

Pre-ride Briefing

Before I let a passenger onto my bike I host a briefing with them. I explain that so long as they are on my bike THEY are the boss - that if they want to slow down, or to stop, for any reason, we will do so. I explain that it is not my intention to scare them, ever, while they are on the bike, but to help them enjoy the experience. In exchange for this there is a price: They have four jobs while riding as passenger, and they must agree to get on and off the bike only with the permission of the driver.

I explain the 'passenger twist' where they connect their helmet cord while facing the bike, then do a full turn clockwise so that the cord wraps behind them before they get on the bike. That they get on and off only while I am on the bike, which is in neutral, and have both feet down and the side stand up (this, because if the side stand is down and they plump themselves on the saddle they will compress the shocks and that will lever the bike to the right - possibly all the way over onto its side!) I nod and tell them it is OK to get on the bike when I'm ready for them. I do the same when I'm ready for them to leave the bike. Finally, I ask that when they mount and dismount the bike they try to keep their weight centered on the bike - that they not pull the bike towards them but, rather, push themselves towards the bike.

I explain that while we are moving they can talk to me if they want, and that they may use the PTT button near their left hand to talk on the CB, but as to moving around, I'd prefer that they pretended to be a sack of potatoes (actually, I tell them they can move about, just not suddenly) - that they NOT try to help me through the turns - that they not lean in anticipation or when we are in a turn.

I tell them that I have never had an accident, but that no matter what happens while we are moving, they are to keep their feet on the passenger floorboards and never, ever, try to touch the ground with their feet to try to hold up the motorcycle. I show them the saddlebag guard rails and point out that they are heavy steel, like 'roll bars', and will protect their legs only so long as their feet remain on those floorboards.

Oh, as to those 'jobs' they have:

- ▶ They are to wave at all motorcyclists approaching us in the opposite direction
- ▶ They are to wave at all policemen who are on their feet
- ▶ They are to wave at all children that show any interest whatever
- ▶ They are to demonstrate to the world that they are enjoying themselves, particularly at all rest stops. Failing any of those jobs, I declare, will result in them having a new job when the ride is over - the spokes!

(There are no spokes on my Wing, of course.)

As to my own personal rules while riding with a passenger:

- ▶ The only thing I want to 'show off' is that riding a motorcycle can be safe and enjoyable
- ▶ I wish to challenge myself with the task of trying to shift gears without the passenger being aware of the activity (no head snaps in either direction.)
- ▶ I want to start and stop with the passenger never quite sure that we have started to move or that we have come to a full stop - i.e., smoothness all around.