

## Motorcycle Mentorship Module 23

# Proper Lane Position at Controlled and Uncontrolled Intersections





**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
4	<b>Discussion Areas</b> – This section provides various discussion topics, sample facilitation questions, and factual information for the facilitator to lead the discussion
6	<b>Wrap-Up</b> – This section provides guidance to the facilitator on wrapping up the topic discussion
7	<b>Feedback Form</b> – A feedback form to be given to all participants for their feedback on the module discussion
8	<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 30-40 minute facilitator-led discussion

**Level of Prior Knowledge:** Participants should have a general knowledge of common driving laws and rules of the road. Participants should have a driver's license and since the topic is motorcycle specific, a motorcycle endorsement will be helpful so they should have a good understanding of some of the unique challenges motorcycle riders encounter.

**Synopsis:** Individuals will be able to identify potential problems for lane positions at controlled and uncontrolled intersections. Participants should be able to discuss life learning experiences which will lead to group discussions.

### Learning Objectives:

- Introduction to identifying areas or concerns in intersections
- Realize importance of seeing and being seen
- Develop techniques for perceiving hazards ahead
- Define the difference between controlled and uncontrolled intersections
- Participant explains the importance of being prepared for hazards and where that responsibility lies.

### Suggested Environment/Props/Handouts:

- Handout – Controlled and uncontrolled intersection figures

## Section II: Module Discussion

**Introduction:** What are some differences between controlled and uncontrolled intersections?

*Definitions:*

- Controlled intersections have traffic lights, yield signs, stop signs or other devices or signs in order to control traffic flow.
- Uncontrolled intersections are where no traffic lights or signs are used to indicate the right-of-way.

Begin discussion with participants focused on where they have encountered different intersections in their local areas and have participants offer personal experiences. The facilitator should, at this point, understand participants can learn from good examples as well as bad examples. What is a definition for ‘intersection’?

### **Sample questions may include:**

- Is there an ideal lane position when approaching intersections?
- What are some factors that affect decisions on proper lane positioning?
- How do road conditions affect lane positioning when approaching an intersection?
- How do environmental conditions like rain, fog, or night time riding influence traffic interaction within an intersection?
- Are rider reactions and traffic interactions different for controlled vs. uncontrolled intersections?

### **[Provide Handout – Controlled and uncontrolled intersection diagram]**

According to the National Highway Traffic and Safety Administration an intersection is the area where two roadways meet, join or merge. Any place where traffic crosses another motorist’s path of travel can be called an intersection. This could include driveways, side roads, entrance to stores, gas stations, etc...

For motorcyclists there is no ideal lane positioning approach that works for all intersections. Every intersection is different in what it demands of a motorcycle rider. Every motor vehicle is occupied and operated by an individual who cannot always be relied upon to behave in an expected manner. Indeed they can often be relied upon to behave in an unexpected manner.

Many factors are involved in the choices made as a rider approached an intersection, first and foremost of those is whether or not it is a controlled intersection. Signs and signals indicating correct behavior are usually clear and present in controlled intersections, but uncontrolled intersections bring a differing set of potential problems. The presence of other highway users, roadway surface conditions, available shoulder runoff, and environmental conditions such as rain, fog and darkness can all play a role in rider reactions to an intersection. Like snowflakes, no two intersections are the same. The one common thread is the need for 360 degree situational awareness.

## Suggested Discussion Areas:

### Discussion Area 1: Managing Risk: Seeing Others and Being Seen

#### Facilitation Questions:

- How can a rider manage risk at intersections?
- What are some things a rider can do in order to be more visible to others?
- How can a rider get better at seeing potential hazards?
- What are some other collision avoidance strategies?
- What might we anticipate when nearing an intersection with other roadway users present?
- How long does it take to assess a potential hazard?
- Would it help if we could predict or anticipate certain common hazards?
- What are the two most dangerous vehicles to a motorcyclist?
- If a majority of traffic crashes for motorcyclists occur at intersections, should that change how we view those areas every time we approached an intersection?

#### *Facilitator Facts:*

Intersections present the greatest hazard to motorcyclists of any common traffic scenario. In order for a motorcyclist to manage risk, he must first recognize that risk exists in almost any situation and he must decide to accept the risk with the understanding that he do everything he can to minimize that risk.

