

Sheriff Points
By your Sheriff Byron Nogelmeier

Ride Safe

Spring is in the air and with the warmer weather comes motorcycles. Most of us with the so called HOG, crotch rocket, or any other slang name you can think of, have been waiting all winter to get back on our bikes. Before we get to carried away, all should do a general maintenance of our bike- check the oil, air in our tires, lights and turn signals, make sure the cables don't stick and when you roll out the shed make sure the brakes still work. These are just a few tips that I can think of off the top of my head. I would suggest that you get out your owner's manual and see if there are some specific things that you should do.

Now once the maintenance is all done, we can hop on and go for that first ride of the season. What about proper clothing? The most important piece of equipment you should wear is your helmet. I am very guilty of not wearing mine and I for one should know better. Does it sound like I am scolding myself? Well, I am. Wear your helmet if you so desire. It is not a law in South Dakota unless you are under the age of 18.

Foot wear: Sturdy over the ankle boots can protect you from a variety of riding hazards. They protect you from burns from hot exhaust pipes and impact from flying debris. If you crash, boots can provide against foot and ankle injury.

Gloves: Gloves can protect hands from blisters, wind, sun and cold. It will also help prevent cuts, bruises and abrasion in a crash.

Clothing: Jackets pants and riding suits will help you stay comfortable while riding in adverse weather conditions. In a crash, proper riding gear can prevent injury.

Remember if your motorcycle is not equipped with a windshield you must wear eye protection.

When you are out riding your motorcycle use the **S.E.E.** system

Search around you for potential hazards

Evaluate any possible hazards such as railroad tracks, turning cars, etc.

Execute the proper action to avoid the hazard.

If you use the **S.E.E.** system you will cover many happier and safer miles on your motorcycle.

If you are riding in a group, take advantage of the staggered formation. The lead rider should ride in the left third of the lane, while the next rider strays in the right third of the lane. You as a rider should be two seconds behind the rider who is directly in front of you and only one second behind the staggered rider.

- : It takes up less space on the highway than a single- file line
- : It provides adequate space cushion for each rider
- : It is easier for other motorist to see and is less likely to be separated in traffic.

Riding side by side is never recommended. This does not give either rider an adequate space cushion or room to maneuver.

One of the biggest challenges group riders have is staying together.

Now that we have covered many of the safety issues that you the motorcycle driver have. Let's talk a little bit about the general public traveling in a car and what they can do to make our ride safe on the roadway. When you are traveling in a car, always be alert for motorcycle traffic and all others for that matter. Most, if not all, motorcycles travel with their headlights on which should make them more visible to you. When traveling in cities always be careful at intersections where a motorcycle may be hidden by parked vehicles or other things that can obscure your vision. A person can always listen for those darn loud pipes. Most Harley Davidson riders will tell you loud pipes save lives. I may agree to a point, that is until they become obnoxious. I hope mine are not.

To learn more about motorcycle safety you can go online to www.msf-usa.org or www.nationalpremium.com/groupriding .

I hope this article will give both motorcyclist and non motorcyclist some reminders what to look for when you are out traveling in the spring and summer months. Remember - Live to Ride and Ride to Live and be careful.