

# **BICYCLE ACCIDENT PROTOCOL & SAFE RIDING TIPS**

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When an accident happens, especially if there is a car involved, here is the sequence of things that need to be taken care of:

## **1) PREVENT FURTHER INJURY**

- a. Control the traffic, immediately – especially in high speed/high traffic/or poor sight-line areas. You don't want to have a secondary accident further injuring the victim or the first responders.
- b. Get the victim off the road to a safe spot, if possible, without further injuring the victim. Don't move the victim if you suspect spinal injury or if you're unsure of the move hurting them.
- c. Get everyone else off the road; don't stand around in the middle of the road in a daze.
- d. If you cannot clear the road, then have riders (preferably in bright-colored jerseys) fan out and warn drivers well in advance of the accident site of the need to reroute, slow down or stop. Create a safe zone and get the bystanders off the road onto the shoulder. Be attentive, polite and assertive to the drivers. Keep your eyes on the cars if you're doing traffic control and don't obsess about the victim's condition, let the others handle that.

## **2) ATTEND TO THE VICTIM**

- a. Follow First Aid procedures as you're trained: A-B-C (Airway, Breathing, Circulation)
- b. Keep the victim as stationary as possible, even if they are feeling all right. Frequently they'll have so much adrenaline pumping through their body that they will not feel pain for quite a while. Their unnecessary movements can create further injury, especially if they have broken bones spinal or head injuries.
- c. Control bleeding, provide comfort and keep the victim as stationary as possible until medical help arrives.

## **3) CALL HPD / EMS**

- a. Get help on the way as soon as possible by calling 911.
- b. Describe as clearly as possible your location and the condition of the victim to the 911 dispatcher.
- c. Don't hang up until the dispatcher tells you to.
- d. Provide a callback number if you can in case they can't find you.
- e. If there was a car involved make sure you file a police report.

## **4) KEEP TRACK OF THE DRIVER** (assuming it is a car/bike accident)

- a. Get the license plate, make, model and color of the vehicle, take a picture of the license plate
- b. Have someone assigned to stay near and watch the driver in case they decide to leave the scene.
- c. Get a good description of the driver and passengers in the vehicle.
- d. Be assertive but don't endanger yourself in case the driver is emotionally distressed.
- e. Don't admit guilt, make judgments, badger or harass the driver – let the police interview them.

## **5) TAKE CARE OF THE BIKE**

- a. Every biker almost universally - no matter how badly injured, is concerned about their bike
- b. Get the bike out of harms way.

- c. Figure out a way you can keep the bike safe (have someone ride back to the cars and come back with their vehicle or call someone to come and pick it up).
- d. Let the victim know that their bike will be taken care of, that will in itself provide comfort to the victim.
- e. If the victim is going to the hospital in an ambulance, it is unlikely they will let you load the bike up with them into the rig, if they do please don't forget to thank them.

#### **6) IDENTIFY WITNESSES**

- a. Encourage anyone who witnessed the accident to stick around until the police are finished interviewing them.
- b. If they are friendly witnesses, try and get their name and phone numbers for your own records.
- c. Take note if there were other people in the involved car, note descriptions: age/sex/location in car/what they look like

#### **7) FLAG DOWN THE EMERGENCY PERSONNEL**

- a. Position riders in areas where the ambulance or Police can easily see them, especially if you're in a difficult to find back road.
- b. Direct the emergency personnel to the location of the victim.

#### **8) ENCOURAGE THE VICTIM TO GET MEDICAL ATTENTION**

- a. Frequently we'll be tempted to not go to the emergency room but if there is a chance that the victim might have broken something encourage them to go to the hospital
- b. If the victim hit their head, make sure they go to the ER

#### **9) KEEP THE HELMET WITH THE VICTIM**

- a. In the case of possible head trauma, the attending ER physician will frequently ask to see the helmet so they can better diagnose what kind of impact the victim suffered.
- b. Make sure that if the victim is taken in the ambulance the helmet makes it into the rig

#### **10) MANAGE THE GROUP**

- a. Keep everyone calm
- b. Get everyone together and talk about what happened and what we're doing
- c. Send un-needed people ahead on the ride, remind them to stay focused on riding safely
- d. Have those who are too rattled to ride call for a ride, or catch the bus back

#### **11) CONTACT THE VICTIM'S EMERGENCY CONTACT**

- a. Let them know what happened
- b. Where the victim is
- c. Where the bike is
- d. How to contact you

#### **12) PHOTOGRAPH THE SCENE**

- a. With almost everyone carrying a camera-phone, take pictures of the scene for documentation
- b. Wide shot to identify the area of the crash
- c. License plate of the vehicle, if one is involved
- d. Damages to an involved vehicle
- e. The driver of the car
- f. The rider, his/her injuries and bike

### **13) FILE A POLICE REPORT**

- a. Getting insurance to pay for something undocumented is really difficult
- b. Cooperate with the reporting police officer and provide as much information as possible
- c. Get the report number before the officer leaves the scene
- d. Identify witnesses to the officer so he can interview them
- e. Document the time, direction of travel, weather conditions, light conditions and road conditions
- f. Make note of anything the driver might have said and note the driver's condition

### **ALWAYS CARRY THE FOLLOWING**

- 1) **Cell phone** – don't leave home without it, especially when riding alone
- 2) **Medical Card** – don't leave home without it
- 3) **Driver's License** – best form of identification around
- 4) **Index card with emergency information**, including: your full name, primary emergency contact name & numbers, allergies, medications, medical conditions, doctor's name along with contact information, backup emergency contacts, home address and employer's name. If you've ever been in ER, put all of the answers to all of the questions they'll ask when admitting you on this card. I've done it and it really speeds up admission – I just handed the admitting clerk the card and my medical card and they had everything they needed to admit me.

### **OTHER THINGS TO CONSIDER CARRYING**

- 5) Cash – enough to catch the bus and buy a snack, I typically carry, at a minimum, one \$5 bill and two \$1 bills
- 6) Credit Card
- 7) Waterproof Wallet – keeps your things dry and compact
- 8) Pen & Paper or PDA – I carry an very small pen and blank index cards with me & my Blackberry
- 9) Program key contact information for emergencies under "ICE" (in case of emergency) in your cell phone. Make it a habit to exchange cell phone numbers with your riding partners. If possible also program in your frequent riding partner's emergency contact number/s.

### **FOOTNOTE**

Cycling is inherently a dangerous sport and it is mostly a matter of time before you will crash – harsh but true words. Our job on the front end is to do everything we can in our power to prevent accidents from happening.

- We are more of a danger to each other than any other factor – since we ride close together
- Inattentive drivers are accidents waiting to happen
- Watch out for distracted drivers near: garage sales, surf spots, children's sporting events, shopping malls
- The road is the most slippery right after it starts raining
- The number one car/bike accident is an over-taking vehicle making a right turn into your path
- Be visible and predictable
- Follow the rules of the road
- Don't run red lights – it is not only very dangerous, it makes a really bad impression on drivers
- Enforce safe riding protocols with your riding buddies so you're all doing the same thing
- Be exceedingly attentive - 360 degrees
- Don't look down much – that is when you'll run into dumpsters, parked cars & curbs – not kidding
- Use proper lights and reflective gear, front and rear at dawn, dusk and at night
- License your bike and display your sticker as required by the law – don't be an unlicensed vehicle