

HELI BIKES

Motorcycle Safety Initiative

www.helibikes.co.uk

Bulletins 06/07/13

Continued High Accident Rate!

After the sudden high accident rate in spring into May and early June, there was a slight pause, but the accident rate continues to be significant with lots of fatalities and very serious injuries. This relates to the UK for the most part, however these rates and figures are being seen around the globe. There are many reasons for accidents, but so far the incidents I have attended, the majority of motorcycle accidents have been caused by rider error or certainly the rider contributed to their own downfall...and yes in some cases drivers were also the cause or contributed also. Either loss of control on bends or high speed filtering or misjudgments at junctions and poor overtaking decision making etc seem to be the common theme. Some probably seem to be related to riding experience or recent riding proficiency...which ties into the wet weather from last year and the much drier weather this year. More people getting out on their bikes this year...probably after a long layoff or infrequent riding. Many of the accidents are single vehicle accidents which are down to the rider only.

It will be very easy for me to tell the biking community what they want to hear...to say that the drivers are the causes of the accidents...or it was potholes or it was drivers using their mobile phones or texting etc...but we are seeing an increasing number of incidents where the riders are at fault. Of course there are environmental factors such as poor road surface etc...but that is something that the rider has not factored for and has not adjusted their speed etc and that is what caused the accident.

Of course there are incidents where drivers are at fault or who have been distracted by phones or something else, but in reality it is a small percentage...certainly not as big as some would have us believe. Sure, awareness on this should remain, but it should not be the scapegoat of all motorcycle accidents. There have been many motorcycle collisions with car and vans, and many of these are related to riding in blind spots. If a rider is positioned in an area that a driver cannot see into, then the rider is placing themselves in the danger zone. Yes drivers can use their mirrors and look around, but if the rider is hidden behind a large vehicle or is not in the line of sight, then it is incorrect and inappropriate to assume that the driver can and should see the rider...even if they are looking.

Sudden approaching or closing high speeds have also caused many accidents this year. Where a rider uses high speed on any type of road then the rider is assuming that any other road user will be able to make an accurate assessment of that speed and either allow for the rider or avoid the rider. The fact is that most drivers will not be able to accurately assess excessive speed and may not be able to react in time, either if the driver is pulling out of...or turning into a junction or changing lanes & direction. With the very high speeds, then the rider is less likely to be able to react in time to avoid any hazard that develops...and this has been the case on numerous occasions so far this year.

Unfortunately, this year...there have also been a few incidents where riders and pillion had been drinking alcohol, and this has led to accidents. Even if the rider is sober, having a pillion who is not does cause problems for the rider and this has also been a cause this year.

So far, this year, these have been the most common reasons for motorcycle accidents.

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Bulletins 23/07/13

Hazards after first rainfall!

After prolonged periods of dry weather, then as the first rain falls the roads can become very slippery and accidents are a plenty because of it and drivers and riders not making allowances for it. Oils fuels etc embedded in the road surface get lifted after rain downpours which add to conditions.

This affects drivers and riders, and it is very easy to misjudge the condition of the road. Look for tell tale signs on the wet road surface, avoid painted surfaces or at least leaning too much or braking whilst on them. Look for the rainbow colored effect on the road, where fuels and oils have been uplifted and make extra allowances for other road users who may make errors in these conditions.

Pay particular attention when riding in changing conditions, from dry to sudden wet conditions or riding from exposed to tree covered areas where changes in sunlight and road surface conditions can change very quickly.

If there is a substantial rain downpour, then beware of surface water or water not soaking away as it should, beware of hidden potholes and any debris that may be left on the road.

RIDE AWARE!/RIDE SAFE!

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Bulletins:12/05/13

Unfortunately, the motorcycle accident rate at the moment does not seem to be slowing down, and this is not only in the immediate area where I operate, but is replicated across other parts of the UK, and these characteristics are also found around the globe. Whenever there is an improvement in weather conditions, so the amount of motorcycle traffic increases and ultimately the amount of motorcycle accidents increase on largely dry roads. You might think that only returning or new season riders are affected but in truth we have dealt with all experience levels recently and many of the accidents are misjudgements of travelling speed, closing & approach speed, speed and position on bends and at junctions, inappropriate or insufficient braking and not allowing enough space between vehicles, and inappropriate overtaking. Of course there have been accidents where the actions of driver of the other vehicle have contributed to the accident, but virtually every case in the last month, the rider has also contributed to the accident or has been the sole vehicle involved.

