

After 16 years of riding motorcycles on the road, both commuting in multiple states and touring, now with just under 200,000 miles across 47 US states, 9 Canadian Provinces, and one Canadian territory, I have come to learn one key factor in staying safe while sharing the road with automobiles, visibility. Anything a motorcyclist can do to improve their visibility and conspicuity amongst the barrage of stimuli a modern driver receives increases their odds of another safe ride.

Today's drivers are distracted by their vehicle's full-featured infotainment systems, with one hand on the wheel and the other scrolling the latest social media posts on their cell phone; you never really know what they are seeing or for how long. Thus, anything that can make a motorcyclist stand out and appear different so the driver has the time to process mentally, there is a motorcycle with a rider amongst the heard of other vehicles that the driver's mind expects to see. The proverbial left-hand turn in front of a motorcyclist with the response of "I didn't see them" occurs too frequently yet is just accepted as it comes with the risk of sharing the road with vehicles 4x or more of your mass.

Although I do not have a statistical analysis to support my claims, I have years of commuting and touring experience and several near misses and close calls. All of my near misses or close calls were averted because the driver caught my white or yellow daytime auxiliary LED lights. Sometimes, it came down to me "strobing" the light as fast as I could to get their attention before they pulled out in front of me. Seeing the vehicles come to an abrupt stop was evidence that they saw me at the last moment.

Allowing motorcyclists in Minnesota to place downward-facing white lighting to make themselves more conspicuous is an obvious decision from my perspective. Even if it only saves one motorcyclist a year, who's to say who that one will be? Anything that allows riders to improve their safety is a win in my book, and I support Minnesota's effort to do so.

Respectfully,
Brian Dutcher
9688 S San Esteban Dr
Vail, AZ 85641
402-289-7182