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Attention "Cagers": Some Advice on Sharing the Road with us Riders

Obviously, there are more cars and trucks on the road than there are motorcycles. There are a host of reasons why many drivers don't see us motorcyclists. Nonetheless, it's the auto driver's responsibility to be on the look out for motorcyclists, especially when changing lanes and approaching an intersection. Due to their small size, a motorcycle oftentimes looks farther away than it really is. Moreover, it can be difficult to gauge its speed as it approaches. To compensate for this, car and truck drivers need to anticipate that the motorcyclist is closer and moving faster than it appears. If all automobile drivers were to follow this practice, thousands of motorcycle accidents could be prevented each year.

Another common cause of motorcycle accidents are caused by the blind spots present on many cars and trucks. Because of its small size and close proximity to the ground, motorcycles are often invisible to the driver behind the wheel. Therefore, whether you're changing lanes or turning at an intersection, it is up to you as the automobile driver to take an extra moment to thoroughly check traffic in the adjacent lane, utilize both the side and rear view mirrors, use your turn signal, and proceed slowly and cautiously.

It is important to realize that motorcyclists often downshift or roll off the throttle to slow down. Doing so reduces brake and clutch wear, but unfortunately it does not activate the brake light. As a rule, assume that all riders utilize this strategy and increase your following distance, thus allowing for a 4 second count to occur. While at intersections, assume that a motorcyclist will slow down without visual warning and therefore, you must slow down in order to maintain your distance.

When it comes to turn signals on motorcycles, many older models are not self-canceling. Thus, some riders, particularly beginners, can forget to turn them off after turning or making a lane change. Before accelerating, be certain to carefully assess the situation and confirm that they are actually making a lane change. Not doing so could result in a rear end collision.

To be seen by others and to minimize the effects of road debris, passing vehicles, and the wind, motorcyclists often adjust their position within a lane. Adjusting lane position is necessary to ensure a rider's safety. Never assume that this driving behavior is careless or reckless.

Although enhanced maneuverability is often associated with motorcycles, don't expect a motorcyclist to always be able to swerve to avoid a collision. Road conditions, rider experience, and physical ability vary greatly and can play a major role in the outcome. Cracks, bumps, ice, debris, and potholes can limit the optional paths a rider can take. In addition, based upon ones experience and reaction time, the degree to which evasive action can be taken varies significantly among motorcyclists. Therefore, when a motorcycle, is in close proximity, assume that all riders are novices and that all roads are in poor condition.

Finally, when a motorcycle is in motion, don't think of it as a motorcycle; think of it as a person. If for whatever reason that bike goes down, the rider generally goes down with it. There is no frame, no seat belt, no airbag, nor a roof to protect us from you or the road that lies beneath.

Tell them Kimmy and Kelly sent you.