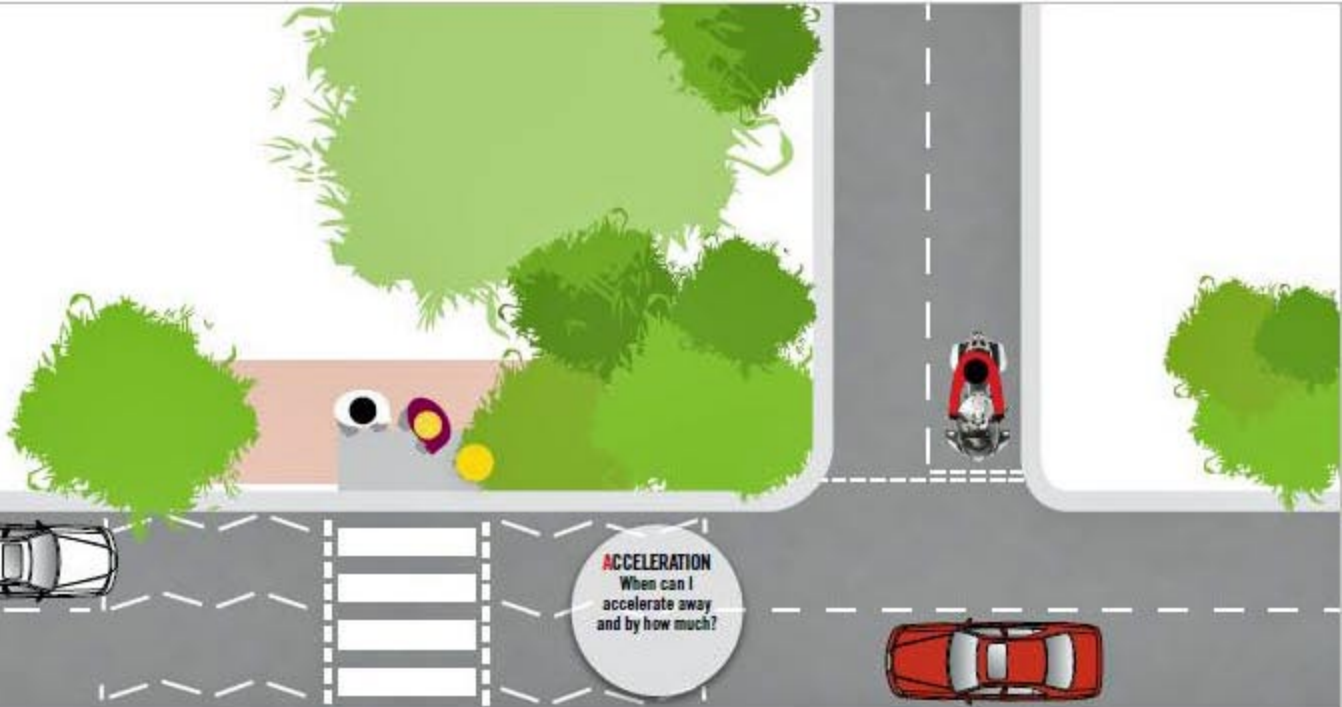


IN A NEW SERIES, WE LOOK AT THE IAM'S SYSTEM OF DRIVING THAT STRUCTURES DECISIONS IN A SEQUENCE OF INFORMATION, POSITION, SPEED, GEAR AND ACCELERATION (IPSGA). THIS ISSUE CONSIDERS INFORMATION

# IPSGA



**INFORMATION**  
All the time, all the way through

**POSITION**  
Where should I be now, where should I go – what path ought I take through the hazard

**SPEED**  
What speed should I be travelling at, at each point through the hazard

**GEAR**  
What gear should I be in to match my speed, and when/where should the change of gear happen?



**ACCELERATION**  
When can I accelerate away and by how much?



The information phase of the system is the only one that overlaps with all the others. As drivers or riders, we should be taking in information while we are on the road. And we can't help giving it out to other road users, no matter how hard we try.

Information is at the start of the model, because it's where any decision starts. But maintaining the level throughout is key to safe and positive driving. Having information and not using it is no help to anyone. Recognising hazards early gives you the planning time that makes the difference between being proactive and prepared, or reactive and dependent on other road users to control your decisions.

Being proactive also means that you can give other drivers notice of your actions, so that they are not surprised by what you do. Being proactive means that, having planned your actions, you will be monitoring other road users to see how (or even if) they are reacting to you. You will be looking for reactions – watching the other people involved to see how they are behaving, and ready to alter your actions if theirs dictate that. For example, checking the driver in the side road is looking at you before you commit to passing in front of them.

At the basic level, information is given by signals – but there is far more going

on than signals alone. We all use our vehicles in ways to give others information. Speed, direction, the rate of change for both of these, the angle of the rider's head, and many other subtleties are all available to other drivers.

Other road users learn from your actions, and you from theirs. You can also take in information from the landscape such as gradients, the sharpness of curves, the distance you can see, the weather and road-surface conditions. They are all visible. The sound of a siren,

**'You will be looking for reactions – watching the other people involved to see how they are behaving, and ready to alter your actions if theirs dictate that'**



or a large engine, or the smell of diesel on the road surface engage your other senses and give you different information. Vibration from the wheels or the engine can also give helpful clues about the road, the vehicle, your speed – and even perhaps your own condition.

We also feel things – both physically and emotionally – that give us valuable information about ourselves, allowing us to recognise that we are tiring, or reacting differently. There is a wide range of information about your emotional and physical condition that can alter the way you make decisions and the quality of the ones you make.

Within the information phase, three stages are commonly used to analyse what is going on:

#### ABSORB INFORMATION

Always observe everything around you, including what's behind you, to the sides and potentially in your blind spots; you should aim to have a feel for what is going on – 360 degrees around you. Mirrors should be correctly adjusted so you can see completely.

#### PROCESS INFORMATION

Using your observations, plan how to deal with the hazards (and opportunities) you have identified and make decisions, using the rest of the system as a structure. Doing this early is important, and when learning to use the system helps drive your vision further forward. If you are reviewing your performance, this is an easy key to check yourself against. Do you ever feel pressured by the speed of the decisions you are making, or do you find yourself saying 'suddenly that appeared'?

Was it really sudden? Or were there indications that you failed to pick up on? These are extremes – but checking that you are looking well ahead, and widely as well (the opposite of tunnel vision) is an important occasional self-check. If you have to process the information in a rush, you are taking it too late (or travelling too quickly).

#### GIVE INFORMATION

We all give information, but don't always realise the signals we are sending. Sometimes, we can be better at it.

Not signalling to another road user when you should have done, or doing so too late, are warning signs that this area needs attention.

The horn, headlights, and even hazard warning lights are all deliberate signals. Use your vehicle position to send signals, too: for example, angling the front of the car towards the kerb lets an oncoming emergency vehicle know that you are moving out of the way. Angling the bike so the traffic ahead understands which side of it you are going to filter as you approach – these are examples of giving information that you can use. Sometimes they help others – sometimes they help others to help us.

