

WHY MOTORCYCLISTS CRASH...



...AND HOW TO STOP IT HAPPENING TO YOU

FROM THE PEOPLE WHO
ATTEND BIKE CRASHES,
SAVE BIKERS' LIVES AND
UNDERSTAND WHY BIKE
CRASHES REALLY HAPPEN.

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ON AVERAGE, SIX MOTORCYCLISTS ARE KILLED OR SERIOUSLY INJURED EVERY WEEK IN THE UK. WITH YOUR HELP, WE CAN CHANGE THIS!

Our Mission

To significantly reduce the number of motorcyclists killed or critically injured on UK roads, while preserving people's passion for riding and keeping it fun!

What is DocBike?

DocBike is a charity putting highly trained trauma doctors or critical care paramedics on two wheels. Working alongside local emergency services, we provide life-saving critical care while helping to prevent crashes from happening in the first place.

It costs over £50,000 to put a DocBike on the road. With your support, we can continue saving bikers' lives.

What do we do?

- » We teach bikers how to keep an injured motorcyclist alive until the emergency services get there, through BikerDown courses.
- » Our team of highly trained trauma doctors and critical care paramedics provide roadside critical care to fallen bikers when they need us the most.
- » We give bikers the ability to avoid being in a crash by sharing our research, evidence, tips and tricks, from the most highly trained motorcycling professionals in the UK.

To find out more information about your local group and how you can get involved, visit: www.DocBike.org



UK'S #1 LEADING POLICE-LED MOTORCYCLE SAFETY INITIATIVE, BRIDGING THE GAP TO A SKILFUL RIDE.

What is BikeSafe?

BikeSafe is a national police-run motorcycle initiative. It's aimed at working with motorcycle riders in a relaxed environment to raise awareness of the importance and value of progressing to accredited post-test training.

Visit www.bikesafe.co.uk to find out more

What do we do?

- » BikeSafe workshops involve an observed ride with a police graded motorcyclist or approved BikeSafe observer covering: attitude, observation, cornering, overtaking, filtering, junctions, group riding, hazard awareness and the system of motorcycle control.

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1 VEHICLES PULLING OUT IN FRONT OF YOU AT A JUNCTION

The most common cause of being knocked off of your bike is another road user failing to see you at a junction. It's so common it has its own acronym – 'SMIDSY', or 'sorry mate, I didn't see you'.

It can be someone waiting to pull out from a side road as you approach on a main road, on your left, or someone coming towards you who turns right into the side junction, directly across your path.

It's no surprise that this is the most common cause of bike crashes, because the human brain isn't very good at identifying low profile objects coming towards it. It's rather like the tip of a dart heading directly towards you. The other problem is that drivers are preoccupied with spotting a gap to pull into – not you and your bike.

