



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION of STATE MOTORCYCLE SAFETY ADMINISTRATORS

Spotlight

Fall 2020

The views and opinions of the articles and authors in the SMSA Spotlight do not necessarily reflect the views and opinions of the SMSA or their members. The articles are intended to provide a wide range of views on motorcycle safety. Any questions regarding articles should be addressed directly to the author(s).

Welcome Fall!

SMSA wishes all of our members a beautiful and fun Fall. The weather is great for riding and training. In these challenging times, we wish everyone a safe and healthy Autumn!

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About SMSA

SMSA, established in 1984, is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that provides leadership for state administered motorcycle safety programs. Our mission is to assist motorcycle safety programs, through collaboration and partnerships, to implement comprehensive, data-driven motorcycle safety programs and countermeasures to achieve a significant reduction in motorcycle operator traffic crashes, fatalities and injuries.

SMSA Listserv

Please take advantage of the SMSA Listserv hosted by Oregon State University. The SMSA Listserv is an easy and efficient way to contact your fellow SMSA members with questions relating to Motorcycle Safety and Rider Education. To sign up, visit the SMSA website Members Only section and choose the tab for Listserv. Summaries from past postings are also listed under the Listserv tab.



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Become a Member

Not a member? Become an SMSA individual, state or supporting [member](#) to support our organization and motorcycle safety efforts. Visit www.smsa.org for more information.

2020 SMSA Annual Members' Business Meeting Goes Virtual

The SMSA conducted the 2020 Annual Members' Business Meeting virtually on September 16, 2020 from 1:30 – 4:30 pm EDT. Highlights of the virtual business meeting include:

- Updates on SMSA activities, including the possibility of an SMSA name change (details below),
- Updates on Federal initiatives,
- Administrators' and Members' Roundtable Discussions,
- Highlights of the SMSA 2021 National Training Summit – Boise, Idaho, and
- Introduction of the 2020-2021 SMSA Executive Committee.

Post communications to the membership included the draft business meeting minutes, links provided in presentations and a link to a recording of the meeting. A link of the recording is also provided in the email distribution of this edition of the Spotlight.

Save the Date: 2021 SMSA National Training Summit!

The 2021 SMSA National Training Summit will be held October 13-16, 2021 at the Riverside Hotel in Boise, Idaho.



Mark your calendars now! For more information visit <http://smsa.org/NewEvents.html>.

SMSA Name Change



The possibility of the name change was presented during the virtual Annual Members' Business Meeting September 16, 2020. The possible name change has been presented in past SMSA Spotlight editions and discussed in numbers webinars over the past year and has been well received by all members.

It has been proposed, by the SMSA Communications and Membership Committee that the National Association of State Motorcycle Safety Administrators (SMSA) should change its name but maintain the logo and the acronym SMSA. The proposed name would be the **State Motorcycle Safety Association (SMSA)**.

The new name would make the Association more inclusive for organizations, state agencies and individuals to share in and support all motorcycle safety efforts, projects and activities.

A link for an electronic vote will be emailed to all designated State voting members and the Supporting and Individual Member Representatives in early October. Please cast your vote or inform your representative of how to vote.

Supporting Members, please inform **Janice Bagley** of your preference at jbagley@ahsi.net.

Individual Members, please contact **Jay Jackson** with your preference at jack47918@aol.com.

SMSA Executive Committee Update

Several webinars have been conducted and communications related to COVID-19 have been shared with the membership. The Executive Committee continues to review the bylaws for possible revisions and are developing several new Position Statements for the Association.

They are working in collaboration with the SMSA Policy and Research Committee on the bylaws and position statements. The current [Bylaws](#), supporting [Policies and Procedures](#), and [Position Statements](#) can all be found on the SMSA website at www.smsa.org.

Please congratulate Ray Pierce (Chairperson), Paul Graves (Eastern Region Representative), Glenn Davis (Western Region Representative), and Jay Jackson (Individual Member Representative) on being re-elected for the 2020-2022 term.

Additionally, Christopher Rector from Illinois has been elected as the Central Region Representative, and Larry Crowe has accepted the position of Vice Chairperson. Congratulations to Christopher and Larry!

SMSA would like to thank the two outgoing Executive Committee Members, Chad Teachout and Sunshine Beer. Your contributions and expertise have been invaluable to SMSA projects and activities!



SMSA Communications and Membership Committee Update

The SMSA Communications and Membership Committee is currently reviewing the process for submitting SMSA Award nominations. The Committee is working to simplify the process and develop a plan for marketing nominations by SMSA members. More information on these awards can be found at: <http://www.smsa.org/AwardNominations.html>.

Additional activities include developing and distributing the Spotlight and identifying the possibility for member discounts with various national motorcycle related vendors.

SMSA Motorcycle Safety Programs Committee Update



The SMSA Motorcycle Safety Programs Committee is currently developing a draft of comprehensive model entry level rider training standards. This model will include sections for program administration, program

oversight, instructor qualifications, coordination with motorcycle licensing, curriculum content, classroom and range delivery, online delivery, and outcome standards. The first draft will be completed by the end of this year with an anticipated release in 2021.