I would urge all riders of all experience levels and backgrounds to really pay particular attention when making your riding decisions and be ever mindful of the potential actions of other road users. At some point another driver may do something that you may not expect or were not prepared for. By allowing extra space and being mindful of your controlled speed, braking and road positioning, may just give you that bit extra to avoid an accident or sustaining serious or fatal injuries if you are involved in one.

Every item that is produced on the website and across the other media is there for a reason, sometimes informative, sometimes light hearted, but always having some kind of message that is based upon what I am seeing on a daily basis. I share this information with all riders in the hope that it may help some riders avoid being involved in an accident.

Whilst, in general, there is a low probability of having an accident...we are currently experiencing a big spike which we can all help to address.

The information is there for all of us to use and to share, I hope you feel the same, whether you believe this affects you or not.

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Bulletins 28/05/12

Accidents, Hot weather & fatigue!

Whilst in most cases it is difficult to correlate accidents with riding in hot weather and being tired, it is correct to state that being tired and 'drained' from riding in hot weather conditions and being dehydrated does affect reaction skills and decision making, thus creating a situation in which the rider is more susceptible for errors or misjudging the errors of other riders/drivers. There has always been a higher accident rate at the weekend/bank holidays in sunny weather and anecdotally it would appear that more incidents occur in the afternoon/early evening on the return journey after a day or weekend ride. We would urge all riders to take note of the weather conditions, remember to eat & drink (soft drinks) during the day and be aware of the rider's condition. Take time to rest and avoid a 'Get Home-itis' situation leading the rider to rush home.

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Bulletins 16/05/12

Animals in the road!

Particularly during Spring & Early Summer onwards, extra care should be taken whilst riding on country roads to look out for animals suddenly coming out of the hedge line and crossing the road. As the weather generally improves, thus the vegetation grows at a greater rate and obscures the hedges and animals within it. Councils workload increases trying to keep the verges cut and last year there were numerous accidents due to this set of circumstances.

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Bulletins 19/08/12

Bend, Bends, Bends!

Periodically there is a cluster of accidents that have the same causation factors. Recently there have been many accidents on bends, with no other vehicles involved. In essence the motorcyclist has lost control on the bend for similar reasons those being;

Excessive speed on entry and through the bend.

Poor initial positioning prior to entry and through the bend.

On right hand bends; riding near the centre of the road near the white lines, thus having reduced vision through the bend.

Harsh braking on initial entry or through the bend whilst trying to make the correction.

Riders should pay particular attention to entry speed and road positioning whilst riding through bends and use appropriate speed for bends that open up and widen or close in and sharpen. Avoid riding in the centre of the road on a right hand bend and always be prepared for an oncoming vehicle near the middle of the road also. Practice or take instruction on 'Limit Points' or 'Vanishing Points' i.e. how far around the bend can you see the actual road surface and where the two road verges meet to limit your further view around the bend. Also be aware of the blind bends with high hedges that also reduced the through the bend visibility.

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Bulletins: 13/01/13

Blind Bends & Hidden Junctions!

Whilst accidents on blind bends and at hidden junctions may occur at anytime during the year and in varying conditions, there has over recent months been a number of accidents whereby the accident was totally avoidable and all parties involved may have contributed to the cause of the accident.

1. The rider or driver travelling at a higher than prudent speed, given the road conditions and the lack of vision through bends or not making allowances for any junctions or property entrances that may be difficult to see, especially on narrow country roads.
2. The rider or driver emerging from or turning into a side junction or property entrance either not expecting a vehicle to suddenly appear or did not make allowances for that vehicle.
3. The local authorities had not recognised that there could be a potential hazard on a particular road and had not taken steps to make riders and drivers aware of the hidden entrances.
4. Warning signs had either not been installed, or were difficult to see from the rider's or driver's perspective.
5. Appropriate local speed limits or traffic calming measures had not been implemented even though there had been a call to do so by local residents.

Accident causation factors are numerous and the above are just a few in particular examples and we urge all riders to be extra vigilant and take extra care when travelling on any road, but especially narrow country roads, on blind bends and where property entrances beyond bends are obscured. Often on country roads, national speed limits are still in force because of low traffic density factors, however that does not necessarily mean that it may be safe or appropriate to ride at the higher speeds on these roads.

