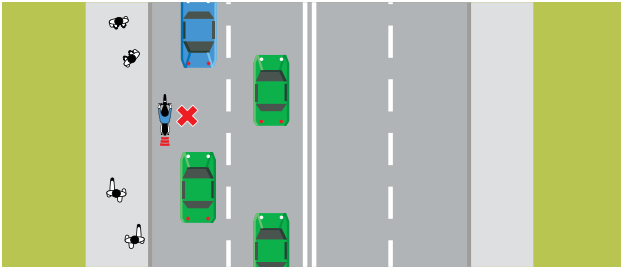
It is illegal to lane filter if you are on your Ls or Ps.

Edge filtering

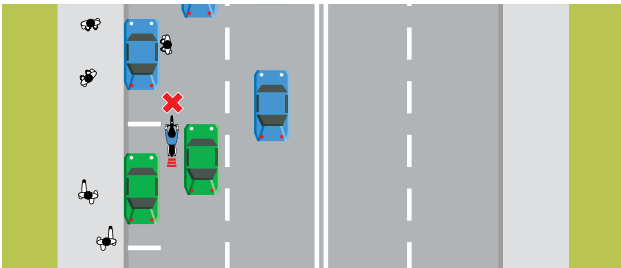
Edge filtering is not safe and is not permitted in the NT.

Edge filtering is when a motorcycle rider changes direction to move towards the edge, kerb or shoulder of the road to:

- pass one or more vehicles on the road
- or pass between two vehicles, one of which is parked.



You cannot edge filter between slow moving or stopped vehicles and the kerb.



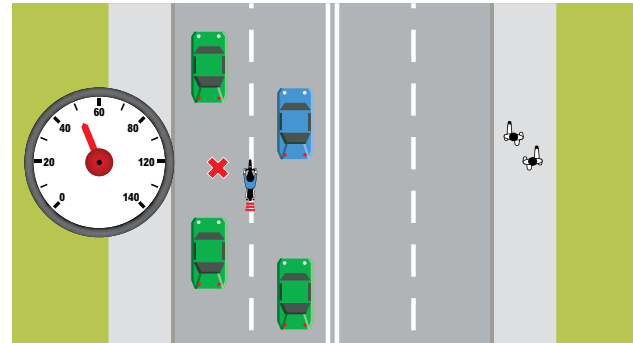
You cannot edge filter between slow moving or stopped vehicles and parked vehicles.

Lane splitting

Lane splitting is not safe and is not permitted in the Northern Territory.

Lane splitting is where a motorcycle rider moves between other vehicles that are travelling at a speed of more than 30km/h.

The higher speeds involved in lane splitting result in higher impact speeds in the event of a crash. The higher the impact speed in a crash, the higher the risk of casualties, especially for motorcyclists.



Lane splitting is illegal in the Northern Territory.

Edge filtering and lane splitting are illegal in the Northern Territory.

Carrying passengers

Motorcycle passenger

Any passenger carried on a motorcycle (not in a sidecar) must:

- sit astride the motorcycle passenger seat facing forward
- sit behind and as close as possible to the rider
- keep both feet on the footrests designed for use by the passenger
- wear a correctly fitted and securely fastened approved motorcycle helmet
- be eight years of age or older
- not interfere with the rider's control of the motorcycle.

Before you can carry passengers you must have an open unrestricted and unconditional rider licence.

Sidecar passengers

Passengers carried in a sidecar must:

- wear a correctly fitted and securely fastened approved motorcycle helmet
- remain safely seated.

The motorcycle rider must not ride with more passengers than the sidecar is designed to carry.

A motorcycle rider must not ride with more than one passenger (excluding sidecar passengers) on the motorcycle.

Loading

Any load carried on a motorcycle must:

- not project more than 150mm beyond the outer extremity of the front wheel
- not project more than 300mm beyond the outer extremity of the rear wheel
- not project beyond the extreme outer portion of the motorcycle on either side.

Any load carried on a motorcycle and sidecar combination must:

- not project more than 600mm beyond the outer extremity of the front wheel
- not project more than 900mm beyond the outer extremity of the rear wheel
- not project beyond the extreme outer portion of the combination on either side.

All loads must:

- be properly secured
- not cause the motorcycle or combination to become unstable
- not project from the motorcycle or combination in a way that is likely to injure or obstruct other vehicles or pedestrians, or cause damage to a vehicle or anything else (including the road surface).