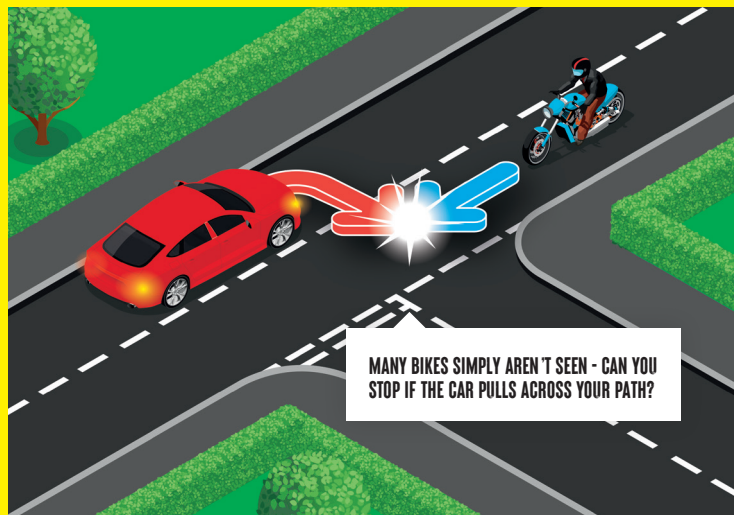
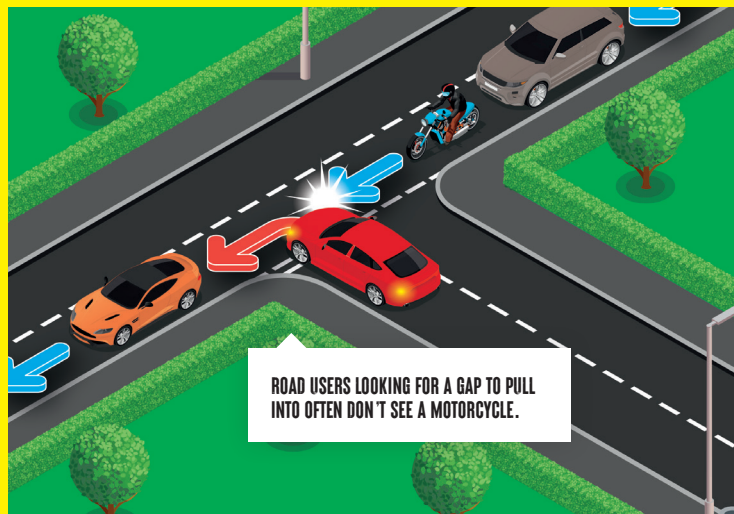
You can wear high vis and put your lights on if it will add contrast between you and whatever is behind you.

What actions can you take to stop it happening to you?

- » The key is accepting that you're not going to be seen. Always be prepared for other vehicles to pull out or cross in front of you.
- » When you see another vehicle at a junction, back off the revs and begin to reduce speed to give yourself more time.
- » Move away from the danger area, using any space available in your lane to add distance.
- » Cover your brakes and be ready to stop – even if it's your right of way
- » If you don't think you've been seen, sound your horn – you could follow it up with a friendly wave!

TOP TIP

WATCH OTHER DRIVERS' FRONT WHEELS (NOT THEIR EYES) CLOSELY. IF THEY START TO TURN, BRAKE, MOVE, AND SOUND YOUR HORN.



2 PASSING A LINE OF TRAFFIC

Seeing a queue of traffic ahead, with little coming towards you in the other direction, does tend to give us riders a sense of smug satisfaction, because we know we can beat the queue.

Bear in mind however that this is one of the most common circumstances in which bikers get knocked off; so we must think why the queue formed in the first place.

Common scenarios that might come back to bite us include,

- » A van delivery driver slowing down to look for an address; then pulling swiftly across the road without looking.
- » Another vehicle (possibly out of your line of sight) slowing down ahead, to make a right-hand turn, causing traffic to build up behind them.
- » Another driver in the queue getting fed up of waiting and deciding to do a sudden three-point turn.
- » The same thought process needs to be applied when filtering between lines of traffic. Filtering is legal, but beware the driver that suddenly decides, without warning, to switch lanes.

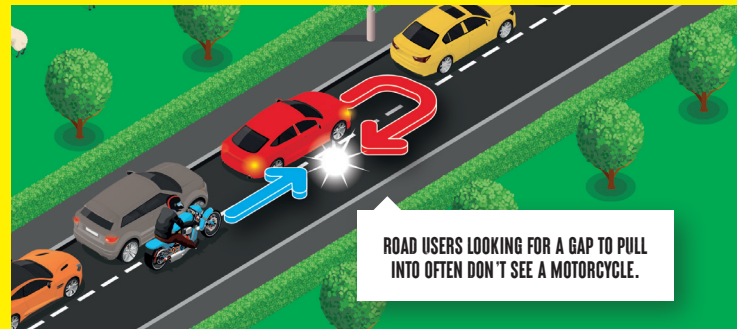
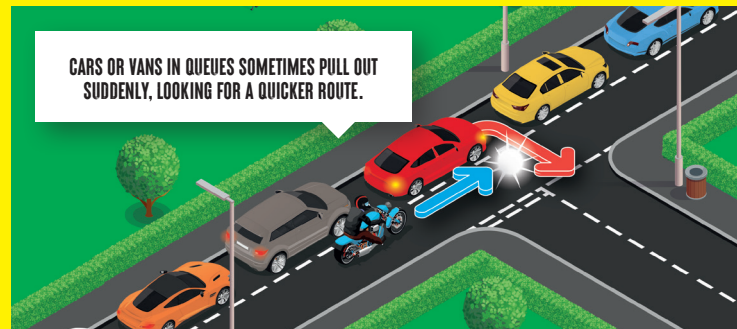
What can you do to stop this from happening to you?

