What is Advanced Riding? (E.& O.E.)

Many things, of course, but it is nothing without concentration, observation, anticipation and **EARLY PLANNING.**

The very last TWO words in the sentence above, really sums up, what being Advanced is all about.

Essential reading: -

MotorCycle RoadCraft. - (the Police Rider's Handbook).

Don't be put off by the "P" word.

ADVANCED RIDING - WHAT IS IT?

A brief synopsis of what it's all about.

Here are a few thoughts regarding what I look for when doing initial assessments on riders, and when conducting pre-test re-assessments. If the terminology used is not fully understood, please seek clarification.

Positioning skills.

When riding along normally does the rider seek to maximise safety margins?

That is, move away from possible developing hazards.

For example, cycles, pedestrians, animals or oncoming vehicles, vehicles waiting in or approaching from a side road on the left (or on the right in one-way streets if riding in the right hand lane).

Generally, one seeks to ride mid-way between hazards, but be prepared to prioritise between greater and lesser hazards (say, a 60/40 split) and adjust the space accordingly.

If adequate safety margins (space) cannot be achieved then speed must come down. It may need to come down in any case.

When following “large” vehicles, does the rider select a position to maintain an optimum view of the road ahead?

Where advantageous taking views along the nearside and/or offside

Does the rider try to ride in his/her own “space bubble” – that is avoid riding with vehicles to either side, as much as is reasonably practicable?

This is particularly important where there are junctions or turnings on the opposite side to where the vehicle(s) is/are.

When riding in, unavoidable, close proximity to other road users, consider covering the horn button - just in case.

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-second space.

When stopping behind traffic, assuming filtering is ill advised, is a large gap ahead retained (at least, a bike length, maybe more, to allow easy manoeuvrability around the vehicle in front should it become necessary.

Keep watching your mirrors, maybe a vehicle from behind can't/won't stop. Have your "escape" plan worked out.

In all situations try to have a "plan B" and maybe "plan C" and "plan D" also where possible.

When riding through bends or negotiating roundabouts, providing traffic conditions, etc. allow, are smoother/straighter lines followed?

Observational skills.

Are "cross" observations taken, on the approach to/at road junctions, especially those controlled by traffic lights?

The fact that you may have priority (not "right of way") is no guarantee of safety.

When approaching bends, especially right hand bends, does the rider adopt the best road position to achieve the optimum view into and through the bend, without compromising safety or stability?

With left-hand bends, does the rider position for view, providing that safety/stability is not compromised.

On narrow (ish), restricted view left-hand bends, view should be sacrificed for safety (away from oncoming vehicles), perhaps riding more centre of lane, rather than just left of centre of road.

Is the candidate looking for other vehicles at motorway entrances/exits that may be joining or leaving, often at the last moment?

Similarly, on dual carriageways and other multi-lane roads.

Acceleration sense (timed approaches).

When approaching stopped or slowing situations, is acceleration sense used to minimise the use and wear of the brakes, fuel and suspension etc.?

Does the rider use acceleration sense to minimise the likelihood of having to actually stop (every time you stop you become a stationary "target" for others to run into – 1 mph is better than none).

Does the candidate, when approaching a "give-way" situation, take early observations (that is, cross views, on the approach where lack of buildings or gaps between allow, rather than merely AT the junction) together with a suitable approach speed, again, to minimise the likelihood of having to stop?

Filtering skills.

Used when applicable, to make progress, usually between, stationary/slow moving lanes of vehicles.

Speed to be about no more than 10 mph higher than other vehicles though not at speeds above 30 mph.

If traffic is held up by, say, temporary traffic lights and a large safety margin (space) is possible, perhaps by judicious use of the offside of the road, for example, then higher speeds may be both possible and desirable,

(space + view = speed).

But this is really overtaking stationary traffic rather than filtering.

When filtering past large vehicles extra caution is required due to the greatly restricted view.

Increased potential danger when vehicles are stationary or very slow moving – cycles, pedestrians, animals or vehicles crossing are more likely.

Signalling skills.

Does the rider, when required, give signals in good time or are they given as the manoeuvre is taking/about to take place?

Does the rider fail to use needed signals or use unnecessary signals?

Any or all of these three are indications that their observational skills are lacking or that they have a reduced understanding of the road or traffic situation.

The ability to correctly omit signals is possibly the best evidence of good Concentration, Observation, Anticipation and Planning skills available to an assessor.

Overtaking skills.

Does the rider utilise the “Catch, Match, Dispatch” technique?

Closing up from the “following” position to the “overtake” position when an overtake can be anticipated.