Animals and vehicles

A motorcycle rider or passenger must not tether or lead an animal while the motorcycle is moving. Animals should be seated or housed in appropriate areas.

A rider must not ride with an animal on the fuel tank.

Duty of care

Riding a motorcycle can be great fun and is enjoyed by people of all ages. Riding on the road, however, means accepting responsibility for your own wellbeing and showing due care and consideration for all other road users.

No matter what the circumstances, the responsibility of each rider is to ride in such a manner as to avoid crashing or causing a crash.

A rider can be held accountable for a crash despite the fact that a road rule was not broken.

Traffic laws and regulations are designed to ensure that the traffic moves in an orderly and safe manner.

People (road users) must not walk, drive or ride (a motor vehicle, bicycle or animal):

- without due care
- without consideration for other people.

If you are involved in a court proceeding, it is your responsibility to show that you took reasonable care to avoid a crash or that you were riding in a reasonable manner.

All road users have a duty of care.

We share the roads; we share the safety.

If you are involved in a road crash

If you are involved in a crash that causes injury to a person or animal or that results in damage to property, you should take the following action:

Stop immediately

It is against the law to fail to stop after a crash. Penalties may include a fine, licence disqualification or imprisonment.

See if anyone is injured

A person involved in a crash must stop and render all possible assistance, and, if necessary and possible, get a message to Police, Fire and Emergency Services (call 000).

Prevent further crashes

Unless it is essential to avoid further injury (danger of fire, explosion, traffic, burns from hot pavement), do not move seriously injured or unconscious people until trained help arrives.

- Note or mark the position of the motorcycle on the roadway, then move it clear of traffic.
- Ask bystanders to warn approaching vehicles
- Personal safety, do not stand on the roadway. Always move to the footpath or to a place of safety.

Give the required particulars to other people

Give your name and address, the registration number and any other information necessary to identify the motorcycle you were riding, and the name and address of the owner of the motorcycle if it is not yours, to:

- any attending police officer
- any other driver/rider
- any injured person
- the owner of any damaged property
- any representative of these people.

Gather all details of the crash

Including:

- estimated speeds of all vehicles
- road and weather conditions
- description of the damage and injuries
- diagrams of positions and directions of vehicles
- the names and addresses of witnesses.

Motorcycle parking

Parking rules and restrictions apply to all vehicles, including motorcycles. However, a motorcycle may park at an angle.

Some areas are designated motorcycle parking only.



Summary

This section has explained the special rules that apply to motorcyclists. After reading this section you should know:

- the rules about how to ride on a motorcycle
- the rules relating to passengers and loads
- where you can ride
- special signs for motorcyclists
- where you can park a motorcycle.



motorcycle roadworthiness

Before you ride you need to make sure that your motorcycle is roadworthy and registered. A roadworthy motorcycle is one that is safe to ride and meets the standards required by law.

It is an offence to cause or permit another person to ride an unregistered motorcycle on a road or road-related area. There could be significant financial implications for the rider and registered operator of the motorcycle because compulsory third party insurance is not valid when a motorcycle is unregistered. This means you could be held personally liable for compensation to any person injured as a result of a crash.

Your motorcycle must be registered, and there are severe penalties for riding an unregistered motorcycle.

Regularly check and service your motorcycle to ensure there are no fluid leaks and the oil and water levels are correct.

Always wear the correct protective clothing while riding because it will greatly reduce the severity of injuries sustained in a crash.

Some of the most important rules about motorcycles are described here. If you have any doubt about the rules that apply to your motorcycle, contact the MVR on 1300 654 628.

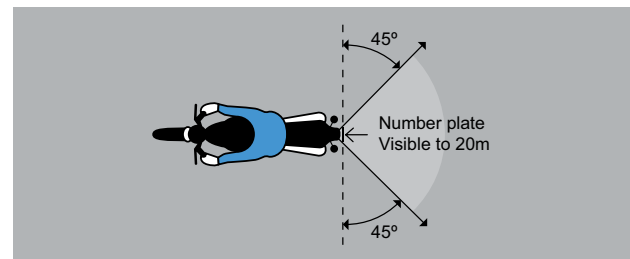
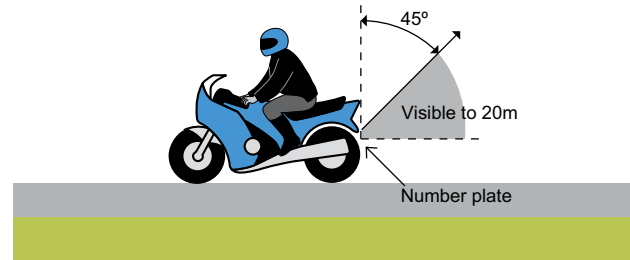
Number plates

An NT-issued number plate is required on the back for motorcycles. When registration has expired, the plates must be given back to the MVR.