SMSA Policy and Research Committee Update

The SMSA Policy and Research Committee is assisting the Executive Committee with reviewing the bylaws for possible revisions, developing several new Policy Positions for the Association and defining a process for the regular review of current position statements.

SMSA Committee Openings

SMSA is seeking volunteers to fill vacancies for the Communications and Membership Committee, the Motorcycle Safety Programs Committee and the Policy and Research Committee. The committees are a great way to get involved in your association, support motorcycle safety, and network with other professionals. The commitment is generally one conference call per month and some review of activities.

If you are interested in participating in an SMSA committee, please contact the SMSA Office at office@smsa.org or (724) 801-8075.

SMSA Awards

SMSA would like to congratulate the 2020 SMSA Award Winners!



Roberta "Bobbie" Carlson received the **2020 SMSA Outstanding Contribution Award**.



SkidCar System, Inc. (SkidBike) received the **2020 SMSA Outstanding Supporting Member Award**.

SMSA thanks you for your continued support and for your contributions to the motorcycle safety community.

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The Looked but Failed to See Motorcyclist/Car Collision

Four Chances Error*

By: Dan Peterson
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Introduction

Understanding the four chances for error and the associated visual phenomena is helpful in furthering our understanding of the Looked but Failed to See (LBFTS) Right-of-way Violation (ROWV) motorcyclist/car collision scenario.

Knowing these four chances for error, and the associated phenomena, is also helpful in formulating recommended actions for both riders and drivers that will lessen the chance of these types of collisions occurring.



A key point to understand is the human eyes and brain are not the equivalent of the lens of a camera. The commonsense argument that “if it is visible, we will see it if we look hard enough” simply is not true.

1. **Didn't look.** Did the driver fail to look? If the driver is distracted or misunderstands the road layout (for example having no experience regarding traffic flow at a roundabout), he or she might not look or might not look in the necessary direction.

- Riders need to be aware of situations that might be complicated for drivers, reduce speed, and be prepared to take evasive action.
- Drivers need to eliminate distractions while driving and take extra time to focus on unfamiliar road layouts.

2. **Looked but couldn't see.** The driver looks but the motorcyclist is not visible. If the motorcyclist is in the “wrong place” (for example behind a larger vehicle) or the motorcyclist is appropriately placed but the driver's view of the motorcyclist is blocked (for example, by the car pillar or a roadway obstacle like a light pole) the driver could look but fail to see the motorcyclist.

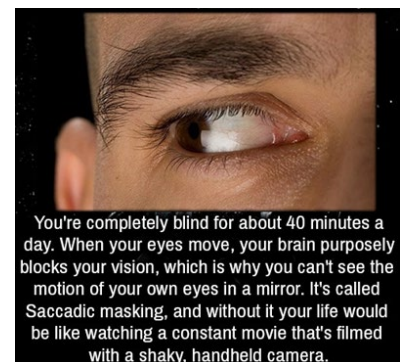
- Riders have the responsibility to ride in a position to be seen.
- Drivers should “rock” their upper body while looking and take more time searching – allowing the motorcyclist to “appear” if driver's vision is blocked. Drivers must understand the need to look around pillars and roadside obstacles.

3. **Looked, motorcyclist visible, but didn't see.** The driver looks, the motorcyclist is visible, but the driver never becomes aware of the motorcyclist. This is an example of what is called *inattention blindness*. There are several explanations for this phenomenon.

The long-standing explanation is that the motorcyclist is small and inconspicuous. Recent research, however, indicates that lack of conspicuity does not explain many LBFTS ROWV crashes - drivers pull out in front of highly conspicuous trains and emergency vehicles. Regarding motorcyclists, the research indicates that prevalence (lack of) and meaning (lack of) might be better explanations for drivers failing to perceive a motorcyclist that is clearly in the driver's line of vision.

Motorcyclists are a small fraction of road users - there are not many motorcyclists on the road compared to other vehicles and most road users do not own or operate a motorcycle and have little connection to motorcycling. People tend to “see” (perceive or become aware of) things within their visual field that they expect to see and/or that have meaning to them. For example, antique car lovers can spot vintage cars in the traffic mix even though there are few on the road.

Saccade masking is another phenomenon about the way our eyes work that could account for when drivers look, the motorcyclist is visible, but the driver does not “see” the motorcyclist.



When we move our head and eyes quickly to scan a scene, the background moves rapidly through our zone of vision. Drivers (and riders) on average look in each direction for less than a half second before turning their head to look in the other direction. When we turn our heads quickly, our vision is shut down in a series of *saccades*. Without saccades, our rapid head and eye movement would cause disorientation and dizziness. Our eyes don't move smoothly across the background, as we commonly think. Instead our eyes move very rapidly from one selected fixation point to another.

