



The Human Element

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Töff, Töff - nüt als Töff !



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MOTORCYCLE SAFETY FOUNDATION

Individual Driving Instruction for Motorcycle Driving Learners: The Swiss Experiment of Motorcycle Driving School

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MOTORCYCLING IN SWITZERLAND

BASIC STATUTES

Originally the drivers of the different categories were divided in the following grades:

till 1960	Category f:	Motorcycles without sidecar Inclusive bicycles with engine-aid
since 1961	Category g:	Motorcycles with sidecar
	Category k:	Small motorcycles till 50 ccm

Drivers who passed a test for cars were also entitled to drive small motorcycles of the category k. Till 1963 the provisional driving license gave formal right only for driving accompanied by an experienced rider. Based on a recommendation from the committee of traffic offices, since 1950 most of the cantons granted to drive without accompaniment after passing the theoretical test. The provisional driving license was given for three months and if desired, they were extended month after month.

At this time, not many of the beginners had their own vehicles, so they had no other choice than to use the driving instructors' motorcycle taking lessons. For the test, it was necessary that the machine had a pillion for the examiner. Till 1969 the driving instructor had to take a special examination also for the categories f and g. The belief in the great future of the cars and the hope of dis-appearance of the motorcycles one day were the reasons that the specialization was dropped in the first edict by the Federal Council for the driving instructors.

Since 1st July 1977 the following order of admission is in power:

Category A	Motorcycles with more than 125 ccm, with or without sidecar
Category A1	Motorcycles and small motorcycles till 125 ccm
Category F	Motorcycles with the maximum speed of 40 km/h (25 mph)

Motorcycles of the category F can be driven by drivers over 16 years. The ordinary way to get the license for a motorcycle of the category A is that somebody has to drive a motorcycle of the category A1 during two years without having any heavy accidents. Except of this duty are policemen, military persons and motorcycle-mechanic apprentices, supposing that these people get an instruction opposite civil people.

To get a provisional driving license it is necessary to pass a theoretical test. This license, today, gives right for learning how to drive without accompaniment during 3 (6) months and the possibility for a prolongation of 2 (6) months (in parentheses the recommendation by the Federal Police, which is in investigation now).

The driving test is taken very differently in each canton. Progressive authority demand in the category A1 a test of 45 minutes, two examinee together, accompanied by a car with wireless equipment. In the upper category the test is taken by the expert on the pillion. First he is testing the first examinee, the second just follow them. After half an hour the expert change the motorcycle and the first has to follow them. The motorcycles of category F are tested the same way as in category A1.

Today a motorcycle-fan is able to start to drive with 16 years. These motorcycles look almost like a 125 ccm, it gives also right to drive with passenger, but its space is only 40 km/h 25mph. After ten years he can ride motorcycles of the category A1. These motorcycles are able to do a lot like the big ones. The fastest runs close to 100 mph, much more even what is legal. Only if they carry another person on pillion, it isn't running that fast anymore. After two years of driving he has a possibility to change to the upper category A (if he hasn't had any severe penalties or accidents). So the category A is usually for people over 20 years. In each category he has to pass a new practical test.

THE SITUATION OF EDUCATION

Already in the '70s the problem was known that young people were driving fast on big motorcycles (cat. A). This was the reason they divided it in different categories: The learner category up to 125ccm, the big ones for experienced riders only. If you look at today's insurance rates, you can see that the situation became a lot better. Still today most of the accidents happen to beginners, but the speed and damage stay much smaller. In the category A it is a lot better.

At the end of the '70s, within the big number of car-driving instructors, many motorcycling-fans under the leadership of Louis Hubscher (Wohlen/AG) took the initiative to revive the education for motorcycle riders. Of this initiative was born the SMFV (Swiss Motorcycle Driving Instructor Association). From the beginning they could count on the help of police and the committee of traffic offices. They didn't have to wait too long for the success and the situation of education and driving tests became a lot better in a few years. Only in the French and Italian part of Switzerland they have to make up.

