



## Motorcycle Mentorship Module 20

# Rural Riding Techniques





**Warning:** Incorrect or inaccurate information could lead to tragic results on the road. If a question arises that is not covered in the guide and you don't know the answer from your own experience and training, simply state, "That is a great question, I'll get back to you with the answer."

**Your Service Safety Center will help with these types of questions should they arise. Their numbers are as follows:**

US Army Driving Directorate: **334.255.3039**

USMC Safety Division: **703.604.4459**

US Navy Shore Safety: **757.444.3520 x7165**

US Air Force Safety Center: **505.846.0728**

USCG Safety Division: **202.475.5206**



## Preface

**About:** The Defense Safety Oversight Council (DSOC) Motorcycle Mentorship Modules are a set of thirty six (36) facilitation modules designed for the purpose of increasing rider knowledge on various aspects of riding and providing additional capability for self-policing within peer groups. The modules are intended as a mechanism to further decrease motorcycle related mishaps and fatalities within Department of Defense (DoD) by encouraging riders to talk, live, and think about the topic.

**Using the Module:** The module content enclosed is intended as a facilitation guide to assist you with discussing the topic. However, it is still critical to use your skills and talent to engage participants and develop “buy-in” on this subject from your group. To maximize this, motivate and moderate your participants, control the accuracy of participant feedback, and be mindful of their time.

Page	Section
2	<b>Facilitation Guide – A brief overview on conducting a facilitated discussion of a topic</b>
3	<b>Module Overview</b> – This section provides the facilitator a synopsis of the topic, learning objectives, and the suggested environment, props, and handouts for conducting the module
4	<b>Module Discussion Introduction</b> – This section provides guidance to the facilitator in opening up the discussion and getting participants talking about the topic and their relevant experiences
5	<b>Discussion Areas</b> – This section provides various discussion topics, sample facilitation questions, and factual information for the facilitator to lead the discussion
7	<b>Wrap-Up</b> – This section provides guidance to the facilitator on wrapping up the topic discussion
8	<b>Feedback Form</b> – A feedback form to be given to all participants for their feedback on the module discussion
9	<b>Resources</b> – Additional resources and definitions to assist the facilitator in preparing for and conducting the topic facilitation
N/A	<b>Handouts</b> – Figures, pictures, diagrams, etc. to assist the facilitator to better demonstrate a topic idea

## Facilitation Guide for DSOC Mentorship Modules

It is recommended that this Mentorship Module be conducted in a facilitation style. Using the information provided in this Mentorship Module, you, as the facilitator, will lead a discussion on the subject. *You should not be conducting a lecture!* The facilitator's role is to help with how the discussion is proceeding. Participants will have much more "buy in" and connectivity with the information if they have input. One of your roles as the facilitator is to control the accuracy of the input and control the time. From the Mentorship Module, generate questions which will lead to group discussion. The more you let the group participate, the more success you will have.

### Competencies of a Facilitator:

- Prepare prior to the event
- Make sure everyone gets a chance to participate and help members to express themselves
- Ask rather than tell
- Honor the group, display respect for the members, and acknowledge participant contributions
- Ask for others' opinions
- Listen without interrupting
- Demonstrate professionalism and integrity

The key characteristic distinguishing facilitation from other types of leadership, like scripted training, is that the outcomes are never predetermined in a facilitative setting. Although the background information provided with this Module remains the same, the result will depend on the participants, the knowledge and experience they bring, and the information that they feel they need to take away. The group uses the activities provided by the facilitator to unlock expertise, ensure thorough discussion, stay focused and reach decisions that are better than those any individual could come up with alone.

At the beginning of each Mentorship Event, discuss why the participants are there and what they will receive as a result of participating. Adults have limited time and they want to know "What's in it for me?" A facilitator should make training fun. Encourage humor and laughter in your Mentorship Event.

### Principles of Adult Learning:

- Adult Learners want material that is relevant to them. "What's in it for me?" "What will I get out of this that will make a difference to me?"
- Adult Learners come to training events with varying amounts of experience. They like to share their experiences. If you have minimal or no motorcycle experience, you can still draw from your group.
- Even if you have motorcycle experience, you should draw from your group because people tend to remember what "they" said longer than what you said. Information that they "own" is more valuable to them.
- Facilitators are not always subject matter experts; nor do they need to be. Facilitators may draw on the existing knowledge of the participants and the information provided in these Modules.

## Section I: Module Overview

**Time Frame:** One 30-60 minute facilitator-led discussion

**Level of Prior Knowledge:** Participants should be able to operate a motorcycle at a novice level. It would be best if facilitator was an avid motorcyclist, but a non-motorcyclist is acceptable

**Synopsis:** A discussion on rural riding techniques will introduce the new rider to a variety of situations and hazards that one may encounter in rural areas. The experienced rider can pick up or reinforce safety techniques that they may or may not have already been using.

