

ROBERTA'S RULES

A NUMERIC GUIDE TO LIVING SAFELY ON TWO WHEELS



THE GOAL IN LIFE IS TO DIE YOUNG, BUT TO DO SO AS LATE AS POSSIBLE. I SUPPOSE IT'S PARTLY WHY WE RIDE OUR BIKES... TO STAY YOUNG; IN BODY AND IN SPIRIT. TO THIS END, A WISE MAN SHARES A CONSISTENT ADMONITION, "TAKE IT SLOW AND EASY. YOU WANT TO BE ABLE TO DO THIS TOMORROW, TOO." IN ESSENCE, DON'T BE AFRAID TO GO SLOWLY. BE AFRAID OF STOPPING. SOME OTHER THINGS TO REMEMBER: A CRUISER BIKE FUELED BY LAUGHTER IS RICHER THAN A CARBON RIG POWERED BY ANGER; A DRIVER WHO GIVES YOU A HONK IS NOT NECESSARILY YOUR ENEMY; WHAT YOU BELIEVE TO BE A SAFE PLACE CAN BE THE MOST DANGEROUS PLACE OF ALL.

THE UNFORTUNATE CONTEXT OF OUR TWO-WHEELED PURSUIT OF YOUTH IS THAT IT CAN RUB UP AGAINST A WORLD OF MOTOR DRIVEN VEHICLES IN THE MOST CATASTROPHIC OF WAYS. WITH THIS IN MIND, AND OUR BEAUTIFUL FRIEND ROBERTA AS A POTENT REMINDER, WE ASK CYCLISTS AND DRIVERS ALIKE TO REMEMBER THESE SIX SIMPLE NUMERIC GUIDELINES, KNOWN AS ROBERTA'S RULES, WHENEVER YOU ARE OUT AND ABOUT ON ANYTHING WITH WHEELS.

1. ONE MEANS ONE FOR ALL!

One for all, all for one. When you are alone on the road you are most vulnerable. You need to take greater care to ensure you are seen; start with adding lights to your bike with white in front and red in the rear. You also need to realize that you are representing all the other cyclists on the road, too. There is a responsibility to yourself, but you also have to realize your actions can have a positive or negative bearing on how drivers view all cyclists. It benefits all of us when you ride courteously and obey all traffic laws. The more you can do to foster respect in how you share the road with drivers the better off the cycling community will be. One for all, all for one.

2. TWO MEANS TWO-BY-TWO!

Two-by-Two. You are encouraged to ride two abreast (but not more), meaning that side-by-side riding is perfectly legal and often safer for all involved. Riding side by side, in pairs, will boost your visibility and reduce your risk of being hit. And where there are Sharrows, you should take the entire lane whether you are with your riding partners or on your own. One courtesy tip: When riding two abreast, consider other road users and if necessary, change to single file to help drivers overtake safely. Two-by-Two riding is safer and legal!

3. THREE MEANS 3-FEET!

Following the lead of many other states, California passed the Three Feet for Safety Act in 2014, which requires drivers maintain a minimum 3-foot buffer when passing a bicyclist. Drivers overtaking a bicycle shall pass to the left of the bicycle at a distance of not less than three feet at a careful and reduced speed and may not again drive to the right side of the roadway until safely clear of the overtaken bicycle.

4. FOUR MEANS 4-FEET!

The Door Zone is the 4-foot area along the side of a parked car where an opening door can hit and seriously injure a cyclist. We now know that 1 out of 5 of bicycle crashes occur when someone opens a car door in the path of a cyclist. When riding in a bike lane, ride on the left side of the lane... at least 4-feet from parked cars. If there isn't enough room to ride 4-feet from parked cars and still provide passing motorists the minimum 3-feet of required safe passing distance, it might be safer to move to the center of the lane for a brief period to prevent unsafe passing.

5. FIVE MEANS HIGH FIVE!

This is about communication, courtesy and camaraderie. Use hand signals for drivers, pedestrians and fellow cyclists. Make yourself conspicuous. Ride predictively by signaling your intent. Point things out to fellow cyclists and any time you see another brother or sister on their bike, give them a HIGH-FIVE!

6. SIX IS FOR SIXTH SENSE!

We all have a sixth sense. Many of us chose to ignore it. Whether you are new to riding, have been riding your whole life or are just getting back into it again, developing and honing your sixth sense will help you stay safe and get more out of your youthful two-wheeled pursuits. Your sixth sense is that innate instinct all riders share that enables us to read the road, the conditions, the potential hazards and stay focused and in control. Honing this sixth sense and developing it will only enhance your riding experience down the road.