

Safety Tips #46

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Turns At Intersections

How many drivers or riders are aware that we are supposed to turn into a particular lane as we make a turn at an intersection? How many of those make an effort to comply? I find this something to be constantly aware of, as many people on the road make turns into whatever lane they happen to wind up in, or whatever lane they may need to be in later on, no matter how it affects other traffic.

When I was learning to drive I was taught that if you are making a left turn, you should turn into the farthest left lane of the road you are joining. And if you are making a right turn, turn into the farthest right lane. Of course, if there are two turn lanes, stay in your own lane position as you turn, allowing others to do the same.

On my commute home from work each weekday there is a “T” intersection from which one can only turn left, and there are two lanes from which to proceed. The road onto which you can turn has 3 lanes. So there are two lanes turning into three. I have to make a right turn after that left, so I need to get to the intersection in the right of the two left turn lanes in order to be in position for the next turn. I have noticed that about 50% of the drivers in the left of the two left turn lanes do not turn into the appropriate lane – they swing wide into “my” lane. I even had one guy, who was a little behind me and to the left, and who was on the phone, by the way, turn wide and almost run into my vehicle’s rear quarter panel. That’s right – he was going to collide with the rear end of my car; the whole scene was in his field of vision, but he was going to turn wide no matter what, even if it meant hitting me! I saw this in my side-view mirror and evaded the collision by darting to the right.

Glad I was watching out for this. And glad I was not on my bike that particular day!

So I guess that is the moral of this month's story – watch out for people who make unnecessarily wide turns. It's really common; I get the feeling that many drivers don't even think about what lane they are supposed to turn into. And, as a wise person said, "It's not about who was right; it's about who is left!"