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Personal Strategies

Topics Covered

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 - Keeping focussed
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RoadSense Tip

Wearing proper hearing protection while riding is a good idea. This will help protect you against long-term hearing loss while still allowing you to hear critical sounds while riding.

In **Chapter 7, Sharing the Road**, you learned how to safely share the road with other road users. This chapter outlines strategies you can use to handle situations that can have a negative influence on you and your riding.

Fitness to Ride

To be in control while riding, you need to be able to rely on the information that your eyes and ears pick up. You must be healthy, rested and focussed.

Seeing and hearing

Thinking Like a Rider

You're late for work so you start off on your bike quickly. Just as you get to the end of the street you remember that you've forgotten to put your glasses on. You feel in your jacket pocket for them. They're not there. Your licence says you must wear corrective lenses when you ride but it's not too far to work.

What should you do?

Your eyes are the single most important source of information you have when you ride. It is estimated that 80 per cent of all riding information comes through the eyes. That's one of the reasons your vision is screened before you get your licence. If it is found that you need corrective lenses, this condition will be marked on your licence. You can be fined if you ride without them.

Your sense of hearing also helps you gather information about the riding scene. You need to listen for horns, sirens and train whistles, as well as for unusual noises coming from your bike.

Strategies: Seeing and Hearing Effectively

To see and hear effectively while riding:

- Scan systematically as you ride.
- Use glasses or contact lenses if you need them.
- Use a faceshield or goggles to protect your eyes, especially if you are wearing contact lenses.

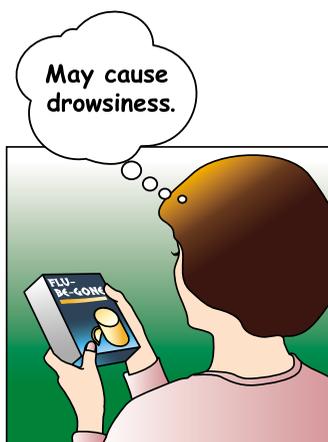
- Keep the volume of headsets and sound systems at reasonable levels.
- Check that your exhaust system is not so loud that it interferes with your hearing.

Assessing your health

Thinking Like a Rider

You wake up with a cold and you feel awful. But you have to go to work so you've taken some cold medication. As you do your pre-trip check you notice that your vision is blurry, your head feels heavy and you're tired.

What should you do?



Even a mild illness, like a cold or the flu, can impair alertness, so it is sometimes better to take the bus or get a friend to drive you if you are not feeling well. If you are taking any medications, read the label carefully. If the label says that the drug may cause drowsiness or dizziness, don't ride.

If you have a health condition that you think might impair your ability to ride, be sure to check with your doctor or pharmacist before getting on the bike.

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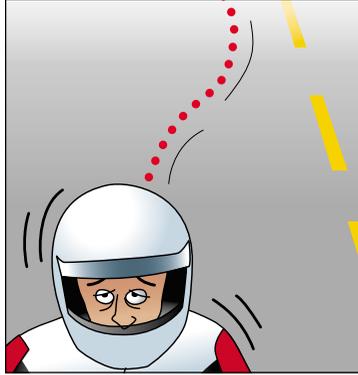
Read labels before taking medications if you plan to ride.

Staying awake

Thinking Like a Rider

You've been on the road all day. You've made stops every hour, but you're getting really tired. You were planning to travel another couple of hundred kilometres.

What should you do?



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Being tired is one of the leading causes of crashes. Fatigue affects all stages of the See-Think-Do strategy. It can cause you to miss seeing things, slow your thinking and lengthen your reaction time.

Strategies: Staying Awake

To stay alert on your bike, especially for long journeys:

- Start out well rested.
- Plan your trip so that you don't ride too far in one day.
- Take breaks. Walk around and get some exercise.
- Stop and eat, but avoid heavy meals that will make you sleepy.
- Don't count on coffee, cola drinks and other stimulants to keep you awake. They don't make you more alert.

Keeping focussed

Thinking Like a Rider

You've been riding all morning, and most of the time it's been raining. Your feet are wet and your fingers are getting numb. You wish you had worn better gear. As you think about this you find yourself wandering out of your lane position.

What's happening? What should you do about it?

When riding, your mind and senses should be focussed entirely on riding. Distractions can affect your hazard perception and your reaction time.

