

Ride Safe

How you can avoid the 5 most common motorcycle accidents



Ride Safe – How you can avoid t

Riding a motorbike safely requires both skill and judgement. These are the reasons that many of us ride bikes. The successful use of these abilities makes us feel good and we are keen to be the best.

This leaflet is designed to provide information on the 5 most common motorcycle crashes and advice on how you can avoid them.

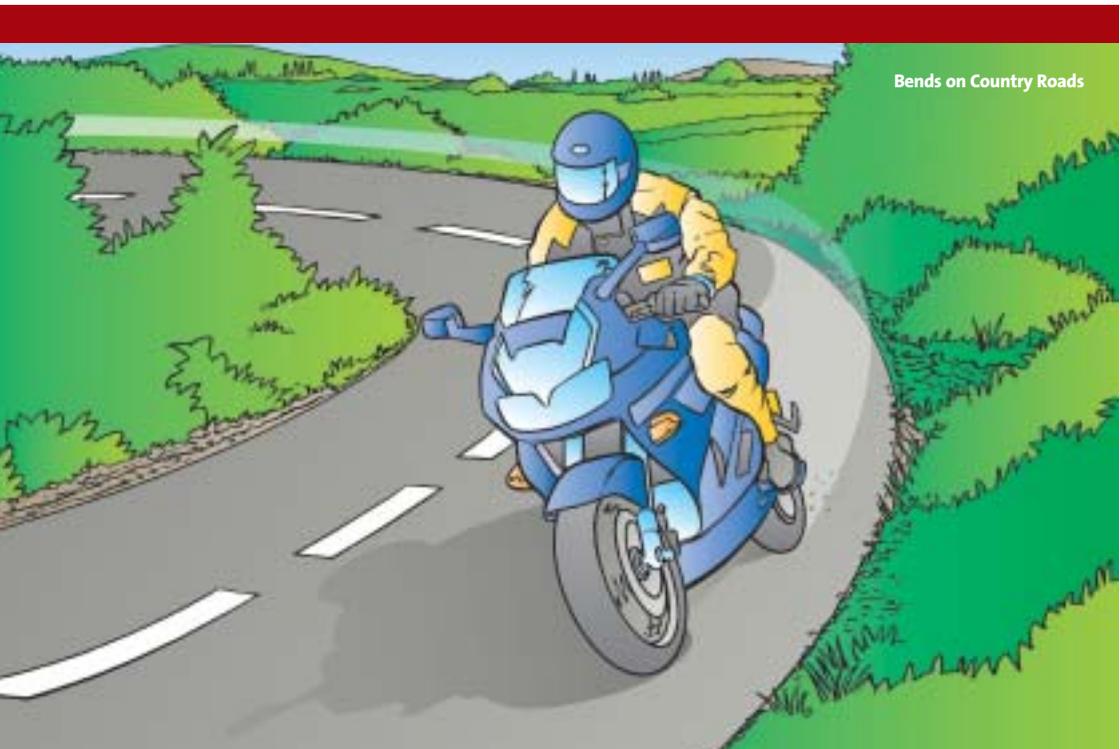
- collision while overtaking
- loss of control.

According to an in depth study of motorcycle crashes the 5 most common are:

- failure to negotiate left hand bend on country A road
- failure to negotiate right hand bend on country A road
- collision at junctions

Bends on Country Roads

Most of us do our training on town not country roads. Country roads are different so we need to apply our skills, knowledge and ability in a different way. Some bends on country roads are smooth and even, opening up once you are into them. Others tighten up dramatically. If you have gone into a bend at too high a speed you will find yourself with a



Bends on Country Roads

The 5 most common motorcycle accidents

major problem. If the road gives you clues on how it bends then use them. You may see:

- the line of trees
- the path of telegraph poles
- hedges at the side of the road copying the path of the road.

Take care and remember to have something in reserve in case things are not as they appear. If in any doubt, lose more speed before the bend so you have greater room for manoeuvring.

