



IMCOM Safety Gram

Sustaining, Supporting, and Defending Safety Excellence



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May is Motorcycle Safety Awareness Month

Motorcycles are vehicles with the same rights and privileges as any motor vehicle on the roadway. One of the most common causes of motorcycle crashes is being cut off by another vehicle. Motorcyclists are vulnerable. Their small vehicles can easily go out of control with changes in the road surface. A spill can mean serious injuries or death for the rider.

Drivers of other passenger vehicles should always remember to follow these steps to help keep motorcyclists safe:

- ◆ Allow a motorcyclist the full lane width. Although it may seem as though there is enough room in a traffic lane for an automobile and a motorcycle, the motorcycle needs the full room to maneuver safely. Do not share the lane.
- ◆ Always signal your intentions before changing lanes or merging with traffic. This allows the motorcyclist to anticipate traffic flow and find a safe lane position.
- ◆ Remember that motorcyclists are often hidden in a vehicle's blind spot or missed in a quick look due to their smaller size. Always make a visual check for motorcycles by checking mirrors and blind spots before entering or leaving a lane of traffic and at intersections.
- ◆ Don't be fooled by a flashing turn signal on a motorcycle – motorcycle signals usually are not self-canceling and riders sometimes forget to turn them off. Wait to be sure the motorcycle is going to turn before you proceed.
- ◆ Remember that road conditions which are minor annoyances to passenger vehicles pose major hazards to motorcyclists. Be aware that motorcyclists may need to change speed or adjust their position within a lane suddenly in reaction to road and traffic conditions such as potholes, gravel, wet or slippery surfaces, pavement seams, railroad crossings, and grooved pavement.
- ◆ Allow more following distance, three or four seconds, when following a motorcycle so the motorcyclist has enough time to maneuver or stop in an emergency. And don't tailgate. In dry conditions, motorcycles can stop more quickly than cars.
- ◆ Two-wheeled vehicles can travel fast, so make sure you can safely pass a bike. Tap your horn lightly, but do not startle the rider. Allow plenty of space for the bike's wobbly course.

Motorcyclists have responsibilities, too, by following the rules of the roadway, being alert to other drivers, and always wearing protective gear. They must drive responsibly and never "hot dog." They must do shoulder checks before lane changes and turns. They shouldn't dart in and out of traffic, putting themselves in danger from larger vehicles.

Too often, in a crash, the drivers of other vehicles involved say they never saw the motorcyclist and failed to respond in time. This is no excuse. Too many lives are being lost.

Our message to all drivers is: Help make this the first year in recent years when motorcycle fatalities do not increase. "Share the Road" with motorcycles.

