

As a California native, lane sharing or "lane splitting" was a normal part of every day motorcycle riding in urban areas. I have had many people in the 30+ years I've been riding (without incident) question if lane splitting is safe—and the answer is absolutely, when done correctly and within the rules of law. In California, the practice is only legal if performed between the 1 and 2 lanes, and if I recall correctly, only if the motorcycle speed does not exceed more than 15 mph above the flow of traffic, up to the posted speed limit. So, if traffic were flowing at 40 mph, I would be able to split lanes at 55 mph, for example. People that don't understand the practice, and/or have never done it before are the only ones that think it's dangerous. However, when you think of it from a motorcyclist's perspective, it makes much more sense. Consider that the traffic and vehicles BEHIND YOU are the only thing you can't control. As you ride, you can focus on traffic lanes, traffic movement (lane changes etc) and speed, and take appropriate action as necessary. But, you have NO CONTROL OVER TRAFFIC BEHIND YOU. In a car, this isn't much of a concern; if you get rear-ended, it usually means a trip to the body shop or the attorney's office. On a motorcycle, it means a trip the hospital—or the morgue. When the traffic slows down, or worse yet, turns to stop-and-go, lane splitting is a viable option that dramatically reduces the likelihood of getting rear-ended. I have had many instances when I was lane sharing in stop-and-go traffic, and had cars in more than one lane adjacent to me rear end each other. I probably wouldn't be writing this if I had just been a good boy and stayed in my lane—and got sandwiched between two 3,000 pound cars. Lane sharing makes motorcycling an attractive alternative to sitting in a car day after day, and thereby reduces the number of cars on the road, which in turn improves traffic flow. There is the argument that lane splitting "startles other drivers" which isn't an argument at all. Ambulances and fire trucks startle other drivers. So do 18 wheelers. Should we make them illegal? And in reality, once drivers are made aware that lane sharing is legal, they become used to seeing motorcycles AND ACTUALLY BEGIN LOOKING FOR THEM in their sideview mirrors instead of remaining in their mental fog with a phone in one hand and a latte in the other. Distracted drivers/driver inattention are the #1 reasons why motorcyclists die. Even the California Highway Patrol officers split lanes—and I can hardly see them doing it if they thought it was unsafe for themselves or other drivers. In the UK, lane sharing is common practice, which again would not be possible if it weren't safer. Please, PLEASE give lane sharing a chance in Oregon. You can always change the law back if you find we're wrong.