

Watch for Motorcycles!

More motorcycles are on the road today than ever before. Motorcycles travel just as fast as automobiles, but are tougher to spot, have less stability and offer less protection to the rider than to a driver of a car or truck.

The most frequent cause of motorcycle crashes on our roads is the failure of motorists to detect and recognize motorcycles in traffic. To avoid crashes and reduce injuries and fatalities, motorists must have an awareness of motorcycles and an understanding of what to expect from motorcycles.

I DIDN'T SEE IT...

"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." – *National Highway Transportation Safety Administration*

More than one half of motorcycle accidents occur because the driver simply "did not see the motorcyclist."

- » Commercial drivers tend to look for other cars, trucks and busses, not for motorcycles.
- » Because of its small profile, a motorcycle is harder to see, and it can be very hard to judge the oncoming motorcycle's speed once it is seen.
- » A large vehicle, such as a van or truck, can block a motorcycle from another driver's view. The motorcyclist may seem to suddenly appear from nowhere.

INCREASED ODDS OF COLLISION

Crashes are most likely to occur in these high-risk situations:

- » **Left Turns** - The most common accident between cars and motorcycles is at an intersection when the automobile driver is making a left turn in front of a motorcycle. Over forty percent of all motorcycle accidents occur at intersections.
- » **Inexperienced or Youthful Riders** – Not all riders share the same concern for safety on the highway. Just as youthful drivers of sports cars may take risks, youthful riders of motorcycles may take risks. While most motorcycle advocacy groups stress taking specialized safety courses, some new riders may be challenged and have a tough time handling high powered bikes.

- » **Weather Conditions** - When the road surface is wet or icy, motorcyclists' braking and handling abilities are impaired.
- » **Strong Winds** - A strong gust of wind can move a motorcycle across an entire lane if the rider isn't prepared for it. Wind gusts from large trucks that pass by in the other lane can present a real hazard to riders.



MOTORCYCLE AWARENESS

- » **Always be on the lookout out for motorcyclists.** Be aware that although you may not see any cars, there may be an unnoticed motorcycle. Be careful at intersections, particularly when making left turns.
- » **Be aware of motorcycle signals.** Many riders downshift to slow their bike – their brake lights will not illuminate under these circumstances. Additionally, turn signals are not "self canceling"; therefore, inexperienced riders may travel for some distance before realizing that their signal is incorrectly set.
- » **Check your "blind spots" carefully!** Since motorcycles are small, they can become virtually invisible in your mirror's "blind areas". This is critical when changing lanes, merging at on-off ramps, near construction zones and even when backing up. While motorcycles do drive with their headlamp illuminated, it simply may disappear in your mirrors.
- » **Anticipate a motorcyclist's maneuvers.** Motorcyclists may change positions in the lane to respond to road conditions, weather, or other factors. Expect and allow room for such actions. Provide plenty of room (don't crowd the rider in his or her lane) when passing. The slightest contact can mean a spill and/or injury for the rider.
- » **Signal your intentions** even if you don't see cars in front or behind you. Be particularly careful when making left turns across lanes of approaching traffic. Look carefully in all directions for approaching motorcyclists.
- » **Respect a motorcycle** as a full-sized vehicle with equal rights to the road. Give motorcycles a full lane.

September, 2019
The Shield
Watch for Motorcycles
Quiz



Driver Name: _____ Date: _____
Please Print

Driver Signature: _____

Please circle one correct answer for each question.

1. The failure of motorists to detect and recognize motorcycles in traffic is
 - a. of the least concern to a motorcyclist
 - b. not an issue on the roads
 - c. the most frequent cause of motorcycle crashes
 - d. none of the above
2. Over two-thirds of car-motorcycle crashes are caused by
 - a. the motorcyclist
 - b. the other vehicle driver
 - c. road conditions
 - d. all of the above
3. Crashes involving motorcycles are most likely to occur in which of the following situations?
 - a. When the automobile driver is making a left turn.
 - b. When the motorcyclist is inexperienced.
 - c. During strong gusts of wind.
 - d. All of the above
4. A motorcycle's turn signals are not _____; therefore, inexperienced riders may travel for some distance before realizing that their signal is incorrectly set.
 - a. large enough
 - b. self canceling
 - c. bright
 - d. none of the above
5. The most common accident between cars and motorcycles is at an intersection when the automobile driver is making a left turn in front of a motorcycle.
 - a. True
 - b. False

