

2008 BP MS150 Training Series - Safety Update

I have heard from quite a few of you who were very concerned and thinking about the rider who crashed near the Simonton rest stop on Saturday so I wanted to send this note to all. The rider did suffer a concussion but there were no fractures which was an initial concern. She was released to go home yesterday.

The crash occurred at a point where the route was making a left turn so I wanted to share a safety moment with all of you about turning and changing lanes.

The normal protocol for riding on country roads is single file on the right 1/3 of the road unless there is a shoulder to ride on. This puts you in a visible location but allows cars to pass when there is not oncoming traffic. You should not ride two or more abreast unless the road is closed to vehicular traffic and you should NEVER ride on the wrong side of the road.

When you are approaching a left turn, you need to be anticipating the turn and start scanning over your shoulder to monitor oncoming traffic. Before you get to the turn, when it is clear to do so, you should move over to the center of the lane - this is called "taking the lane", indicate your left turn, and then, make the left turn when it is clear to do so. By taking the lane and signaling, you let cars know your intention so they know to stop and not try to pass you on the left. Before turning, you do need to scan behind you again to make sure they are not in a hurry and passing on the left even though you are making a turn.

There are some exceptions when riding on much busier roads. If you don't feel the location is a good place to pull into the middle of the road, for example, the turn is just over the crest of a hill and fast traffic coming from behind may not have time to see you, then it may be safer to pass the turn, make a U-turn when it is safe and then, make a right turn.

It is also critical to be scanning the road for traffic before moving over, even if you are riding in a group. When I am riding in a group and we have a left turn approaching, the back riders scan and let us know when it is safe to start moving over to turn. Even though they tell me it is safe, I always scan before moving in case they missed something or I mis-understood their directions.

Bicycles are vehicles and one of the things I learned this weekend in my LCI class is that we need to be predictable and assertive so cars know what we are doing and are about to do. We also need to be scanning the roads constantly and increase the scanning when we are preparing to change lanes, make a turn, or an any way change our riding line. This alerts cars that we are making a change and ensures we know about approaching traffic before we move over.

This weekend, we will be riding on some gentle rolling two lane roads. We will have one spot just over 6 miles into the ride where the long riders will be making a left turn onto Kulow Rd. This is not at a controlled intersection (no light or stop sign). Please read and re-read the tip above and be sure to use this tip if applicable and practice your scanning this week.

I will have another extra note coming this Thursday to address arriving on time and signing in/out. Please read these extra notes - I am keeping them short so you can focus on one topic. Each topic is important to your safety and enjoyment of the series.

Be safe and I will see you this Saturday...

Stephen Moskowitz

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