Even though everybody knows that driving a motorcycle is more difficult than to drive a car, people still think it would be good enough to take 2 or 4 lessons to pass the test. For car-driving most of them take 10 times as much lessons. In a few lessons it may be possible to learn how to handle a motorcycle, but most of the accidents happen for other reasons. But this is exactly the point where the education starts. The instructor has to show the danger on the road. Most of the time car drivers are overcharged to calculate the speed of a motorcycle, the distance, or they even don't think at all of a motorcycle who would appear somewhere. This not being seen by a car-driver could cost one's life or his health.

Hopefully the good work of many motorcycling-fans in the crowd of car-driving teachers brings another point of view, not just in motorcycle circles, just to by help of the authority. It is still a lot easier to pass the test for motorcycles than for cars.

THE DRIVING INSTRUCTOR

Since 1969 every driving instructor of cars has the right to give also lessons in motorcycling. The instructor has the same right like every person living in Switzerland: Everyone who has a car driving license since 3 years can show a beginner how to drive. But if somebody teaches more than one person with no connections a year how to drive, he has to be a licensed driving instructor. To accompany a motorcycling learner, the order is just to have the license for the category - no time limit, etc. The main problem is that hundreds of thousands of people took possession of the driving license for category A1 without taking a test or even ever have been riding such a motorcycle when in 1977 the law changes. So there is no guarantee when they accompany a learner that they know anything about motorcycle riding, in fact it starts to be a problem only when this is a car-driving teacher selling lessons to motorcycle student-drivers! Since 1969 the education of car-driving instructors is exactly defined, since 1976 it is a part of the traffic-law. Not so for motorcycle-driving instructors: 1979 the first training-college for

motorcycle driving instructors took place and since 1981 driving instructors are formed regularly. The education of a driving instructor of cars takes 5 months and if they also want to give lessons for motorcycling it only takes another 3 days of further education (not mandatory). Still all continuous courses (3 different one-day courses, one three-day seminary) don't give more than 9 days together, less than 2 weeks.

Already years ago the union of the committee of traffic offices made the suggestion of forming real experts like they do it for trucks. This education takes two months. This kind of proposal was given by the SMFV to the Federal Government. A lot of driving instructors of cars still think 5 days of education would be good enough.

Anyway, it would be better only to give an education to people who are themselves experienced motorcycle riders. For car-driving instructors it is a limit of at least three years of experience from their own test. It also should be forbidden that driving instructors who don't know how to ride a motorcycle sit in the car and teach people by a wireless equipment.

If one day the proposal is accepted by the Government it would be possible that in about 10 years only well-educated driving instructors give lessons to motorcyclists. In some cantons they already have lists with recommended driving instructors, who had at least an education of 3 days.

INDIVIDUAL TRAINING PROGRAM

First Lessons, method: 1 student-driver/1 teacher

Phase of accustom: rider and machine

Become familiar with the machine: weight, holding upright in balance,
seat height, rider, lever and pedal position
Pushing the machine: forward and backward
steering stop, front brake (only in straight line)
Parking: centerstand, sidestand (in first gear only)

First driving experience (engine off): technique of looking while
getting underway
stabilize, keeping balance
braking
come to a stop (left foot down)

First experience with the engine running: teaching the senses
in standstill
in "walking"

Feet on the pegs: in getting underway and stopping

Second driving experience (engine off):
turning, left and right
technique of looking while turning
technique of looking while going straight
stabilize
stopping while turning (straighten first)
turning in an eight

Second experience with the engine running: driving in and at friction point
driving in a "O"
calm throttle action
"Lastwechselreaktionen"
stopping by order
turning in an eight

Practice by the student-driver himself of all these procedures.

Exercises for getting underway and shifting:
getting underway by listening
starting by "step on the gas"
starting with a passenger
upshifting
downshifting

First course for handling in slow speeds, tight turns, better clutch operation and braking. 2 times half a day, maximum participants per instructor: 4-6.

Next lessons, getting familiar with machine, street and operation procedures.

