

WINTER WORK

INSTITUTE OF ADVANCED MOTORCYCLISTS

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Paul is continuing to strive for his IAM riding standard, with a few observed rides taking place over winter. Yep, rain and single-digit temps don't stop the mission for knowledge...





IAM

**NZ RIDING STANDARD
FOR MOTORCYCLISTS**

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Those of you who regularly read BRM will know that I bumped into a group from the Institute of Advanced Motorcyclists while on a Ride Forever Silver course with my son. A brief chat ended with a commitment to meet the IAM crew the following weekend, and so my journey to become IAM qualified began.

If you didn't see that article, a brief recap is that the IAM riding standard began as a way to train new police motorcycle recruits back in the fifties. The system was so successful that it was quickly implemented to train civilian riders, with the Institute of Advanced Motorcyclists set up as a volunteer organisation for coaching riders in advanced training. It's not a substitute for official rider training, nor is it meant to replace the excellent ACC Ride Forever scheme. Instead, it's a program designed for riders looking to further improve their skills, with a focus on making you think about your surroundings and what is

approaching/unfolding in front of you so you can then react with plenty of time.

At its heart, there are three questions: What can be seen? What cannot be seen? And what might reasonably be expected to happen? An advanced motorcyclist is monitoring the ever-changing circumstances in any ride and continually observing, anticipating, prioritising, deciding and acting early. And getting this nailed can take a reasonable amount of time, with monthly rides encouraged with an IAM observer who will assist you with following the Roadcraft process.

TRON TRAINING

With BRM located in Hamilton, my local IAM observer is a chap called Chris Nielsen, who I knew beforehand but didn't realise he was hooked up with IAM. The idea is that you get a couple of books – the Motorcycle Roadcraft Handbook and the IAM NZ Riding Standard – which, if you like reading, basically outlines everything you need to know about the IAM way of riding. You then meet with your 'observer' hopefully once a month for a ride, and you practice the various skills required to meet the IAM standard with the observer, well, observing. Pretty simple, right.

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these groups of letters help to remind you of the fundamentals of the IAM system, which is very helpful as you're riding down the road trying to concentrate on everything that's going on.

I.P.S.G.A INFORMATION, POSITION, SPEED, GEAR, ACCELERATION.

Yeah, that makes much more sense!

The basis of the IAM system is to make 'good progress in a seemingly effortless manner', and using IPSGA helps you to achieve that. At the front is information, and an IAM rider is consistently scanning far ahead to gain as much information as possible to then make decisions on the rest.

Over a couple of rides with Chris, we worked on this by taking it in turns to sit at the front and then call out the things that we see ahead



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(or behind) us, and then explain the changes this is going to cause us to make. With one of our rides out in the countryside and the other through the inner-city roads of Hamilton, it takes a reasonable degree of brain power to acknowledge the info you're seeing and then talk about it while making the necessary changes.

Out on the open road, the information can be anything from changes in road surface, approaching intersections or other vehicles to shaded areas or road signs signalling a potential hazard like a school or corner. Or it could be noticing that the white lines in an approaching corner are starting to look further away from one another, indicating that the corner is opening up and that it could be the time to start getting on the gas. It's not all about slowing for stuff, you see. The aspect of smooth progress might see you accelerating, for example, to get somewhere ahead of a vehicle you've seen approaching an intersection ahead, and you don't want to arrive at exactly the same time.

The observed ride through inner city streets upped the ante for observation, with so much

going on. Here you're looking at all the signs and road conditions but also paying attention to the type of area you're in (residential or commercial) and the unique potential hazards that are likely to occur in these areas. Is there a school sign, and if so, what time of day is it? If it's drop off/pick up time, expect parents to be pulling erratic maneuvers while trying to get little Johnny as close as possible to the school gates, or maybe there could be a child running out. Or is it a school sports field, so maybe a ball might roll out? Is there a petrol station with cars pulling out or maybe fuel spilt? All these observations should then enable you to make a decision on your road position (for maximum visibility), speed (so you're able to react in time), gear (maybe lower so you've got sufficient acceleration if you need to react), which will finally make you think about whether you should be accelerating or not. It could be that the information you've seen is that you're approaching a roundabout, and there's a spot you can move into the flow without the need to stop if you get there a bit quicker. In that case, you'll be accelerating.

