



CHAPTER RIDER EDUCATOR

Chapter FL1-F2

We are in the middle of our prime riding season and I think it's time to bring up a subject that's very important to all of us. That is unscheduled departures from the paved surface of the highway. That's right, running off of the road. Oops! According to the "Hurt" report, after you work your way thru drunk driving accidents and other people running into you, we come to the largest cause of single vehicle accidents. It's failing to keep the bike on the road in turns. (Now I know some people manage to run off the road while going in a straight line, but I'm not going there.) Some of you know what I mean by first hand knowledge, and others have had close calls. There are many reasons for this including not judging your entry speed correctly, inattention, distractions, decreasing radius turns, road damage, sand or other objects, and the famous oncoming vehicle that wants your lane. Now, what can we do to be prepared for these problems? I think many of these accidents happen because the driver was not prepared to turn. When we ride we tend to relax and lean back against the backrest, feet on the highway boards and arms extended. This is not a position that allows us to make precise steering adjustments. We need to make a commitment to the turn. To convince your mind and body that you are serious about cornering you need to take a positive riding position. By this I mean with feet flat on the foot pegs or boards, butt slid back in the seat, which gives you a forward lean, and shoulders forward and prepared to apply firm input to the handlebars. Select the proper gear for the speed of the turn and use the engine to help you slow to your entry speed. Remember the MSF training for cornering, slow, look, lean, and roll. Practice this on all of your corners and it will become second nature.

One of the hardest things we have to do on a motorcycle is to put everything else out of our mind and drive the bike. That means not getting distracted by other things like adjacent traffic, animals and birds, and co-rider requests to change the radio station. We sometimes have to build our own "cone of silence" to concentrate on the job at hand. Remember, the key to safer cornering is practice, practice, and practice. This builds the proper habits.

Ride safely, think safety. Jim Waddell & Linda Sherrod