

RIDE SMART

A fatal motorcycle collision often results from another vehicle pulling into the path of the motorcyclist. The collision is often complicated by the motorcyclist's speed and failure to use a helmet. That means motorcyclists must make safety a priority:

Intersections: Before riding through an intersection, check traffic from the right, left, rear and front. Especially check oncoming traffic for vehicles turning left; 25 percent of all motorcycle crashes are caused by a vehicle turning left across a motorcyclist's path.

Residential Driveways: Automobiles backing out of driveways may have difficulty seeing an oncoming motorcycle. Motorcyclists should especially be aware of this hazard in residential areas by reducing speed, ensuring the driver sees them and being prepared to stop quickly.

Passing: Before passing, motorcyclists must ensure the motorcycle is in the left portion of the lane at a safe following distance. Avoid crowding an automobile.

Road Hazards: Potholes, railroad tracks, oil slicks, puddles, road debris, ruts and other hazards may require sudden lane changes or result in a loss of control. Motorcyclists should scan ahead. Watch other vehicles for reactions to problems and maintain an appropriate following distance.

Judgment: Motorcyclists must add the skills of balance and heightened awareness to the other skills necessary for safe vehicle operation. Motorcyclists must realize that what might be a minor crash in a motor vehicle can be deadly for them – especially without helmets. That is why it is imperative that motorcyclists' judgment is not impaired by alcohol or drugs.

For more driving safety tips or to request a safety presentation, log onto www.schp.org or call the Office of Community Relations at 803-896-7920. Safety tips provided by the SC Department of Public Safety (www.scdps.org) and the national Motorcycle Safety Foundation (msf-usa.org).