Number plates on the motorcycle must be:

- issued by the registration authority (MVR)
- clearly readable; not dirty, worn or damaged
- clearly visible at night by way of a light
- able to be seen and read clearly from anywhere within a 45-degree arc of the motorcycle's centreline, at a distance of at least 20 metres (see diagrams).

Number plates cannot be hidden by anything (such as 'L' or 'P' plates, tow bar or anything being carried).



It is an offence to:

- alter number plates in any way
- attach a number plate to any vehicle other than the plates issued by MVR
- use a number plate cover that is not flat, clear and untinted (number plate covers which have lines across them are not considered to be clear).

Do not obscure any part of your number plate—heavy penalties apply.

Take special care with 'L' and 'P' plate holders.

Safety check before riding

Check your:

- lights (headlights, brake lights, indicators)
- brakes
- horn
- tyres
- fuel
- oil
- chain.

Adjust the controls of the motorcycle so they are right for you. You should be able to reach all the controls easily without being cramped.

Make sure that your lights work, are clean and can be clearly seen. You must not ride any motorcycle at night if the lights are not working.

Tyres

Your motorcycle's tyres must be in good condition and have a tread at least 1.5mm deep across the tread surface. Motorcycles must not have re-grooved tyres, unless the tyre was manufactured to be re-grooved.

Keep the tyres inflated to the pressure recommended by the manufacturer or they may overheat and fail. The sidewalls of the tyres should not have any cracks or bumps. If your tyres wear unevenly, there may be a problem with the steering or suspension.

Tyre pressures are critical to a motorcycle's handling. Under-inflated tyres significantly increase the risk of crashing.

Mirrors and indicators

All motorcycles used on the road must have at least one mirror fitted. Most motorcycles manufactured after June 1975 must have two mirrors.

Make sure your mirrors are clean, and adjust them so that you have a good view to the rear and sides.

Flashing turn indicators must be fitted to the front and rear of the motorcycle.

Summary

This section has outlined the roadworthiness and registration requirements for your motorcycle. After reading this section you should know:

- the registration requirements for your motorcycle
- how to check your motorcycle and ensure it is roadworthy
- the requirements for number plates.

Your notes:



penalties

Under Northern Territory laws, if you do not comply with the road rules you can be penalised.

Traffic offences

Penalties for traffic offences include fines, disqualification from holding or applying for a licence, licence cancellation, refusal or suspension and, in extreme cases, imprisonment.

Demerit points for traffic offences

If you break the traffic laws you can be fined. For certain traffic offences you will also have demerit points recorded against your licence. There is a limit to the number of points you can build up before your licence is suspended.

You can check your current NT demerit points tally any time at nt.gov.au website.

There are different limits for different types of licences. Make sure you understand the points limit for your licence.

Speeding offences

Penalties for exceeding the speed limit include demerit points, fines, licence suspension or disqualification. Penalties increase depending on how many kilometres over the speed limit you are going.

Other serious riding offences

If you are convicted of serious riding offences, you may be disqualified from riding by a court. The court decides how long you should be disqualified for and you could even be sent to prison.

These types of offences are heard in front of a magistrate at a local court and penalties include a large fine, a prison

term and disqualification. Heavier penalties apply for second or subsequent offences. These offences include:

- riding or attempting to ride under the influence of alcohol or other drugs
- riding or attempting to ride when your alcohol level is over the legal limit for your licence
- refusing to take a breath test
- not stopping after a crash in which someone was injured or killed
- riding at a dangerous speed
- riding in a dangerous manner
- riding without a valid motorcycle licence for the type of motorcycle being ridden.

Negligent or dangerous riding causing injury or death

Northern Territory law provides for serious charges to be laid against people riding a motorcycle in a negligent or dangerous manner that causes injury or death.

As the rider of a motorcycle involved in a crash where somebody is injured because of your negligent riding, you could be imprisoned, face a heavy fine and a period of disqualification. If somebody is killed in such a crash you could be imprisoned and face a higher fine.