Pay particular attention when riding/driving and approaching or travelling through very small towns, villages or hamlets as because traffic density is low, local residents may not expect 'your' bike to be on 'their' road at a particular time. It goes without saying that all road users should raise their awareness, and we as riders should not only raise ours but also compensate for the distraction of others.

When riding on narrow roads in the countryside, try to position your motorcycle in a position whereby you can gain the best possible view of the road ahead and also beyond the bend and always 'expect' a vehicle to suddenly appear. Sometimes it may be more appropriate to sacrifice the optimum road position, and reduce speed and allow extra space between the sides of the road or the path of oncoming traffic, which will permit the rider time to take avoiding action if needed.

Whilst riding in the countryside may be really enjoyable and thrilling, always be mindful that the lack of space and vision may turn a great day's riding into a nightmare!

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Bulletins 05/05/13

PLEASE NOTE ALL RIDERS IN THE LOCAL REGION & BEYOND. The last couple of weeks we have dealt with an unusually high number of motorcycle accidents in various areas for varying reasons. This is just a quick message to really pay attention to how you are riding and watch out for how others are driving. The recent good weather has seen more motorcycle traffic and a lot of issues are to do with entry speeds and braking at and in bends, vehicle spacing, traffic flow at roundabouts, observations of how other vehicles are moving and being able to avoid them. We can all review our speeds and just give ourselves that extra space and time to react and plan for hazards.

Some riders may be just returning to riding and also riding in groups, so pay particular attention and watch for hazards that are developing around you and also that you may be creating yourself.

I would strongly urge all riders reading this to spread the word amongst other riders...as many as you can...and get them to start reviewing how they are riding and how accidents are and have occurred. There is lots of information on the website and especially on the articles page that details where and how accidents are occurring so please take five minutes of your day to have a look at it, read it and let it be a catalyst to improve hazard perception and address your riding practices.

If you do not wish to promote the HELI BIKES website or pages etc...I am completely OK with that, but I would ask that you all look at other sources if you can find it and or look at some recurrent training or advanced training. There is no shame in developing your skills, but remember that you should always ride with a readiness and awareness of elements that can effect rider safety.

The key should be never to be too comfortable with your riding...always be prepared and be looking to improve. Please share this message amongst your friends, colleagues and your groups.

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Bulletins 03/07/12

Identification & Next of Kin Contacts.

Over the last few months there have been numerous incidents where riders have had accidents and have not been carrying I.D. of any kind. When attending an incident, we in the emergency services use this information to gather background information that may assist in the rapid treatment of the patient. The other services also can utilise this information of course to contact next of kin to inform them of a rider's condition. HELI BIKES has long promoted the CRASH CARD Scheme as a method of carrying medical information and to act as an I.D. card and the beauty is in its simplicity. However there are also other options available; such as the U-TAG (data held on a USB Stick) or a similar brand, the QR code, which can be produced at home and either stuck to the outside of the helmet or carried in the wallet or in the helmet with the Crash Card. The good old fashioned 'Dog Tag' or always carry a wallet or purse with some contact details. If you carry a mobile phone, be sure to place an ICE (In Case of Emergency) Contact Number in there. We are in the process of promoting amongst ambulance services across the UK, as well as the CRASH CARD, the use of the QR Code. There are options in the market for a rider to purchase one, however they are very simple to produce on a home computer and printer. Follow these steps to produce a QR code that can hold more information and can be in addition to the CRASH CARD. The beauty of this is that YOU control the information held on the code and as more and more emergency services personnel use smart phones, the code can easily be read at the roadside.

Google Search: Free QR Code Printing, Choose a website & enter your info to create a code, Save it & print it in a credit card size.

Information Template: Name, Address & Postcode, D.O.B., Blood Group, Next of Kin + ICE Tel, Medical Conditions, Allergies, Medications etc and any other info you feel comfortable with.

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Bulletins 30/06/12

Is Your Machine Roadworthy!

