

## Motorcycle Mentorship Module 10

# Highway Hypnosis





**Warning:** Incorrect or inaccurate information could lead to tragic results on the road. If a question arises that is not covered in the guide and you don't know the answer from your own experience and training, simply state, "That is a great question, I'll get back to you with the answer."

**Your Service Safety Center will help with these types of questions should they arise. Their numbers are as follows:**

US Army Driving Directorate: **334.255.3039**

USMC Safety Division: **703.604.4459**

US Navy Shore Safety: **757.444.3520 x7165**

US Air Force Safety Center: **505.846.0728**

USCG Safety Division: **202.475.5206**



## Preface

**About:** The Defense Safety Oversight Council (DSOC) Motorcycle Mentorship Modules are a set of thirty six (36) facilitation modules designed for the purpose of increasing rider knowledge on various aspects of riding and providing additional capability for self-policing within peer groups. The modules are intended as a mechanism to further decrease motorcycle related mishaps and fatalities within Department of Defense (DoD) by encouraging riders to talk, live, and think about the topic.

**Using the Module:** The module content enclosed is intended as a facilitation guide to assist you with discussing the topic. However, it is still critical to use your skills and talent to engage participants and develop “buy-in” on this subject from your group. To maximize this, motivate and moderate your participants, control the accuracy of participant feedback, and be mindful of their time.

Page	Section
2	<b>Facilitation Guide – A brief overview on conducting a facilitated discussion of a topic</b>
3	<b>Module Overview</b> – This section provides the facilitator a synopsis of the topic, learning objectives, and the suggested environment, props, and handouts for conducting the module
4	<b>Module Discussion Introduction</b> – This section provides guidance to the facilitator in opening up the discussion and getting participants talking about the topic and their relevant experiences
5	<b>Discussion Areas</b> – This section provides various discussion topics, sample facilitation questions, and factual information for the facilitator to lead the discussion
8	<b>Wrap-Up</b> – This section provides guidance to the facilitator on wrapping up the topic discussion
9	<b>Feedback Form</b> – A feedback form to be given to all participants for their feedback on the module discussion
10	<b>Resources</b> – Additional resources and definitions to assist the facilitator in preparing for and conducting the topic facilitation
N/A	<b>Handouts</b> – Figures, pictures, diagrams, etc. to assist the facilitator to better demonstrate a topic idea

## Facilitation Guide for DSOC Mentorship Modules

It is recommended that this Mentorship Module be conducted in a facilitation style. Using the information provided in this Mentorship Module, you, as the facilitator, will lead a discussion on the subject. *You should not be conducting a lecture!* The facilitator's role is to help with how the discussion is proceeding. Participants will have much more "buy in" and connectivity with the information if they have input. One of your roles as the facilitator is to control the accuracy of the input and control the time. From the Mentorship Module, generate questions which will lead to group discussion. The more you let the group participate, the more success you will have.

### Competencies of a Facilitator:

- Prepare prior to the event
- Make sure everyone gets a chance to participate and help members to express themselves
- Ask rather than tell
- Honor the group, display respect for the members, and acknowledge participant contributions
- Ask for others' opinions
- Listen without interrupting
- Demonstrate professionalism and integrity

The key characteristic distinguishing facilitation from other types of leadership, like scripted training, is that the outcomes are never predetermined in a facilitative setting. Although the background information provided with this Module remains the same, the result will depend on the participants, the knowledge and experience they bring, and the information that they feel they need to take away. The group uses the activities provided by the facilitator to unlock expertise, ensure thorough discussion, stay focused and reach decisions that are better than those any individual could come up with alone.

At the beginning of each Mentorship Event, discuss why the participants are there and what they will receive as a result of participating. Adults have limited time and they want to know "What's in it for me?" A facilitator should make training fun. Encourage humor and laughter in your Mentorship Event.

### Principles of Adult Learning:

- ➔ Adult Learners want material that is relevant to them. "What's in it for me?" "What will I get out of this that will make a difference to me?"
- ➔ Adult Learners come to training events with varying amounts of experience. They like to share their experiences. If you have minimal or no motorcycle experience, you can still draw from your group.
- ➔ Even if you have motorcycle experience, you should draw from your group because people tend to remember what "they" said longer than what you said. Information that they "own" is more valuable to them.
- ➔ Facilitators are not always subject matter experts; nor do they need to be. Facilitators may draw on the existing knowledge of the participants and the information provided in these Modules.

## Section I: Module Overview

**Time Frame:** One 30-50 minute facilitator-led discussion

**Level of Prior Knowledge:** Participants should be able to operate a motorcycle at a novice level.

**Synopsis:** The definition of Highway Hypnosis and identifying factors that can contribute to Highway Hypnosis are covered. Topics are explored to increase awareness of the causes Highway Hypnosis and what can be done to prevent or reduce its onset.

