

**CHAPTER 5**  
**DEFENSIVE RIDING PRACTICES**  
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## CHAPTER 5

### DEFENSIVE RIDING PRACTICES

1. POLICY. Officers assigned to the Bicycle Patrol Unit (BPU) shall comply with the defensive riding practices contained in this chapter.
  
2. DEFENSIVE RIDING PRACTICES.
  - a. General Safety Considerations.
    - (1) An officer should be careful not to override their ability or the bicycle's limitations.
    - (2) As an officer gains experience and proficiency, the officer should guard against the tendency to become overconfident.
    - (3) An officer shall always wear safety glasses and gloves while riding.
  
  - b. Awareness of Riding Surfaces. An officer should:
    - (1) Continually scan the roadway for grease, water, oil, sand, leaves, or other debris.
    - (2) Avoid riding in the center of traffic lanes for the following reasons:
      - (a) Normally, oil and water accumulate in these areas.
      - (b) The possibility of being rear-ended increases.
      - (c) During routine patrol, officers should ride as close as practical to the right hand curb or edge of the roadway except in situations outlined in Section 21202 of the California Vehicle Code.
    - (3) Anticipate changes in riding surface conditions due to weather and/or construction.
    - (4) Avoid riding on painted roadway lines because of the reduced coefficient of friction.
  
  - c. Braking Considerations. An officer should:



- (1) Follow a vehicle at a safe distance and to the right or left of the vehicle for potential evasive maneuvers.
  - (2) Gradually decelerate and avoid hard braking in the event of a flat tire or while traveling on wet surfaces.
  - (3) Synchronize the use of the front and rear brake for maximum braking efficiency.
  - (4) Avoid braking excessively while negotiating a turning movement.
  - (5) Maintain the front wheel pointed straight ahead while braking hard.
- d. Stopping in Traffic. An officer should:
- (1) Avoid stopping directly behind a vehicle. This will help you avoid being struck from the rear.
  - (2) Be aware of traffic conditions to the rear when reducing speed and/or stopping.
- e. Negotiating Intersections. An officer should:
- (1) Use extreme caution when traversing through intersections.
  - (2) Relinquish right-of-way to avoid a hazard and/or collision.
  - (3) Proceed with caution when entering an intersection.
  - (4) Avoid riding in close proximity of parked vehicles.
  - (5) When a traffic signal changes to **green** for the rider, before entering the intersection, make sure it is clear and all approaching vehicles on cross streets are stopping.
  - (6) Avoid passing on the curb side of a vehicle. This will prevent a collision when a vehicle pulls over to park; turns into an intersection; or turns into a driveway/alley without notice.
- f. Negotiating Lane Changes and Passing. An officer should:
- (1) Always clear all blind spots prior to negotiating a lane change or passing.
  - (2) Use appropriate hand signals when changing lanes or merging into traffic.



- (3) Watch for signs and signals that a vehicle is about to change lanes or make a turning movement.
- (4) Anticipate unexpected movements of vehicles and pedestrians.
- g. Negotiating Curves. An officer should:
  - (1) Increase or decrease speed appropriately to safely negotiate curves.
  - (2) Avoid applying brakes excessively while leaning into a turn.
- h. Splitting Traffic. An officer may split traffic, however, the officer should:
  - (1) Be cautious of doors opening and objects projecting from the side.
  - (2) Check the mirrors of vehicles to determine if the driver is aware of the officer's approach.
  - (3) Use the bicycle horn if necessary.
- i. Violator Stops.
  - (1) Use caution when making violator stops. Be prepared for the possibility of sudden turning movements and/or stops.
  - (2) Officers should not stop in front of a violator unless absolutely unavoidable.
  - (3) During high risk stops, a bicycle officer is at a definite disadvantage. BPU officers should request assistance from a marked patrol unit if possible, prior to making the stop. Consider the use of telephone poles, mail boxes, parked cars, etc., for protection. Determine if you can handle your weapons with gloves on. If not, develop a technique to remove them prior to making the stop or as you make the stop.



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