### Learning Objectives:

- Learn how to transition safely from pavement to gravel and/or gravel to pavement
- Learn how to share the road with farm equipment
- Learn what to do if the road is narrow or one lane
- If there is livestock on the road, what next

### Suggested Environment/Props/Handouts:

Suggested Environment: Classroom, Outside with motorcycle, Whiteboard

Additional handouts and presentation ideas are available at Service Branch Safety Centers, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) and other traffic safety related web sites. Safety center developed Combat Wallets are great materials as handouts or supplemental learning materials.

## Section II: Module Discussion

**Introduction:** Facilitate discussion: What types of situations or hazards might you encounter in rural areas that may be different from city streets?

**Define rural:** “Of or relating to the country, country people or agriculture” [Merriam-Webster]

Open discussions with participants. Ask participants if they have ever driven through farm country or a farming community and what were their experiences? What might a rider see in a rural area that one wouldn't see on city streets? It is beneficial to use experience(s) of participants to help define hazards that a rider would only find in rural areas. Write rider responses on whiteboard (if available).

### Additional introductory questions may include:

- Do you think you will always be riding on perfectly paved roads? What types of road surfaces might you encounter?
- How is driving a car on a dirt road different from driving on a paved road? How do these differences pertain to a motorcyclist on a dirt road?
- How might riding a motorcycle through farm country be different from driving a car on the same roads?
- What did you see in the country that you didn't see in the city?

### Notes:

- If the facilitator used a whiteboard to record rider answers from earlier, this can be a good tool to help facilitate answers to questions and provide a basic guideline for topics to discuss.
- Yes or No questions can help to facilitate rider discussion, but to engage riders in longer discussions, use open ended questions.

## Suggested Discussion Areas:

### Discussion Area 1: Things a Rider Doesn't See in the City

#### Facilitation Questions:

- What kind of animals might you see in rural areas and not on city streets?
- What's a John Deere?
- Why doesn't that railroad (R&R) crossing have a gate?
- What can a rider do to successfully navigate through these potential hazards?

1. In the country it is common to see livestock (cattle, sheep, goats, horses, etc.). Livestock are typically divided into herds and can be moved on roadways in large numbers.

A good rule of thumb: if a rider sees livestock near or on the road, it is safe to assume there may be more livestock close by. Dogs are common in rural areas too. They are used to move livestock from place to place. They can be allowed to roam freely without the confinement of yards. Horses may also be ridden on rural roads. Watch for manure in the road.

Discuss the need for good riders to keep up their attention and watch for animals of all sizes on the road and road side. Slow down, possibly downshift, and remember animals are unpredictable. If riding through a herd on the roadway, go slow! You want to ride without upsetting the animals. A cow can weigh from young adult (200 lbs) to a full grown (800-1000 lbs) female and much larger for males. Slow and cautious is best.

Wild animals such as squirrels, rabbits, raccoons, deer, etc. can lead to nasty spills if a rider is powering through the corners on a rural two lane asphalt road and one of these animals runs out in the road. Often in rural areas trees, shrubbery, and other obstacles that can hide small or large animals grow right up next to the shoulder of the road leaving no room for a rider to see them before they step into the roadway. Slowdown in areas where limited visibility to the sides of the road exists.

2. John Deere, that's something John's wife says to him right? A John Deere is a brand of tractor. There are tractor brands like there are automobile brands. Many tractors do not have signals, flashers or lights of any kind. They may or may not have a Slow Moving vehicle sign mounted on the back.

The person driving the tractor may need to drive down the middle of the road due to the tractor's size or the implement they are towing so a rider may need to take the motorcycle off the roadway to avoid being hit. Slow down and keep the motorcycle as upright as possible to allow for the best traction. Avoid sudden maneuvers like 'grabbing' the front brake.

The tractor's size may also force it to drive partway off the roadway causing dust and rocks to become airborne. The equipment could have debris falling off of it: grass, hay, straw, large clods of dirt, rocks, etc. Don't tailgate large equipment! Again, all riders should lower their speed and keep their attention up to avoid last minute abrupt actions on the motorcycle.

3. When you're riding through rural America you may see a dark line crossing the horizon on the road far ahead of you. As you get closer you will see they are railroad tracks. The gate isn't down, because there isn't one.

This is actually quite common as rural areas are often populated with 'unprotected' train tracks. These tracks have no lights or guards to warn you from crossing if there is a train approaching. Slow down and look both ways for an approaching train. Depending on the time of day, sun position, heat coming off the earth, seeing a slow moving train may be difficult. When crossing the tracks, try to cross at a 90 degree angle; a rider may need to rise off the seat, give a little throttle as the front tire crosses the tracks and let off the throttle as the rear tire goes over the tracks since some railroad tracks have been there for quite some time and the roadways may not be maintained that well.

## Discussion Area 2: Roads in Rural Areas

### Facilitation Questions:

- How might roadways in rural areas differ from city streets?
- What potential hazards may a motorcyclist find on the road in rural areas?

