

**CROSSROADS HOG  
SAFETY THOUGHT  
MAY, 2008**

**You've stopped; now what?**

Whether you are participating in a Group Ride, riding with a few friends, or riding alone you always need to adhere to traffic regulations. That means you are going to be stopping for stop signs, traffic signals, and other impediments to traffic flow. Here are few things to keep in mind when you've stopped; one for just before you stop; and some for moving on.

**Before you apply the brakes and stop**, be sure to check your mirrors to know what is behind you; how close it is and whether or not it poses a threat. Adjust your stopping strategy and method to maximize your safety.

**If you are riding in a group** there are a few good practices to follow:

- Don't strike up a conversation with the bike stopped next to you.
- Don't strike up a conversation with your passenger.
- Stay alert to know when it is time to move forward
- Keep you bike in gear.\*

**If you are riding alone or in a group** these are always good practices to follow:

- Keep your brake applied so the brake light remains lit.
- Make sure you are in first gear.\*
- Check your mirrors to be sure of what is going on behind you.
- Constantly observe on-coming and crossing drivers and traffic, watching for potential problems. Look left, look right, look forward, & check your mirrors; repeat.
- Listen as well as watch. Often you can hear a problem before you can see it.
- When it's time to move on:
  1. Always double check on-coming and crossing traffic before moving.
  2. Always move away continuously.\*
  3. Don't loose track of what is happening in front of you.

**\*Special note to keep in mind:** Always check to make sure you are in first gear and ready to move on. This is critical to assure that you can move continuously when you leave the stop. It is also critical to your ability to get away from a problem developing behind you (like a vehicle that cannot stop).

Moving away continuously is important to you because not doing so could result in your getting hit from the rear. Think about it. You have looked at the traffic situation (right, left, and forward) and decided you can go. You start out and the bike is not accelerating as you expect – because it is in the wrong gear! In correcting that, your rate of acceleration drops. NOW, the guy behind you saw you start to move. He assumes you will be accelerating away normally. He begins to move: he takes his eyes off you and looks right, looks left, looks forward – OH NO! – YOU ARE NOT MOVING AWAY AS HE EXPECTED!

If you are the follower, keep this potential in mind as you begin to move. Keep track of the vehicle in front of you.

That's my thought to share this month. Now you think about it and use it to make your next ride and all those that follow a little safer.

Mike "the safety guy"