



CHAPTER RIDER EDUCATOR

Chapter FL1-F2

A Matter of Seconds

As I mentioned at the June meeting one of my motorcycle heroes was Lawrence Grodsky who wrote a column in Rider Magazine. He was widely recognized as one of the most knowledgeable motorcycle safety experts in the country. One of the things I'm sure he was acutely aware of was that our sport is inherently dangerous and that we can only minimize the risk. Sometimes a close call or a disaster are only a matter of seconds. It makes me wonder if Grodsky had been 5 seconds either side of that deer... This is some information I gleaned from one of his pieces sometime ago reminding us that most things are just a matter of seconds.

One Second- When riding in a group the length of time you should wait before pulling away from a stop after the bike in front of you moves out.

Two Seconds- The minimum following distance from the bike directly in front of you. That means your distance increases as 'your speed increases.

Three Seconds- and I Quote "The minimum time needed to apply brakes smoothly before a bend. The idea is to efficiently transfer weight onto the front wheel and the return it to the back wheel. That takes time and when it's done effectively the brake light typically remains lit for at least three seconds.

Three/Four Seconds- is the frequency you need to check your mirrors in heavy traffic. **Four Seconds-** Minimum sight line for a corner and the maximum amount of time to execute a pass on a two lane road...GET 'ER Done!

Five/Six Seconds- Normal mirror checks and the interval between signaling and executing a turn or interstate exit.

12 Seconds- Normal scanning distance. The ideal distance you would like to see ahead in your path of travel.

How do we determine these distances? By counting and practicing of course. While maintaining a constant speed pick a spot on the road or a fence post and then count, one thousand one, one thousand two etc. Then practice, practice and then practice some more! Like everything else with the aging process (and yes Sue really did get me a membership to AARP for my last birthday) speed and distance judgment head south so practice becomes more important with every passing day!