If you are riding a motorcycle at a speed or in a manner dangerous to the public, and you are involved in a crash that results in injury or death, the penalties can be severe.

Should somebody be injured or killed as a result of your dangerous riding, you could be imprisoned.

Hooning

The penalties for hooning are severe.

Hooning is:

- taking part in unauthorised street races and speed trials
- burnouts
- damaging the surface of a road or public place.

If the police suspect you have been involved in hooning, they can take possession of your vehicle on-the-spot for up to 48 hours and you can be fined.

The courts may impose other penalties that include impoundment for a period of more than 48 hours, forfeiture, a fine or imprisonment.

Drink riding

Drink riding penalties are increased according to the level of alcohol detected in the blood.

Penalties are severe and may include:

- large fines that increase if a second offence is committed
- immediate licence suspension

- prison terms that increase when a second offence is committed
- a period of disqualification from riding, up to lifetime disqualification.

Riding without a licence

All riders **must** carry their licence with them every time they ride.

Heavy penalties apply for riding without a licence. If you fail to produce your licence you can be issued with an on-the-spot fine.

Larger penalties apply if you are convicted of riding while serving a non-riding period for being disqualified from holding or obtaining a licence, or when your licence has been cancelled, refused or suspended.

Penalties may apply for allowing an unlicensed person to ride your motorcycle.

Fine defaults / unpaid fines

If you do not pay a fine within the time allowed, the matter will be referred to the Fines Recovery Unit (FRU).

The FRU manages all aspects of fine recovery, including:

- taking payments
- making 'time to pay' arrangements
- providing information to the public about the enforcement when no other solution can be found.

These enforcement orders range from licence suspension through to civil enforcement and community work orders.

If the outstanding fine amount is not paid, MVR will be advised by the FRU to suspend your licence and/or refuse to do certain business with you until all fines have been paid.

If your licence has been suspended for a fine default, and you pay the fine, MVR will be advised by FRU to lift the suspension.

Summary

This section has outlined the penalties for traffic offences. After reading this section you should know:

- the implications of serious, negligent and dangerous riding offences
- how hooning (street and drag racing) penalties can result in the loss of a motorcycle
- what happens if a traffic fine is not settled
- the implications of drink riding and unlicensed riding.

Your notes:



**makes and
models**

Choose the right motorcycle

Riding a motorcycle is more physically and mentally demanding than driving a car, and the relationship between machine and human is that much closer. So it is important to choose the right motorcycle for you.

Before you buy a motorcycle, talk to experienced riders for advice. Think about what you want to use your motorcycle for: is it for touring on weekends, everyday commuting, off road riding or sporting pursuits?

Also, be realistic about your size, weight and strength. You need to consider this so you will be able to manoeuvre quickly, efficiently and confidently. If upgrading to a more powerful bike after gaining your class R licence, take time to practice, because the handling is very different from smaller motorcycles.



Sports

Sports motorcycles are designed purely for performance. With their powerful engines, they tend to require arms-forward posture and strict handling. Sports motorcycles are sometimes called 'performance bikes' and are known for speed, acceleration, deceleration, and manoeuvrability capabilities.

There are certain design elements that most sports motorcycles share. They have comparatively high performance engines resting inside a lightweight frame, which helps maintain structural integrity and chassis rigidity. Their braking systems combine higher performance brake pads and multi-piston callipers, which clamp onto oversized vented rotors. Their advanced suspension systems bring increased stability and durability. Fairings may or may not be found on a sports motorcycle. When used, the fairings are shaped to reduce aerodynamic drag as much as possible, and generally offer less wind protection for the rider.



Tourer

Touring motorcycles were created solely for long-distance comfort. They often feature backrests, large windscreens and larger fairings, and creature comforts like radios and navigation systems.



Road/trail

Road/trail motorcycles are dual-purpose and can be used both on road and off road.

Road/trail bikes used on the road must be registered and roadworthy.



Cruiser

Cruisers are designed for laid-back riding. These motorcycles mimic the style of American motorcycles from the 1930s to the early 1960s. The riding position always places the feet forward and usually with the hands up and the spine erect or leaning back slightly, which some riders find to be more comfortable for long-distance riding. Some cruisers may have limited performance and turning ability because of a low-slung design. Cruisers are sometimes called 'custom bikes' even in the absence of aftermarket modifications.