The key is remembering that someone might suddenly turn across your path, while you're overtaking that line of traffic.

- » Learn to position yourself on the road so that you build a 'bubble of space', giving you more time and space to react and more visible.
- » Consider turning on your headlight if it's not already on, to make yourself more visible in other drivers' mirrors. Be ready to use your brakes and horn.
- » Overtake at a speed that will allow you to stop in time if someone does suddenly pull out in front of you.
- » If filtering, keep your speed differential (your speed compared to that of the other traffic) to below 15mph – and be prepared for a vehicle to switch lanes without warning. Don't filter at a speed above which you cannot react. Once the traffic starts to pick up, drop into a gap and run with the flow.

TOP TIP

ALWAYS ASK YOURSELF 'WHY? AND 'WHAT IF?'. IF YOU CAN SEE AND THINK BEYOND THE OVERTAKING MANOEUVRE, APPRECIATING WHY THE QUEUE IS THERE AND THAT SOMEONE IN THE QUEUE MIGHT SUDDENLY BECOME FRUSTRATED AND DO A U-TURN, YOU'LL RIDE IN A MANNER THAT WILL PROTECT YOU IF THE WORST DOES COME TO THE WORST.



3 OVERTAKING AT JUNCTIONS

Even the most highly trained riders and drivers, on blue lights, avoid overtaking at junctions, because it's a highly risky manoeuvre that is absolutely fraught with danger.

So we have only one line of advice: don't do it. Ever! Year after year, air ambulances are called out to motorcyclists killed at junctions and a far too common cause is that the rider was overtaking another vehicle through the junction itself. It's simply not worth the cost.

TOP TIP

(AND WE MAKE NO APOLOGIES FOR REPEATING OURSELVES)

DON'T OVERTAKE AT JUNCTIONS. IF BLUE-LIGHT RIDERS DON'T DO IT WITH THEIR LIGHTS AND SIRENS ON, THAT'S A GOOD ENOUGH REASON FOR THE REST OF US NOT TO DO IT EITHER.

NEVER OVERTAKE AT A JUNCTION.

OVERTAKING AT JUNCTIONS IS ASSOCIATED WITH MASSIVE RISKS THAT OFTEN AREN'T VISIBLE TO THE RIDER.

NEVER OVERTAKE AT A JUNCTION.

OTHER VEHICLES CAN BE UNPREDICTABLE AT JUNCTIONS. OVERTAKING AT JUNCTIONS IS ASSOCIATED WITH A LARGE NUMBER OF AVOIDABLE BIKE CRASHES.

VEHICLES SLOWING FOR NO OBVIOUS REASON MAY BE ABOUT TO TURN SUDDENLY ACROSS YOUR PATH.

4 GETTING IT WRONG ON A BEND

We all love to ride twisty roads, particularly in the countryside – but getting it wrong on a bend is one of the most common causes of frustration, not to mention buttock-clenching, for motorcyclists the world over.

There are three main reasons that bikers crash on bends – in this order:

- » Going too fast around a left-hand bend, pushing you across the centre line and into the path of oncoming traffic.
- » Going too fast around a bend but failing to anticipate what might be around the corner.
- » Going too fast around a right-hand bend and ending up in the verge.
- » It comes down to the foresight of being able to think ‘can I stop if there’s a tractor around the bend?’ That will keep you out of trouble.

