

CROSSROADS HOG  
SAFETY THOUGHT FOR OCTOBER 2011

***WATCH YOUR REAR!!!***

We are all well aware of the need to keep ourselves alert and to be constantly scanning forward and to the sides for potential hazards. In our MSF training we learned SIPDE – Scan, Identify, Predict, Decide, Enact as a methodology to do that.

I want to remind you; however, that looking forward is not enough. And, that there are things you can do to minimize and/or handle danger from the rear.

Starting with the obvious, you need to know what's back there. To do that, you use your MIRRORS. Commonly recommended safety practice is for a rider to be "scanning" the environment for potential hazards every few seconds – many times per minute. Those scans must include the mirrors. If you don't know what's going on behind you, you certainly cannot protect yourself from it.

Once you know what is there, you need to make sure you are communicating with it.

- Are your taillight, brake and turn-signals all working properly? When did you last check?
- Are you slowing down? Is your brake light lit? (Don't just use engine braking.) It is more difficult for a driver to discern your deceleration than that of a car or truck.
- Are you using hand signals as well as the bike's signals?
- Are you riding in the center or left portion of your lane? Riding in the right may be interpreted as an invitation to a 'partial lane pass.'
- Are you visible? Have you taken steps to make yourself more visible through clothing choices?

**AND** you have to be "exploring" the possibilities of what that following vehicle might do.

- Is it approaching rapidly? Perhaps too rapidly to slow sufficiently and it will need to swerve quickly and pass! Is there room for that to happen without incident?
- Can you tell if the driver is distracted? If they are close enough, you can often see in your mirror that they are eating / talking on the phone / sleeping!
- Is it tailgating?

**THEN** you have to decide what you're going to do - and do it.

- Flash your brake light?
- Speed up?
- Move left?
- What will the situation in front of you allow?

Think about this – before you ride – and you'll have a better ride.

Mike "the safety guy" Hoffman