

Single-actor bicycle crash classification guide

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April 2, 2025

1 Introduction

This document aims to guide you to understand the proposed classification [1] of single-actor bicycle-crashes and label the samples sent to you.

1.1 What is a Single-actor bicycle crash?

A single-actor bicycle-crash is an event where the normal riding of the bicycle is disrupted and ends in a crash with no other road users involved. Essentially, in this document will be assumed that a crash occurs when, during a manoeuvre one or more excitations modify the state of the system in an unexpected way. This excitation is the beginning of the ‘critical scenario’, where we find the mechanisms that produce the crash. Finally, the crash itself can be characterised by the motion of the bicycle and/or the rider in the outcome of the event.

2 Bicycle dynamics-oriented classification

The proposed workflow to classify the crash according to the observed characteristics is composed by three layers: motion, mechanism and excitation (see Figure 1).

2.1 Motion of the bicycle

This is related to the main motion of the rear frame of the bicycle while the crash is occurring. Due to the dynamics of the bicycle, and following the common simplification to its analysis, we find two main motions related to the degrees of freedom: pitch-over and roll-over. Additionally, the roll-over motion includes its own sub-classification according to the direction of rotation with respect to the initial motion. Please visit https://youtube.com/shorts/_etyqSpH10c?feature=shared to watch an example of a crash where the roll angle is negative with respect to the intended turn. This is particularly challenging to represent in a normal drawing so the visual explanation is on the make.

- **Pitch-over (P):** The main characteristic of this motion is one of the wheels lifting from the ground, following a trajectory that finishes with the front wheel behind the rear wheel.
- **High-side (H):** Characterised for a sudden deceleration of the wheel while in lateral motion, which leads to a violent negative roll rate with respect to the direction of the initial motion.
- **Low-side (L):** The human-bicycle system follows an excessive roll rate in the same direction as at the beginning.

Please note that in Pitch-over and High-side motions, the rider is abruptly ejected from the bicycle.

2.2 Mechanisms of crash

Here we detail mechanisms that make possible bicycle riding, however, in the analysis of crashes, we delve into the failure of these mechanisms.

- **Modes of vibration:** Bicycles are studied as dynamical systems composed, among others, by rear and front frame connected by a rotating joint that creates the steering. When these models are linearised, stability analyses show two particularly dangerous oscillatory modes of vibration when unstable: weave and wobble. Being the former a combination of roll and yaw angle, while the latter a high-frequency steering oscillation.