1. It could stand to reason that if a rider has never seen livestock or ridden through rural country, that he/she may have never seen a cattle guard. A cattle guard is placed in the roadway to prevent cattle from wandering off. Cattle guards are often made of metal. If they are metal there is a large hole underneath the entire guard. They would be about 6 feet wide and cross the entire roadway (20 feet or more). The metal bars could be 20 feet long or more (to cross the roadway) and about 4 inches wide spaced about 4 inches apart running perpendicular in the roadway, like a metal fence in the road. There is also a good space that is open in the very middle of the cattle guard to be aware of; a motorcycle tire could potentially get stuck in there. Over time the cattle guard gets more and more depressed in the roadway creating a large dip in the road.

In any case, it is best to slow down, watch for livestock, and travel over the cattle guard like a rider would over any obstacle. Be especially careful if they are wet, metal and paint are very slippery when wet. Slow down, there should not be power to the rear wheel when crossing over slippery surfaces.

2. Road surfaces vary greatly in rural areas. A rider may find narrow roads, dirt/gravel roads, hazards (e.g. wet manure) on the road.

Roads sometimes narrow or the road surface changes with no warning. Watch for oncoming traffic, especially on narrow bridges. The oncoming vehicle may live in the area and drive that road daily, not aware that a motorcyclist is there. Be visible! Dirt roads are abundant in rural areas so use the brakes smoothly. Remember if a rider locks up the rear brake on a loose surface, he/she can regain traction by letting off the rear brake, and then reapplying as needed. Keep speeds reasonable and search the roadway for potential changes in road surfaces.

In rural areas the roadways are not always maintained. A lot of roadways end abruptly and turn to dirt roads. Even if they are maintained, they could be utilized by heavy equipment and/or livestock. If the maintenance does not keep up the roads could be damaged, have debris, or have gravel just filling in the holes in the road. Cow manure, another hazard, is not only messy, but very slippery; and falling in a pile or two, quite disgusting.



## Wrap-Up:

Review strategies and suggestions discussed. A key element to good, safe riding in rural areas is keep perception up. Scanning the roadways helps to minimize risk, but doesn't eliminate it completely. Reinforce the fact that the world might not move as fast in a rural area, but conditions that affect a motorcyclist can still pop up in an instant. Livestock can be free roaming and not fenced in; farm equipment moves slowly and take the entire roadway surface to move. Review roadway surfaces as they change in an instant and roads may not be maintained. Stress that good riders strive to reduce risk by using good judgment and thinking ahead.

### Wrap-Up Discussion:

- Ask participants how they could apply the knowledge they gained from this discussion to their next ride.
- If you don't live in a rural area, how would you practice the strategies discussed?

Distribute copies of the DSOC Motorcycle Mentorship Module Evaluation form to all participants and request that they deliver or mail the completed form to the Command or Command Safety Office for processing.

Remind everyone to ride safe, and see you at the next Mentorship Meeting.

# DSOC Motorcycle Mentorship Feedback Form

Presenter Name:

Date:

Topic/Title:

Unit Number:

**Please review each statement below and check the response that closely matches your experience in the Mentorship Module today:**

**1. Please rate the presenter's performance:**

Prepared    Not Prepared    Engaging    Not Engaging    Led Discussion    LECTURED

Comments:

**2. I was given opportunities to participate in the module's discussion**

Never    Only Once    2-4 Times    Many Times Throughout Discussion

Comments:

**3. With regard to my personal riding experiences, this discussion was:**

Relevant    Not Relevant    Interesting    Not Interesting

Comments:

**4. This discussion topic has provided me with specific learning points that I can use to be a safer, better informed rider**

None    One Idea or Fact    2-4 Learning Points    5 or More

Comments:

**5. I would be interested in participating in other Motorcycle Mentorship Module discussion topics**

Never Again    Willing to Try Another Module    Would Like to Do Modules Regularly

Comments:

Thank you for your participation. Please make note of any other suggestions or comments below (continue on the back if needed):

Deliver or mail this completed form to the Command or Command Safety Office for processing. Please do not return this form directly to the Module Presenter.

## Resources

### Continued Reading:

**Code, Keith** (1983). *A Twist of the Wrist* (Vol. I.)  
Glendale, CA: California Superbike School, Inc.

**Code, Keith** (1993). *A Twist of the Wrist* (Vol. II.)  
Glendale, CA: California Superbike School, Inc.

**Ienatsch, Nick** (2003). *Sport Riding Techniques:  
How To Develop Real World Skills for Speed,  
Safety, and Confidence on the Street and Track.*  
Phoenix, AZ: David Bull Publishing

**Motorcycle Safety Foundation**, (2005). *The  
Motorcycle Safety Foundation's Guide to  
Motorcycling Excellence*, 2nd Edition. Irvine  
CA: Whitehorse Press

**RAND Corp.** (2010). *Understanding and  
Reducing Off-Duty Vehicle Crashes Among  
Military Personnel* (DSOC Contract W74V8H-  
06-C-0002). Arlington VA: RAND Corp.

**Spiegel, B.** (2010). *The Upper Half of the  
Motorcycle*. Stuttgart, Germany: Whitehorse  
Press





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