

# STAY VISIBLE

Mark Welch — Safety Officer



## Stay Visible!

A common statement from drivers when they are involved in a crash with a motorcyclist is, "I didn't see him/her!" One of the theories is that, because of its size, a motorcyclist is not perceived as a threat, like

a car or truck, and therefore the drivers mind ignores us. Don't fret!

There are things you can do on your bike to help you be more visible so that you get the attention of other motorists on the roadway and have a safer ride.

Start with the obvious: wear brightly colored clothes. Even better, wear gear that has reflective material sewn into the fabric. Harley makes a great leather jacket that has reflective material sewn into it that you have to strain to see in the daytime but really shows up well at night. (I wonder if I can get paid for that plug...)

You can also put reflective decals on your helmet to make it more visible.

Customize your bike with lights. Make certain the colors you choose are legal to be used on the street to avoid any trouble with law enforcement. There are some great after-market lights that will enhance the beauty of your bike and help you to be seen in the process.



Create a safety buffer around you. Leave enough space 360 degrees around you to react to unexpected movements from other drivers. This will also keep cars and trucks from obstructing other motorists' view of you.

Use your arms to signal in conjunction with your turn signals. (Remember to use all your fingers.) The movement of your arms will attract attention from others. Just be certain to keep both hands on the handgrips when you are turning.

Don't hang out in blind spots. We are hard enough to see without making it more difficult by staying in a lane position where the motorist physically cannot see us. By the way, motorcycles have a blind spot, too. It is eliminated by doing a head-check.

A trick I have recently learned from a motorcycle expert is to shift your lane position when meeting oncom-

ing traffic while driving on a two lane road. We like to ride in the left third of the lane, closest to the centerline.

That is a pretty good spot to be in so the drivers ahead of us can see us in their mirrors. But when a car headed in the opposite direction is approaching, consider moving into the center or even the right third of the lane. It

creates more space to react and the lateral movement of your headlight will attract the attention of the driver.

Suddenly, I have the overwhelming urge to go for a ride!

Head and eyes!

Mark.