

# Motorcyclist makes plea for increased awareness

**Safety  
Commentary**  
by  
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Fluor Hanford

Those of us who ride motorcycles already know full well the joy that riding brings us. Many of us have tried to convey this sense of freedom and exuberance to our friends and co-workers. We also recognize that with our sense of freedom and fresh air comes a trade-off in operator protection. When compared with a driver of a car or truck, we are more exposed and thereby assume a greater risk of injury in the event of a collision. Regardless how minor the impact may be, or who may be more at fault, the rider of the motorcycle will likely go down.

I think most motorcycle riders will agree that intersections and other situations involving close interaction with other vehicles and any “jockeying” for position pose our greatest potential threat. This brings me to the main intent of this article — barricade safety for motorcyclists.

When approaching any of our Hanford area entry points, there often are distractions for drivers. One may experience anything from a misplaced badge, spilled morning coffee or another driver trying to change lanes in front of him or her. There is also the possibility for the vehicle in front to be stopped for further identification.

If the vehicle being stopped is a motorcycle, the rider is watching the patrol person for direction, with eyes drawn away from the rear-view mirrors, making the rider particularly exposed to being struck from the rear. If this happened to the driver of an automobile, probably very little in the way of injury would result. But, if this same vehicle-to-vehicle contact were to involve a motorcycle, the damage and likelihood of injury would rise dramatically.

This potential impact could take place while the rider was holding up his identification badge, leaving the rider with only one hand on the controls. Note that the motorcyclist uses the left hand for the clutch and the right hand to operate the front brake and the throttle. Shifting is accomplished with the left foot, and the rear brake is applied with the right. You can see from this that the rider literally has his or her hands full at this point.

The trip through a Hanford barricade with all of the congestion, distractions and drivers’ eyes being drawn away from rear-view mirrors poses what may be the motorcyclist’s greatest risk of the day. Any efforts to increase awareness and thus enhance safety would be a boon to improving Hanford’s already excellent safety reputation.

I’m sure all motorcyclists will thank you for your awareness and commitment to traffic safety. I know I appreciate any courtesy given on my behalf. I realize that sometimes a bike and rider are harder to see than a larger vehicle. This article is just a plea for increased awareness to make the ride to work a little safer for all riders.

**Editors’ note:** Hanford Patrol reminds us that all vehicles are subject to stopping or being stopped at the site barricades for any variety of reasons. Drivers should be particularly attentive when approaching one of the site barricades. This is true for both inbound and outbound vehicles. As pointed out by Norman, motorcyclists can be especially vulnerable to any distractions that could result in a collision. ♦



**T Plant bikers Earl Norman (left), J.D. Dudley, Riney Wilbert and Howard Miura ask for heightened awareness from other motorists as sunlight fades to winter.**