

SAFETY CORNER

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Don't Always Trust What Your Eyes See

This month I'd like to talk about the dangers of intersections and what your eyes don't always see. When approaching intersections of any kind there can be hidden dangers you don't and probably can't see or you may not be looking for them. What I am talking about here are the following two scenarios:

Scenario A. You are traveling north on a two lane road and approaching an intersection with a stop sign. East and west bound traffic is four lane through traffic. North and south bound have stop signs. As you come to a stop, you're looking to the left and all you see is a pick up with a trailer in the right lane approaching. He signals he's turning right and you see he's slowed and is committing to the turn. You look right and it's clear, you ease off the clutch and proceed. Wham! What you didn't and couldn't see was the Smart Car in the left lane paralleling the trailer. Waiting a second longer, the car would have come into view.



Scenario B. You are traveling on a four lane city road and at the intersection it's four lane in all directions with traffic lights. As you are heading east and you're in the #2 or curb lane, you are approaching the intersection and you take notice of the traffic light. On the west bound side of the road you see a car in the left turn lane ahead of you. On the right is a UPS truck a little farther up in the lane and a car, in what you'd reasonably think or looks like from your vantage point in the north bound #2 or curb lane, waiting at the light. You now enter the intersection and a SUV that was next to the UPS truck pops out from the turn lane he was in to make a right turn and you both see each other at the same time. He jams on the brakes and you, being the awesome biker that you are, swerve left because you knew where your outs were to avoid him. A couple of things here could have caused you not to notice the right turn lane. One that comes to mind is a high crown in the road. Another would be, it's early morning and the position of the rising sun is in your eyes making it difficult to see, let alone determine how close the truck was to the curb.

The moral of the story is don't always trust what your eyes see. Expect the unexpected, and be prepared to deal with whatever comes your way. When coming to an intersection if you don't already practice it, cover the brakes and the clutch to slow down a bit and give yourself that extra second. If you want to blend in, ride a bus.