

Online version of the questions (updated regularly):
<https://laneshareoregon.com/#faqs>

Q: Will motorcyclists be able to lane share anywhere?

No. Only under the limited conditions proposed in the bill, summarized below.

Traffic on the road:

- must be stopped, or moving at 10 miles per hour or less

The rider:

- may travel no more than 10 miles per hour faster than traffic
- must not impede the normal and reasonable movement of traffic
- must safely merge with traffic, if traffic speed exceeds 10 miles per hour

Riders cannot lane share:

- between a traffic lane and the curb and bicycle lane (on either side)
- between a traffic lane and a row of parked vehicles (on either side)
- in a school zone

Riders should also use common sense when lane sharing, and err on the side of caution: "If you can't fit, don't split". The California Highway Patrol has defined [guidelines](#) for safe lane sharing.

Q: Is lane sharing dangerous for pedestrians and bicyclists?

Not lane sharing under HB2314. HB2314 legalizes lane sharing only on roads with posted speeds of 50 mph or greater: highways and freeways. Most people don't walk or bicycle on or across these roads, even if they're allowed to. Also, under HB2314 motorcycles may not lane-share on the right hand side of the right hand lane, next to the curb, shoulder or bicycle lane. HB2314 was written this way to give additional protection to pedestrians and bicyclists. Commenting on the specific constraints in HB2314, Portland's Bureau of Transportation wrote "our most serious concerns of threats to pedestrian and bike safety are addressed". (Testimony to the Governor's Advisory Committee on Motorcycle Safety)

Q: What data is available about lane sharing's safety benefits?

A: The best and most relevant data for HB2314 is 2015's [Berkeley Study](#). (For a succinct two-page summary by the report's author, see '[Rice's letter to Quirk](#)'). The study's key conclusion is that in the event of a crash, lane sharing motorcycle riders are less likely to be injured or killed, compared to riders who are not lane sharing. The Berkeley Study is the largest motorcycle crash study ever conducted in the U.S. Commissioned by the California Office of Traffic Safety, with statewide data collected by California Highway Patrol, the Study was provided as a legal document to the California legislature, to inform legislators on their decision of whether to write lane sharing into law. The entire study is fairly substantial; for a succinct summary, read the summary letter written by the report's author. The Berkeley Study also states that "the current data [of this study] cannot be used to compare the collision risks for lane-splitting or non-lane-splitting riders." That is, the Berkeley Study draws no conclusions — and cannot be used to draw conclusions — about whether or not lane sharing is more or less risky than not lane sharing. This fact is often overlooked, so keep in mind!

Q: Doesn't lane sharing mean more motorcycle crashes? Won't it cause more traffic problems?

There is no evidence that lane sharing increases crash risk on highways and freeways, under the conditions of HB2314, despite lots of strong opinions about this question. On the contrary, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) and the Motorcycle Safety Foundation (MSF) state in their [National Agenda For Motorcycle Safety](#): "There is evidence (Hurt, 1981) that traveling between lanes of stopped or slow-moving cars (i.e., lane splitting) on multiple-lane roads (such as interstate highways) slightly reduces crash frequency compared with staying within the lane and moving with other traffic."

Q: Is lane sharing dangerous for riders?

The Berkeley Study explicitly states that in the event of a crash, lane sharing motorcycle riders are *less likely* to be injured or killed, compared to riders who are not lane sharing. Please see the two-page summary for the details.

As [Chris Cochran](#), spokesman for the California's Office of Traffic Safety, stated: "lane-splitting in and of itself — when done in what we refer to as in a safe and prudent manner — is no more dangerous than regular motorcycle-riding." Any transportation mode has its risks; lane sharing makes for better outcomes, if a rider is in an accident.

Q: If it's legalized, will lane sharing be mandatory?

No. Lane sharing will be optional for motorcycles. If riders don't want to do it, they don't have to! As always, ride within your limits and abilities.

Q: Do enough people ride motorcycles to really help reduce congestion?

A: HB2314 isn't a silver bullet that'll solve Oregon's congestion problem, but it lets motorcycles make a unique contribution to the solution. Motorcycles share the road with cars and trucks, but they are truly a different transportation mode, and can help reduce congestion in a way cars cannot. Lane sharing benefits everyone: when a motorcycle lane shares that's one less vehicle in the line of cars. It boils down to more efficient use of existing roadway space. Also, many riders leave their motorcycles in the garage every day, because they cannot lane share. If HB2314 passes then these riders have a reason to ride to work.

Q: Team Oregon is the state's award-winning mandatory rider education program. What do they think about lane sharing?

Team Oregon is "neutral on the concept of limited lane sharing in Oregon," adding that "lane splitting, as legally practiced in California and under certain conditions (at 50 mph or less; speed differential of 15 mph or less), does not appear to create undue risk". Importantly, Team Oregon reached this conclusion "after review of motorcycle lane splitting and filtering research, interactions with riders familiar with the practice, and interviews with California law enforcement". (Testimony submitted to the Governor's Advisory Committee on Motorcycle Safety Subcommittee)

Q: Do enough people ride motorcycles to really help reduce congestion?

