

# How to Drive Safely Around Motorcycles

*These tips are from esurance. We formatted their tips to provide drivers and driver educators with an easily downloadable document.*

<https://www.esurance.com/info/car/sharing-the-road-with-motorcycles>

## **Introduction**

Even the sleekest of sports cars lacks the maneuverability of the average motorcycle. And while they each have their well-deserved place on our roads, not all 4-wheeled vehicles and motorcycles get along swimmingly. We'll help you understand your car's distant 2-wheeled cousins so you can safely share the road and avoid accidents.

## **Why motorcycles can make drivers nervous**

In addition to their ability to weave in and out of lanes, motorcycles are smaller and harder to spot. With all due respect to the Smart car, motorcycles are the smallest vehicles on the roads. And because of their size, they often appear to be faster and farther away than they actually are.

Motorcycles also lack the safety devices of most cars and trucks, like seat belts and air bags, which explains why it's almost always the motorcycle riders who are most at risk in collisions with passenger vehicles.

Frankly, it can be nerve-racking to drive a vehicle that leaves other riders around you so vulnerable. But there are a few things drivers can do to drive confidently and responsibly around motorcycles.

**Here are 5 general rules to bear in mind the next time you share the road with motorcycles.**

## **Follow the 4-second rule**

Increase your driving distance when you find yourself behind a motorcycle and maintain a cushion of at least 4 seconds. Choose an object (a tree, road sign, or house) and count the seconds between when the motorcycle passes and when you pass. This cushion gives you time to react to the unexpected.

## **Respect Mother Nature**

You already know it's important to adjust your driving when Mother Nature rears her rainy (or snowy or sleety) head. But inclement weather is even more hazardous for bikers than for drivers. So if you spot a motorcycle ahead during not-so-awesome weather, anticipate that the rider might have a little trouble and give him a little extra space.

For more information visit the **EDUCATION** section of the website of the Skilled Motorcyclist Association – Responsible, Trained and Educated Riders, Inc. and review the material posted under **For Drivers and Driver Educators:**

<http://smarter-usa.org/general-information/educational-materials/>

**Look before you turn**

A whopping 44 percent of 2-vehicle, fatal motorcycle accidents in 2013 were the result of a car trying to turn left while the motorcycle went straight, according to the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety. If you see a motorcycle at an intersection, attempt to make eye contact with its rider before turning in its direction. Many motorcycles aren't equipped with self-canceling turn signals like cars are, so it's possible that a biker might have his right turn signal on (the old "gradual right") because the rider simply forgot to turn it off. If you have to pass or drive next to a motorcycle with a lingering turn signal, proceed with caution.

**Check your blind spots often**

Since motorcycles are smaller than cars, it's that much easier for them to slip into your blind spot - especially when they're attempting to pass you. Swivel your head to check your blind spots regularly and, in particular, before changing lanes.

**Be a pal**

This tip goes for all kinds of safe driving: just be nice. Cut other drivers and riders a little slack and remember that we all make mistakes. It'll be good for your blood pressure and your driving record.

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