

The Motorist Awareness Team

GWRRA's Motorist Awareness Division (MAD) and its **Ride Aware!** campaign seek to reduce the number of crashes and near-misses occurring between motorcyclists and other highway users through a program of awareness education for motorcyclists and motorists.

The Motorist Awareness (MA) program will be conducted by Motorist Awareness Division coordinators and liaisons, spreading the gospel of Motorist Awareness through public speaking, distribution of printed materials, and by being highly visible at events and rallies world-wide. Specifically, coordinators and liaisons will:

- ⇒ Distribute brochures to relatives, co-workers, and friends.
- ⇒ Leave handouts and materials with retailers, waitresses, doctors, banks, and others on an ongoing basis.
- ⇒ Encourage motorcycle organizations to hold Motorist Awareness Bike Shows.
- ⇒ Distribute MA documentation and information at shopping centers, auto parts, grocery stores, etc.
- ⇒ Participate as a speaker of MA at high schools, community clubs, such as Elk's Club, Lion's Club, Masons and other social groups with motorists and/or motorcyclists in attendance.

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"There is no need to drink and ride a motorcycle—the ride alone is intoxicating!"

Gold Wing Road Riders Association

Conspicuity



From Out Of Nowhere!

"A common complaint of street riders is that other motorists fail to observe them. Motorists who violate motorcyclists' right-of-way frequently state, 'I didn't see him,' or 'He came out of nowhere.'"

(Hurt, 1981)

**"Motorcyclists Are *Dying*
To Be Seen!"**



Why Conspicuity?

“The greatest risk to all motorcyclists is the violation of their right-of-way by the driver of another vehicle.” The failure of motorists to detect and recognize motorcycles in traffic is the predominating cause of motorcycle accidents. A significant “Hurt” finding was that conspicuous motorcycles and riders were less likely to have their right-of-way violated by other vehicles.

Why Are Motorcycles Difficult to Detect?

There is no clear answer. But there is a great deal of conjecture and many theories. It is known that the problem centers on at least three potential factors.

1. Detection of the motorcyclist! People truly fail to detect a motorcycle in the traffic environment.

2. Human visual-perception limitations. People fail to attach valid, meaningful relationships to what they observe. Their matching, comparing, and association of the information they gather yields them inaccurate conclusions.

3. Misinformation. The observer sees a motorcycle, then identifies it in the same category as a bicycle or moped. They do not view the motorcycle as a threat to their safety.

Motorcycling Facts

- ⇒ Riders are responsible for their own well-being in traffic. Conspicuity is a rider/co-rider responsibility.
- ⇒ Approximately 3/4 of all motorcycle accidents involve another motor vehicle.
- ⇒ 2/3 of these accidents were caused by the motorist failing to yield the right of way.
- ⇒ **Left Turns**—Over 40% of all motorcycle accidents occur at intersections.
- ⇒ Motorcycles are often hidden in a vehicle’s blind spot or missed in a ‘quick look’ due to their smaller size. Always ride where you can be seen.

How To Be Seen

- ⇒ **Bright Colors**—Wear brightly colored upper-torso clothing and a light-colored helmet. Use retro-reflective material on your clothing, your motorcycle, and your helmet to increase your visibility in low-light conditions.
- ⇒ **Headlights**—Ride with your headlights on high beam during the day. You might consider a modulator that pulses your headlight during daylight hours. Headlight modulators are federally regulated lighting devices, and as such, all state laws governing them are preempt.
- ⇒ **Position Lamps**—Many modern motorcycles are equipped with position lamps in their front turn signals. This may help other motorists to identify the vehicle as a motorcycle and enable them to better judge its distance and speed.

Turn Signals—Communicate with other road users by signaling your intentions. When legal, combine hand with electric signals whenever possible. Remember to cancel your turn signals. A false signal is as dangerous as none at all.

Brake Light—A flashing light is more visible than a steady one. Use your brake light before and during stops to make yourself more conspicuous and to communicate your intentions.

Horn—Use your horn to gain attention, but don’t rely on it. Most motorcycle horns cannot be heard over traffic noise and a 4-speaker stereo.

Lane Positioning—Rider traffic strategy strongly affects visibility. Position yourself within a lane to avoid windblast from other vehicles, avoid roadway hazards, and to create a space cushion between you and other traffic. Don’t hide among other vehicles. Position yourself so drivers ahead can see you in their mirrors.

Fairings—Motorcycles equipped with fairings were under-represented in crashes where motorists violated the motorcyclist’s right-of-way. The larger the fairing and the brighter the color, the more effective it seemed to be in preventing other vehicle right-of-way violations. (Hurt, 1981)

**Conspicuity -
A Motorcycling Must**