Collisions at Junctions

These can be down to a driver failing to give way or stop and fall into the category of “sorry mate, I didn’t see you”. Many of them happen at T-junctions but can happen at other junctions. Some road users are desperate to take any opportunity to join the flow of traffic.

They may not spot your bike in the traffic even though you think you are easy to see. There is research showing that drivers have difficulty judging the speed of a bike and underestimate the bike’s time of arrival.

Always remember that if there is a collision between a car and your bike, you and the bike will come off worst whoever is at fault. Consider how you would deal with the vehicle unexpectedly pulling out in front of you.

Collisions while Overtaking

Overtaking not only requires the skill to judge speed and distance, but a good knowledge of your bike’s acceleration. With a bike you are not used to riding, take time to learn how it reacts to acceleration and braking in different gears, before doing any overtaking.

“Sorry mate, I didn’t see you”.



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Don't overtake when approaching:

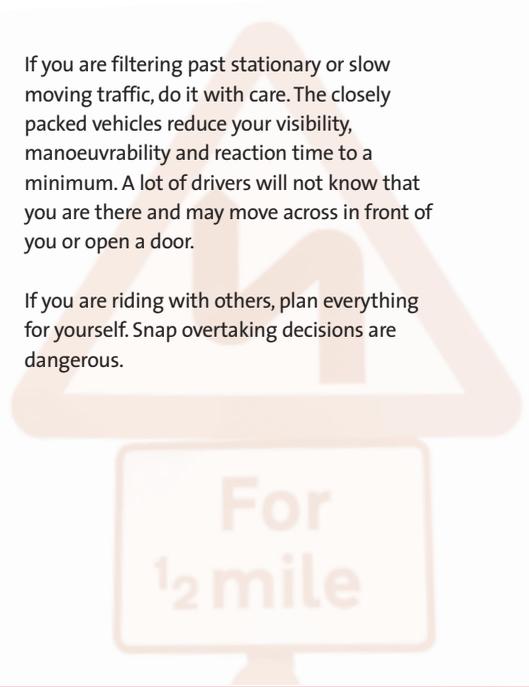
- bends
- junctions
- lay-bys
- pedestrian crossings
- hills or dips in the road
- where there are double white lines or other signs prohibiting overtaking.

There could be a high speed vehicle coming the other way, hidden from view. To overtake safely you need a view of everything going on around you and none of us have x-ray vision.

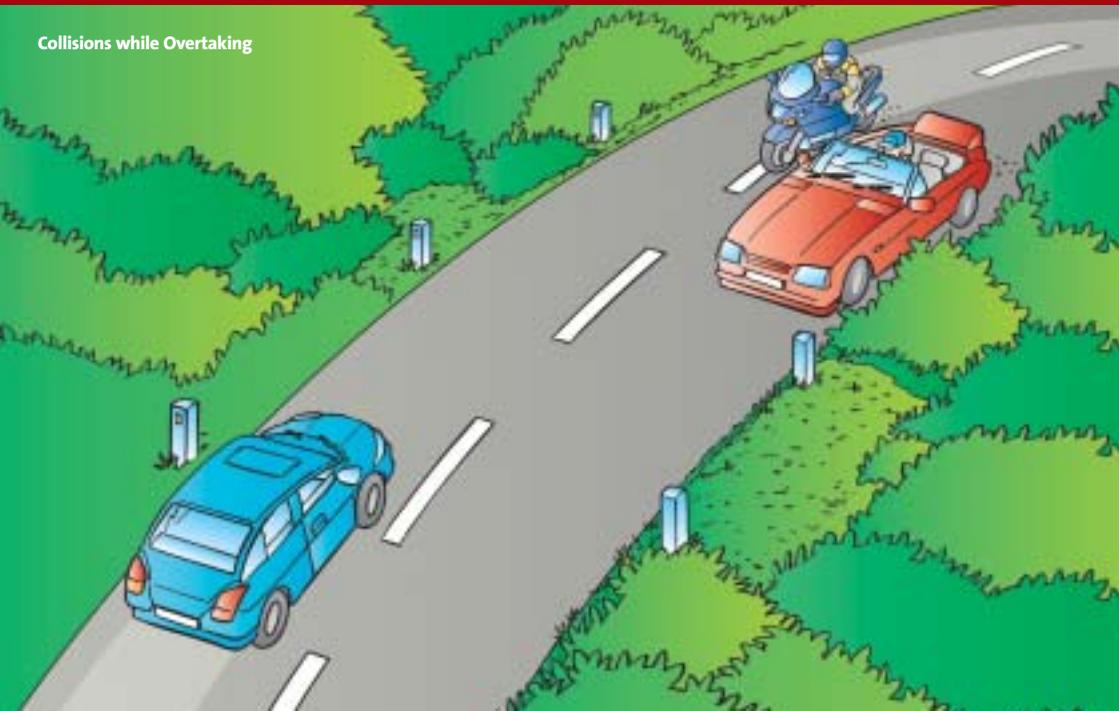
You have no idea how a driver or rider will react when they see you overtaking them. You can't assume they will slow down to let you in. They may do the opposite.

