

CROSSROADS HOG  
SAFETY THOUGHT  
APRIL 2011

***SO, YOU THINK YOU'RE READY***

It's spring! For some, the temperature is warm enough; the roads are dry enough; and the bike is accessible. So, I guess some are ready to ride. All of us are certainly eager to do so, I am sure. It's been a long winter season here in Michigan.

Typically I would be talking with you about making sure your bike and you are truly ready to ride. Equipment properly checked and prepared and your skill levels tested, refreshed, and understood.

That remains very important but this time I am going to focus on only one aspect of riding early in the season – one that threatens your life! It is quite possible that the danger to you from **distracted drivers** is at its peak right now.

May is MOTORCYCLE AWARENESS MONTH in many states. It is proclaimed with banners, signs, and news articles. The driving public is admonished to watch out for Motorcycles. April, however, is the first month that we typically have opportunity to get back on the road with our bikes (and trikes) **AND NO ONE EXPECTS US TO BE THERE!**

If you combine that with the plethora of equipment or conveniences available to drivers today you have a bad mix. Talking on the phone; texting (illegal here); working with GPS; messing with the satellite radio; adjusting the movie playing for the kids in the back; and, oh, watching where you're going just might put a driver on 'over-load.' And we expect them to see a motorcycle?!?

Here are a few tips you can use to help them see you and keep them from hitting you.

- Stay right (or be ready to go right) on a two lane road. Distracted drivers wander – to their right = you're OK. To their left = you're not!
- Avoid multi-lane roads when possible – at least early in the riding season. They can come at you from too many places.
- Catch their eye. Choose clothing that is bright and/or reflective. When you can do so without blinding them, run your high beam. Run every light you can.
- Avoid the T-bone (not dinner) Assume any vehicle entering your path from the right or turning left into your path does not see you. Slow down; try for eye contact; be ready for something stupid that can really mess up your day.
- Remember how small you are and ride to make yourself bigger and easier to see.

Distracted drivers have become a major threat on our highways. According to NHTSA 5474 people lost their lives to distracted drivers in 2009. It is safe to assume some of those were motorcyclists.

At this time of year the danger is compounded by the fact that they don't expect motorcycles to be on the road. Be aware of that and adjust your riding accordingly.

That's my thought for this month – ride safely.

mike "the safety guy" hoffman