



## Using This Process Helps You Be a Safer Rider

Author: Michael Bradbury, Senior Road Captain and Safety Director,  
Top Cats Illinois

Driving a motorcycle is challenging because you need to do many tasks at once. You have to control the vehicle, watch the roadway and off-road areas, read signs and be alert for sudden actions of other drivers. These are the same processes when you drive other vehicles but, on a motorcycle, wrong decisions can lead to more dire consequences.

Besides managing the many tasks to ride your motorcycle, one of the most important skills to have been being a good decision maker to be a safe driver. But you don't want to learn how to make good riding decisions by trial and error. So here is a five step process that we all somewhat unknowingly do to be a good, safe rider. Now, with awareness of this process, you should be able to employ it even more when focusing on riding your motorcycle.

Have you ever heard of the SIPDE process?

The SIPDE process is short for search, identify, predict, decide and execute.

Here is the SIPDE process:

1. **SEARCH** the roadway and the off-road area 20 -30 seconds (about a block to a block and a half) ahead for information that can help you plan your path of travel. Use a systematic search pattern to gather information. First search the road ahead, then to the sides, then glance in your rearview and side mirrors.
2. **IDENTIFY** objects or conditions with 12-15 seconds ahead that could interfere with your path of travel. To identify important information as a driver, you must do more than just **LOOK**. You must think about what you are looking for; things like stalled cars on the side of the road, pedestrians waiting to cross the street, and cars coming up too fast behind you are all important information.
3. **PREDICT** what actions or changes in conditions on or near the roadway could increase your level of risk. As you search the roadway and see the positions of the vehicles and pedestrians, try to predict what you would do in certain circumstances. For instance, the car behind you that is coming up too fast might not be able to stop. You need to think – *before that car rear-ends you* – in order to make a decision to move to another lane to avoid a crash.
4. **DECIDE** what action or actions to take (such as reduce speed, increase speed, brake or steer clear) 4 to 5 seconds ahead of time to control or reduce risk. Once you have identified a potential threat you can decide how best to minimize the risk of a collision. Keep in mind most situations allow you a choice of actions, such as moving to another lane to avoid a rear-end collision, or taking the ditch to the right rather than taking a head-on hit.
5. **EXECUTE** your decision. The final step is to execute the decision you have made.

Now with awareness of this process, you can more consciously practice it and apply it. Using the SIPDE process can make motorcycle riders be safer drivers.