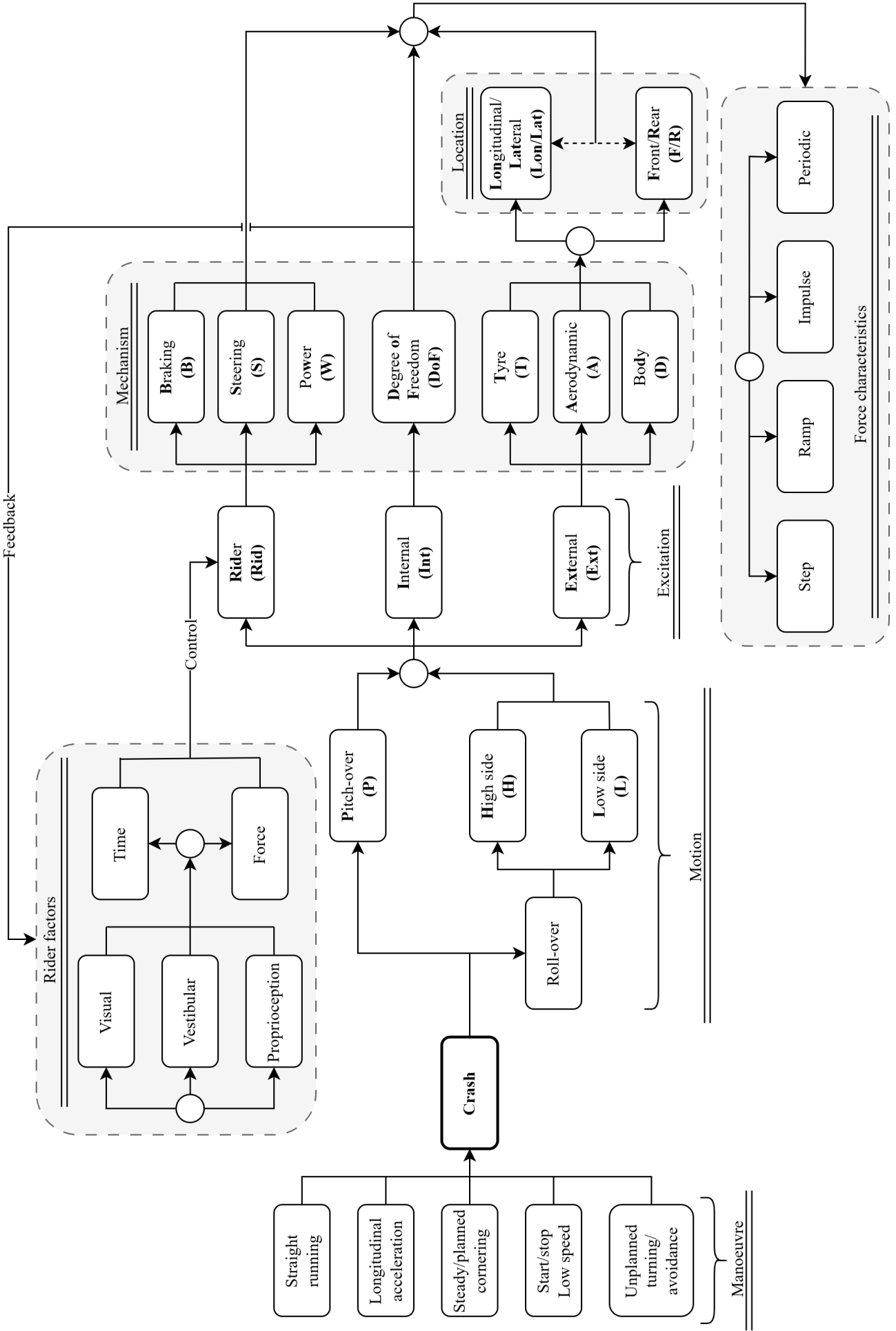


Figure 1: Flowchart of bicycle crash classification.

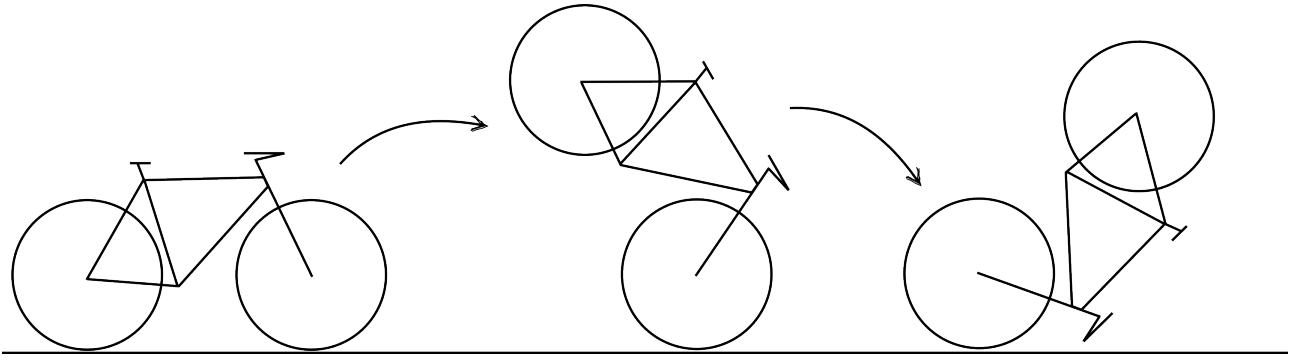


Figure 2: Simple diagram of pitch-over motion.

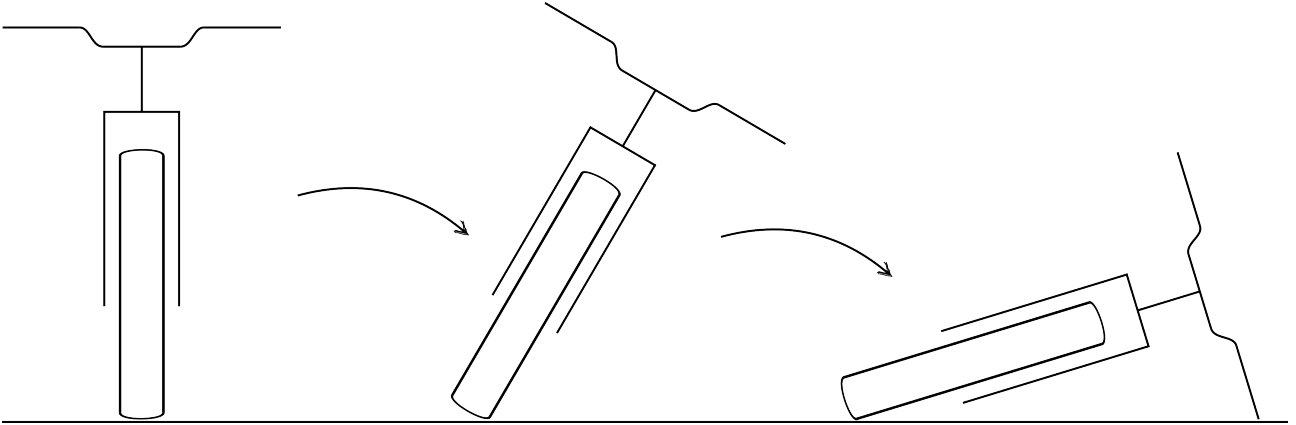


Figure 3: Simple diagram of roll-over motion.