Strategies: Staying Focused

To concentrate while riding:

- Make sure you wear the right gear. Being too cold can reduce your ability to focus.
- Pull over and tend to whatever is distracting you: inspect your bike to identify that strange noise, check your map for the best route or get out your warmer jacket.
- Tell passengers who want to talk too much that you need to give all your attention to controlling the motorcycle and watching traffic.
- Keep predicting what might happen and planning your moves.
- Keep your eyes moving. Don't get distracted by any one thing in the riding environment.

Dangerous Emotions

Thinking Like a Rider

You are riding on a busy four-lane road heading for an appointment. Suddenly a car swerves immediately in front of you into your lane. You have to brake hard to avoid running into it. The car then speeds off and quickly changes to the left lane. You think, "What a fool!" You feel your anger rising.

What should you do?



Riding can be a frustrating experience at times. How can you control your anger while riding?

Emotions are powerful forces that can interfere with the concentration you need for riding. When you are feeling angry, anxious or sad, you become less alert. Your thinking becomes unclear. Your safety and the safety of others is in danger.

At times you may become angry or impatient because of something in the riding environment. Crowded traffic conditions and high-speed freeway riding often cause stress. Being slowed by other traffic when you're in a hurry produces tension. Riders who are tense or stressed are less tolerant of the mistakes of other riders and road users.

Whatever the cause of your upset, it is important to look at your emotional fitness to ride. Sometimes it's best to stay off your bike.

Strategies: Controlling Emotions

Here are some things you can do to help you stay calm and in control while riding:

- Keep learning. Analyze previous stressful riding situations you have experienced and figure out what you can do next time to be calmer and safer.
- Plan ahead. Increase your chances of staying calm by choosing a route that avoids crowded traffic conditions.
- Allow yourself plenty of time. Being in a hurry can cause you to become angry or frustrated. Realize that if you leave late, you'll arrive late.
- Think of your own safety and the safety of others. This can help you calm down.
- Be patient – remember that all road users make mistakes.
- Be extra courteous – switch your attention from yourself to others.
- Pull off the road and take a couple of moments to calm yourself.
- Be honest. Admitting to yourself exactly how you feel can often calm you.



CrashFact

Half of the people killed in motorcycle crashes have alcohol in their blood and, of those, two-thirds had only one or two drinks before the crash.

Motorcycle Safety Foundation

Impairment

Thinking Like a Rider

You are at a party with a group of friends. You intend to leave soon, but a friend offers you a beer. You say, "No, I'm riding home pretty soon." He says, "Aw, come on, it's only light beer."

What would you do?

Riding is a complex activity that requires smart decision-making and excellent coordination. Research shows that drinking even a little alcohol affects both of these. Therefore, any impairment makes it impossible to See-Think-Do effectively.

Facts about alcohol

Here are some ways that alcohol can interfere with seeing, thinking and doing.

Ability	Rider's Symptoms	Effects on the Rider...
See	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> tendency to stare 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> eyes cannot take in information quickly enough
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> eyes lose reflex abilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> can be blinded by glare
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> reduced coordination of images 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> sees double
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> reduced depth perception 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> cannot judge distance and speed of other vehicles
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> reduced peripheral vision 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> may not see hazards approaching from the side
Think	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> reasoning becomes unclear reduced concentration emotional state becomes unstable awareness is reduced 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> thinks mental ability is sharp; however, cannot make smart riding decisions
Do	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> reduced muscle control 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> cannot coordinate steering and braking
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> increased impulsiveness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> takes greater risks by speeding or taking chances
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> reduced coordination 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> over-steers or under-steers brakes too hard or not hard enough
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> slowed reaction time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> cannot make turns accurately cannot react to emergencies quickly
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> balance is affected 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> can lose control over the bike's stability, especially at slow speeds

Alcohol Myths		Alcohol Facts
<p><i>Alcohol won't affect me so much if I have something to eat.</i></p>		<p>Drinking on a full stomach isn't much different from drinking on an empty stomach.</p>
<p><i>Beer doesn't affect riding as much as other alcoholic drinks do.</i></p>		<p>A glass of beer contains the same amount of alcohol as a glass of wine or an average cocktail. In some cases, even small amounts of alcohol can cause a rider to be impaired.</p>
<p><i>Coffee will reduce the effects of alcohol.</i></p>		<p>The only thing that reduces the effects of alcohol is time.</p>



CrashFact

Q. What is the most common motorcycle crash that results in death?

- A. The rider who has been drinking, can't make a curve, runs off the road and strikes an object. This most often happens on the weekend, late at night.

Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, Arlington, VA



RoadSense Tip

If you are feeling impaired after taking a drug or medication, don't ride until the effect has worn off.

Facts about drugs

Drugs and riding

Drugs and medications can impair riding. If you are taking medications or drugs, you need to know how they can affect your ability to ride safely. Drugs affect different people differently. If there is any doubt about safety, don't ride.

Medications

Over-the-counter medicines for allergies, coughs, colds and nausea can cause:

- drowsiness
- inattentiveness

Prescriptions including sedatives, tranquilizers, painkillers and some antidepressants can affect:

- alertness
- concentration
- reaction time

These effects can continue for many hours after the medicine is taken.

Protecting yourself from impairment

If you are taking any drugs or medications, read the package label or brochure to find out the effects on riding, or ask your

Applying Your RoadSense



RoadSense Tip

Always read the label of any medication you are taking to see if it can affect riding. If you are taking more than one medication, ask your pharmacist or doctor about their combined effects on riding.



Think About...

Is it worth it to drink and ride?

- You could crash and you or your passenger could be killed or injured.
- You may spend time in jail.
- You could lose your licence.
- You may have to pay large fines.
- Your insurance may not pay for any injuries or damage you cause.
- Your motorcycle could be impounded.



CrashFact

A driver who combines alcohol and drugs is 9 times more likely to have a crash than a sober driver.

Australian study, O. Drummer, 1994

doctor or pharmacist how the drug or medication may affect riding safety. If you are taking more than one medication, be sure to ask about their combined effects on riding.

If your doctor or pharmacist cautions you that a medication is likely to interfere with riding safety, heed their advice. If you are feeling impaired after taking a medication, don't ride – arrange for alternate transportation until the effect has worn off.

Illegal drugs

Recreational or street drugs such as speed, heroin, and cocaine have a wide variety of effects including those noted above, as well as:

- hallucinations
- altered perception
- feelings of invincibility
- lack of judgement

Marijuana may cause a rider to:

- have difficulty following the movement of vehicles or pedestrians accurately
- misunderstand visual cues from the driving environment
- delay responses, especially in emergency situations

Drugs and alcohol

Many drugs, when combined with even small amounts of alcohol will cause greatly increased impairment.

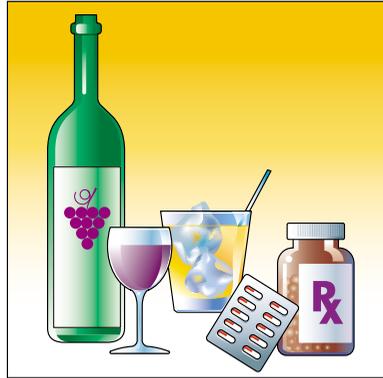
Strategies: Protecting Yourself from Impairment

To get home safely:

- Arrange to have your bike secured in a safe place and take a taxi or bus home if you are impaired.
- If you know you will be drinking, leave your bike at home and arrange another way to travel.
- Refuse to be a passenger when the motorcyclist or driver is impaired.
- Take a stand. Don't let people who are impaired ride a motorcycle or drive a car. Someone may thank you later for holding onto their keys.
- Arrange a ride home for a friend who is impaired.
- Use positive peer pressure by getting friends to help ensure no one in your group rides while impaired.

Chapter 11, Your Licence, talks about some of the fines and charges for impaired riding.

Combining even a small amount of alcohol with drugs increases your risk of a crash.



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Taking Risks

Thinking Like a Rider

You've just bought a powerful bike and you're riding alone on a quiet country road. There is no other traffic in sight. You come to a straight stretch, and you're tempted to see how fast your new bike can go.

What will you do?

Think About...

- About 89 per cent of motorcycle collisions in B.C. happen on dry roads.
- About 75 per cent of motorcycle collisions happen during the day.

Why did these riders crash?

Traffic Collision Statistics: British Columbia (1998)

How will you manage risk? Riders differ in the way they manage risk. You probably know riders who aren't sure what to do in difficult situations and who are nervous around other road users. These people lack confidence in their skills. And then there are overconfident riders – the ones who think they are much better riders than they really are. Both underconfident and overconfident riders need to learn more about riding and take more time to practise their skills.

A few people adopt a dangerous riding style and seek excitement through speeding and taking risks. These people are thrill seekers – they enjoy speeding, tailgating or passing unsafely.

What kind of riding style are you aiming for? Do you want to stay within your skill level? Do you think it is better to be cautious than to take chances? You are responsible for the kind of riding style you choose.

