

## 1b - POSITIONING SKILLS

General road positioning is determined by the presence or otherwise of hazards.

We try to minimise danger by equalising the space between the lateral (sideways) hazards, also front and rear - but that's another story (the "space bubble", see below).

Though, at times, we may need to create more space between a greater hazard and less space on the lesser hazard.

Children on the nearside or oncoming vehicles are two examples where extra space (safety margin) may be appropriate.

A 60/40 split between greater and lesser dangers may be considered suitable. Though a 90/10 split may be required at times. I am thinking about horses, primarily, here.

If space (safety) reduces by any significant factor then speed may need to reduce to compensate, it may need to come down anyway.

### MotorCycle Road Craft, Chapter 7. pages 116 -124.

Generally, the offside position (default position) gives better views on straight urban roads and keeps oneself well clear of and gives improved views into side roads on the left.

Additionally, there is the psychological benefit; you appear larger/more important to motorists in the side roads than you would if riding nearer the gutter.

This position also coincides (approximately) with the off-side wheels/driver's seating position of other vehicles; this makes you visible to drivers of cars in both their interior and offside mirrors (if they take the trouble to look?) If you are riding in the tyre tracks of other vehicles you are less likely to collect road debris, nails and punctures since this area will have been "swept" by other vehicles.

There is a ready "escape route", with only a slight deviation, along the offside of the vehicle if required.

When riding in the absence of other road users or hazards, then being along the centre of the road, though not actually on the cat's eyes or white lines, equalises the dangers and improves your chances if animals should emerge/cross from either side.

## SPACE BUBBLE.

Always try to drive/ride in a “**space bubble**”. That

Avoid allowing yourself to become the “**meat-in-the-sandwich**”.

That is, avoid riding with vehicles to either side of you as much as is reasonably practicable? Certainly don't "linger" alongside another vehicle, if they were to veer towards you they would "take you out".

This is particularly important where there are junctions or turnings on the opposite side to where the vehicle(s) is/are - the other vehicle(s) may turn suddenly. Especially applicable at motorway, dual-carriageway and ring road exit slip-roads .

Try to have empty road space (**escape area**) on, at least, one side and preferably both sides of yourself, particularly when travelling in lanes, in addition to space to front and rear.

When riding, unavoidably, in close proximity to other road users, consider covering the **horn button** - just in case. Similarly, when overtaking at speed. A long horn note may be needed before overtaking - though in Britain this is often taken to be a rebuke by others, so may be mis-understood.

Is the “**2 second rule**” adhered to, on dry roads? 4 seconds on wet roads.

If traffic behind is too close (**tail-gating**) try to create a longer gap ahead of you - that is, increase the 2 or 4 second gap, to allow extra braking distance both for you and the “**tail-gater**”.

Consider trying to get the “**tail-gater**” in front of you. Then YOU can control your safety margin (space).

When stopping in traffic, assuming filtering is not viable, stay well back from the vehicle ahead - at least, a bike length, possibly more. You need to leave sufficient space to enable you to ride around the vehicle in the, admittedly unlikely, event of a vehicle from behind being unable to stop. You are, of course, watching your mirrors whilst waiting, aren't you?

Another point worthy of note, that many may not appreciate, when stopping - either in traffic queues or when parking - avoid doing so where there are “**dropped kerbs**” (including traffic islands). These are specifically designed to allow easy access to wheelchairs and prams. Also for cyclists at Toucan crossings (whatever they are?)

**KEY POINT:** - if using the off-side of the road, for whatever reason, the critical element is that you **MUST** be able to regain your own part of the road without causing danger or inconvenience to any other road user. That is, it must be **SAFE, LEGAL** and **CONVENIENT** for other road users.