

# Motorcycle Etiquette You Absolutely Must Know Before You Ride

## 10 Rules to Make Riding More Fun for Everyone

### 1. Obey the rules of the road

When you're on a bike, you are a representative of every other biker. Whether or not it's right, other drivers don't differentiate one biker from another. When you weave in and out of traffic, cut off a driver, or cut to the front of the line at a toll booth, you make every other biker look bad.

### 2. Obey the rules of the road with other bikers

Most traffic laws are intended to keep people safe, so when you pass another biker, use a separate lane. Passing in the same lane puts both you and the other biker in a potentially dangerous situation. (One caveat is that if you are on a busy road, and there is room for another biker to safely pass you within your lane, you can wave them through.)

### 3. Obey the bikers' rules of the road

Beyond the general traffic rules, there are unwritten rules bikers follow with one another. One of the most important is to check on other riders if you see them stopped on the roadside. It could be they just need a break. It could also be that they are out of gas, had a flat, or they're having engine trouble. In any case, what goes around comes around, and you'll be glad to have the help when it's you stuck on the side of a lonely highway.

### 4. Don't skip the wave unless you have to

The "motorcycle wave" is synonymous with riding. It's an acknowledgment of the familial ties among riders. But it isn't always appropriate. Safety and control of your bike always come first, and other riders should understand if you aren't in a position to take a hand off the controls.

### 5. Be respectful

Not everyone can afford a custom Sportster. And not everyone wants a Kawasaki Ninja. The fact remains, whether you're on a Goldwing or a Yamaha V Star 250, you're

on a bike, and so is your fellow rider. Respect that. Also, never ask if you can ride someone else's bike.

## **6. Pass courteously**

"When you're cruising on the open highway and you approach another Harley-Davidson rider, you have to ride with them for a few hundred feet before going past them. This isn't a law or anything; it is proper etiquette to show other riders your respect."

Although this is written with Harleys in mind, the same could be said for anytime you approach another biker.

## **7. Don't assume**

Don't assume it's okay to join another rider or group of riders on the road.

## **8. Riding in groups**

Each riding club or motorcycle club has its own personality, but there are some universal guidelines for riding in groups. Maintain your position in the group, although you can and should wave faster riders ahead. It's okay to fall behind as you can always catch up when the group stops for a break. Remember, it's not a race. Riding ahead, however, is rude.

## **9. Ride in formation**

Along with keeping your place within the group, you also need to maintain your spot within your lane. A staggered formation gives you better visibility, and it also gives you more space and opportunity to react to road hazards or accidents.

## **10. Don't ignore your skill level**

This is perhaps the single most important piece of motorcycle etiquette. Whether you're on a solo ride, a quick trip to the store, or on a long-distance ride with a group, don't ignore your comfort level with your bike. You don't have to be the first one off the line at a stop light. You don't need to take that curve as fast as another rider, nor do you need to push your bike to top speeds on the highway. You know your skill level. Trust that. After all, you're already on a bike; you've got nothing to prove.