### Learning Objectives:

- Define Highway Hypnosis
- Identify factors present at the onset of Highway hypnosis
- Identify conditions of susceptibility
- Recognize Highway Hypnosis
- Understand strategies in avoiding Highway Hypnosis

### Suggested Environment/Props/Handouts:

Any comfortable environment, such as classroom, conference room, auditorium, or stadium seating, is appropriate.

## Section II: Module Discussion

**Introduction:** Facilitate discussion: What is Highway Hypnosis?

Highway Hypnosis is a phenomenon that occurs when motor vehicle operators travel from a point A to a point B without conscious recollection of periods of travel time, making driving decisions as if on “auto-pilot.”

### **Activity:**

Have a participant stand next to or sit at their seat in the classroom and close their eyes. Then, have another participant enter the room and stand at some distance (preferably at least to the side, if not a little behind the first participant) in the classroom and hold up a random number of fingers. On a mark, the first student opens their eyes and locates the second student and calls out the number of fingers being held up. Time is noted upon successful identification of the student and the number of fingers recognized. This time, used with speed/distance traveled charts can highlight the distance traveled while “snapping to alertness” from a period of highway hypnosis and can demonstrate what can result from such a time lapse, in terms of highway disasters during driving.

## Suggested Discussion Areas:

### Discussion Area 1: What is Highway Hypnosis?

*Facilitation Questions* – Have you ever ridden a distance and been surprised to find yourself farther into your trip that you thought you should be? Has anyone ever found yourself at a destination before you thought you should have arrived? Have you ever ridden a distance and been surprised to find yourself farther into your trip that you thought you should be?

#### Facilitator Facts:

1. ***Traveling Without Recollection*** – Arriving at the destination without recalling the ride – along the lines of being in a “fog.”
2. ***Driving Without Attention*** – Driving/Riding without specific attention to task of driving/riding – on “auto-pilot.” It’s like driving by blind remote control – you get there, but don’t remember the specifics of the ride. Or you arrive at the wrong location and don’t realize it until you arrive.
3. ***White Line Fever*** – Becoming mesmerized by the white line dividing lanes or lines along the edge of the highway. You can drive for miles, focused only on the white lines of the highway – missing everything else on the roadway – including near miss hazards, road signs and other highway users.

### Discussion Area 2: How does Highway Hypnosis Happen?

*Facilitation Question* – Have your thoughts ever strayed to something else when you were riding? Have you ever “zoned out?”

#### Facilitator Facts:

1. ***Boredom*** – Riding long distances on “ordinary” roads where the scenery changes very little, if at all.
2. ***Complacency*** – Confidence in your riding ability can make you less attentive to current details of riding. An undesirable by product of confidence in your riding skills is that that confidence can make you less attentive to the “here and now” details of riding – the hazards that surround you now.
3. ***Daydreaming*** - Thoughts wander to upcoming activities, past activities – anything not directly focused on your current task at hand (note: may be a form of distracted driving).
4. ***Speed Control*** – Riding long distances with no speed variation – leads to boredom which starts the whole cycle over again.

### Discussion Area 3: Who is Susceptible to Highway Hypnosis?

*Facilitation Questions* – Who would be some prime candidates to fall prey to Highway Hypnosis?

#### Facilitator Facts:

1. **Lone Riders** – People traveling alone – no one to talk to, etc.
2. **Long Distance Riders** – People traveling long distances, concerned with “getting there.” These folks tend to focus on the road ahead of them – in a tunnel vision type scenario.
3. **Tired Riders** – People that have been riding a long time in a day. Excess fatigue can cause people to not pay attention to hazards around them while riding.
4. **Novice Riders** – Novices can become complacent in new skills. New riders can become so confident in their new skills that they fail to notice riding hazards in the environment around them.

### Discussion Area 4: Recognizing Highway Hypnosis

*Facilitation Question* – How can you determine if you have experienced Highway Hypnosis?

#### Facilitator Facts:

1. **Riding Without Recall** – Arriving someplace and not realizing/remembering the specifics of how you got there. This is like the “auto-pilot” talked previously – it’s great in airplanes, but not when riding a motorcycle.
2. **Near Misses** – Finding oneself in a near miss, running over the line, or hitting rumble strips could be a sign that you are in a fuzzy state of consciousness.
3. **Tunnel Vision** – If you are focusing solely on a point at the horizon and you tend to let the surrounding hazards fade away without rider recognition, then you are experiencing tunnel vision.
4. **Muscle Stiffness** – Muscle aches and pains are often due to not changing body position, and could be a sign that you are slipping into a state of “Highway Hypnosis.” Listen to your body – take a break.



