



A Simple Method to Deal with Any Common Road Hazards!

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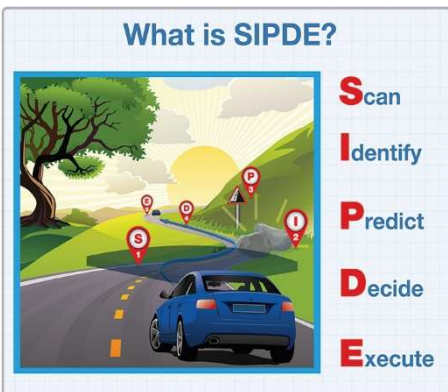
There are many types of road hazards we encounter on our motorcycles. This article does not attend to address how to handle mother-in-laws crossing the street, dead ends, getting stuck in a parade for no apparent reason, soon-to-be road kill and gravel roads. I leave those road issues to your judgments.

I will explain here a simple principal I follow to deal with the most common road hazards I encounter on my motorcycle. If you follow this common motorcycling principal, you will better handle what the road dishes out to you on your many bike rides and trips.



The basic principle I follow is known as the SIPDE strategy. I did not make this up; this is a common strategy in riding your bike. The acronym SIPDE stands for Scan, Identify, Predict, Decide and Execute. It is a simple strategy that is fairly easy to understand and employ. The main element is scanning. The quicker you can identify a problem, the easier it is to avoid.

Sometimes, though things may get past you. Yes I'm talking to all you bikers from veterans with years of experience to beginners. It happens to everyone. If you utilize this system to the best of your ability, you will ride in a safer manner. It is as simple as that.



Here is a brief explanation of what the different sections stand for:

Scanning

This process doesn't just involve looking ahead. You should be sweeping your field of view from left to right, near and far and from time to time including your gauges as well. This includes your side view mirrors as hazards can come from behind too. This is essential as noted before. The quicker you identify a problem, the more time you have to react and react as safely as possible.

Identify

What is the issue ahead that concerns you? Identification is key in predicting your best course of action and deciding to do it. Should you swerve, stay the course, slow down, speed up, honk, signal, etc. What you need to do is dependent on identifying the hazard you are about to encounter. This will help you decide exactly what you believe your proper course of action is.

Predict

This one is a little tricky. You sometimes need to predict the rates of speed you're traveling and other moving objects about to cross your path, is the road ahead slick or not, is there a future obstacle in your path, the angle of attack of your bike to that future obstacle which basically is the pathway you will follow, etc. All these things are judgments you must make in microseconds to properly handle the pending road hazard you will find. This is analytical but is one of the contributing factors to why riding your bike can be so thrilling. You constantly are doing this whether you realize it or not.

Decide

This is just like it sounds. After predicting a future outcome, you *decide* what you are going to do to deal with the road hazard you identified is coming upon you while scanning ahead. This is where motorcycle training can play a big part. If you attend Top Cat's G.R.A.S.S. classes and learn from other sources about driving your motorcycle safely, you will act more automatically. Training helps reinforce safe riding ideas and ingrain them in your head so when you encounter an unsafe situation you are better prepared to react in a natural manner, almost like second nature. Training is an important element in making faster decisions. The act of decision also includes making a plan. Sometimes at 50-60 miles per hour. Piece of cake!

Execute

Finally, now we get to doing something on the bike! Action! This is where the rubber stays on the road (hopefully) and you successfully manage your road hazards. This can mean doing almost anything on the bike but not in a reactionary way if you follow SIPDE. This can include many things; swerving, staying the course, slowing down, speeding up, stopping, etc. Whatever you decided you need to do you act upon.

The last thing to consider is that you perform the SIPDE principals constantly. You continually are scanning, identifying, predicting, deciding and executing while you are doing the same. This ultimately means that what you scanned, identified and decided is a changing environment and thus, your decisions on a course of action or execution of your decisions are constantly changing. This is a continual cycle (pun intended) that you ride over and over while you navigate your motorcycle down the road of life. If you follow SIPDE you will be safer for it.