

How to Avoid being Involved in a Bicycle Accident

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Bicycling has gained a lot of popularity in Ohio over the last few years and an increase of bikes on the road means an increase in bicycle accidents. Most bicyclists have learned the basic safety rules and know that they are supposed to ride with the flow of traffic, wear a helmet, sign when turning, and follow all road signs as if they were driving a motorized vehicle. But following these elementary guidelines, however important, is not enough to ensure the avoidance of an accident.

Most [bicycle accidents](#) on the road are caused not by the cyclist, but by motorists who have ignored the rights of cyclists to use the roadway. Often times drivers of other vehicles fail to yield, do not pay attention, do not see, are under the influence of drugs or alcohol and fail to recognize the signals given by the cyclist. Below you will find a few scenarios that you may encounter while riding your bike as well as what you can do to avoid personal injury and perhaps death.

1. *Being clipped by a passing vehicle* occurs when a motorist traveling in the same direction as a cyclist strikes him, in most cases, with the mirror and causes him to lose control of the bike.

How to Avoid Injury: Even though cyclists are encouraged to ride as far to the right as possible, this may create the illusion for the motorist that there is more room to pass on the left than is really there. So as a cyclist you do not want to ride the curb, but instead ride at a distance that will not tempt a motorist to pass you without yielding proper distance between you and his vehicle. Another way to avoid this type of incident is to invest in a mirror for your handle-bars and be attentive to what is happening behind you.

2. *Running into or being struck by a vehicle leaving a driveway* often happens because the driver is not checking for a cyclist riding near the curb, but instead is looking in the middle of the lane for other motorized traffic. He then pulls out striking a cyclist, or is struck by a cyclist from the side.

How to Avoid Injury: Here again, riding too close to the curb causes an issue because when pulling out of a driveway onto a street there may be obstructions like shrubs, trees or parked vehicles blocking the driver's view. Riding off the curb gives the driver a better chance to see you, but the best way to avoid this kind of accident is to always be attentive to what is going on around you. Pay attention to people getting into vehicles, listen for cars being turned on, and look for the lights of vehicles approaching the curb. When you notice one of these events taking place, stop, slow down and/or remain cautious.

3. *Being struck by a car turning right after stopping at a red light* happens when you stop between a vehicle and the curb at a stop light and when the light turns green you proceed straight and the car next to you turns right without seeing you.

How to Avoid Injury: In this scenario it is most likely the driver did not see you before making a turn because his focus was on cars approaching from the left as well as the stop light. To avoid this from happening do not stop in vehicle “blind spots” instead come to a stop directly behind the car. This allows you to be seen by vehicles in all directions as well as wait to see what the car in front of you does. You never want to make assumptions based on a turn signal or a lack there of.

These are just a few examples of how you can be safer on the road. Taking these steps to make yourself more aware on the road may reduce your risk of accident, but even the most cautious and experienced riders face dangers, and despite your best efforts you may still become a victim of a bicycle accident. When this happens it is very important to take the proper steps to protect yourself and ensure the guilty party is held accountable. First you will want to contact the proper authorities, get the drivers insurance information and make sure you contact a [bicycle accident lawyer](#) as soon as possible. You have rights as a cyclist and if you wait too long, a statute of limitations may prohibit you from recovering damages, [accident lawyers](#) will make sure your rights are protected.

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