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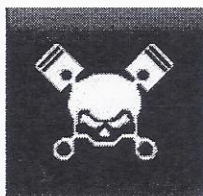
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09-14-2011, 07:29 AM

Thread Starter

post #1 of 3 (permalink)

**Dodsfall**  
Administrator



Join Date: May 2008  
Location: Illinois, USA  
Posts: 22,842  
Mentioned: 0 Post(s)  
Tagged: 0 Thread(s)  
Quoted: 82 Post(s)

### Know your enemy: The left turn vehicle

The number one cause of multi-vehicle motorcycle accidents is the left turn vehicle. Learning how to avoid these types of accidents will make riding significantly safer for the motorcyclist. In this post, we will examine some of the causes and solutions to the left-turn enemy.

Quote:

Originally Posted by **Sun Tzu- The Art of War**

*So it is said that if you know your enemies and know yourself, you can win a hundred battles without a single loss.  
If you only know yourself, but not your opponent, you may win or may lose.  
If you know neither yourself nor your enemy, you will always endanger yourself.*

#### Why do vehicles turn left in front of motorcycles?

There are several contributing factors for a driver to turn left across a motorcycle's path. The human brain tends to filter and sort visual input for what it deems important information. If the driver is in an overly relaxed or distracted state, the brain may be registering "Car" and "Truck" as the only visual clues to be wary of. The motorcyclist can literally be *invisible* to the senses of such a driver.

Another factor is the perception of speed. A motorcycle, being a small vehicle, and traveling toward a driver, may not be *perceived* as traveling as fast as it actually is. The driver may misjudge the time and space that they have available to make a turn.

#### What can the rider do to avoid the left turn vehicle?

While we can always build a box we can't get out of, and can't avoid every possible scenario, there are several things a rider can do to avoid an accident caused by a left turn vehicle.

##### Be aware

Always be on the lookout for someone about to turn left. An obvious clue is a left turn signal, but also watch for the front end of the vehicle dipping from application of the brakes, and entrances, driveways, or intersections to your right where a driver may wish to turn. These are things that should always raise a red flag for the motorcyclist.

##### Do not assume

Even if the driver is looking straight at you, don't assume they can see you. Don't assume that just because you have the right of way that a vehicle will always yield.

##### Slow down

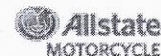
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A slower speed gives you more time and room to maneuver. Slowing down can mean a very real difference between a close call and a tragic accident. Don't worry about being a couple of seconds later to your destination by having to tap your brakes a bit. The risk isn't worth it.

### Plan your escape

Think about where you want to go if a vehicle crosses your path of travel before you get to that point. Keep your eyes up. Don't panic brake and lock your wheels. Push on those handlebars and counter-steer. Be prepared. Practice often. Know your bike and know yourself. With enough foresight, many times a rider can come to a nice, easy, and safe stop before the enemy crosses their path.

2008 XL1200R

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*Last edited by Dodsfall; 09-14-2011 at 07:32 AM.*

Quote

Quick Reply

09-14-2011, 07:23 PM

post #2 of 3 (permalink)

### curtis41

Senior Member

Join Date: Jul 2010  
Location: Near Augusta, GA  
Posts: 315  
Mentioned: 0 Post(s)  
Tagged: 0 Thread(s)  
Quoted: 0 Post(s)

Some of these people who make left turns in front of you are the same ones who jackrabbit a fresh green light, and turn in front of another car anyway. In Georgia, 51% of motorcycle accidents occur at intersections. I guess that would include the rear-enders, the left turn in front of you anyways, and other incursions into a red light area or stop sign. That is a LOT of the total accidents, so be especially careful at intersections. I agree totally about not assuming a driver sees you. In fact, I pretty much ride assuming I am invisible to cars and trucks. I now wear a rather bodacious hi-vis jacket that almost glows in the dark. Drivers CAN see bright orange, yellow and other hi-vis colors better than my nice, comfortable black leather jacket. Reflective jackets are good at night. If it is raining and at night, I hang it up and don't ride. It is just too hard for drivers to see much of anything in a heavy downpour. Very good advice in the post above. Thank you.

Quote

Quick Reply

09-14-2011, 07:32 PM

Thread Starter

post #3 of 3 (permalink)

### Dodsfall

Administrator

Join Date: May 2008  
Location: Illinois, USA  
Posts: 22,842  
Mentioned: 0 Post(s)  
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You bring up a good point I didn't touch on above. Being visible with both your gear and road positioning is another way to tip the odds in the rider's favor. Although I have yet to install one myself, a headlight modulator would also be a great idea.

2008 XL1200R

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