If you are filtering past stationary or slow moving traffic, do it with care. The closely packed vehicles reduce your visibility, manoeuvrability and reaction time to a minimum. A lot of drivers will not know that you are there and may move across in front of you or open a door.

If you are riding with others, plan everything for yourself. Snap overtaking decisions are dangerous.



Collisions while Overtaking



Loss of Control

The two main reasons for loss of control collisions are shunts and road surface conditions.

Shunts

These are usually down to riding too close to the vehicle in front, or the vehicle behind you being too close. To protect yourself:

- leave plenty of room between you and the vehicle in front
- be able to stop in the distance you can see to be clear
- if the vehicle behind is too close give yourself more room in front.

Road Surface Conditions

Part of the challenge of using a motorbike is adjusting our riding to deal with different road conditions. There are all sorts of conditions we need to have the skills to deal with but some examples that can lead to loss of control of the bike are:

- poor weather conditions
- diesel spills

- mud
- manhole covers
- painted road markings.

Look out for these and for road signs warning you of hazards ahead. Even new road surfaces can be slippery in certain conditions. There may be other clues to the presence of some hazards. For example, where there are lorries there may be diesel spills, where there are building sites, or farm and field entrances there may be mud.

Make sure your tyres are in good condition and at the correct pressure; your life is dependent on two small patches of rubber.

Allow yourself the time and space to see what is ahead of you and take avoiding action.

The safest response will depend on the circumstances around the hazard such as road conditions, weather, the limitations of your bike, and your skill as a rider.



Conclusion

Motorcycling is a skill for life and any skill needs to be practiced, honed and developed. If you haven't been on the bike for a while ease yourself back in to riding gently and think about refresher training.

When you've had a good safe ride, think back to the skills and knowledge that made it good. Where it hasn't been so good or you've had a near miss, have other issues like group pressure, lack of practice, tiredness, distraction, anger, or stress got in the way?

Learn the lessons of experience to improve your skills and your enjoyment of motorcycling. An assessment ride such as BikeSafe will highlight problem areas. To be better than the rest, ensure you have the skills and ability to deal with any situation by getting further on-road training from an accredited provider.

Useful Points of Contact

BikeSafe
www.bikesafe.co.uk

British Motorcyclists Federation
www.bmf.co.uk

Driving Standards Agency
www.dsa.gov.uk

Institute of Advanced Motorists
www.iam.org.uk

Motorcycle Action group
www.mag-uk.org

Motorcycle Industry Association
www.mcia.co.uk

Motorcycle Retailers Association and
Motorcycle Riders Training Association
www.rmif.co.uk

Royal Society for the
Prevention of Accidents
www.rospace.com

RoSPA Advanced
Drivers and Riders
www.roada.org

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