

Class 8 - Rural Roads

- Why ride rural roads?
 - It can be boring to ride on city streets.
 - One of the great sources of enjoyment in riding is going new places
 - Seeing what's around the bend and over the hill: fields, redwoods, small towns.
 - It's one major reward for riding. Do it every once in a while to keep your passion for "drudge" work around town.
 - Once you discover the joy of rural riding, you usually don't give up cycling.
- The Bay Area is a great place to Bicycle!
 - Fairly flat rural areas nearby:
 - Coyote Valley
 - Livermore Valley
 - Watsonville (Pajaro Valley)
 - Wine Country - Napa, Santa Rosa

Rural Roads - What's different

- What's different:
 - Narrow Roads - Basic rules are what you already know
 - High-speed Traffic - You are a slow-moving vehicle
- Ride steadily and predictably. The skills you've practiced will serve you well and give you confidence.
- Be attentive to traffic so you can be out of the lane, especially when traffic will be coming over a hill or around a turn.
 - If you ride two across, single up *before* to avoid obstructing traffic
 - In large groups, leave breaks so traffic can go around parts of your group at a time.
- Wind buffet.
 - Be aware that your bike could be pulled or swerve.
 - Listen for traffic and be prepared to compensate.
 - Practice and experience will help you gain confidence.

Rural Road Car-Bike Crash Types

- Motorist Overtaking Errors
 - The danger isn't usually getting hit from behind, it's the motorist pulling back over too soon.
 - If a short vehicle (car or short truck), slow down and let it move ahead of you.
 - If a full size truck, bus, or trailer, get off the road immediately.
- Incipient Head-on (Motorist Passing Errors). Cars overtaking don't see you quarter-mile or more up the road, and then take your lane of travel.
 - Brightly colored clothes can help them see you further away.
 - Be observant. When you see multiple cars coming, watch for ones trying to pass.
 - Study the road and shoulder and plan an escape route if the emergency develops.
 - Slow down in preparation if it's possible. May also allow the crisis to pass.
- If you do leave the road surface to avoid either type of crash.
 - Brake on the road before leaving the road if possible.
 - Once off the road, ride straight while braking carefully to a complete stop. Large steering corrections can cause a fall.
 - Don't try to ride back onto the road unless you *know* it's clear and that the road boundary won't cause a fall.

Dogs

- Rural dogs can be more defensive of their territory than urban.
- A fall is more dangerous than a bite.
 - Your first priority is to avoid hitting the dog with your front wheel. You will most likely fall.
 - After front wheel is past, next priority is to keep control of the bike to avoid a fall.
- Aggressive or non-aggressive response?
 - Non-aggressive
 - Continue pedaling - the dog will usually stop when you leave his territory.
 - Some dogs bark and chase for fun with no intention of biting.
 - The faster your feet are moving, the less likely they are to be bitten.
 - Aggressive
 - Yell "No!" or "Go home!"
 - Spray with water from water bottle.
 - Physical violence or pepper spray should be used only in extreme cases.
 - Every situation is different. Depends on the dog and your technique.
 - Last line of defense is to put the bike between you and the dog.