Motorcycles should be part of a comprehensive strategy for reducing congestion. HB2314 isn't a silver bullet that'll solve Oregon's congestion problem, but it lets motorcycles make a unique contribution to the solution.

Motorcycles share the road with cars and trucks, but they are truly a different transportation mode, that can help reduce congestion in a way cars cannot. Also, many riders leave their motorcycles in the garage every day, because they cannot lane share ... better to be stuck in traffic with a heater and a radio, right? If HB2314 passes then these riders have a reason to ride to work.

Q: Isn't lane sharing unfair to drivers?

Motorcycles are not cars, even though many of our laws treat them like cars, and even though they share the road with cars. As we've heard from an Oregonian: "I

used to commute from Hillsboro to Portland on Highway 26. Stuck in traffic an hour each way -- at least! -- I'd see the MAX train whiz by. I didn't think it was unfair that MAX riders weren't stuck in traffic like me ... after all, I'm the one who decided to drive, rather than take the train."

Fairness is also a tricky subject, and HB2314 won't do anything to change human nature. There are people who think it's unfair that bicyclists get to "cut in the line", or get upset with light-rail passengers and think they should "grow up and get a car."

Q: Is lane sharing enforceable?

A: Opinions vary: some law enforcement officers say it isn't, but many say it is. The California Highway Patrol (CHP) has no trouble enforcing the practice and has even published guidelines on how to do it safely. For some Oregon perspective, consider [this testimony](#) from a former Klamath County Sheriff with 24 years in law enforcement: "I served 11 years riding as a motor officer. During that time, I was certified by the Oregon State Police motorcycle division. I went on to become a motor instructor- teaching and certifying other police officers throughout the State of Oregon ... [Lane sharing] can be done correctly and safely and can be legally enforced." Consider also [this testimony](#) from a 29-year Oregon State Trooper: "I can't tell you the amount of motorcycle crashes I have investigated that could have been prevented if lane-sharing was available to legally practice in Oregon."

Q: How would HB2314 affect liability, in the event of an accident?

There are no changes to civil liability. Motorcyclists and drivers still owe a duty of reasonable care to each other. Motorcycles that ride between lanes outside of the permitted parameters of HB2314 will be subject to legal liability if their violation was the cause of a motor vehicle accident.

Q: Wouldn't HB2314 make it hard to get emergency vehicles to a crash scene, in the event of an accident?

HB2314 would not make it more difficult for emergency vehicles (ambulances, fire trucks, police) to get to a crash site, in dense traffic on freeways and highways. Unfortunately, it's difficult for any emergency vehicles to get through a traffic jam, regardless of what's causing the slowdown. And, as noted above, there is no evidence that lane sharing as proposed by HB2314 would increase accident frequency (in fact, there's evidence that it may decrease accident frequency). See "Q: Doesn't lane sharing mean more motorcycle crashes?" above.

Q: What about drivers opening their doors? Couldn't they cause a motorcycle crash?

Most people don't open their car doors when stuck in traffic. In case a stopped driver did, motorcycles traveling at 10 mph or less — as HB2314 would legalize — should be easily able to stop in time. More generally, it's unrealistic to expect any law to account for extremely uncommon occurrences, like people opening their car door while stuck in traffic on a freeway.

Q: Won't drivers be surprised by lane sharing?

A: HB 2314 is a low-speed, limited approach to lane sharing that will minimize the chances of drivers being surprised or startled by a lane-sharing motorcyclist. New rules of the road and transportation practices are often implemented, and drivers adjust quickly. Consider the surge in bicycles over the past 15 years and the increase in driver awareness that has resulted.

Q: Is lane sharing the same as lane splitting? as filtering?

For the purposes of HB2314, yes. We chose the term 'lane sharing' because it's important to consistently communicate with people about what we're proposing: allowing motorcycles to operate in ways cars cannot, under the conditions noted above.

Q: I've heard lane sharing is just about protecting motorcyclists from being rear-ended?

A: Studies suggest there are many potential safety benefits to be gained from lane sharing. It's true that lane sharing removes motorcyclists from being rear-ended or, worse, being "sandwiched" by a car in front and behind. Even in stop & go traffic such accidents can have serious consequences for a motorcyclist. With distracted driving at an all-time high, anything that reduces a motorcyclists' exposure to these accidents is worth pursuing. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) and the Motorcycle Safety Foundation's (MSF) wrote that "There is evidence (Hurt, 1981) that traveling between lanes of stopped or slow-moving cars (i.e., lane splitting) on multiple-lane roads (such as interstate highways) slightly reduces crash frequency compared with staying within the lane and moving with other traffic." In addition, other safety benefits of lane sharing include:

- Increases motorcycle's visibility and takes them out of car drivers' "blind spot." A motorcyclist who is lane sharing can be seen in a car driver's sideview mirror at all times. And a motorcycle that is moving, when

surrounding traffic is stopped, is more conspicuous and visible. In places where lane sharing is legal drivers become more likely to look for, and be aware of, motorcycles.

