

16 Uncommon Motorcycle Touring Safety Tips

Last Updated on: May 29, 2021

1. When **driving at night and you get blinded by an** oncoming traffic glare, close one eye. Alternate between eyes. This gives the closed eye receptors a chance to recover from over-stimulation. The same trick can be used if you encounter extremely dusty or sandy conditions. It's better to always have one eye "in reserve" than have both impaired and then have to get off the road safely.
2. **Never ride in "formation"**, as in side-by-side, or close quarters. This is for police or Shriners on parade. There is no reason to do this. It cuts your lane size and options to take action drastically. It is far better to ride in a staggered position. Each motorcycle is positioned on each side of the lane, leaving a generous distance between each motorcycle for stopping and maneuvering.
3. **Learn the basics of weather forecasting**, aka how to read the clouds. Don't rely on your smartphone to tell you what you can see coming with your own eyes and senses.
4. **Get in the habit of looking far ahead** for any potential issues on the horizon. For example, you might see a railway signal going off, and a long line of highway traffic that you are in will need to stop, be aware of drivers behind you that may be surprised.
5. **Don't try to make gear adjustments** while you ride, pull over and do it safely.
6. **Plan to finish the day early** and start late. This avoids local commuter traffic and the bad sun angels that can temporarily blind you and on-coming traffic. The same goes for Friday and Saturday night driving. There are still people who drive after one too many!
7. **Keep your head level in turns.** Never tilt in the direction of the bike. Tilting your head will disorient you, and you could misjudge a move or fail to see an upcoming danger. Stay level and stay alert.
8. **Secure your luggage; check frequently.** Please do not put anything in saddlebags or top boxes loose; secure it or put it inside a pocket. If you strapped down extra items on racks, check them a few miles down the road and at rest stops. Balance the weight between saddlebags. If you take on a new passenger, brief them on not leaning into turns, this can be a disastrous shift in balance when you least expect it.
9. **Don't ride with others that push you to uncomfortable limits** in speed or time in the saddle. Touring is supposed to be fun. Go at your speed and on your own time.

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10. **Replace your anemic stock horn** with a real one that makes a real sound.
11. **Do not ride with your hi-beams on all the time.** This is particularly unsafe if you have modern LED lighting (post – [Hi-Beams All The Time?](#))
12. If you need to **pull over on the side of the road, do at the end of a long straightway or top of a hill.** This will allow you to see any oncoming traffic and give you a good buffer space to get back up to speed when you get back on the road.
13. **Carry water with you, take a drink at every rest stop.** Dehydration can sneak up on you and cause some severe issues, like impaired judgment or vision, with little warning.
14. **Play a memory game – to judge your state of mental awareness** and get burnt out. Take notice of street names, road signs, etc., that you pass. Do so every 5-10 mins. With each new entry in the game, try to remember at least the last 3 of them in reverse order. If you can't or forget that you are even "playing the game", it's time for a rest or to end the day.
15. **Learn & practice some basic non-verbal communication** signals with your passenger, or fellow your riders. Confusion over hand signals and yelling at your passengers are not the best way to stay focused on the road.
16. **When lights turn green,** always glance to the right and left before moving forward – looking for drivers that may be about to run the light. Intersections are killing grounds for motorcycles; burn *that into your mind.*