How often do you take risks?

How often do you:	Always	Sometimes	Never
Shoulder check?			
Drive within the speed limit?			
Signal?			
Avoid drinking and riding?			
Leave good space margins?			

Strategies: Identifying Your Riding Style

To identify your riding style:

- Ask someone you trust to give you some feedback on your riding skills and style.
- Analyze your style. If you have a close call, ask yourself why it happened and think of how you can ride more safely so that it won't happen again.
- When you watch a motorcycle chase scene in a movie, be critical. Ask yourself: *What message am I getting? Do I agree with the message? Will this message affect my riding style?*
- Do you find yourself always blaming other road users? Ask yourself: *Is it really their fault, or could it be me?*

Peer Pressure

Thinking Like a Rider

You've been riding for about four months and you are pretty excited because a couple of friends have invited you out for a ride. They are more experienced than you are. The three of you speed up together and head for the highway. Once on the highway you quickly realize that your friends are taking the curves faster than you want to.

What should you do?



It's hard to resist peer pressure. All of us want to belong, so we are sensitive to what others think of us. There are two kinds of peer pressure: positive and negative. Friends who persuade you to do the right thing because they care about you are using positive peer pressure. On the other hand, friends or acquaintances who encourage you to do something dangerous are exerting negative pressure on you.

It takes a lot of practice to learn how to resist peer pressure in a way that lets you keep your friends without putting yourself in danger.

Strategies: Handling Negative Peer Pressure

Try using these four steps to help you resist negative peer pressure:

1. **Identify the problem.** If you speed up you are putting yourself in serious danger. If you don't speed up, you will fall behind your friends.
2. **Think about the consequences.** If you choose to keep up, you could get into a crash and be injured. You could wreck your bike. On the other hand, you could lose face with your friends.
3. **Identify alternatives.** What would happen if you rode at a safe speed and met up with them later?
4. **Follow through.** Choose an alternative and take action. Put your safety first.



Warning

You are not allowed to carry passengers with a learner's licence or with a Class 6 or 8 licence that has a passenger restriction.

Passengers

Thinking Like a Rider

You finally have your Class 6 licence. To celebrate, you are going out with two friends for a ride. But first, you have to pick up one of the friends and take him over to his sister's where he left his bike. Just before you leave the house, you start thinking about how your bike will handle with a passenger. Will it accelerate as quickly? How will it take the curves? How will the brakes respond? Will you have trouble because of the extra weight?

What should you do?

Carrying passengers

Whenever you carry a passenger, you will need to make adjustments both to your riding techniques and to your motorcycle in order to compensate for the extra weight of the passenger.

Applying Your RoadSense



RoadSense Tip

Never carry a passenger unless you are experienced and confident of your riding skills. (Experts suggest you have about 2,500 kilometres of riding experience before carrying a passenger.)

Carrying a passenger will affect how your bike handles. You may have slower acceleration and need longer braking distances. Your turns may be disturbed because the passenger leans more than you expect. The balance of the bike may be off, especially at lower speeds.

Check the following to prepare your bike to take a passenger:

- tire pressure (check your owner's manual for specifications for carrying extra weight)
- suspension to handle extra weight
- headlamp aim, if necessary
- mirrors, after you and the passenger are seated on the bike

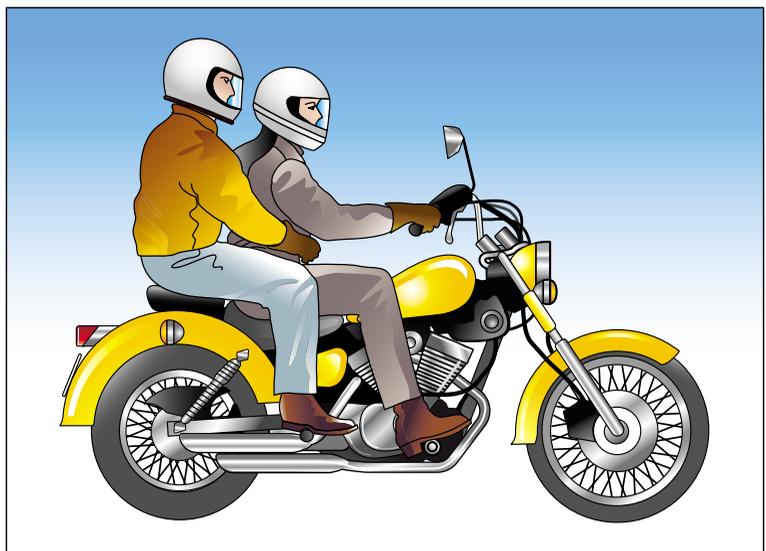
Strategies: Carrying Passengers Safely

To get passengers home safely:

- Have your passenger sit behind you on a proper seat with proper footrests.
- Avoid heavy braking and abrupt acceleration.
- Be prepared to ride at slower speeds, especially when turning or on curves.

