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08 0536 2677

Welcome to the first of what we hope to be a regular column from us on road riding techniques and safety tips.

There has been a lot of bad press of late about motorcyclists and their behavior on the road. As motorcyclists we tend to too often take the approach that its not us but the car drivers that are at fault and if they could only look out for motorcyclists then the world would be a better place. This would be great if only it were true however; we do not live in a rosy world. Therefore, whose fault is it when we are bumped by the inattentive car driver?

As motorcyclists, we need to take responsibility for our own safety and not put our lives in the hands of the people in the cars.

“It’s never my fault when I can blame someone else”

A great example of this was Monday morning I was reversing out of my boss’s drive onto Melbourne St, it was about 9am so the traffic was very heavy there were parked cars blocking my view up the street. I spotted a black speed triple approaching with a gap large enough behind him for me to reverse into. I started to reverse out and to my horror, there was a blue ZZR1100 in the space I had chosen. As a motorcyclist and an Instructor, I was mortified that I could be one of those ignorant tin lids that just pull out with out looking. But hang on I saw the black triumph with the black helmet and black leathers so why did I not see a bright blue bike with blue and white leathers? I followed this couple up the road past the hospital and it happened again a parked car started to pull out but saw him at the last second

and stopped. This clown on the ZZR was riding in the left hand wheel track against parked cars, it was not that car drivers didn’t see him but couldn’t see him. And you think that after two near misses this guy would get the hint and move over to the right wheel track where he would be able to take full advantage of the wonderful colour scheme he was sporting.

So what’s my point, although riding off set (staggered) with another motorcycle can increase your presence on the road, it is only good in open areas. Never ride in the left hand wheel track it blocks your vision of intersections and driveways. You become hidden by roadside furniture i.e. parked cars, trees, shrubs and signs yes even a simple sign can hide a motorcycle if you look at it at the right time. Let’s face it a glance is all you’re going to get so make the most of it.

Cheers Jeff Lane.