

*"I didn't see it coming!"*

## Increasing Motorcycle Awareness (Advice to drivers)

Over two-thirds of car-motorcycle crashes are caused by drivers, not by motorcyclists. The driver either does not see the oncoming motorcyclist at all or does not see the motorcyclist in time to avoid a crash.

### WHY DIDN'T I SEE THAT MOTORCYCLE?

Drivers tend to look for other cars, not motorcycles.

Because of its smaller profile, a motorcycle is harder to see and you may find it more difficult to estimate the motorcycle's speed.

The motorcyclist's riding pattern is different from your driving pattern. Different actions may be needed for the same driving or highway situation. For example, you may ignore a piece of road debris as a driver; however, that same piece of road debris may be deadly for a motorcyclist.

Traffic, weather, and road conditions require a motorcyclist to react differently than a driver, thus it is more difficult for you to judge and to predict cues that may require the motorcyclist to take an evasive action.

### WHAT ARE SOME SITUATIONS WHEN CRASHES ARE MOST LIKELY TO OCCUR?

**Car making a left turn:** You are attempting a left turn in front of a motorcycle operator.

**Riding in your blind spot:** A motorcyclist is riding in your blind spot and you may not see the motorcycle. Additionally, you may fail to adequately check blind spots before changing lanes or making turn.

**Hazardous road conditions:** Potholes, wet leaves, railroad tracks and other road obstructions may dictate that a motorcyclist take an action that you may or may not.

**Obstructed line of sight:** Large vehicles, such as sport utility vehicles, delivery vans, and large trucks may block a motorcycle from your view and the motorcyclist may seem to suddenly appear.

### HOW CAN I BECOME MORE AWARE OF MOTORCYCLISTS?

**Respect the motorcyclist:** Remember the motorcycle is a vehicle with all of the privileges of any vehicle on the roadway. Give the motorcyclist a full lane of travel.

**Look out:** Look for the motorcyclist at intersections, when a motorcyclist may be making a left turn, and on the highway, when a motorcyclist may be changing lanes. Clearly signal your intentions.

**Anticipate a motorcyclist's maneuver:** Obstructions that you do not notice may be deadly for a motorcyclist. Predict evasive actions.

**Allow plenty of space:** Don't follow a motorcycle too closely. Allow enough room for the motorcyclist to take evasive actions.

### WHERE CAN I GO FOR MORE INFORMATION?

**American Motorcyclist Association**  
Phone: 641/891-2425

**Motorcycle Riders Foundation**  
Phone: 202/546-0983

**Motorcycle Safety Foundation**  
Phone: 949/727-3227

**National Highway Traffic Safety Administration**  
Phone: 202/366-1739

**National Association of State Motorcycle Safety Administrators**  
Phone: 612/785-9242

TNTRAFFICSAFETY.ORG  
1-800-99BELTS



www.SafeandSober.org



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www.nhtsa.dot.gov

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration  
U.S. Department of Transportation

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# Increasing Motorcycle Awareness

(Advice to riders)

"That driver  
didn't see me  
coming!"

**O**ver two-thirds of car-motorcycle crashes are caused by drivers, not by motorcyclists. The driver either does not see the oncoming motorcyclist at all or does not see the motorcyclist in time to avoid a crash.

## WHY DIDN'T THAT DRIVER SEE ME?

Don't assume that you are visible to a driver. As a motorcyclist, it is your responsibility to make your presence known to the driver. Select and wear an appropriate helmet with retroreflective materials. Wear bright, contrasting protective clothing. If you choose darker clothing, wear a fluorescent vest.

23 states require that the headlight be on while the motorcycle is on the highway. Use high beams rather than low beams and consider using a modulating headlight if your state allows it.

Proper lane position is important to being seen and for protecting your riding space. If you can see the driver in the side-view mirror, the driver can see you. Don't "hide" in the driver's blind spot!

Clearly, communicate your intentions by signaling appropriately. Let the driver know what you intend to do.

## WHAT ARE SOME SITUATIONS WHEN CRASHES ARE MOST LIKELY TO OCCUR?

**Car making a left turn:** A driver is attempting a left turn in front of you.

**Riding in a driver's blind spot:** You are riding in the driver's blind spot and the driver may not see the motorcycle. Additionally, the driver may fail to adequately check blind spots before changing lanes or making turn.

**Hazardous road conditions:** Potholes, wet leaves, railroad tracks and other road obstructions may dictate that you take an action that a driver may not or does not anticipate.

**Obstructed line of sight:** Large vehicles, such as sport utility vehicles, delivery vans, and large trucks may block a motorcycle from a driver's view and you may seem to suddenly appear.

## HOW CAN I INCREASE THE DRIVER'S AWARENESS OF MY PRESENCE?

**Make yourself visible:** Choose protective gear that will increase your visibility in addition to providing protection in the event of a crash. A motorcycle helmet is your most valuable piece of protective gear and should be most visible to the driver.

**Ride where you can be seen:** Remember that there is no one safe place to ride. Use lane positioning to your advantage to be seen and to provide extra space for emergency braking situations or avoidance

maneuvers. Avoid the driver's blind spots. Make your lane moves gradually, and always use appropriate signaling.

**Never share a lane with a car:** A driver may not expect you to be there and may not be aware of your presence. Remember most drivers are looking for other, bigger vehicles.

**Clearly signal your intentions to the driver:** Signal before changing lanes and never weave between lanes.

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