

TRICKS TO AVOIDING MOTORCYCLE ACCIDENTS IN ARKANSAS

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Wesley A. Cottrell

There is no question that riding a motorcycle can be dangerous. Although they do not provide the best protection in an accident, they do come with incredibly powerful brakes, obstruction-free vision, excellent handling and tires with a good grip. If you can stay calm, use common sense and follow these helpful tricks, you may be able to avoid a serious motorcycle accident.



What to do when a car turns left in front of you

This is probably the most common motorcycle accident scenario. The driver of a car does not see you, or does not judge your speed accurately and turns in front of you at an intersection. Regardless of whether the cause is distraction or a blind spot, it happens. In some cases, automobile drivers simply perceive the absence of another car as opposed to the presence of a motorcycle.

The only way to avoid this situation is to be more observant. Unfortunate for motorcyclists, you need to develop a sort of "sixth sense." Put another way, you need to know how to recognize the signs that someone may turn in front of you. For example, if there is a car at an intersection waiting to turn or a gap in traffic near an intersection, driveway or parking lot, be careful. Slow down, cover your brakes and get ready to take evasive action.

What to do if you hit an unstable surface

If you have ever unexpectedly run into a patch of sand, gravel, leaves, or any other unstable surface while on your bike, you know the horror of wiping out as soon as your front tire hits it. Obviously, the best way to avoid this is not to hit the unstable surface. But, if you are on an unfamiliar road, the only way to do that is to ride at a pace that will allow for an appropriate reaction time.

What to do if you enter an unexpected corner too fast



You're trying to negotiate a curve, but you realize that it is tightening on you and you're probably not going to make it around. The trick is to only ride as fast as

you can see. You need time to be able to use visual clues such as telephone poles and signs to judge a road's direction, especially when that road is disappearing over a hill. But if you find yourself in that situation, the best thing to do is trust your bike and ride it out. Take as much lean out of the bike as possible, look where you want to go and control the bike as smoothly as possible.

What to do if a car changes lane into you

Another common scenario is when a car unexpectedly moves into your lane, into the space you are occupying, as if you weren't there. The unfortunate reality is that motorcycles fit far too easily into automobile blind spots. Add to that the fact that most drivers are looking for cars and aren't "programmed" to see motorcycles. In order to avoid these situations, you must be aware of blind spots lie and stay out of them as much as you can. The rule of thumb is, if you can see a driver's eyes in their mirror, then they can see you on your motorcycle.

Also, be more aware of circumstances on the roadway where cars are more likely to be making lane changes. Look for signs of a car changing lanes: turn signals, wheels turning, the car wandering around its own lane while the driver checks his mirrors and, of course, the driver's head moving. Be aware of all that, in all the cars around you, at all times, and you'll be good.

What to do if a car opens its door unexpectedly

Suppose you see a gap in traffic between a line of parked cars and a line of traffic that isn't moving, and you decide to scoot through. Suddenly, a driver in

a parked car swings her door open right in front of you. Obviously, the best way to prevent this type of accident is to never ride between an active traffic lane and parked cars. Even if the active lane of traffic is at a standstill, you should never do this. Not only do you have to worry about opening car doors, but also pedestrians, cars pulling out into traffic slightly in order to see, but also many other unavoidable or unpredictable situations. All you could possible do in this situation is brake as hard as you can, and pray.

If you have questions regarding avoiding motorcycle accidents, or any other personal injury issues, call the Cottrell Law Office at (800) 364-8305.

About the Author



Wesley A. Cottrell

Wesley A. Cottrell has been successfully practicing law for over 29 years. Born in Springdale, Arkansas and raised in Baxter Springs, Kansas, Wes is licensed to practice law in Arkansas, Kansas, Missouri, and Oklahoma.

Wes earned his B.A. from Pittsburg State University in 1981 and his J.D. from the Washburn University School of Law in Topeka, Kansas in 1985. He was admitted to practice law in Kansas in 1986, in Missouri in 1987, in Arkansas in 1989, and Oklahoma in 1993.

He is licensed to practice law in the United States District Court for the District of Kansas, eastern Arkansas, western Arkansas, and western Missouri. He was Deputy Prosecuting Attorney in Crawford County, Kansas from 1987-1989.

Wes lives in Rogers, Arkansas with his wife, Shelly, and their two daughters, Kennedy and Gabby. He is active in his community, and is regularly asked to teach courses to other attorney on personal injury and workers' compensation litigation.

Memberships and Associations:

National Organization of Social Security Representatives
Benton County Bar Association
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Kansas Bar Association
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