Wearing Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) that is white, bright or of high visibility coloration, or retro-reflective gear in low-light conditions can help other motorists to identify motorcycle riders. Other ways to be more visible to others is lane positioning or lateral movement; a side-to-side weave within the lane can draw attention to a rider's presence. Simply being in the right place within the lane can also aid visibility. Any or all of these techniques are good ways to present a more conspicuous approach but ultimately there is no guarantee that a rider will be seen.

Seeing hazards is a matter of awareness and practice. Scanning, observing, and predicting are habits that can be developed by any rider. When riding, a motorcyclist can use 'what if...' to help improve responses. "What if that car fails to see me and pulls out...?" "What if the driver in the next lane comes over into my lane...? What will I do?" Playing the 'What if' game creates a habit of preparing for common traffic problems in advance, and being prepared is the key to dealing with those problems before they become life-threatening. (Facilitator may use the handout to propose 'what-if' scenarios for participant discussion.)

An old motorcyclist expression is: "Ride like you're invisible." Assume the other person **does not see you** and prepare accordingly. Paying careful attention to surroundings allows a rider to identify individual or multiple threats, then prioritize and/or separate them in order to deal with them safely and individually.

Most traffic mishaps allow the rider less than two seconds to take evasive actions – which usually consist of braking or swerving to avoid the hazard.



Two of the more common causes of on-road, multi-vehicle motorcycle crashes are: on-coming, left-turning vehicles, and vehicles entering the motorcyclists' path from the right. Left-turning vehicles violating the rider's right of way are the most common and most dangerous. The vehicles from the right are cars making a 'right on red,' merging traffic, and vehicles entering the roadway from driveways, parking lots or parking spaces, etc. Just knowing that most multi-vehicle crashes happen at intersections should change the way a rider approaches every intersection for the rest of their motorcycle riding career.

- Professional training is the single most important and reliable factor in learning to minimize or avoid hazards.
- The risk in any situation can be reduced by making good decisions as the rider moves from one situation to another.

## Discussion Area 2: Intersections and Lane Position

### Facilitation Questions:

- What are two actions a rider can take when approaching an intersection to minimize hazards?
- How does the rider adjust lane position and why?
- Does it matter if you have legal right of way?
- What happens when a controlled intersection loses power?
- Does any vehicle have automatic right of way?
- Is traffic our only concern?

### Facilitator Information:

1. Adjusting speed and/or changing lane position while communicating these intentions via lights and signals are thought to be appropriate ways to prepare for hazards in intersections.
2. A single lane of normal roadway can be visually divided into three motorcycle-sized lanes: left, right and middle. A rider should position himself in the portion of the lane that provides the most space cushion (time and space in which to react) from possible hazards. Since the number, location, speed and path of travel of other vehicles will vary with each intersection as will whether the intersection is controlled or uncontrolled, there is no single 'best' lane position for approaching intersections. For example:
3. Time and circumstances permitting; facilitator may use the handout to propose the following scenarios for participant discussion:

Rider is approaching an uncontrolled four way intersection. Several vehicles are approaching from the opposite direction; one has their left turn signal on. How should the rider respond? *If there are no other factors, rider should slow appropriately and move to the far right of his lane or into the right lane if multi-lane roadway. The rider should also monitor all other vehicles in the line for intentions to turn without signaling. Watching the front tire of the turning vehicle will provide some small advance warning when the other vehicle has initiated their turn. Prepare for evasive action such as swerving or braking.*



Rider is approaching a controlled intersection where they have a green light. A vehicle is approaching from a side street to the right where they (should) have a red light. How does the rider react? *If there are no complicating factors the rider should move to the far left of their lane or into the left lane if multi-lane roadway. Once there the rider should watch for a turn signal indicating a 'right-on-red' by the other vehicle and the rider should also look at the front wheel of the car to monitor that tire's rotation indicating continued forward movement. Prepare for evasive action such as swerving or braking.*

4. If a traffic-signal controlled intersection loses power, it should be treated as if it were a four-way stop. Always proceed with due caution.
5. Right-of-Way law varies considerably from state to state. Some spell out very clearly where right-of-way exists, other states do not recognize the existence of legal or automatic right of way. Instead those states require all motor vehicle operators to behave in the safest manner possible at all times. An example of a failure to be 'in the safest manner possible' is when vehicle 'A' runs into vehicle 'B' from behind. If vehicle A is always at fault regardless of vehicle B behavior because vehicle A failed to allow a safe following distance, then that state probably employs safest possible behavior rules. Never assume right of way. Always protect yourself and proceed with caution.
6. Traffic is only one concern; roadway and surface characteristics, construction, environmental conditions such as fog, precipitation, and temperature extremes, as well as the presence of pedestrians, animals or bicyclists all add to the need to ride with care and caution.

