

Riding Smart

Pre-reading

Questions: What do you know about the subject of this reading?

Definitions: Critical – very important
Advanced – beyond a beginning level
Anticipate – to expect; to look for



Reading

It's a beautiful spring day! The sky is a perfect shade of blue. The sun is shining brightly and the open road is calling your name. You're ready for the first motorcycle ride of the season! The weather conditions may be good, but how about your skill level?

It doesn't matter whether you are a new, returning, or experienced rider – if you have never had motorcycle training, you probably lack the critical skills needed for safe driving. Most riders do not realize what they are missing until it is too late. Ask yourself these questions: Do corners sometimes tighten up on you? Do you ever lock up your brake, trying to stop quickly? Do other drivers often pull out in front of you? Do you steer the motorcycle by leaning your body?

If you answered "yes" to any of the above questions, the Basic Rider Course or the advanced Skills Plus Course is for you! All of the problems mentioned above can be solved with rider training, knowledge, and skill:

- Corners do not suddenly tighten up. They only seem to because you are not ready.
- Locking up your brakes can actually increase your stopping distance.
- Other drivers may not see you because you are poorly positioned in traffic.
- Motorcycles are steered by the handlebars, not your body.

Proper **attitude**, focused strategy, and good riding skills will help you ride more safely. These critical points are taught and practiced in the riding courses.

Safe riding requires good mental skills. Experts say that riding is 90 percent mental and 10 percent physical. A smart rider is prepared to ride. Attitude plays a large part in your mental strategy. A good attitude means knowing the limits of your self, your environment, and your motorcycle, and riding within those limits. Riding beyond any of those limits can lead to a crash.

Smart riders think ahead. You need to anticipate and avoid hazards before they cause you to crash. Remember, it is your life at stake if you crash. Learning and practicing both mental and physical skills will not only make you a safer rider, it will make riding more enjoyable.

Don't stop learning once you get comfortable on your bike. If you have never taken a safety course, sign up and see what you've been missing. Contact the Minnesota Motorcycle Safety Center for training near you.

Source: Minnesota Motorcycle Safety Center

Level 6.0

Understanding

1. What two courses are offered? How do they differ? _____

2. Who could benefit from such a course? Why? _____

3. What is taught in the courses? _____

4. Who is a resource for the trainings? _____

5. What is **attitude**? How does it affect riding? _____

6. How can a rider best avoid a crash? _____

7. Why might it be difficult for drivers to see motorcycles? _____

Writing

Option A: Summarize the reading in your own words.

Option B: Write about a new skill you would like to learn. Where might you receive training?

Option C: Write about a skill you currently have, but would like to refine. Where might you find advance training in this field?
