



Kaution Korner

By Traveler

5 Common Motorcycle Accidents



These are just 5 common accidents with recommended avoidance techniques. There are, literally, hundreds of other situations that can cause an accident.

Oncoming, Left Turning Vehicle



This is probably the most common cause of motorcycle accidents. The driver of an oncoming vehicle doesn't see a motorcyclist and makes a quick left turn directly in the rider's path, leaving little or no time to avoid hitting the car.

Avoidance Strategy: It's helpful to be as conspicuous as possible, which is helped by auxiliary lights and high visibility riding gear. Watch for indications that the oncoming driver may not see you: no eye contact, hands turning the steering wheel, or movement of left front wheel. Ride at a safe speed in traffic congested areas. Higher speed equals longer stopping distances. Be careful NOT, to

slow to a crawl when you see a left turning vehicle. This is an *invitation* for that driver to turn in front of you!

Animals on the Road



It doesn't necessarily take a large critter to take a two-wheeler down. A 3,000 lb moose or a 2 lb squirrel, can cause an accident. The avoidance strategy is the same.

Avoidance Strategy: Constantly scan the road and surrounding terrain ahead for animals, particularly when undergrowth and trees are close to the pavement. Those "deer warning signs" are usually present for a reason. Be especially alert when riding in the early morning or evening, when animals are the most active. Adjust your speed and cover your clutch and brake levers in high-risk areas for emergency stopping. Periodically practice emergency stops and swerves so you become proficient.

Gravel on Curves and Corners



Riding through gravel with the bike leaned over at speed is almost certain to result in a crash. The situation worsens if the sliding motorcycle and rider cross the center line into an oncoming vehicle.

Avoidance Strategy: Gravel / mud on roadways is more likely after heavy rains, near construction sites, and at farm fields and gravel driveways in rural areas. Assume there will be gravel around a blind curve and adjust your entry speed accordingly. The best technique is usually to avoid the gravel. If you enter too fast, bring the bike upright, and apply maximum braking. Maximizing sight lines is also an important strategy for avoiding all types of hazards on blind curves. If you are not sure which way the blind curve turns, left or right, most often the power lines will be an indicator. Note: Most often, not always.

Vehicles Changing Lanes



On multi-lane highways, an adjacent motorist may suddenly pull directly into your path, leaving little or no time for evasive action.

Avoidance Strategy: Stay out of the blind spots of other drivers. Maximize the space between you and other vehicles. Rush hour traffic on multi-lane highways presents the highest risk for other vehicles changing lanes into a rider. If riding at this time can't be avoided, the best strategy is riding in the far-left lane so only traffic on the right side must be monitored, and you avoid merging traffic entering or exiting the highway via

ramps. Be careful not to ride so slow that you become a hazard to traffic.

Excessive Speed in Curves



A rider suddenly realizes mid-curve that the turn is tighter than expected (e.g., a decreasing radius curve). Instead of leaning and increasing the bike's lean angle, the rider stops looking through the curve, stiffens their arms, and goes straight off the roadway. This results in crashing into a stationary object (guardrail, tree, building, etc.) or flying down an embankment.

Avoidance Strategy: The easiest way to avoid crashing on a curve is to slow down before entering a curve and accelerate out of it. Even a highly skilled rider should always keep some of the bike's lean angle in reserve. A very important skill to develop is how to read a curve. Is it on-camber, off-camber, increasing radius, decreasing radius, dry surface, debris free, any dark spots indicating liquid, etc?

Safe riding practices, and developing skills into well-practiced habits, clearly help us avoid accidents and injury, and they also build our confidence and enjoyment.