#### *Conclusions:*

**Traffic** – When approaching an intersection, ALWAYS look left and right for traffic on the intersecting road, even if you have a green light. If you have to slow down for the intersection, check your mirrors for traffic behind you.

**Speed** – Since some vehicle drivers actually ARE paying attention to other operators, maintain a steady legal speed when close to or passing through intersections so that if another driver has observed your speed and calculated your distance to anticipate you're passing. A sudden acceleration just before, or a sudden deceleration when arriving at, a drivers location can throw off the timing of his merge into traffic and may cause a close call. An exception to this would be if there is chance traffic may cross the intersection in front of you. If so, slow down or cover the brakes and be ready to slow quickly or stop. Be aware of pedestrians about to cross the intersection and vehicles edging into the intersection or approaching at higher speeds.

**Space** – Keep at least a two- to three-second distance behind the vehicle in front of you. Add time for complications such as heavy traffic or adverse roadway or environmental/weather conditions.

**Controlled intersections** have traffic lights, yield signs or stop signs to control traffic.

- At a controlled intersection where you face a green light, drive carefully through the intersection at a steady speed. If the light has been green for a while, be prepared to stop when it turns yellow. Where you face a red light, come to a complete stop and wait until the light turns green.
- When you approach an intersection on a main road, and the road beyond the side street is blocked with traffic, stop before entering the intersection and wait until the traffic ahead moves on. This does not apply if you are turning left or right.
- At a controlled intersection where you face a yield sign, slow down and merge if possible or stop if necessary and wait until the way is clear before driving through the intersection.

- At a controlled intersection where you face a stop sign, come to a complete stop. Drive through the intersection only when the way is clear.
- Uncontrolled intersections have no signs or traffic lights or it is unclear who has the right of way. They are usually found in areas where there is not much traffic. Extra caution is required around these intersections.
- If two vehicles come to an uncontrolled intersection from different roads at the same time, it is suggested that the motorcyclist yield the right-of-way to the other vehicle. This minor, courteous gesture may prevent a crash if the other motorist doesn't think they have any reason to stop.

## Wrap-Up:

Ask participants how they will apply the knowledge they learned about intersections in the future. Does the participant feel they now have more knowledge of intersections and the hazards that they could encounter?

### Close out discussion with the following questions:

- How long does it take to reduce risk? (Each and every decision has that power )
- Where is the greatest potential for conflict with other traffic for motorcycles? (Intersections)
- What are two actions a rider can take when approaching an intersection to minimize hazards? (Adjust speed and/or change lanes or lane position.)
- At intersections, what are the two most dangerous vehicles/circumstances for a motorcyclist? (On-coming left turning vehicles and any vehicle approaching from a side-street to the right.)

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:

**Code, Keith** (1983). *A Twist of the Wrist* (Vol. I.)  
Glendale, CA: California Superbike School, Inc.

**Code, Keith** (1993). *A Twist of the Wrist* (Vol. II.)  
Glendale, CA: California Superbike School, Inc.

**Hough, David L.** (2000). *Proficient Motorcycling  
and More Proficient Motorcycling: Mastering the  
Ride*. Irvine, CA: BowTie Press

**Ienatsch, Nick** (2003). *Sport Riding Techniques:  
How To Develop Real World Skills for Speed,  
Safety, and Confidence on the Street and Track*.  
Phoenix, AZ: David Bull Publishing

**Motorcycle Safety Foundation**, (2005). *The  
Motorcycle Safety Foundation's Guide to  
Motorcycling Excellence*, 2nd Edition. Irvine  
CA: Whitehorse Press

**Parks, Lee** (2003) *Total Control – High  
Performance Street Riding Techniques*. St. Paul,  
MN: Motorbooks International

