

2 + 4



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Many that know me will not be surprised to learn that, beyond my obvious passion for motorcycling, driving is also a long standing passion. While my love of four wheels may not be as intense as my love of two wheels (I'd say 80/20 motorcycles/cars), there are many a time where four wheels makes more sense than two. Inclement weather comes to mind. In the past, donning rain gear was always an option. These days, four wheels makes more sense. Me thinks age has played a part in my shifting views. Similarly, enjoying a spirited drive with non-riding friends is always an option, as few non-riding friends would consider riding pillion. There is always a place for two wheels and four wheels.

But, is there a place for two wheels and four wheels together? This can be a thorny issue, to say the least. As a motorcyclist, I had long been opposed to the

mixing of the two disparate vehicle types. I thought of it as a water and oil dilemma—they just can't mix. My memories of aggressive drivers nipping at my fender caused distress. However, as I began to digest the issue, I realized it wasn't the car so much as the driver that posed the threat. Could a rider and driver roll together was the real issue. Reframed, I began to see that this was indeed doable—with a few rules in place.

Rule Number One: Motorcycles lead. Now, this may sound counter intuitive at first. If a motorcyclist was to low-side and go down, wouldn't this pose a high risk to being struck by the car? While in theory yes—in reality having the car sweep is safer. If the car were to lead, and make a mistake, the risk of causing all the following motorcycles to crash would be much higher. Better to be in a position where one motorcyclist's safety could become an issue than a position where all motorcyclist's safety could become an issue.

Rule Number Two: Be defensive, not offensive. Rule of thumb, as a driver, is to leave a good space between the motorcycles and your car. Not only does this allow greater reaction time in event of an emergency, it provides a psychological barrier as well. Even with a driver you know, having a 4000 lbs. car nipping at your fender is always a stressful event. Seeing a car several car lengths behind your motorcycle means less time spent in the rear view mirror and more time focused on the road, and its many inherent risks, ahead.

Rule Number Three: Treat motorcyclists as fragile road users. Much like pedestrians, cyclist and skateboarders, motorcyclists have little to no protection against cars. Drivers have steel safety cages surrounding them, giving them a much higher tolerance of risk (unfortunately). Keep in mind that though you are on the same road, you are not playing the same game. Keep the safety of your riding friends paramount at all times.

Though mixing motorcycles and cars can lead to a more stressful situation—it need not. I have successfully driven with motorcycling friends, and have found the experience to be exciting. Through a careful adherence to the rules, cats and dogs can live in harmony...well, perhaps not...still one can dream...