Naked

Naked motorcycles lack bodywork or a fairing that would normally hide their engines and inner workings. Also known as a 'standard' or 'street' bike, this is the basic form of the motorcycle stripped down to its fundamental parts. The emphasis here is on functionality, performance and ergonomics rather than aerodynamic body panels and exaggerated riding positions that are common on sports motorcycles. Current naked motorcycles are usually given a modern, more-or-less sporting suspension, unless they are intended to have 'retro' styling.



Scooters

Scooters are like small motorcycles with bodywork that allows the rider to step through, often typified by the Italian-made 'Vespa'. Scooter engine sizes can be as little as 50 ml and as high as 650 ml.



Mopeds

A moped is a small, light motorcycle that may be either two or three wheeled. Mopeds have a piston engine with a maximum engine capacity of 50 ml, and a maximum speed of 50 km/h.

All Terrain Vehicles (ATVs) and quad bikes

ATVs and quad bikes are four-wheeled vehicles used by farmers, local governments, search and rescue teams, and for adventure tourism. These vehicles, including off road buggies, do not meet national vehicle safety standards and are not eligible for unconditional registration for use on roads or road-related areas.

Motorcycle trailers

Trailers that are designed to be towed by motorcycles are available. However, because of the added risk involved, no manufacturer of single-track motorcycles recommends that they be used to tow trailers. Although there are aftermarket trailers that allow motorcycles to tow, factory made motorcycles specialised for towing are rare.

Imports and custom motorcycles

An imported motorcycle is one that has been manufactured overseas and brought into Australia. An imported motorcycle may not meet the Australian standards.

If you want to import a motorcycle there are some steps you must take if you want to register it in the Northern Territory.

An imported motorcycle may need to comply with the following:

- Australian Design Rules (ADR)
- federal vehicle standards requirements
- state/territory vehicle standards requirements.

For further information, please contact the MVR.

Classic and vintage motorcycles

There are a small number of exceptions to some design and functional requirements for certain classic and vintage motorcycles. For further information, please contact the MVR Vehicle Standards Section.

glossary

Accelerate – increasing speed.

Approaching – getting closer to, from any direction.

Approved helmet – as defined under section 270 of the Australian Road Rules

BAC – blood alcohol concentration given as grams of alcohol per 100 millilitres of blood.

BrAC – breath alcohol content given as grams of alcohol per 210 litres of exhaled breath.

Blind spot (see also 'head check') – area beside and behind that is not seen in mirrors.

Buffer/buffering – positioning the motorcycle to create maximum space around you, away from hazards.

Colliding – crashing into.

Crash avoidance space – the space a rider needs in order to prevent a potential crash.

Combination (motorcycle and sidecar) – a motorcycle with a sidecar attached.

Compulsory – necessary, required, must do.

Contact patch (tyre) – the part of the tyre that is in contact with the road.

Covering the brakes – where the rider's fingers are over the front brake lever and their toes over the rear brake

pedal without activating the brakes. See also 'setting up the brakes'.

Counter steering – the action of applying slight pressure on the handlebar in the opposite direction of the turn to cause the motorcycle to lean into the turn.

Direct steering – the action of turning the handlebars in the direction you want the motorcycle to turn.

Dual-purpose motorcycle – a motorcycle made to ride on sealed or unsealed roads (see trail motorcycles).

Edge Filtering – passing between a line of traffic and the kerb/shoulder of the road or parked vehicles.

Evidence of identity – documents that establish who you are and that you use a particular name.

Fairing – bodywork designed to deflect wind.

Fatigue – the experience of feeling sleepy, tired or exhausted. Fatigue affects your body and your ability to ride safely.

Footpeg – pegs attached to the motorcycle to support your feet.

Friction point – where the clutch begins to transmit drive to the rear wheel.

Full face helmet – a helmet fitted with a visor that has inbuilt chin protection and so covers all of the rider's face.

Goggles – eye protection that covers and forms a seal around the eyes.

Hazard – any object or feature, fixed or moving, that contains an element of actual or potential danger.

Head check – looking over the shoulder to the left or right to make sure that nothing is in the blind spot. Also known as a ‘shoulder check’.

Intersection – where two or more roads meet or join.

Lane – an area of road marked by continuous or broken lines, designed for use by a single line of traffic.

Lane filtering – riding a motorcycle at low speed, less than 30km/h, between vehicles that have either stopped or moving slowly and travelling in the same direction.

