

Safety Tips April 2011

Aging facts:

- Today there are more than 18.9 licensed drivers in the U.S. who are 70 and older.
- By 2020, it is estimated there will be more than 30 million drivers over 70.
- The primary traffic violation by drivers 50 and older is failure to observe the right of way.
- 1 out of 3 drivers is over the age of 55.
- The typical motorcycle driver age has increased from 24 to 41 over the past 30 years.
- Another violation of 55 and over is the improper left hand turn.
- The effects of aging occur gradually over a long period of time.
- 20 % of people age 55 and 30% of those over 60 are hearing impaired.
- Relatively few deaths of elderly people, 75 years of age and older, involve motor vehicles; but they have a higher rates of fatal crashes per mile than younger drivers.
- Recent data show that more than 57,000 drivers involved in fatal crashes annually, more than 10,000 of those were over 55 years of age.
- The FDA reported that about about 50% of all medications that older people take could interact with alcohol.
- There are options out there that can help your driving skills and they are physical therapy, perceptual therapy, and driver education.

Eyesight-

- Motorcycle operation, as with the operation of any motor vehicle, is a task that involves visual and perceptual functions, cognitive and attention capabilities, and motor skill responses.
- As a rider we must address the acronym SEE. Search for potential crash factors, evaluate the level of risk, and execute a smooth, controlled response in getting out of danger.
- The World Health Organization estimates 16 million people go blind every year from cataracts.
- Up to 20% of these cases can be linked to over exposure of the eyes to UV radiation.
- Sun glare is a contributing factor in a number of automobile and off road vehicles accidents every year.
- Temporary but painful loss of site, and occurs especially in snowy or wet conditions, where the UV rays are reflected by the sun's rays- even on cloudy days this can happen.
- Looking into the sun directly can temporarily bleach the photosensitive pigments in the retina, which makes phosphene visual artifacts and may cause temporary partial blindness.

- Looking into the sun directly for short periods of time over your life time can cause cataracts to form.
- As we get older, these instances of temporary blindness increase.

Physical Execution-

- Muscles are weaker as you age
- Muscle tone deteriorates.
- Without weight training, a person loses 6-10% muscle mass per decade starting at age 30.
- Endurance is diminished, oxygen is not utilized as efficiently, and muscles lose their elasticity.
- Reaction time slows down.

Physical Health and Fitness

- Have annual eye exams
- If over 60, check for cataracts, glaucoma, macular degeneration and other eye problems.
- Have annual medical checkups.
- Be physically fit.
- Follow a regular exercise regimen.
- Ask your significant other for any signs of riskier safety violations.
- Consider a smaller lighter bike to fit your physical fitness in handling and moving the bike around.

Riding tips for riders over the age of 50:

- Leave more distance between you and the person in front of you. Increase the time from three seconds to five or six.
- Avoid complicated and congested roads and intersection. Input overload could occur.
- Allow larger gaps when merging into traffic.
- Turning your head gets a little harder as you age, so double check before entering an intersection.
- Keep making blind spot checks, younger drivers are better at this.
- Passengers can help with SEE.
- Keep windshields and glasses clean at all times.
- Wear clear lenses at night.
- Wear sunglasses during the day.
- Adjust mirrors at night to reduce glare from headlights.

Website to visit about riding and aging:

1. www.seniordrivers.org
2. www.aarp.org/drive/
3. www.afb.org
4. www.motorcycles.org
5. www.iihs.org
6. www.msf-usa.org