

## **Safety Tips #32**

**By Ben Hochberg  
ABATE of Colorado**

### **Lighting, Part Deux**

In the last installment I described my quest to improve the lighting on one of my bikes, and now I am going to let you know how this is working out. I have had some success, but not completely, as you will see if you read on.

First of all, I upgraded the headlight by changing the stock H4 bulb to a PIAA Xtreme White unit. Although I have not ridden at night since I made the change, I can tell even in daylight that this bulb is brighter than the one it replaced. But I will know more after I use it at night. (While I am on the subject of improved headlight bulbs, I would like to relate a story from years past. I bought a bulb that was actually rated at 80 watts/low beam and 100 watts/high beam, for my '97 Sportster. It got so hot and/or drew so much current that it actually melted the plastic connector and surrounding wires! So I am glad my new PIAA bulb is the same wattage-rating as the stocker. A representative from PIAA told me that it does not run any hotter than the old one did; yes, I made sure to ask this time!)

Next I mentioned the rear fender tip light; I got a 4-LED replacement bulb for the stock (#194) bulb. As I said previously, that didn't work out so well, because of the fact that LEDs are highly directional, and the angle of the bulb when mounted on the bike improves visibility only sky-ward, but not to the rear.

I reported that I was happy with the replacement for the front fender tip bulb, as it is a 40-led panel and very bright. But after studying it for a couple of days I realized that the panel is also angled too far upward to be effective for other traffic or pedestrians. So I put the stock bulb and lens back in the front

fender and moved the LED panel to the rear fender, which has a more suitable mounting angle. This really works for visibility from the rear; it's a keeper! Again, it came from [www.customdynamics.com](http://www.customdynamics.com), part #GEN-FT-W. Mine is a white light, but they also have them in red and in amber.

Another plan I had mentioned was to replace the taillight bulb with a PIAA Xtreme White #1157 replacement. I had high hopes for this change, but was disappointed to find out that my bike takes a different taillight bulb, a #3157 (same general type of bulb but with a different base). I may use the two new PIAA #1157 bulbs in my Buell, which takes two of them in the taillight section. This ought to make a big difference for that bike.

In the past I had improved the brake lights by doing two things: adding a Harley-Davidson brake light kit, which makes the turn signals into additional brake lights while it keeps them functioning as turn signals, too. This is an inexpensive modification. The other thing was to add a "Stopper LED Brake Light", part #4635 from Aerostitch ([www.riderwearhouse.com](http://www.riderwearhouse.com)). This is a neat product because it mounts neatly at the top (or bottom) of your license plate, looks good, is very bright, is used *in addition* to the other lights already on the bike, and costs only \$25.

To recap, after all the swapping of parts back and forth, the front of the ElectraGlide was updated with a more effective headlight bulb. And the rear was improved with the brake light kit from Harley, the Stopper LED Brake Light, and the 40-LED panel for the fender tip light. It all just gives those inattentive drivers fewer excuses to say, "I didn't see him." And the bike looks totally stock, except for the addition of the additional LED Brake Light, which is fairly unobtrusive. If I do anything else to this bike's lighting it will be to replace the tail/brake light bulb with an LED unit. But that may be overkill; I think this project is complete. Now that the ElectraGlide is done, let's see how much I can improve the Buell's lighting...