- Gives motorcycles more maneuverability for accident avoidance. Lane sharing positions motorcyclists in open road, rather than being directly behind a vehicle, this gives them a path ahead to avoid hazards.
- Lane sharing increases motorcyclists' "line of sight." Being on open road means a better opportunity to see ahead to predict and avoid hazards.
- In the event of a crash, a motorcycle that is lane sharing is more likely to have a "glancing" blow to the vehicle rather than a direct hit. Such accidents are less severe because the motorcycle rider can keep moving forward rather than stopping instantly. The motorcycle rider is also more likely to remain upright.
- Keeps motorcycle riders moving, which reduces fatigue both from heat and from constant stop & go operation of the motorcycle's controls (the vast majority of motorcycles have manual transmissions and require exertion and dexterity to operate the controls).

Q: I've got a sidecar on my motorcycle, and my friend rides a trike. Are we allowed to lane share?

The proposed bill permits lane sharing only by two-wheeled motorcycles, scooters, and mopeds.

Q: What about autonomous vehicles? How does that affect HB2314?

A: While we are monitoring the increased prevalence of autonomous vehicles, they should not affect HB2314. We are encouraged that organizations like the American Motorcycle Association (AMA) are making sure technology companies consider motorcycles. Please take a few minutes to read this [article](#) detailing the work AMA Member Christian Lauterbach is doing on Waymo's autonomous vehicles team. Christian, who "ride[s] and lane split[s] past our self-driving cars on a daily basis," writes that "... our radars all around the car can spot you, whether you're going with a Hi-Viz Roadcrafter or all-black leather."

Additional resources: <https://laneshareoregon.com/#resources>

Motorcycle Lane Sharing in Oregon

What is Lane Sharing?

Lane sharing motorcycles safely ride between lanes, when traffic is stopped or moving very slowly. Also known as “filtering” or “lane splitting”, the practice is legal in California and most countries around the world.

Safety Benefits

In 2015, the State of California and the University of California, Berkeley, published a study on lane sharing. The study found that motorcyclists in accidents are “considerably less likely to suffer head injury, torso injury, extremity injury, and fatal injury” than riders who were not lane-sharing.(1) Lane sharing has compelling safety benefits for riders. This study (often called the “Rice Report”) is well regarded by transportation safety experts in the government.

The Rice Report draws no conclusions about whether sharing increases or decreases the overall risk of accident, stating that “our study data cannot be used to estimate the risk of actually being involved in a collision.”(2) There are lots of strong opinions on whether or not lane sharing increases the likelihood of accident, but no published studies or reports. That said, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration suggests that lane sharing may reduce accident frequency, noting that “there is evidence ... that traveling between lanes of stopped or slow-moving cars (i.e., lane splitting) on multiple-lane roads (such as interstate highways) slightly reduces crash frequency compared with staying within the lane and moving with other traffic.”(3)

Congestion Benefits

Lane sharing reduces traffic congestion during traffic stoppages and slowdowns, benefiting both riders and drivers: each lane sharing rider is one less vehicle stuck in traffic. A 2012 Belgian traffic engineering study concluded that if 10% of all drivers rode motorcycles and lane shared, traffic delay times for all motorists would be reduced by 40%.(4) The benefits of lane sharing are free: no new infrastructure, structures, or signage is required.

The Portland metropolitan area was recently ranked as the eighth-most traffic congested urban area in the U.S., tied with Chicago and Washington, D.C.(5) Slowdowns are worst when lane sharing would benefit commuters the most: during the morning and evening rush hours.

Environmental Benefits

Lane sharing will reduce the number of automobiles on Oregon roads, and lower the time vehicles spend idling in traffic.

Lane sharing also encourages the use of more fuel-efficient alternative vehicles, including electric motorcycles. Typical gasoline-powered motorcycles and scooters travel 50, 60 or even more miles per gallon.

Details

- Lane sharing would be optional, not mandatory.
- In 2015, a lane sharing bill (SB694) passed the Senate Judiciary Committee unanimously and passed the full Oregon Senate with a 2/3, bipartisan majority. The bill required traffic to be moving under 10 mph, motorcycles under 20 mph; these are low, safe, ‘school zone’ speeds.

Motorcycle Lane Sharing in Oregon

References

1. For an excellent and succinct summary of the Rice Report:
<https://olis.leg.state.or.us/liz/2017R1/Downloads/CommitteeMeetingDocument/107350>
The full study, by Dr. Thomas Rice, PhD, Motorcycle Lane-Splitting and Safety in California, May 29, 2015, is here (see especially pages 3 and 16):
http://lanesplittingislegal.com/assets/studies-surveys/lane-splitting-safety-california_may-29-2015.pdf
2. See the full Rice Report noted in (1), page 18.
3. <https://one.nhtsa.gov/people/injury/pedbimot/motorcycle/00-NHT-212-motorcycle/motorcycle51.html>
4. http://ridetowork.org/files/docs/MCs_reduce_congestion_Travel_Times_-_Conference_Leuven_study.pdf
5. https://www.koin.com/news/study-portland-traffic-among-most-congested-in-nation_20180208092200104/960359400

Additional info: <http://lanesplittingislegal.com/resources-links>

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