

SIX POSITIONS OF TWO-VEHICLE CRASH

239. The largest single category of traffic accidents involves two vehicles. The two-vehicle accident involves combinations of collisions between heavy vehicles, motorcars and motorcycles.

The two-vehicle accidents result in most deaths and injuries.

There are six positions in which you could have an accident with another vehicle. Learn and distinguish these six positions, study the hazards using the case studies and apply the defences against them to prevent yourself from getting into one.

The Six Positions to study with are:

- (i) You could collide with the vehicle in front
- (ii) You could collide with the vehicle behind
- (iii) You could collide with the oncoming vehicle
- (iv) You could collide with the vehicle from the side
- (v) You could collide with the overtaking vehicle
- (vi) You could collide with the vehicle being overtaken

ACCIDENT WITH THE VEHICLE INFRONT

240. There are two main reasons for this type of accident.

- (i) The vehicle in front suddenly slows down or stops.
- (ii) You followed too closely behind the front vehicle.

What makes the front vehicle slow down or stop suddenly?

Possible reasons include:

- The taxi in front may suddenly stop to pick up passengers,
- It may suddenly brake in order to make a turn because the passenger has given last minute instructions;
- The car in front suddenly stops when the traffic lights turn amber because the driver notices a Red Light Camera;
- A drunken or sleepy driver may apply brakes suddenly;
- A car or motorcycle may suddenly cut into the path of the vehicle in front of you, forcing its driver to brake hard;
- The driver in front may suddenly brake to avoid a dashing animal, pedestrian, pot-hole or litter on the road;
- During night-time riding, the driver in front may stop suddenly as he is momentarily blinded by the oncoming headlight glare.

These kinds of situations usually take place so abruptly that the drivers in front would have no time to signal or slow down to warn the other drivers behind them. If you happen to be riding behind them when they make such sudden stops, the risk of collision is higher. Never take for granted that all drivers will signal and slow down their vehicles before stopping.

Accidents due to own fault can arise for the following reasons:

- You are not alert because you are sleepy, tired, sick, or distracted;
- Your brakes are not working properly;
- Your tyres are not providing enough grip when you brake hard;
- The road is wet and slippery;
- Your speed is too fast for the road and weather condition;
- You follow too closely behind the front car.

When you collide into the rear of the front vehicle, you usually end up a loser. You will be blamed for the accident and your vehicle will usually be badly damaged.

DEFENSIVE APPROACH TO ADOPT

241. Firstly, always try to anticipate what the driver in front is going to do. This requires full concentration and alertness from you.

Secondly, keep a safe distance away from the vehicle ahead of you. A safe following distance provides you with the space cushion which gives you ample time to react and brake safely behind the vehicle in front of you.