T.U.G TAKE, USE, GIVE.

Nope, we're not talking about lollies. TUG involves the way an IAM rider uses the information they're receiving while scanning for hazards around them. Taking information means head checks and looking in the mirrors regularly to see what's happening behind whilst also continuing to scan ahead. Through these observations, you need to take the information and use it to make a decision about what you're going to do. So that could be changing road position or slowing down / speeding up while also thinking about what could potentially happen next and prioritising your response. You then need to Give other road users information about your movements.

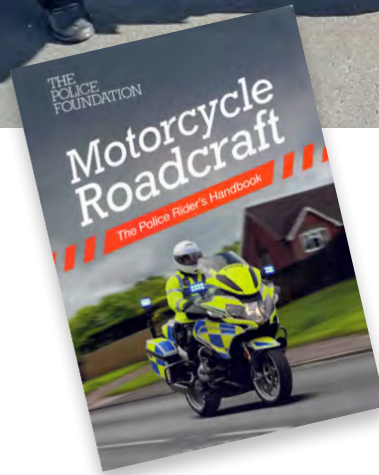
Chris and I had a perfect example of this during our town ride, with a car edging out from a side road as we rode towards it. It wasn't clear whether the driver had actually seen us even though they were actually looking our way, so we both reduced speed and moved towards the right-hand side of our lane so that we had room

should the car continue to edge out. But then a car coming towards us indicated right and pulled to the centreline, essentially blocking any sort of an escape route should the first car keep edging out. As we were both continuing to scan rather than focusing all our attention on the first car, we made the call to split the difference and move back to the centre of our lane while also 'giving' information to these road users in the form of a brief toot on the horn before safely passing between them.

And it's in these sorts of situations that the IAM training provides real benefits, with many riders reacting far too late to impending hazards simply because they're not looking far enough ahead or thinking about what might possibly occur. If you're riding while looking at the road just in front of your wheel, the chances of you being able to do anything other than risk an emergency stop are highly unlikely.

SSV SAFETY, STABILITY, VIEW

This is the final piece of the puzzle and sets the sequence for making a call on your road position. Number one is safety, so always maintaining a safe position on the road is your main focus, and this trumps all the others. Stability refers to the surface you're riding on, while view is both the vision you have ahead



WHERE ARE THE I.A.M?

Head to the IAM website if you want more information, and you'll also find them on social media. They have groups up and down the country, and some offer social rides once a month where you can tag along and see if you like the vibe. www.iamroadsmart.org.nz

and also the ability others have to see you.

Out on our road ride, which took place in the pouring rain in the middle of winter, safety meant finding places on the road that weren't covered in standing water while also avoiding the treacherous shiny bits which affect stability. With those covered off, I could think about view, whether that was staying wide for a lefthander or close to the edge entering a righthander. If the safety or stability weren't there, I'd sacrifice a bit of my vision around a turn, but I'd also sacrifice a bit of my speed as well. And I'd be thinking of my IPSCGA, so maybe I'd drop a gear so that the bike was in a good rev range should I roll off the throttle for a bit of engine brake or crack the throttle and get a good drive.

In town, safety and view are more of a focus, although there are still plenty of stability issues with potholes, spills and shiny patches. But SSV meant I was constantly changing my position on the road to keep these three in check, especially when riding along a line of parked cars where a door being thrown open could have really serious consequences should I have

been riding too close. And with the two cars pulling up together, being in the centre of our lane while slowing and hooting meant we had the maximum safety, the best stability, and the optimum view.

A NEW WAY OF THINKING

Once you get into the IAM way of thinking, you'll be amazed at how far ahead you start scanning and how smooth your riding becomes. Looking near the front of the bike means less time to react, usually a jerky throttle and slower progress. If you're planning way ahead and making sure you're in the right gear and road position, you've got everything already sorted, allowing you more spare brain capacity to get on with riding. It's a great system and undoubtedly a better and safer way to ride.

With an average of 12 observed rides usually required before taking the IAM test, I've still got a few to go before seeing if I'm up to the grade. But here's hoping the next ones will be warmer and drier than the ones I've done so far.

