

Safety Tips #11

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Blinded By The Light

If you are going to ride at night, you are going to face the headlights of oncoming vehicles. Riding at night presents a challenge just because of the lack of light; but then when another vehicle approaches, the challenge increases. Suddenly your view of the road and surrounding areas gets even worse as those offending headlights cause your eyes to adjust to their brightness. You could almost see the road before, now you can't see it at all! It gets even worse if the oncoming vehicle's lights are not adjusted properly, or if the high beams are on. It takes a good few seconds for your eyes to readjust after being blasted by those headlights, plenty of time for your path of travel to become, shall we say, *errant*. You probably won't be headed toward the oncoming vehicle, but you may be unintentionally headed for the side of the road.

Older riders have a bigger problem with this than younger ones. So do riders who are fatigued, or are not sober.

We can't make this problem go away (unless we NEVER ride at night), but we can mitigate it. Here are some ideas.

Let's start out with some obvious things: be refreshed, alert and sober. Wear clean, non-tinted eye protection. Choose a lower speed for night travel. Make sure your headlight(s) is working and adjusted properly. Here are some tips that are not so obvious: Before you get on your bike at night, spend a few minutes in the dark in order to allow your eyes to adjust to the darkness. Once you are riding, and an oncoming vehicle approaches, focus your vision toward the right side of the road, perhaps on that white line

that often defines the edge of the roadway, until the oncoming vehicle passes you, and then refocus your vision to the road ahead.