What can you do to stop it from happening to you?

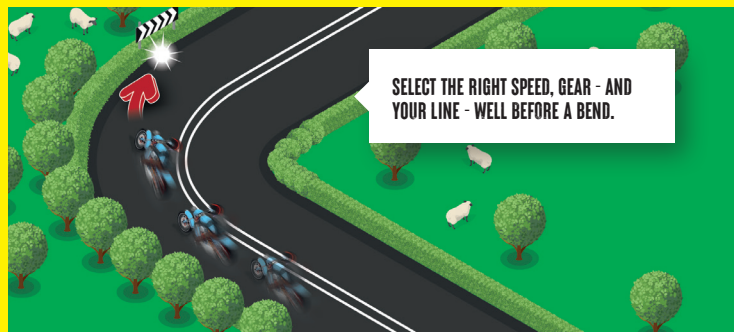
- » Find out what ‘limit points’ are – and use them. The limit point is the farthest point along a road, giving you a clear and uninterrupted view of the road surface. It is where the two verges seem to ‘meet’. If the limit point is far away, you can speed up (as long as there’s not a vehicle waiting to pull out of a junction and it’s otherwise safe

to do so!). If the limit point is coming towards you, you need to slow down. If the limit point is maintaining the same distance from you as you go through the bend, you’re at the right speed. Practise your bends, use the limit point – and start to enjoy going around corners.

- » Where there is any doubt, **SLOW DOWN** on the approach. Carrying too much speed into any bend is one of the most worrying experiences you can have as a biker.
- » Use the road to your full advantage. When going around a right-hand bend, move towards the left to give yourself a better view. When going around a left-hand bend, move towards the centre line, but keep clear of oncoming traffic, particularly HGVs which could destabilise you.
- » Be able to stop in the distance that you can see to be clear (using the limit point allows you to do this). This way, if you see a stationary vehicle ahead, you’ve got time to stop without ploughing into the back of it.

TOP TIP

BECOME A MORE SKILFUL RIDER: INVEST TIME IN LEARNING TO USE LIMIT POINTS AND TAKE A BIKESAFE OR ADVANCED RIDER COURSE. ENJOY RIDING YOUR BIKE MORE, BY GETTING THE BENDS RIGHT.



5 LOSING CONTROL

This tends to spike in the spring, after riders have had their bikes tucked away for the winter or on the first sunny day following a lengthy period of bad weather.

The greatest number of motorcyclists that are either killed or critically injured aren't young or inexperienced riders but men aged 40-60 riding bigger bikes, often with an extensive riding history.

Losing control accounts for a large proportion of bikers being killed each year. The best approach is to develop the 'headspace' that will enable you to recognise when you might be a little rusty, and being humble and honest enough to appreciate that using your bike to its full potential on a road, with other traffic, is likely to put you and other people at risk of being killed.

What can you do to stop it from happening to you?

Learn to tune into when you're a bit rusty, tired or are experiencing other emotions such as grief, anger or sadness. They can all affect your riding. Motorcycling is good for your mental health, but take it easy until you've got yourself back in the saddle.

