

Chapter FL1-F2

QUICK THINKING EQUALS SAFETY

By Dick Rubin, California GWRRA member



No matter how careful we are, there will be times when we find ourselves in a tight spot. The chances of getting out safely depend on the ability to react quickly and properly. The most important emergency skills are those needed to make quick stops and quick turns. These skills should be practiced in safe areas before they have to be used on the road.

QUICK STOPS - To stop quickly, apply both brakes. Don't be shy about using the front brake, but don't grab it either. Apply firm, steadily increasing pressure to the brake lever, while simultaneously applying the rear brake with the same firmness. Don't stomp on the rear brake, or it may lock. If it does lock, you can still control the cycle and stop quickly, as long as the motorcycle is upright, and going in a straight line. If you must stop quickly while turning, conditions may not always permit you to straighten up and then stop. In such cases, apply the brakes, **GENTLY**, and start slowing down. As you slow down, you can reduce the angle of lean, and apply more brake pressure until the motorcycle is straight and maximum brake pressure is possible. In either case, remember that the bike should be straight up when you come to a full stop. If you straighten the handlebars in the last few feet of stopping, you know the bike will be straight up, and in balance, when you put your foot down.

EVASIVE MANEUVERS - What happens if that truck in front of you drops a couple of logs of wood? Or the cell phone user doesn't "see" you, and cuts you off? The only way to avoid a collision would be to make an evasive maneuver. Steering the bike is **NOT** the answer. The key to making an evasive maneuver is to get the motorcycle to lean quickly in the direction you wish to turn. The sharper the turn, the more the bike must lean.

o get the bike to lean quickly, press on the inside of the handle grip in the same direction you want to turn. If you want to go right, press on the inside of the right handle grip. A simple maneuver, but one that needs to be practiced to be believed. Try it. While riding in a straight line, press the inside right handle grip - the bike will go right; press the inside left handle grip - the bike will go left. Practice making the quick turns so you can perform them instinctively whenever the need arises. In making an evasive maneuver, try to stay in your own lane. You should be able to squeeze by most obstacles without leaving your lane. The moment you change lanes, your risk of being hit by a car increases. Change lanes only if you have enough time to check to see if the lane is clear. The bottom line: when faced with an unexpected obstacle, stop if you can, **SAFELY**, or swerve around it, using the press, press technique. This morning we've discussed the skills a rider can apply in an emergency situation. Of course these techniques can become instinctive if we practice them often enough, especially if the environment in which we practice is safe, and supportive. Guess what we are leading up to? Parking Lot Practices are an ideal environment to develop your skills. We are planning to provide PLP's to all of you this year so stay tuned for more info. This is your opportunity to start developing the skills you will need to protect yourselves on the road.

Submitted By Jim Waddell and Linda Sherrod