



Riding with a First-time or Long-time Passenger

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What Do We Owe Them As Their Driver??

As motorcycle enthusiasts we all enjoy riding our motorcycles whenever we can. We also love to share the enjoyment of motorcycle riding with others. When someone who has never been on a motorcycle expresses interest in taking a ride, most of us are happy to share the opportunity. However, before we put a passenger on our bike we first owe that passenger several things.



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- The proper state licensing is required. An instruction permit typically does Not permit its holder to carry a passenger. You must have a state motorcycle-class license. It's best to check with the DMV of your state for motorcycle license regulations.
- Before adding a passenger we need to have gained experience as a driver, have taken a motorcycle safety course, and understand how a passenger seriously changes the operating dynamics of our motorcycle.

What We Owe a First-Time Passenger:

- * We are always responsible for our passenger's safety. They should be wearing proper protective gear that fits. Their gear should include but not limited to a helmet, long pants, jacket or long sleeve shirt, gloves, proper footwear, and eye protection.
- * We need to advise our passenger on what not to touch, such as hot engine parts and exhaust pipes. Instruct them on how to get on and off the bike and when it's okay to do so. Make sure they're aware of how they should hold on, whether it is at handhold locations or around the waist of the driver.
- * We need to give our first-time passenger an idea on what to expect. Encourage them to minimize movement and stay relaxed. In turns they need to look over the driver's inside shoulder and lean with the bike and not against it. Let them know how to react when the bike is accelerating and breaking.
- * We need to give them an enjoyable ride and remember their safety is our responsibility. This is No time to show off our motorcycle's redline capabilities. For our first-time passenger even the most basic ride will feel exciting. Take it easy their first time out.
- * A first time motorcycling experience often draws a strong reaction from the passenger. You'll probably know right away whether your passenger liked the ride or not. Having a conversation with them after the ride gives you an opportunity to answer any questions or misconceptions they might have.

What We Owe Our Loyal Long-Time Passengers:

- * They are not just a passenger but part of the team. They should have a role in planning the trip including gas stops, rest and food stops.
- * They must have the proper safety gear. Just like a first-time passenger their gear should include but not limited to a helmet, long pants, jacket or long sleeve shirt, gloves, proper footwear, and eye protection. Make sure they're aware of handhold locations if the bike is unfamiliar to them.
- * The bike should be properly set up to accommodate a passenger. This should include properly set shocks, tire pressure, passenger foot pegs, handholds, and mirrors adjusted because of the extra weight.
- * You will need to recalibrate your riding technique. Enlarge your safety cushion by adding more distance for stopping and more time to swerve.
- * You must have flexibility on your travels. If you were planning on getting to a particular location by the end of day but the weather and/or the end of day arrived before your destination, or you are just plain tired, STOP. Don't push your luck to go further. Don't take chances; remember you are out to have fun.
- * All you may need to enjoy the day is to be on the road riding your bike. However your passenger might actually want to stop and see some of the attractions along the way. Don't be afraid to stop so everyone can enjoy the

day.

Remember, carrying a passenger on your motorcycle can be a fun and rewarding experience if you take the time to do all that you can to keep both of you safe.

