From 1 August 2019, motorcycle riders in the Northern Territory with an unrestricted/full/open motorcycle licence will be permitted to safely lane filter between stationary or slow moving traffic moving in the same direction of travel, provided they do not exceed 30 km/h and it is safe to do so. When lane filtering, motorcycle riders are required to ride with due care for all other road users.

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# What is the purpose of this rule?

Lane filtering should improve safety for motorcycle riders as it will enable them have greater control over their exposure to traffic, particularly vehicles following behind. Moving in between two lanes of stationary or slow moving traffic may reduce a motorcycle rider’s risk of being hit from behind by an inattentive driver. There is also evidence that the risk of death or serious injury is less when a motorcycle is struck at 30km/h. Lane filtering should also improve traffic flow.

If you intend to travel interstate you should check the relevant state or territory’s laws about lane filtering, as they may vary.

# What is lane filtering?

Lane filtering is when you ride your motorcycle at a low speed, **less than 30km/h,** between vehicles that have either stopped or are moving slowly, and travelling in the same direction you are.

# Who is allowed to lane filter?

Only riders that hold an unrestricted motorcycle licence for the class of motorcycle they are riding may lane filter in the Northern Territory.

It is illegal to lane filter if you are a novice rider and hold a learner or provisional motorcycle licence, or if you are riding a moped on a C class drivers licence.

# Why aren’t novice Learner or Provisional riders allowed to lane filter?

Lane filtering requires a high level of technical ability, road awareness and hazard perception. Novice riders are inexperienced road users, who may still be developing these skills. Lane filtering without these skills can be dangerous and put motorcycle riders, as well as other road users at risk. To ensure the safety of all road users, motorcycle riders are only permitted to lane filter when on their unrestricted/full/open motorcycle licence.

# What conditions apply to lane filtering?

To minimise safety risks, lane filtering is:

* Only permitted when it is safe for motorcycle riders to do so.
* Not permitted when travelling at speeds greater than 30km/h.
* Only permitted for unrestricted/full/open motorcycle licensed riders.
* Riders on their learner or provisional licence are not be allowed to lane filter.
* Not allowed in school zones during school zone hours.
* Not allowed next to the kerb or parked vehicles.

Motorcycle riders are advised to also:

* Not lane filter near heavy vehicles or buses as the drivers of these larger vehicles find it harder to see motorcyclists.
* Always look out for pedestrians and cyclists.

# What’s the difference between lane filtering and lane splitting?

Lane filtering is where a motorcycle rider moves past, or rides between stationary or slow moving vehicles safely at a speed of 30km/h or less. Lane filtering is legal in the Northern Territory and most other jurisdictions.

Lane splitting is where a motorcycle rider moves past stationary or moving traffic at an unsafe speed of more than 30km/h. Lane splitting is not safe and is illegal in the Northern Territory.

# What are the dangers of lane splitting?

Lane splitting involves motorcycle riders traveling at higher speeds, which increases the unpredictability of their movements for other road users. This increases the crash risk for motorcyclists and other road users, especially pedestrians and cyclists. The higher speeds involved in lane splitting also result in higher impact speeds in the event of a crash. The higher the impact speed in a crash, the higher the risk of casualties, especially for motorcyclists.

# Are motorcyclists allowed to edge filter?

No. Edge filtering is not permitted for motorcycle riders in the Northern Territory. This is considered dangerous for the rider, other motorists, cyclists and pedestrians

Edge filtering is when a motorcycle rider changes direction to move towards the edge, kerb or shoulder, of the road to:

1. Pass one or more vehicles on the road; or
2. Pass between two vehicles, one of which is parked.

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# Do lane filtering laws apply to cyclists?

The new motorcycle lane filtering laws do not apply to cyclists. Existing laws continue to apply to people riding bicycles.

# What about interstate or international riders visiting the Northern Territory?

Riders must ride according to their jurisdictions licence provisions.

If they have an equivalent interstate or international learner or provisional type of licence, they are not allowed to lane filter in the Northern Territory.

# What are the penalties for lane splitting or lane filtering unsafely?

Police can charge riders with a number of existing road traffic offences if lane filtering is done in a negligent or dangerous manner.

# How does this rule compare with other states?

Lane filtering is currently allowed, or is being trialled, in most Australian states and territories.

# Where can I find more details?

For more information on motorcyclist safety tips and road rules please visit: <https://roadsafety.nt.gov.au/safety-topics/motorcyclists>

For more information on motorcycle training and licensing visit <https://nt.gov.au/driving/driverlicence/get-your-licence/get-your-motorbike-licence/sit-your-practical-riding-test>