- **Load transfer:** This refers to the longitudinal load transfer as a result of longitudinal accelerations.
- **Balance control:** This refers to the lateral control of the bicycle through the steering input.
- **Tyre friction:** Forces acting in the tyre-ground interface, principally grip and normal.
- **Aerodynamic forces:** Aerodynamic forces which are studied as a resultant in the centre of pressure of the system.
- **Contact forces:** All forces that interact with the human bicycle system as contact inputs (e.g. collisions).
- **Rider-bicycle joint:** Events where the rider is unexpectedly disengaged from the bicycle, losing the connection to the control interfaces.

2.3 Excitation of the system

For this research, the bicycle is assumed as an interface between the human and the environment. Therefore, the bicycle is subjected to forces from the environment and from human control. Additionally, the bicycle itself is a dynamic system which can present excitations in its motion, which are referred as intrinsic excitations.

- **External excitations (Ext):** Mechanical forces that result from the interaction of the human-bicycle system with the environment.
- **Intrinsic excitations (Int):** Behaviour of the system due to its dynamical properties. Its associated crash scenario is the excitation of a natural frequency of the system, creating an unstable and/or uncontrollable vehicle.
- **Rider forces (Rid):** This makes reference to the control inputs from the human to the vehicle.

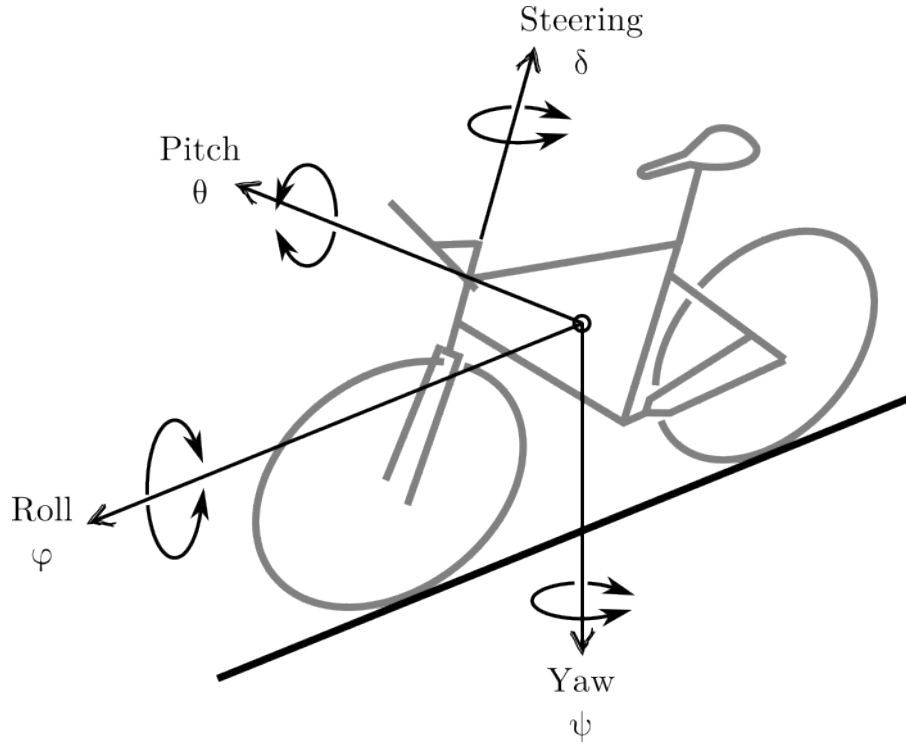


Figure 4: Rotation axes of the bicycle.

3 Important notes

3.1 Control interfaces

- **Handlebar:** Through the handlebar the rider exerts steering torque to control the lateral balance of the bicycle.
- **Pedals:** In the pedals, the rider applies force to create the propulsion of the bicycle. This interface is subjected to large forces when the system is in longitudinal acceleration.
- **Brakes:** To reduce the longitudinal speed of the system, the rider controls the brakes through handles. If the control input is not correct, the system experiences excessive braking force, over its load transfer limits.

4 Example

Let's do an example using the following video <https://youtube.com/shorts/VZibdrdhgM?feature=shared>.

First, it is observed that the main motion of the bicycle in the crash is related to roll angle. Additionally, it is in the same direction of the beginning of the motion. Therefore, this corresponds to the category low-side (L).

Second, from visual inspection, it is possible to conclude that the saturation limit of tyre grip was reached, causing a loss of grip during the turn.

Third, there are no visible wrong rider control inputs, which leads to an external force mechanism. Additionally, it is not possible to determine if aerodynamics played a major role and there is no visible external body perturbation.

Finally, the classification of this crash would be **L-Tyre-Ext**, front slide low side.

5 Closing words

This classification aims to provide a wide coverage of bicycle crashes, taking into account factors, mechanisms and common motions. However, it is still possible that with the available information, the event does not fit properly in the available options. For this reason, this work allows to classify crashes with a combination of different layers.

References

- [1] Elin K. Jacob (2004): Classification and Categorization: A Difference that makes a Difference. Graduate School of Library and Information Science. University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. <http://hdl.handle.net/2142/1686>
- [2] Moore, Jason (2012): Human Control of a Bicycle. Doctoral thesis, University of California Davis.