And “dropping back” to the “following” position again if the overtake does not develop.

Is the “slingshot” technique used when appropriate?

Does the rider “cut in” on the overtaken vehicle thereby “stealing” its braking space?

Does the rider have to “force” a way back in between vehicles?

General skills.

Are good “slow riding” skills shown, perhaps during “filtering” or on the approach to junctions, or do these need to be demonstrated separately?

Does the candidate use the “Hendon shuffle”? (see below).

Sometimes known as the “dancing bear” routine.

Does the rider “trail” a leg or legs when moving away or dangle a leg or legs when stopping?

Either creates potential instability.

Does the rider display a general air of confidence?

Is the rider decisive where necessary, yet courteous when needed?

Is the rider proactive to situations rather than merely reactive?

Is restraint shown where necessary?

Be particularly aware when riding through any “jaws of death” type of situation.

That is, for example, where a vehicle is waiting to emerge from the left and an oncoming vehicle is approaching or waiting to turn right across your path – you have NO "escape" route.

It is not the speed of the emerging/turning vehicle that will kill or seriously injure (KSI) you – but your speed might.

Be aware if riding with your dipped headlight on, going over a bump in the road may well appear to others that you have "flashed" your headlight and that they may take this to be an invitation to them to proceed.

Are lane changes made smoothly, without alarm or inconvenience to other road users?

Late or sudden swerves into another lane are indicative of poor planning.

THE VERY LAST WORD ABOVE (PLANNING) IS WHAT MAKE THE DIFFERENCE ABOUT BEING ADVANCED OR NOT AS "EARLY PLANNING" IS WHAT ADVANCED RIDING IS ALL ABOUT.

Dave Brook

Dry Lines and Happy Days.

THE HENDON SHUFFLE

Aka the "Dancing Bear Routine".

Named after the Police Driver/Rider Training College at Hendon.

The technique that used to be taught for stopping was something like this:-

- That the final braking effort should be with the foot-brake only, in order to achieve a smother, jerk-free stop – the front forks do not need to de-compress. Also, to show the brake light - on early and small modern, motorcycles the brake light only operates on the rear brake.
- Apply the front brake.
- Foot-brake foot to the ground.
- Gear change foot to engage neutral (unless the stop was very brief).
- Release clutch lever - saves wear on mechanism and stretch on springs and cable or pressure on hydraulics.
- Gear change foot back onto the ground.
- Foot brake to be re-applied (to show a brake light).

- Release the front brake, less likelihood of machine twisting if hit from behind.

When preparing to move off again:-

- Re-apply front brake.
- Foot brake foot to the ground.
- Clutch lever pulled in.
- Gear lever foot to engage the gear (usually, but not necessarily, first).
- Gear lever foot back to the ground.
- Foot brake to be re-applied.
- Release the front brake.
- Balance throttle setting with clutch and release of foot brake.
- Foot onto footrest as soon as one is moving.

Viewed by others this looks akin to the antics of a "dancing bear".

Nowadays, I believe, the more enlightened instructors recommend the following:-

- Graded or feathered braking with both brakes to achieve a smooth/jerk free stop.

- Changing down the gears towards the end of braking, using either sequential or block gear changing - here is a topic in its own right - see MotorCycle RoadCraft, chapter 4, page 74).

- Engaging neutral, just before actually stopping – to keep coasting to a minimum – placing the, usually nowadays, right (brake) foot on the ground. Natural road camber assists those who, like me, suffer from "Duck's Disease" (little, short legs).

- Keeping the front brake applied to hold the bike and show the stop light. Left foot ready to engage gear and go, go, go if danger appears from the rear.

You are, aren't you, watching your mirrors until you have the protection of a few vehicles stopped behind you?

And you will have stopped, well away, at least, a bike length, possibly more, from the vehicle ahead – assuming filtering was ill-advised - so that you can easily ride around the vehicle in front of you should the need arise.

When preparing to move off: -

- Clutch in and engage gear.

- Balance throttle, clutch and release of front brake (though if on a steep uphill slope the foot brake may need to be re-applied to prevent a roll back, it depends upon the skill of the rider).

And, yes, if one were moving off down a steep hill, or in slow moving traffic, then the foot brake might also be needed.

- Foot onto footrest as soon as one is moving.

- Avoid “trailing” either foot when on the move (either moving off or prior to stopping), a la many racing motorcyclists, it is unnecessary, untidy and reduces machine control.

Now, isn’t that a wee bit simpler?

Dave Brook

MIAM (car and motorcycle). RoSPA (RoADAR) Gold Standard (car and motorcycle)

DOTADI - Approved Driving Instructor - car.