This is known as *saccadic masking or saccadic suppression* and works very effectively for processing complex scenes, but there is a drawback. The brain ceases to process retinal images between saccades. It is only during the stationary fixations that an image is processed. The consequence is all drivers and riders are left with gaps in visual perception whenever we quickly scan both ways at an intersection. The brain “fills in” the missing visual data giving us the impression of continuous vision during the scan. We believe we have

completed a full continuous scan, but the truth is our scan is more like a series of snapshots which, without our awareness, our brain has stitched together. Even an attentive driver looking in both directions to check for oncoming traffic may fail to see an approaching motorcyclist if he/she falls within a saccade.

- Research does indicate that riders can benefit from making themselves more conspicuous (visible). Riders should strongly consider wearing Hi-Viz gear and adding auxiliary lights.
- Drivers need to make (force) their brain to perceive road users that might be relatively rare in the traffic mix or have little meaning to the driver. Motorcyclists are vulnerable road users that fit this category. Drivers should look near, middle-distance, and far while asking themselves - is there a pedestrian, bicyclist or motorcyclist approaching? Taking more time to move our head and keeping our eyes moving in lock-step with our head will lessen the chance a motorcyclist will be lost in a saccade.

The left turn scenario presents yet another problem - ***motion camouflage***. Many motorcyclists ride in the left third of their lane. This position is often recommended as the best position for seeing and being seen. However, a motorcyclist riding in the left third of the lane and approaching a stopped car waiting to turn left is placed directly in front (straight ahead) of the driver. The motorcyclist is moving toward the car but from the driver's perspective, the motorcyclist appears stationary because the motorcyclist remains on the same line of travel between the driver and a landmark point behind the motorcyclist. The motorcyclist can appear to remain at a far distance until the last moment.

- In this scenario, motorcyclists should consider moving toward the right portion of the lane. In this position the view from the driver to the motorcyclist is at an angle which presents a changing background and results in the perception of movement.
- The car driver, waiting to turn, looking ahead, and aware of this phenomenon can increase their chance of seeing a motorcyclist traveling directly at them by rocking their upper body side-to-side while looking. The rocking will remind them, they are searching for hard to see motorcyclists and at the same time change their line of vision creating the same result the motorcyclist can by changing lane position.

4. **Looked, saw but miscalculated.** The driver looks, the motorcyclist is visible, the driver sees the motorcyclist but fails to correctly judge the speed and distance of the motorcyclist.



The research indicates that motorcyclists' approach speed toward intersections is often higher than that of other vehicles.

The phenomenon termed ***size-arrival effect*** is in play in this scenario. Our mind judges larger objects to be closer to collision than smaller objects, even if the larger object is farther away. Because motorcycles (and their riders) are small compared to other vehicles on the road, drivers may judge them as being farther away (longer time to arrive) than they actually are.

- Riders have the responsibility to slow down and approach intersections with caution and readiness to brake.
- To compensate for the size-arrival effect, drivers should assume the motorcyclist they see will arrive at the collision point sooner than they think - and choose to wait. Choosing to wait will cost a few seconds in time. Misjudging the motorcyclist's arrival and turning across his/her path causing a collision that could result in a horrific catastrophe.

Summary

Blocked vision, inattention blindness, saccadic masking, motorcyclist speeding, motion camouflage and size-arrival effect all come together at intersections (including informal intersections, such as driveways) to create a perfect storm that can result in a tragic crash. Riders and drivers need to understand these phenomena. Both can take action to lessen the chances of such a disastrous result.

- For the rider, Hi-Viz gear, auxiliary lights, slowing down and making informed choices about positioning are the main measures to take.
- For drivers, looking to specific distances, rocking (side-to-side or back and forth) while looking, thinking about vulnerable road users by asking yourself if a pedestrian, bicyclist or motorcyclist is approaching, and assuming a motorcyclist will arrive quicker than you expect are actions to take to reduce the chance of a crash.

*Four Chances for Error is a concept from The Science of Being Seen by Kevin Williams

<https://scienceofbeingseen.wordpress.com/>

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NHTSA's Traffic Safety Marketing Website

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) offers a website:

www.trafficsafetymarketing.gov/ with materials for numerous traffic safety campaigns including motorcycles, drunk driving, vehicle safety, distracted driving, drowsy driving and more.

These marketing tools include images, videos, animations, posters, fact sheets, social media messages and images and offer a way to get involved through traditional media and online media. Each month a different campaign is highlighted. For a full list of 2020 communications go to: www.trafficsafetymarketing.gov/calendars.



NHTSA's Traffic Safety Marketing website is a great resource for all your State's traffic safety campaigns. Please share with your traffic safety peers.



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Step into the Spotlight

Have your article featured in the next edition of the *Spotlight*. Please submit articles to the SMSA office at office@smsa.org. Articles can showcase your state safety campaigns, state programs, best practices, teaching techniques, new motorcycles or other motorcycle safety related news.

Please see the [SMSA Guidelines for Submitting Spotlight Articles](#) for more information.

Advertisements for Supporting Members: please submit your new advertisements that can be featured in the *Spotlight*.



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF STATE MOTORCYCLE SAFETY ADMINISTRATORS

Thank you for your continued support and interest in SMSA.

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