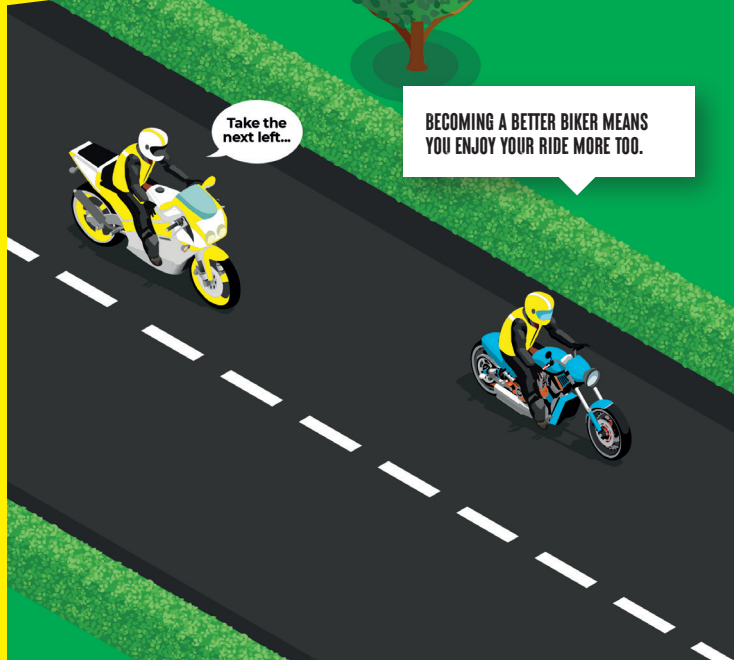
If you've got a lot going on in your mind, perhaps today isn't the day to test your riding skills or your bike to the limit. Be aware that your situational awareness of what's going on around you will be reduced and your ability to identify risky situations will be degraded. Sit back, enjoy the ride and get to where you need to go in one piece.

If you're having a tough time in your life, consider chatting about it. Mental Health Motorbike is a good place to look.

TOP TIP

A BIKE IS A POWERFUL BEAST AND IT'S EASY TO EXCEED YOUR ABILITY TO CONTROL IT. BUILD UP SLOWLY AND CONSIDER GETTING FURTHER TRAINING TO BECOME A MORE SKILFUL RIDER. IF YOU REALLY WANT TO TEST YOUR BIKE, BOOK A TRACK DAY. THEY'RE EPIC FUN AND DON'T HAVE WHITE VANS COMING TOWARDS YOU!

CONSIDER TAKING ADDITIONAL TRAINING SUCH AS A BIKESAFE COURSE



6 RIDING IN GROUPS

We all get more fun out of life when we share the good times with our mates. Making a day of it by meeting up for breakfast, going on a ride-out and enjoying the freedom that motorcycling brings is one of the best feelings you can have. It's good for your mental health too!

Being part of a group, however, puts you at greater risk of being involved in a collision – that's a fact! There are two main reasons for this:

1. Riders often like to show off, but racing and roads really don't mix. We've seen the evidence of this all too often. So save it for the track!
2. The most common cause for group riders crashing is trying to keep up with the person in front. Often, the least experienced rider, or the person who doesn't know the area so well, finds themselves at the back of the group. Not having local experience of which way the road bends can be a disadvantage, leading to them being left behind. In an attempt to keep up, they push themselves beyond their abilities and start to pay less attention to what's going on around them, focusing only on their friends disappearing into the distance.

TOP TIP

BE AWARE THAT RIDING IN A GROUP PUTS YOU AT INCREASED RISK OF BEING IN A CRASH. GET OUT THERE, HAVE FUN, BUT RIDE YOUR OWN RIDE.

What can you do to stop it from happening to you?

Make it culturally unacceptable to race on the roads. We don't like other road users using their mobile phones as it puts us at risk, so apply the same thinking to road racing and make sure your mates know it's not cool.

- » Book a track day or try your hand at dirt bike racing. It's epic fun and really scratches that itch! You can hire bikes and kit, so you can just turn up and away you go.
- » Beware the rider at the back of the pack. Agree a destination and make it OK to become separated. If you're on a long road trip, pre-arrange stop-off points where you can re-group. If you want to stick together, consider putting your least confident member second and if you're the leader, ride to their ability, keeping an eye on them in your mirrors.
- » Don't just focus on the number plate in front of you; "raise your gaze" and be aware of what's going on ahead of the riders in front, too. Riding into the back of your mate as part of a convoy is embarrassing, but it happens a lot.

IDENTIFYING REGULAR CATCH-UPS POINTS WHEN RIDING IN A GROUP MEANS YOU DON'T HAVE TO KEEP UP WITH THE PACK.





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