Lane splitting – riding between stationary or moving traffic at an unsafe speed of more than 30km/h.

Lean angle – how far the motorcycle leans in a corner or turn.

Lean in – the physical movement of the rider’s upper body into the turn and slightly forward so that the motorcycle’s lean angle is reduced.

Lean out – the physical movement of the rider’s upper body away from the turn to allow the motorcycle lean angle to increase and tighten a turning circle.

Lean with – where the rider leans at approximately the same angle as the motorcycle.

METAL – The Motorcyclist Education Training and Licensing program that delivers rider training courses.

Multi-lane road – a road with more than one lane in the same direction.

Oncoming – a vehicle approaching, and travelling in the opposite direction.

Overtaking – to pass a vehicle travelling in the same direction as you.

Pannier – luggage boxes fitted to the sides of the motorcycles.

Pillion – motorcycle passenger.

Pot holes – holes in the road surface.

Power to weight ratio – engine power – in kilowatts to weight of motorcycle – in tonnes including the rider.

Pressure (tyre) – the measure of how hard a tyre is inflated.

Protective clothing – clothing designed to reduce rider injury and fatigue.

Rack – carrying tray/frame.

Rev – to increase engine speed.

Revs – engine speed measured in RPM (revolutions per minute).

Rider Knowledge test – a computer based test of the road rules.

Road – an area that is opened to or used by the public.

Road-related area – includes an area that divides a road, a footpath, nature strip, cycleway and parking areas.

Road motorcycle – motorcycle made primarily to ride on sealed roads.

Scanning – moving the eyes to different areas to build up a picture of events.

Setting up the brakes – the action of taking the freerplay out of the front and rear brake levers (see 'two stage braking').

Sidecar – a wheeled attachment fitted to the left side of a motorcycle (see combination).

Size (engine) – usually measured in millilitres or cubic centimetres.

Skid – when a tyre loses grip on the road surface.

Speed limit – the legal maximum speed for any particular stretch of road, licence or vehicle.

Speeding – excessive or inappropriate speed, including not adjusting your speed to suit the conditions or speed limit.

Squeeze (brakes) – progressively applying more pressure to the brake levers (see 'two-stage braking').

Stationary – not moving.

Suspension – front forks, rear shock absorbers, springs.

Swerving – quickly turning in one direction.

Tailgater – someone who follows other vehicles too closely to be safe.

Three-second gap – a space between vehicles big enough for three seconds of time to pass between them.

Throttle – a control used to vary the motorcycle's engine speed.

Traction – grip between a tyre and the ground.

Trail motorcycles – motorcycles built primarily for riding on unsealed roads.

Tread – the pattern of rubber on the surface of a tyre that grips the road.

Two-stage braking – a braking technique consisting of setting up and squeezing the brake levers.

U-turn – a complete change of direction; approximately a 180-degree turn.

Visor – clear, plastic shield on the front of a helmet designed to protect your face.

Wheel track – the mark on the road made by other vehicles' tyres.

MVR offices

MVR Contact Centre

The MVR Contact Centre can assist with all general enquiries. To speak to an operator, call **1300 654 628** Monday to Friday between 8am and 4pm.

Website: mvr.nt.gov.au

Email: mvr@nt.gov.au

Post: GPO Box 530 Darwin NT 0801

Office locations

To find a Motor Vehicle Registry office and office hours, please visit mvr.nt.gov.au or phone the MVR Contact Centre on **1300 654 628**.

For more information on road safety and programs, please contact **Road Safety** on **1800 720 144** or visit the website at roadsafety.nt.gov.au.

Feedback

In the interest of all road users and to further improve this publication, the department wants your feedback. When your feedback is received it is recorded and will be considered in the next review of this publication.

Please provide your feedback in the following format:

- subject: 'Motorcycle Riders' Handbook – Feedback'
- reference to the relevant section
- feedback/suggestion

Please consider the impact on all road users when making a suggestion.

Please send via post, email or fax to:

Manager Driver Licensing

Motor Vehicle Registry Darwin

Post: GPO Box 530 Darwin, NT 0801

Email: MVR.Licence@nt.gov.au

Fax: 08 8999 3103

This publication is reviewed when there has been a significant change to legislation or a number of changes are required (on average a revision is conducted every three to five years).

To check you have the most up-to-date version of this publication, please visit the nt.gov.au website.



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