



CITY SLICKIN'

Own the road by making sure you've spotted all the clues about what's coming up – proactive rather than purely reactive.

Riding through traffic can be a motorcyclist's worst nightmare, even for the most experienced riders. As the roads get busier and more congested, it's important that you're fully prepared and know how to deal with traffic, otherwise it can end badly.

One of the best things about being on a motorcycle is that you can make progress through slow or stationary traffic. But remember, car drivers most likely will not see you. They are probably not expecting you to be there in the first place, and you are smaller and may not be easily visible to them - so you need to take a bit of extra care. Position yourself where you can be seen.

FILTERING

The most important thing when filtering through heavy traffic is remain focused; you need to be aware of things around you. If you're riding between a line of cars, actively look for indications of what the driver and passengers are doing – make sure none of them are getting out, as this could mean a door being opened on you.

Be on the lookout for vehicles suddenly changing lanes. Look at the other drivers – their body language will help you decipher what they are going to do.

Be aware of vehicles emerging from side roads between other vehicles in your lane – especially when you're next to a tall vehicle and can't see properly.

Don't put yourself in a vulnerable position on the motorway. Try to avoid placing yourself

between a vehicle and an exit or off-ramp on the motorway in case the vehicle decides to rush for the exit at the last possible moment, especially when there are traffic jams ahead and they want a quick exit. There's a good chance they won't see you and you will be the one coming off second best.

FOLLOWING TOO CLOSE

One problem with too many motorcyclists is the tendency to follow traffic too closely, particularly vans and trucks which obscure our vision. It's important to drop back to provide a better view, giving more time to plan. Keeping your distance also allows you to gain more information about what's coming up or about to happen, so you have the opportunity to decide earlier whether to overtake or not, how to prepare for a corner or anticipate other road users' actions. Staying to the left or right of the vehicle in front of you can also give you an escape route just in case the traffic suddenly comes to a stop – getting rear-ended on a bike is an ugly scenario.

PLAN AHEAD

By gathering as much information from ahead and around us as possible we can be proactive about hazards such as junctions and other traffic. What do the road signs say? Why are there street lights ahead? This information enables us to deal with something before it happens, rather than being reactive, where something happens and we need to find a suitable response in double-quick time.

ANTICIPATE

In order to help anticipate any sudden movement, try to keep a close eye on the head movements of drivers (through their windows or mirrors). By doing so, you can judge whether drivers are planning on suddenly jolting left or right; it's more than likely that they'll turn their head towards the direction they're planning to move towards before they swing the wheel – and indicate at the same time....

PREPARE

It's a good idea to prepare yourself for sudden movements from cars by covering the front brake at all times. Those crucial split seconds when you can get onto the brakes sooner – could be the difference between you stopping in time or not. This also stops you from suddenly fumbling for the brake lever when you need it most or grabbing a fistful and losing the front. Make sure you have well fitting gloves, so they don't get hung up on the levers when you need to engage them quickly.

TUG

Take information and observe what's happening around you

Use it to respond appropriately to situations as they develop

Give information to other road users

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