



Motorcyclists Confederation of Canada
Confédération motocycliste du Canada

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Lane Filtering and Lane Splitting Fact Sheet

What is Lane Splitting?

Lane splitting is the practice of riding a motorcycle (or bicycle) between lanes or rows of slow moving or stopped traffic moving in the same direction. It is sometimes called lane sharing, white-lining, filtering, or stripe-riding. This allows riders to bypass traffic congestion, save time, and may also be safer than stopping behind stationary vehicles.

Guidelines for lane splitting published by: The California Motorcyclist Safety Program (*Division of the California Highway Patrol*)

Motorcyclists who are competent enough riders to lane split, should follow these general guidelines if choosing to lane split:

1) Travel at a speed that is no more than 10 MPH faster than other traffic – danger increases at higher speed differentials.

- A speed differential of 10 miles per hour or less allows an alert, competent rider enough time to identify and react to most dangerous situations that can occur.
- The greater the speed differential, the less time a rider has to identify and react to a hazard.

2) It is not advisable to lane split when traffic flow is at 30 mph or faster --- danger increases as overall speed increases.

- At just 20 mph, in the 1 or 2 seconds it takes a rider to identify a hazard, that rider will travel approximately 30 to 60 feet before even starting to take evasive action. Actual reaction (braking or swerving) will take additional time and distance.
- Braking and stopping distance varies greatly based on a multitude of factors (rider, machine and environment).
- As speed increases, crash severity increases.

3) Typically, it is safer to split between the #1 and #2 lanes than between other lanes.

- Other road users are more accustomed to motorcycles splitting between the #1 and #2 (furthest left) lanes.
- Avoid splitting in lanes near freeway on-ramps and exits.
- Avoid splitting lanes when another motorcycle rider is splitting between other nearby lanes as cars may make additional room for one rider and accidentally reduce space for another.



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4) Consider the total environment in which you are splitting, including the width of the lanes, size of surrounding vehicles, as well as roadway, weather, and lighting conditions.

- Some lanes are narrower than others, leaving little room to pass safely. If you can't fit, don't split.
- Some vehicles are wider than others -- it is not advisable to split near wide trucks. If you can't fit, don't split.
- Know the limitations of your motorcycle --- wide bars, fairing and bags require more space between vehicles. If you can't fit, don't split.
- Avoid splitting on unfamiliar roads to avoid surprises such as poor road surfaces.
- Seams in the pavement or concrete between lanes can be hazardous if they are wide or uneven.
- Poor visibility, due to darkness or weather conditions, makes it difficult for riders to see road hazards and makes it more difficult for drivers to see you.
- Help drivers see you by wearing brightly colored protective gear and using high beams during daylight.

5) Be alert and anticipate possible movements by other road users.

Be very aware of what the cars around you are doing. If a space, or gap, opens up next to your lane, be prepared react accordingly.

- Always be prepared to take evasive action if a vehicle changes lanes.
- Account for inattentive or distracted drivers.
- Riders should not weave back and forth between lanes or ride on top of the line.
- Riders should avoid lingering in blind spots.
- Never ride while impaired by drugs, alcohol or fatigue.
- Constantly scan for changing conditions.

What is Lane Filtering?

Lane filtering or filtering forward describes moving through traffic that is barely moving (less than 30 km/h) or is stopped. It can also refer to using space on the outside edge of same-direction traffic.

This is how Australia describes it: "Lane filtering is when a motorcycle rider moves alongside vehicles that have either stopped or are moving slowly (less than 30 km/h)."

[\(http://roadsafety.transport.nsw.gov.au/staying-safe/motorcyclists/lanefiltering/\)](http://roadsafety.transport.nsw.gov.au/staying-safe/motorcyclists/lanefiltering/)

Why practice lane splitting and lane filtering?

Lane splitting, and filtering is practiced by motorcyclists and cyclists in many countries, particularly in the developing world. Population-dense and traffic-congested urban areas in many countries allow it for practical purposes. There are typically many more motorcycles, scooters, and bicycles sharing the road with other vehicles in these countries.



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Is it legal in Canada?

The practice of lane splitting, and lane filtering is currently not legal in Canada. A number of groups continue to petition their local and provincial governments to consider making lane splitting and lane filtering legal.

What is the MCC's position on lane splitting and lane filtering?

The Motorcyclists Confederation of Canada (MCC) has not taken an official position on the issue of lane splitting and lane filtering in Canada. It continues to be a contentious and often confusing issue, with legitimate arguments on both sides. MCC encourages riders to obey the traffic laws wherever you ride. Even the written laws can sometimes be confusing.

From: <https://fortnine.ca/en/lane-splitting-in-canada-the-good-the-bad-and-the-ugly/>

Even the government states that it “does not allow or prohibit” lane splitting. ... Lane splitting is widely regarded as illegal in Canada. But that doesn't mean our laws are any clearer! The Ontario Ministry of Transportation states that filtering is “extremely dangerous,” but they make no reference to an actual law.

Arguments for lane splitting include:

- Motorcyclists are less likely to be rear ended
- Motorcyclists save time
- Reduced congestion saves everyone time
- Motorcyclists are protected from the elements
- Decreased emissions through less idling
- Other vehicles are more aware of motorcycles
- More visible to motorists (by moving to the front of the line)
- Improved visibility for motorcyclists

Arguments against lane splitting:

- Motorcyclists are exposed to other dangers
- Motorcyclists are likely to be found at fault in collisions
- Motorcyclists have no escape route
- Incidents of road rage may increase
- Idling between vehicles reduces space margins, and can put motorcyclists in drivers' blind spots