Whilst in general terms the reliability of components on motorcycles is very good and does not significantly add to the accidents statistics, recently there have been a few incidents where there has been a direct affect or has contributed to the accident. Obviously we would say make sure your machine is roadworthy!...But what does that mean in reality? If you have performed mechanical work on your own bike, be sure to test it thoroughly and continue to monitor its performance, especially if that involves the braking system, drivetrain, suspension or structure. However a rider should continually check their bike for signs of wear or failures. One of the most vital components on the motorcycle that is commonly overlooked are the tyres. Not only for condition and tyre wear but also most notably tyre pressure. Commonly from Spring to Autumn more riders will venture out on bikes for weekends away or longer tours. This means loading up the bike with luggage, tents and of course pillions as well as supplies. This extra loading, coupled with incorrect tyre pressure will lead to a decreased handling performance and will effect steering control also. If we add changes in temperatures during the day which will effect tyre pressure also, then the rider is faced with a new set of variables to contend with. If we are honest, how often does the average rider check their tyre pressure, or drive or adjust their suspension or even look at the owners manual to check for settings under different riding conditions. As riders are probably more in tune with road conditions and weather conditions than other road users, an area that all could improve on is to regularly check the roadworthiness of the machine. If the rider performed a 'Pre Ride Check' before every ride then this would not only enable the rider to be more confident in the machine they are riding but it would also engage the rider in a safety culture. All it takes is a quick 5 min check once a day or before every ride on the brakes, suspension, steering, tyres, etc...occasionally read the owners manual and soon you'll be doing it without even thinking!

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Bulletins: 18/11/12

Jack Frost At Your Door!

At this time of year, there can be a rise in accidents not necessarily caused by excessive speeds or universally inappropriate speeds, but more so caused by either the misreading of weather and road conditions or by being caught totally unaware by these conditions.

Early mornings will be a particular issue with temperatures reaching their coldest and there being a real risk of ice and frost on the surfaces and roads, coupled with riders and drivers potentially being not fully awake or feeling tired.

Early evenings are also an issue with a sudden drop in temperature, darkness and high density traffic which may cause accidents that the rider may not have been prepared for.

Recently there have been accidents that have been associated with some of these causation factors, and whilst in situations the roads are still 'safe to ride' there have been accidents resulting from loss of grip, or reduced awareness of potential hazards, or accidents caused by drivers not being aware of riders or riders not being aware of or prepared for a drivers intentions.

Pay particular attention to weather forecasts and the effect of outside air temperatures and low light or night riding factors which may present hazards that a rider may not ordinarily consider.

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Bulletins 01/10/11

Junction Incidents!!

Whilst it is a common held belief that road junctions are the scene of many motorcycle accidents, actually they are no more common than other scenes. The exception to this is in urban areas of course. There have been many incidents at junctions over the last few months where culpability has been either with other vehicles or with bikes or with both. One should remember that any access onto a road should be considered a junction, be it from a private residence, business premises, petrol station...the list goes on! Be vigilant of other vehicles approaching or at a side 'junction' wanting to pull out onto the road. Allow plenty of room to be seen and manoeuvre to avoid if necessary and adjust speed appropriately, even if this conflicts with 'your perceived right of way'. This approach is more 'defensive' in style, however this extra awareness may act as an incidence avoidance tool.

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Bulletins 03/05/13 Misjudging bends and movements of other vehicles.

Having an accident on a bend is not uncommon, but there have been a lot where the rider has totally misjudged the entry position and speed and has ultimately run wide. I have recently responded to a few incidents within the last few days where this has been a factor. If the rider is really lucky, then they will run wide onto the other side of the road and there will not be an oncoming vehicle, however many times there is just that, which the rider collides with. Because the impact is head on, invariably the impact force is high and we are seeing very serious injuries and even fatal injuries. Making an approach to a bend is so important to get right. Approach with an appropriate speed with a lower gear selected to enable more control. Use engine drive to proceed through the bend and not roll or coast through the bend. Pick a suitable position on the bend entry that will give the best vision through and beyond the bend, which is on the outside edge of the bend, but not necessarily on the very edge. Always be prepared and able to manoeuvre away from any oncoming vehicle or road defect and this will be achieved by selecting the correct gear and riding at an appropriately slower speed. Just because you are going slower through the entry, it does not mean that you will be losing time on the journey. Going slower will make the ride through the bend more controlled and as the road opens out on the exit, then the rider can apply the power. Essentially the rider should be looking to go slower into the bend and power and speed out of the bend. Anytime the rider performs a manoeuvre, be it approaching a bend or overtaking or coming upto a junction etc etc, they should be looking to have the bike in control and that will be at a slower speed, in a lower gear and in a road position that will give them the best view ahead and of the surrounding traffic and environment. Have these elements in place will allow the rider more control when having to take avoiding action or when correcting a mistake. One of the key errors that have led to accidents is where the rider has misjudged what the other vehicle is likely to do. The rider has proceeded along a path and has not considered that the other vehicle may change direction quickly, or suddenly emerge from the junction, etc. By keeping greater control of the bike and really taking note of how the other vehicles around are driving and what they may potentially do will enable the rider to always assess the traffic flow and be in a prepared state. Because they are already riding with greater control, the avoiding action will be a lot easier and a lot more successful. This accident cause is really common and is really avoidable, by taking more control and being more observant the rider is able to counteract any potential hazard. Check your speed! Check your position! Check your ability to avoid! Check other road users and how they are driving! Check your environment!

