



Kaution Korner

By Traveler

Blind Spots



Blind spots are death zones. All vehicles have blind spots which is an area that cannot be seen in a vehicle's mirrors. Typically, the larger the vehicle, the larger the blind spots. It is good practice when riding to assume that drivers will not check their blind spots. Failure to clear blind spots, accounts for too many motor vehicle accidents.

The blind spots on a motorcycle will vary depending on the motorcycle and the type of mirrors used. Some motorcyclists may have blind spot mirrors fitted to aid in reducing the blind area. In general though most motorcycles will have blind spots to the sides and rear as indicated by the red shaded areas in this picture.



A combination of mirror checks and physically looking at the blind spot should always be done before executing any maneuver.

Checking the blind spot also requires looking behind, which in itself is hazardous if you don't clear the highway ahead first.

Experienced riders will always check their blind spots before:

- moving off from a stationary position
- making left or right turns
- making lane changes
- overtaking
- slowing down
- stopping

As a motorcyclist you don't want to be riding in a vehicle's blind spot as you become invisible to that driver. This is obviously unavoidable in some situations, but when you have the opportunity...move out from a vehicles blind quickly!



A car's blind spots vary due to make, model and type of mirrors used. Look at the picture above with the yellow car, the red shaded area indicates the most dangerous area to travel in.



Larger vehicles will have larger blind spots. The blue shaded areas signify areas where a semi truck cannot see in their mirrors or cannot see due to the bulk of the vehicle.

If you cannot see the driver, chances are they cannot see you either. Experienced riders keep a good distance from larger vehicles where the driver is less likely to see you, by passing quickly or changing lanes.

Be mindful that in our vision there is a small portion of the visual field of each eye where there are no photoreceptors in the optic disk, and, therefore, there is no image detection in this area. A driver can look, and completely NOT SEE a motorcycle if it lands in this part of the driver's peripheral vision. This is often why we hear "I didn't even see him".

Many newer vehicles have a blind – spot warning system that illuminates a signal on their external mirrors when a vehicle is in their blind spot. Once again, experienced riders will look for that signal when approaching a vehicle as an indicator that they are now in that vehicle's blind spot and move to where they can safely be seen.

We take many precautions to be sure that we are visible to other vehicles. Federal law requires reflectors, some wear bright safety vests, we have hi intensity headlights, turn signals and taillights all of which are totally useless if you are riding in a vehicle's blind spot.

Be conscious of blind spots, stay out of blind spots and the result will be a much higher probability of being seen.