**Pridmore, Reg** (2004). *Smooth Riding The  
Pridmore Way*. Center Conway, NH: Whitehorse  
Press

### Internet Sites:

**5 Huge Safety Tips for Motorcycle Road Trips:**  
[http://ezinearticles.com/?5-Huge-Safety-Tips-  
For-Motorcycle-Road-Trips&id=1645649](http://ezinearticles.com/?5-Huge-Safety-Tips-For-Motorcycle-Road-Trips&id=1645649)

### Rural Bike Wrecks:

<http://www.abateny.org/safe/rural.html>

[www.drivingschool.ca](http://www.drivingschool.ca) (Hand outs)

**National Center for Statistics and Analysis (NCSA)**  
<http://www.nhtsa.gov/NCSA/>

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

**None:** this module is non-technical and is designed  
for delivery in lay-person terms.

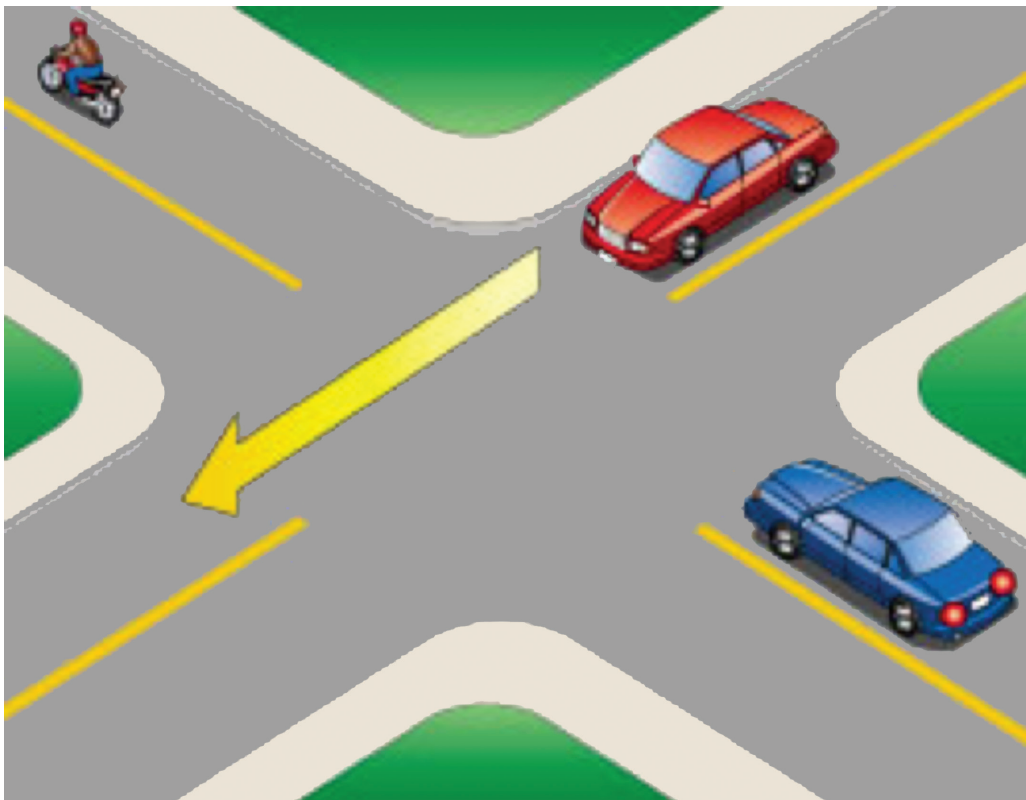


## Handout: Intersections

**Figure 1:** Controlled Intersection



**Figure 2:** Uncontrolled Intersection





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Mr. Jerry Aslinger, DSOC Program Manager

Captain Richard D. Jones, US Naval Safety Center  
Mr. Walter Beckman, US Army Ground Driving Task Force  
Mr. Peter Hill, HQMC SD, PMV-2 Working Group Chair  
Mr. John Waltman, HQMC SD  
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Mr. Don Borkowski, US Naval Safety Center  
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Mr. Mark Erpelding, USAF Safety Center  
Mr. William Walkowiak, USAF Safety Center  
Mr. Arthur Albert, USAF Safety Center  
Mr. Dale Wisnieski, USCG Traffic and Recreational Safety  
Ms. Wendy Medley, US Joint Bases Subject Matter Expert  
Ms. Debra Ann Ferris, National Safety Council  
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