

CROSSING OBSTACLES

Mark Welch — Safety Officer



Have you ever been riding down the roadway when suddenly there is something laying in the roadway ahead of you?

Now it's time to react!

You have three options we will discuss. The first option is to try to stop. Some bikes are equipped with an anti-locking braking system (ABS) so you don't have to be concerned with your tires sliding. You want to apply pressure to both brakes evenly and gradually increase the pressure on the controls as you begin to stop while keeping the handlebars square.

Take care not to lock either wheel if your bike is not ABS equipped. Should you lock up the front wheel, you should release the pressure and reapply. If the rear wheel locked up, you would not want to release the pressure on the rear brake. Doing so could cause the bike to overturn. No matter what braking system you have, you should practice a quick stop periodically.

There is no need to go fast, about 12-18 mph is plenty fast enough. Any empty parking lot will suffice but if you have not experienced engaging the ABS, you might want to try it out before you must use it in a critical situation.

Your next option is to swerve to avoid the obstacle. The important thing to remember is to not brake while attempting to swerve. You can swerve, then brake, but do not brake while swerving. Your tires only have a certain amount of traction, and you want to use it all to swerve or brake. Keep your body upright and press on

the handgrip in the direction you want to swerve and press on the opposite handgrip to upright the motorcycle. Again, parking lot practice! You can try to swerve around a car in the parking lot and if you miss it, you have successfully swerved. Just kidding, you know the parking lot needs to be empty.

The last option is to try to cross the obstacle if it is small enough to successfully cross. As you approach the obstacle, rise up off the seat to keep your back from absorbing the impact. Keep your knees slightly bent to use as shock absorbers. Just before the front wheel



reaches the obstacle, blip the throttle quickly. (That means roll it on then immediately roll it off.) Rolling the throttle on will shift the weight of the bike toward the rear and take weight off the front wheel.

After the front wheel is over, rolling off the throttle will take the power away from the rear wheel so the object you are crossing won't be propelled away from the bike as you cross over.

Don't forget to be looking 12 seconds ahead!

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MARK