



QUICK TIPS: Guidelines For Riding With A Passenger On Your Motorcycle

Legal Considerations

1. All state laws and requirements for carrying a passenger must be followed.
2. Some states have specific equipment requirements. Examples: the motorcycle must have passenger footrests, passengers must be able to reach the footrests, and a motorcycle must have a separate seating area for a passenger.
3. The decision to carry a child, assuming all safety and legal factors have been considered, is left to the parent or guardian. Ensure that the child is mature enough to handle the responsibilities, tall enough to reach the footrests, wears a properly fitted helmet and other protective gear, and holds onto you or the passenger hand-holds. Check your state's laws; a few states have set minimum ages for motorcycle passengers.

Operator Preparation

1. Passengers should be considered as a second "active" rider so they can help ensure that safety and procedural operations are correctly followed.
2. A passenger will affect the handling characteristics of a motorcycle due to the extra weight and independent motion.
3. A passenger tends to move forward in quick stops and may "bump" your helmet with theirs.
4. Starting from a stop may require more throttle and clutch finesse.
5. Braking procedures may be affected. Braking sooner and/or with greater pressure may be required.
6. More weight over the rear tire may increase the usefulness and stopping power of the rear brake, especially in quick stop situations.
7. Riding on a downgrade will cause braking distance to increase compared to a flat surface.
8. Extra caution is called for in a corner because of the extra weight. Cornering clearances may be affected.
9. More time and space will be needed for passing.
10. The effects of wind, especially side wind, may be more pronounced.

Motorcycle Preparation

1. The motorcycle must be designed to accommodate a passenger.
2. The motorcycle owner's manual should be reviewed for manufacturer's tips about motorcycle setup as well as any related operational recommendations.
3. The motorcycle's suspension and tire pressure may need adjustment.
4. Care should be taken to not exceed the weight limitations specified in the owner's manual.

Passenger Preparation

1. Passengers should be tall enough to reach the footrests and mature enough to handle the responsibilities.
2. Passengers should wear proper protective gear.
3. Passengers should receive a safety briefing (see #7 below).
4. Passengers should consider themselves a second operator and share responsibility for safety.

General Safety Considerations

1. You need to be experienced in the motorcycle's operation and have a safety-oriented attitude before taking on the added responsibility of carrying a passenger.
2. Practice low-speed clutch/throttle control as well as normal and emergency braking in a low-risk area like an open parking lot, with a passenger.
3. Use caution in cornering and develop cornering skills over time to ensure passenger comfort and safety.
4. Use caution in corners as clearance may be affected.
5. Use MSF's Search, Evaluate, Execute strategy (**SEESM**) to increase time and space safety margins.
6. Allow time for a passenger to adjust to the sense of speed and the sensation of leaning; speeds should be conservatively safe and reasonable until a passenger acclimates to the proper riding techniques.
7. Ensure passengers follow safety procedures:
 - a. Complete personal protective gear is properly in use.
 - b. Hold operator's waist or hips, or motorcycle's passenger hand-holds.
 - c. Keep feet on footrests at all times, including while stopped.
 - d. Keep hands and feet away from hot or moving parts.
 - e. When in a corner, look over the operator's shoulder in the direction of the corner.
 - f. Avoid turning around or making sudden moves that might affect operation.
 - g. If crossing an obstacle, stand on the pegs with the knees slightly bent and allow the legs to absorb the shock upon impact.
8. Allow more time for passing.
9. Be ready to counter the effects of wind.
10. Avoid extreme speeds and dramatic lean angles.
11. Be ready for a passenger "bump" with their helmet or with their whole body sliding forward during hard braking.
12. Start the motorcycle before the passenger mounts.
13. Have the passenger mount after the motorcycle's stand is raised and the motorcycle is securely braced. Hold the front brake lever if the surface isn't level.
14. Have the passenger dismount first.
15. Annually complete a **Basic RiderCourse 2 – Skills Practice** with a passenger.
16. Have frequent passengers complete a **Basic RiderCourse** so they can better understand the operator's task.