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Bulletins 18/05/12

Overtaking & Stability!

It is not uncommon for motorcycle accidents to occur when the rider performs an overtake manoeuvre and loses control, either due to excessive speed or rapid directional changes which destabilise the motorcycle which the rider has not been able to control. Recently there have been numerous incidents of this whereby a rider has used a combination of excessive speed, for the road & traffic conditions, and swerved or used a rapid sweeping motion to perform the overtake. An overtake manoeuvre can be performed quickly & efficiently in a safe manner, however it does require some preparation and planning. Last second attempts to 'quickly' overtake reduce the rider's ability to appraise the situation and make the motorcycle less stable and an unforeseen bump in the road actually compounds the problem.

Recurrent training and/or advanced training will teach/reaffirm skills and safety systems to enable a rider to plan, assess and perform an overtake. It will also enable a greater awareness of road positioning, appropriate speed and potential hazards which ultimately will improve riding skills and lead to a smooth riding style which is ultimately more stable.

However, the rider should also adopt a 'Raised Awareness Mentality', whereby the rider is actively looking for potential hazards and being more self aware of riding techniques & styles and changing their approach to riding, if appropriate, to enable a more defensive style which is commonly agreed as a best practice approach.

HELI BIKES strongly recommends recurrent or advanced training and/or additional rider courses to allow the rider to review their own standards and allow for potential improvements in technique & approach. Failing that, as individual groups or riding friends may also adopt their own 'Rider Buddy' system, whereby riders actually take it in turn to watch each others riding standards and openly discuss amongst friends how collectively as individuals and as a group, riding techniques may be improved. I acknowledge this may be unwelcome by certain riders, however the intention is not to publicly vilify a rider but merely to get riders to start discussing and practising skills such as overtaking manoeuvres to improve standards & knowledge, raise awareness and hone abilities.

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Bulletins 27/09/12

Rear Ends & Side Swipes...SPACE & TIME!

A common occurrence that the emergency services are notified of are accidents that involve motorcycles either running into the rear of another vehicle or making contact with a vehicle from the side...usually when a vehicle changes lanes without noting the motorcycle and side swipes leading to an accident, or when a vehicle turns into a junction/side road into the path of an overtaking rider...with the same result.

These type of incidents are very common in built up areas where drivers are frequently trying to find 'space' which ultimately lead them to quickly changing lanes or direction without an adequate view of the surrounding traffic. Coupled with the rider trying to 'fit in space' on either sides of vehicles then usually contact is made, sometimes only glancing with no body injuries but frequently there might be vehicle bodywork damage.

Running into the rear of vehicles is actually more common than you might think. Usually occurring either on high speed roads when not reacting in time for vehicles that are braking ahead, or for when vehicles pull out of junctions into the path of a rider or when a vehicle suddenly stops when wishing to make a late turn into a junction/side road.

Injuries sustained are usually determined by the speed of impact and the level of protection worn, and not all injuries are sustained due to any contact with the vehicle 'in front'. In many cases injuries are sustained when the rider loses control of the motorcycle under braking and then fall off, making contact with the road surface, or loses control whilst avoiding the vehicle 'in front' and loses control and collides with a solid object: either street furniture or vehicles etc.

The key to avoiding this kind of incident is: SPACE & TIME! Allow a lot more space between the rider and the other vehicle, which allows a lot more time for the rider to react to sudden changes and allows the driver a lot more time to see the rider. Making allowances for drivers not seeing you...(the rider)...then allows you time to react in a natural manner without the need to adopt any emergency riding skills. Further training and continued training will assist in developing skills to enable a rider to react to these sudden changes and a good refresher on braking and taking avoiding action is always a good choice, but it is the rider's mental approach to creating space & time that will ultimately reduce the likelihood of encountering this accident cause. It's better to shake your head and tut from afar at poor driving than be up close and personal with little room to manoeuvre.