## Discussion Area 5: Avoiding Highway Hypnosis

*Facilitation Questions* – What are some things you can do to prevent the onset of Highway Hypnosis?

### Facilitator Facts:

1. **Frequent Rest Stops/Breaks** – Stopping every half hour or so to stretch, especially on long rides. Gives your body a chance to regroup and revitalize awareness.
1. **Variety in Music** – Have music to listen to that changes tempos from song to song, vocals to instrumentals, etc. (Don't try to change stations or CDs while riding as it results in rider distraction; do so during a break)
2. **"Active" Riding** – Constant scanning – landscape, mirrors, roadway, traffic, gauges, and the Smith System for driving (five points – left rear view mirror, right rear view mirror, gauges, 3 seconds out, 12 seconds out) – make a point to keep your eyes moving and your brain processing what is seen.
3. **Change Riding Position** – As much as safely possible – shift body weight in the saddle. Sit straighter/bend more/change your posture periodically.
4. **Don't Ride During Normal Sleep Cycles** – The circadian rhythm is strong – riding long distances during normal sleep cycles can put you at risk for Highway Hypnosis. Your body wants to sleep at the time it's used to sleeping.
5. **Read All Traffic Signs** – Not only will it keep you well informed, it keeps your mind engaged.
6. **Ride in Groups / Have Intercom to Talk** – Ride with a passenger, take a riding partner, have an intercom system in your helmets so you can talk. Conversation is a great way to avoid highway hypnosis, but be careful and avoid too much distraction while talking.  
*Note: Don't take a passenger on your motorcycle until you feel fully comfortable with your own riding abilities and you are used to your motorcycle. We recommend that your first few rides with a passenger be with someone small who is experienced as a motorcycle passenger.*

## **Wrap-Up:**

Review all discussion area topic points – What is Highway Hypnosis, how does it happen, who is susceptible, recognizing Highway Hypnosis and how to avoid Highway Hypnosis.

### **Suggested Wrap-Up Discussion:**

- Ask participants how they would apply the knowledge gained from this discussion to future rides.
- Have any preconceptions about Highway Hypnosis changed?
- What is the best new idea they have gained from this module?

Distribute copies of the DSOC Motorcycle Mentorship Module Evaluation form to all participants and request that they deliver or mail the completed form to the Command or Command Safety Office for processing.

Remind everyone to ride safe, and see you at the next Mentorship Meeting.

# DSOC Motorcycle Mentorship Feedback Form

Presenter Name:

Date:

Topic/Title:

Unit Number:

**Please review each statement below and check the response that closely matches your experience in the Mentorship Module today:**

**1. Please rate the presenter's performance:**

☐ Prepared   ☐ Not Prepared   ☐ Engaging   ☐ Not Engaging   ☐ Led Discussion   ☐ Lectured

Comments:

**2. I was given opportunities to participate in the module's discussion**

☐ Never   ☐ Only Once   ☐ 2-4 Times   ☐ Many Times Throughout Discussion

Comments:

**3. With regard to my personal riding experiences, this discussion was:**

☐ Relevant   ☐ Not Relevant   ☐ Interesting   ☐ Not Interesting

Comments:

**4. This discussion topic has provided me with specific learning points that I can use to be a safer, better informed rider**

☐ None   ☐ One Idea or Fact   ☐ 2-4 Learning Points   ☐ 5 or More

Comments:

**5. I would be interested in participating in other Motorcycle Mentorship Module discussion topics**

☐ Never Again   ☐ Willing to Try Another Module   ☐ Would Like to Do Modules Regularly

Comments:

Thank you for your participation. Please make note of any other suggestions or comments below (continue on the back if needed):

Deliver or mail this completed form to the Command or Command Safety Office for processing. Please do not return this form directly to the Module Presenter.

## Resources

### Continued Reading:

“Accident Analysis Prevention,” Elsevier, 1978,  
Volume 10, Issue 2, Pages: 111-129

**Geoffrey D. M. Underwood** (2005) “Traffic and  
transport psychology: theory and application.”  
*Proceedings of the ICTTP 2004*

**Weiten, Wayne** (2004) *Psychology Themes and  
Variations*, 6th Edition, pg 200. Belmont, CA:  
Wadsworth/Thomson Learning

**Williams, G.W.** (1963) “Highway Hypnosis,”  
*International Journal of Clinical and  
Experimental Hypnosis*

### Definitions: *(As defined for purposes of this module.)*

*Highway Hypnosis:* A phenomenon that occurs  
when motor vehicle operators travel from a point  
A to a point B without conscious recollection of  
travel, making driving decisions as if on “auto-  
pilot.”





## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

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