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Car/Motorcycle Accidents – There are NO Winners...

by Stacey “Ax” Axmaker

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No doubt you have all seen the newspaper stories and TV news reports on recent motorcycle accidents and fatalities. They are tragedies, and unfortunately have been on the rise in recent years. Motorcycle and scooter sales and registrations have been growing very fast – this means more riders on our roads. This is one of the reasons for the increased number of crashes.

We are encouraging three main approaches to help reduce the number of crashes:

- 1. Motorist awareness**
- 2. Rider education**
- 3. Reduce impaired riding/driving (alcohol)**

Some facts to consider:

- Motorcycles are harder to see than cars. So, when you are driving, look twice for bikes. When you are riding, dress for visibility (that all-black outfit can make you even harder to see).**
- When riders and drivers collide, the rider loses. It’s just physics – big wins. While the rider generally takes the brunt of the impact, imagine how you would feel to be that driver...there are NO winners.**
- Motorcyclists are your neighbors, your co-workers, maybe your family and friends. We are you. There are over 7 million motorcyclists in this country – odds are you know some. Once you know that someone in your life rides, you’ll start to see more of us. Then we all win.**

Some simple suggestions:

Drivers:

- Give more space to motorcyclists, they are often hard to see and can change speed and direction quickly.**
- Riders often change position within their lane – this is normal and is one of their ways of adjusting for changing conditions to improve their safety.**
- Please use your turn signals so motorcyclists know if you are going to turn - seeing that turn signal may just give them the heads up they need to avoid a collision.**
- Avoid alcohol when driving – it greatly reduces your ability to see other vehicles (especially small ones) early enough to avoid them; not to mention your judgment, reaction time, and coordination.**

Riders:

- **Drivers aren't 'out to get you.'** If one pulls out in front of you, most likely, they didn't see you and meant no harm. Responding with road rage doesn't help anyone. If it seems they are driving aggressively, give them more space and/or let them go ahead of you.
- **Do what you can to be seen.** Bright colors and reflective material on your bike, helmet, and jacket can really help you to stand out in traffic. That driver seeing your brightly colored gear may just give them the heads up they need to avoid a collision.
- **Practice your skills.** Maximum braking, swerving, and cornering are skills that you can never be too good at – practice, practice, practice.
- **Avoid alcohol when riding –** alcohol is one of the leading factors in motorcycle crashes and fatalities. It greatly reduces your ability to see other vehicles early enough to avoid them; not to mention your judgment, reaction time, coordination, and balance.
- **Dress for success –** protect your arms, hands, legs, feet, eyes, and head. You are exposed to the wind, the sun, bugs, dust, and if there is a collision – you are vulnerable to the roadway itself and other vehicles. Good riding gear can greatly minimize injury in the event of a mishap.

We are all road users – cars, trucks, buses, motorcycles, scooters, bicycles, and pedestrians. Let's practice sharing the road.

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