Taking responsibility for passengers

If you are carrying a passenger, you are responsible for his or her safety.



This passenger is sitting in a safe riding position and is wearing the right gear.



RoadSense Tip

Make sure your passengers always wear a legal helmet and appropriate clothing and footwear. If they don't want to wear a helmet, remind them that a helmet must be used in B.C. and passengers without one can be fined.

Strategies: Keeping Passengers Safe

- Make sure your passenger has a helmet.
- Check that the passenger's gear is reflective and bright and adequate for the riding conditions.
- Do not let the passenger dismount while the bike is moving.
- Commit some time to teaching your passengers how to ride safely.
- Think carefully before taking a passenger – you are responsible for their safety.

Strategies: Being a Safe Passenger

- Always sit facing forward and astride the motorcycle.
- Always keep both feet on the passenger footrests.
- Go with the lean of the motorcycle.
- Hold onto the rider's waist or the grab rail for stability and safety.
- Keep your legs away from the exhaust system.
- Sit still and avoid turning around and looking behind, or leaning to the side to see ahead.
- Tighten your hold when the bike is about to stop or start or when the bike makes any sudden move.
- Agree on a way to let the rider know if you become frightened, so that the rider can pull over and discuss the situation.

Aggression on the Road

Thinking Like a Rider

It's late at night and you are riding in an unfamiliar neighbourhood. A vehicle comes speeding up behind you and sits right on your tail. The driver starts flicking the headlights back and forth from high to low beam.

What should you do?



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It is often difficult to know what to do when faced with road users who are aggressive. Their lack of courtesy and bad driving habits can lead to crashes. Although extreme aggression, or road rage, is not common, mild aggression can escalate if you are not careful. How should you respond?

Strategies: Handling Other Drivers' Aggression

When other drivers act aggressively:

- Respond with good manners – give the other road user plenty of room and the right-of-way.
- As a rider you are vulnerable. Never return aggression – avoid eye contact and don't gesture back. Keep away from erratic road users.
- Keep calm.
- If you're in a situation in which you feel threatened, get help. Ride to a location where there are plenty of people (e.g., a shopping mall or police station).
- Do not go home if you are being followed.

Preventing aggression

How can you make sure you don't increase the anger or frustration of other drivers and riders? If you use your road sense, allow plenty of space and give others the right-of-way, you can help prevent situations that cause aggression.

Strategies: Preventing Aggression

Help prevent drivers from becoming frustrated or angry:

- Don't park in spaces reserved for people with disabilities.
- Never use turning lanes or shoulders to get ahead of backed-up traffic.
- Don't split lanes.
- Don't race your engine unnecessarily.
- Loud noise causes stress and irritation. How quiet is your bike?
- Follow at a generous distance.
- Give up the right-of-way.
- Move over for merging traffic.
- Pull over and let the other road users go by if you are impeding traffic.
- Don't block passing lanes.
- Signal your intentions well before you move.
- Don't use your horn unnecessarily.



Right now in British Columbia, there is a very long list of people waiting for organ and tissue transplants. For some, the gift of an organ will not come in time. Yet only 12% of people in BC are registered to be an organ donor.

Everyone has the potential to be an organ donor. There are no age limits.

Organ Donor Registry

Until a few years ago, you could have a decal placed on your driver's licence to indicate your intent to become an organ donor.

The Organ Donor Registry, implemented in 1997, replaced all previous ways of indicating your decision about organ donation. The Registry allows you to make an educated decision about organ donation and legally record your decision. It also removes this difficult decision from surviving family members during the grieving period – a time when this kind of decision is most difficult. The Registry is accessible 24 hours a day to health care professionals in an Emergency Room and/or an Intensive Care Unit.

How to register

Organ Donor Registration forms are available at all ICBC driver licensing offices, ICBC Autoplan brokers, and ICBC Claim Centres.

You can also register online at <http://www.transplant.bc.ca> or by calling 1-800-663-6189.

Please register to be an organ donor. You could save a life. And live on.