Method: 1 student-driver / 1 teacher

Drive away from the roadside: Procedure by watching traffic, give signal (turning light), making ready to start (friction point), head check and getting underway, switch the turn signal off and upshift gears.

Come to a stop at the roadside: Procedure by watching traffic, give signal and move to the right, brake and downshift simultaneous with compensation - gas, release the clutch smoothly in each gear, bring the machine to a smooth stop by releasing the brakes more and more (degressive braking), standing position.

Start and stop uphill: Driving, stopping and stabilizing by friction point starting by hand-, foot- and both brakes
starting with passenger
combination with the whole procedure (above).

Procedure at a stop street: Test of the preceding knowledge
Move in the correct position for turning
brake and stop, release the brakes before full stop
watch the traffic
be ready to start prepare a left on a right turn
squeeze the clutch, control of traffic, start and more traffic checks on big intersections.

Cornering: Procedure for cornering to the right, to the left
first without, then with, watching traffic.

From this point the combination machine and rider should be in the condition to share the attention with everything happening around him. Some other teachers take two or three student drivers together for the next part of the program.

Learn how to find the right position: Road and stationary objects

Looking where to drive: "Read" the road surface, watch for different tractions, dirt, etc.
Position: Avoid running over painted lines, manhole covers, especially in curves, etc.
Perform of braking, merging and cornering.

Find the proper position:	in small roads in normal roads in wide roads in different roads in hazards
How fast to drive:	Watching for roadside conditions: limited vision, different hazards and any kind of danger.
Right-of-way:	Law and rules, hazards to look for turning left, crossing left position for being seen, communication by speed give way to other drivers (hand signals)
Definition of "Being ready to brake" (in german: Bremsbereitschaft):	how to make "Bremsbereitschaft" speed adjustment be ready to stop

By this time, the student driver should be able to anticipate more information, such as stationary signals, take care of possible points of conflicts, etc.

Method: 1 student-driver / 1 teacher to control all decisions immediately

Home-Lesson: teaching the feeling for speed in different gears	Watching for speed-limits, driving constant speed without controlling too often the speedometer. Listen to the engine, shift gears when necessary-- for example, uphill or downhill or plain driving the same with passenger.
Include signal information:	open the "visual angle" by - painted lines (avoid to roll over) - signals like speed, right-of-way, instructions
Better position in special conditions:	changing position in case of parked cars, etc. position before turning in one-way-streets changing position in case of hazards
Places to stop or wait in special conditions:	Come to a stop in yield streets (no priority, give way or stop). Place to stop with traffic mirrors. Step by step in large crossings by using waiting spots like refuges, tramway lines or other spots painted on the road surface.

After teaching all stationary elements of the street, the attention can extend to the much more complex area of other road users. The skills of the rider are consolidated, his eyes are trained to watch for different things: it's time to watch out for all car drivers, pedestrians, bicycle riders, etc.

Behavior on all other road users:	Right-of-way of pedestrians in a marked crosswalk 3A-training*, school buses and children passing an intersection with round-about traffic passing signal-controlled intersections moving into tramway railways turning left driving in two or three-lane roads: riding with parallel traffic, changing lanes passing other vehicles proper position in special conditions with other road users
Driving outside towns:	Riding in high speed, view in higher speed, accelerating and braking. How to drive a curve: Position, technique of looking, technique of driving. Traffic awareness, training to be aware of any dangerous situation, handle extreme situations.
Driving on motorways:	Special rules and signals, entering and leaving, proper position, blind spot, passing, changing lanes. Special weather conditions, grooves and dangerous drivers.
Combination of the whole knowledge:	Driving by rules: - heading straight - always in the right lane when many lanes - stay on the main road Driving by order, left or right (speaking or other communication like touching, radio, etc.). Driving under special circumstances like - very tricky situation by turning tight, uphill or downhill, narrow road, no sight or in combination of all.
Test ride:	Analyse all mistakes, if need be controlled in similar conditions for better understanding.

Duebendorf, June 30, 1990

* 3A-Training means: A for "Alter" (age), A for "Aufmerksamkeit" (attention), A for "Absicht" (intention).