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Bulletins 25/03/12

RIDE THE BENDS!

As one of our safety poster denotes, be sure to 'ride' the bend and not be out of control. Many of the accidents that we see are on bends. A Typical example is on a left hand bend. A suitable position for the rider is on the right hand side of the lane on approach to the left bend and an appropriate speed in order to gain the best view of the bend and any oncoming traffic. It is imperative that riders approach the bend at an appropriate speed and in total control of the motorcycle in order to achieve the aforementioned. However, be also very mindful that a vehicle may be travelling in the opposite direction and driving towards the centre of the road i.e. on the right hand side of their lane. This leads to a situation where the motorcyclist and oncoming vehicle may ultimately occupy the same space...which is not a good situation. Hence, whilst the correct road position should ensure the best view of the road, it is how the rider maintains control through the bend that will enable the ability to avoid an unforeseen danger. When riding on country lanes, where high hedges and trees obscure the route through the bend and any oncoming traffic, it is imperative that the rider be aware that an appropriate speed is used to ensure a controlled path through the bend but also almost 'expect the unexpected' and adjust your speed and be prepared to alter your position on the road in order to move away from any danger that unexpectedly appears. We would advise some recurrent training for any riders who are starting to ride after a winter break and also some advanced riding which will emphasise road position, speed and awareness of situations.

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Bulletins 21/08/11

Road Resurfacing Perils

Recent road resurfacing has been a contributing factor in a number of motorcycle accidents that occurred in one morning at the same location. Though not usually a major factor in accidents, on this occasion in South East Oxfordshire it has been reported that the resurfacing had not afforded any grip in this certain area. After a third incident, the road was closed and then resurfaced, thus fixing the problem. After any resurfacing all riders should pay particular attention and expect a decrease in grip performance, hence adjust speed and riding style as appropriate.

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Bulletins 03/08/11

Snatch Braking

Snatch Braking & approaching the brow of a hill. This year there have been a few instances whereby accidents have occurred due to Snatch Braking resulting in wheels locking and skidding leading to losing bike control. When riding in rural areas, country lanes & approaching a brow of a hill be aware that on the other side there may be an obstruction in the road. Adjust your approach speed as appropriate, take up the best road position, slow down and be prepared to brake in a controlled fashion.

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Bulletins 29/05/12

Suitable Protective Clothing!

Whilst most protection is recommended but is not a legal requirement, apart from the helmet, it is still at the discretion of the rider whether it is worn. All safety schemes and 'best advice' will always suggest that all riders wear protection all the time, regardless of the weather, type or length of journey. Whilst HELI BIKES concurs, there are also further things to consider! One key fact to remember is that protective clothing will only offer protection up to a certain point and will rapidly decrease in performance under high impact loads and high angle impacts. Although clothing with CE protection will provide some resistance to relatively low impact loads and low angle impacts and provide abrasive resistance, if protection is not worn, then even at low impact speeds very serious life altering injuries may readily result. A common comment we hear from riders after an impact is: "Even with all this gear on I still broke my..." The fact that they were wearing protection actually minimised their injuries, it may have even saved their life, however it will never provide a 100% protective shield.

Appropriate Clothing! There are many choices of clothing available for different weather conditions and journey types. As well as a correctly fitting item, comfort is also a key factor. Unfortunately during hotter weather many riders will stop wearing protection because "it is too hot for leathers". We also see this replicated in the young rider/scooterist who commonly ride with no protection at all and we see serious injuries incurred even at the slower speeds. There are many types of protective clothing that are purposely suited to riding in hotter temperatures and we would recommend to seek out the alternatives as lightweight protection is still far superior to no protection at all.

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Bulletins 10/04/13

Vehicles performing U Turns or suddenly changing direction or changing lanes!

A general advisory to all riders to be ever vigilant of drivers of cars, vans/trucks & lorries etc who may perform a U Turn in the middle of the road. A recent spate of incidents whereby a rider has collided into the side of a vehicle because either making a U Turn or suddenly changing lanes or turning across a carriageway and the rider has not been able to react in time to avoid the collision. Be ever mindful that drivers may not have seen you in their rear view or side mirrors ... or did not look adequately! before performing this manoeuvre. Always give yourself extra room to be able to react in time and be prepared for this possibility especially if riding past stationary traffic, holiday congestion and or slow moving traffic. If approaching a vehicle that is seemingly parked on the side of the road or in a lay by, always be mindful that the driver may suddenly pull away or turn across the carriageway directly into your path. Try to really pay attention to any early movement of the vehicle and try to look into the vehicle where possible to see if the driver has looked in their mirrors to see you. Always ride at a speed and vehicle spacing with enough time to react to vehicle that may perform a manoeuvre that you did not expect.

