

TRAVEL LANE LANES

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Hello HOGs!

I have been asked to write a safety article in Lee's absence while Judy and he attend to a family matter. Keep them in your thoughts and prayers.

Several years ago, I had the opportunity to attend training for a rather unique method of riding in traffic that I thought I would share with you. If you have attended training through the Motorcycle Safety Foundation, you may recall your travel lane has three lanes in it for you to use. They are identified as LP1 (the third of the lane closest to the centerline), LP2 (the middle of your lane) and LP3 (third of the lane closest to the road edge line).

Waaaay back when I was in high school and took driver's ED, we watched a film that instructed motorcyclists to always stay in LP1 so that they would be visible to the drivers in cars they were following and to oncoming drivers. That was back when a 15 year old person with a restricted license could operate a motorcycle that was 100cc's or less.

We have made a lot of progress from there with motorcycle training.

The advice in the film was not bad, but it eliminated 2/3's of the lane for motorcyclists to use. The method I am about to describe has two advantages. When you are out on the open road and you see an oncoming vehicle, move from LP1 to LP3. One advantage is that it gives you more distance from the vehicle and more time to react should the driver do something foolish. The other advantage is that it moves your headlight laterally, which is easier for the oncoming driver to see.

The steady, straight line movement of the headlight on your bike toward the oncoming car can be difficult

to see and makes it exceedingly difficult for the other driver to estimate your speed. Although the headlight appears to get bigger as the two vehicles get closer, it is difficult to perceive the increase in size. Compare that to a car with two headlights traveling at the same speed. The perceived increase in headlight size is the same as it is on a motorcycle.

What is different, and much easier to detect, is the perceived distance between the headlights increases as the car gets closer, making it easier to estimate speed. Moving from near the centerline toward the road edge line will help to attract attention. Once the car has passed, move back into LP1.

Let's say that you are practicing this technique and approach a car and move to LP3 when you notice another car approaching an intersection to your right. When this happens, move to LP2 and split the difference between the two cars.

An unintended consequence of employing this riding style is that it forces you to watch for traffic ahead so that you do not get passed by a vehicle coming the opposite direction while in LP1. It is always a good thing to pay attention to traffic while riding your motorcycle.

By the way, I was not completely honest when I said there were two advantages to this method. There is a third advantage. It makes riding on Florida's straight roadways way more fun!

Give it a try.

MARK