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Bulletins 05/02/12

We Are Still In Winter!

As the weather has turned against us and to remind us we are in winter, be sure to check the weather forecasts on a regular basis. After the first snow of the season for many parts of the regions around the country, the temperatures are forecast to drop to below freezing causing substantial icing coverage over all surfaces & roads. Although main road routes may be gritted/treated, it does not mean that there is zero icing on these roads. All drivers of all vehicles should take extra care in these conditions and Riders of powered two wheeled vehicles are no exception, and may consider other forms of transport if at all possible during these conditions.

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Bulletins 15/10/11

Wearing Protective equipment correctly!

Recently a few incidents have occurred whereby protective clothing was not worn properly, did not fit properly and helmets have not been fastened properly. These conditions have led to the riders sustaining more severe injuries than may have been otherwise sustained.

A particular issue has been with the wearing of helmets and wearing them correctly. In an accident, the helmet will protect the head from injury or severe injury, up to a certain point depending on the impact. If helmets are not worn or fitted correctly then they can easily slip off the head in an accident, hence the head is totally unprotected and is most vulnerable in this scenario. Take the extra time to make sure the helmet is fitted & fitted correctly and is fastened securely!!

Certainly in accident scenarios regarding life threatening injuries, the most vulnerable parts of the body that require protection are the head and torso. A proper motorcycle jacket with CE protection and back protector is beneficial and a fitted & fastened helmet will afforded some superior level of protection.

Whilst there are many styles of & manufacturers of helmets with varying price tags, they all provide a certain level of protection and have been tested and certified to be sold. One should note that in accident scenarios however, open face helmets do not provide facial/chin protection. Flip up helmets, whilst versatile, actually offer no more protection than an open face helmet when the rider is riding with the front section in the up/open position.

Be mindful that all protective equipment has a performance limit. It will offer protection up to a certain point. If protective apparel is not worn, then it follows that no protection will be provided.

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Bulletins 09/09/11

Wet Roads & Incidents!

Whenever we have wet roads, we in the emergency services always see a spike in incidents whereby motorcycles skid on the road. Not only does water on the roads lift oils embedded on the road, but also the water itself acts as another layer between tyre and tarmac. Be aware of reduced tyre performance and indeed how 'YOUR' bike starts to react in these conditions. Allow extra road spacing to compensate for decreased braking performance and adjust your braking technique accordingly. BE AWARE of riding over road line markings as they provide even less resistance in the wet conditions and also avoid any metal surfaces .i.e. man hole covers etc.

Riding in the wet can cover a whole spectrum of conditions. From damp conditions to standing water on the roads. Fresh rain after a dry spell usually causes problems as the road conditions suddenly changing but riding practices are also slow to adjust. It is also a case that in drying conditions, some areas of the road will dry out sooner than others, such as in the shade or under tree cover. Hence it is important to realise that the weather changes the road conditions at different rates and the rider should be aware of that.

Another factor is the wearing of the correct protective clothing in the wet conditions. With this the rider is protected from the elements, hence feels more comfortable whilst riding and is less likely to be distracted by the potential discomfort.

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Bulletins 02/12/11

Winter & Night Riding & Icing!

As we are firmly setting into winter, many accidents are occurring due to the weather and road conditions and reduced perception due to low light conditions. Unsurprisingly the number of motorcycles on the roads reduce at this time of year but the accidents that do occur and have occurred recently are in the main attributed to the seasonal conditions and reduced visibility. Now more than ever you should look at weather reports to know what weather has passed and what will become. For Example: If it has rained the day before and then at night there are clear skies, then there is a very real risk of ice on the roads during the night and the next morning due to the damp roads and the severe drop in air temperature. In many ways riding in the winter and during the longer hours of darkness, the rider should be even more conscious and aware of the weather & road conditions and adjust the riding practice accordingly. There are many groups and training organisations that will offer extra courses for winter riding so it is worth investigating if you feel this would be of benefit. However not only should the rider be more aware of riding practices but also should be extra vigilant for other road users and their 'decreased driving performances' and reduced visibilities.

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Bulletins 12/03/12

Recent Riding Experience

We have seen a general improvement in weather and this last weekend was dominated by blue skies, warm temperatures and dry roads. At this time of year we start to see the inevitable rise in accidents as riders take advantage of the favourable conditions. However in many cases, there has been little recent riding experience and this contributes to the accident causation factors. We strongly recommend that riders with little recent experience take prudent steps to gain riding proficiency and ride with extra caution as the riding season develops. The road conditions will tend to change attitudes of all road users and riders should take this into consideration as they regain their proficiency. **BE AWARE OF HOW YOU ARE RIDING & HOW OTHERS ARE DRIVING!**

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Bulletins 28/07/11

Riding & Holiday Traffic

Within the last couple of weeks there have been many more incidents involving motorcycles on our roads, especially on the main road arteries. Last weekend saw a large number of incidents coinciding with the first weekend of the summer holidays. Pay extra attention on the main holiday routes with the extra holiday traffic. Many drivers may be distracted, tired, stressed etc, so please make an allowance for this. Also pay attention to your own Ride-Ready-State. Be sure to drink (non alcohol), eat and rest. I'm sure this has been heard before, but we still see many incidents at this time of year so please take care.

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Bulletins 15/10/11

The Coming of Autumn & Winter

As autumn & winter approaches the weather & road conditions can change rapidly. Pay particular attention to leaves & debris on the roads and be aware of the low temperatures which may result in ice forming on sections of roads. Always keep in mind that the road conditions will seldom be uniform for your whole journey. Allow for decreased brake & tyre performance and allow extra spacing between yourselves and other vehicles.

Whilst it is a fact that there are less accidents during the winter months, this is due to less motorcycles being on the road, a common trend for autumn & winter accidents is riders & drivers not making allowances for the road conditions and this results in the bulk of incidents.

Whilst motorcyclists make mistakes, other vehicle drivers also make mistakes. Hence it is imperative that riders ride with self preservation in mind at all times and be prepared for the conditions. Wear the correct winter clothing, Adjust riding styles and allow extra space between vehicles.

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Bulletins 04/06/13

High Speed Filtering, Lane Swapping & Overtaking at Junctions!

There have been a number of incidents recently in our immediate operating area, that is replicated elsewhere where riders are riding at high speeds through slow moving traffic and either approaching from a blind spot and colliding with a vehicle or the vehicle has started to swap lanes and has collided with a rider that is traveling at a much greater speed. Please review riding speeds in traffic as high speed does not give the rider any margin of error or time to avoid, nor does it give the driver enough time to look and see any approaching rider, even if they are looking, it can happen so fast.

Another incident that has been repeated recently has been where riders have decided to overtake another vehicle at a junction and when that vehicle either turns off the main road into the junction into the path of the motorcycle or turns off the road away from the motorcycle, but a car that is waiting to pull out, then emerges into the path of the rider. The vehicle has not been able to see the rider because the rider was riding in behind the other vehicle and was operating in a blind spot. Be extra vigilant approaching junctions, and hold off overtaking until after the junction and there is a good view of the road ahead.

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Bulletins 22/07/13

Not wearing motorcycle protection.

This is less about recent accidents, but more about recent trends of riders not wearing protective equipment, clothing etc of any kind in the hotter weather. Anytime there is an motorcycle accident where a rider has not been wearing protective clothing, the rider sustains injuries that could have been prevented if they had been wearing items. Recently we had attended many motorcycle accidents which have happened at low to medium speed, therefore the impact injuries were not so severe, however the serious abrasion injuries were a consideration. Where protection had been worn, then the rider sustained some bruising and very minor injuries but there were no significant injuries to skin or tissue. Where protection had not been worn, then the rider sustained substantial injury to skin and tissue, which could easily have been avoided.

It is not only fashionable, but also very tempting to not wear protective equipment when riding in hotter temperatures, but the reality is that regardless of what you are riding, even at low speed, the potential for injury is substantially increased when not wearing a protective barrier to skin and tissue. This means wearing suitable motorcycle clothing and footwear & helmets secured properly when riding in hotter conditions.

Again it is very tempting to not wear any protection or wear thin, summer style everyday clothing...but the reality is that offers very little protection.

The options available these days for lightweight, summer wear that is suitable for motorcycle/scooter riding are extensive as they offer sufficient cooling but offer protection at the same time. It is worth the investment.