

Top 5 Dangerous Bicycling Situations

Cycling-related deaths are on the rise in recent years. According to [the US DoT's recent statistics](#), cycling fatalities are at the highest rate they've been since 1995. Now more than ever, it is vital to ride safely and intelligently to avoid serious injury while out on the road.

Below are the top 5 dangerous cycling situations to watch out for, as well as what steps you can take to avoid them.

1) Right Hook

Occurs when:

- A car passes a rider without noticing, then tries to make a right turn in front of (or into) them.
- A rider fails to notice a car turning right (or a car turning that isn't using their blinker) and rides into the car's path.
- A rider is waiting beside a car at a red light or stop sign and attempts to ride past the car when they get right of way, unaware that the car is turning.



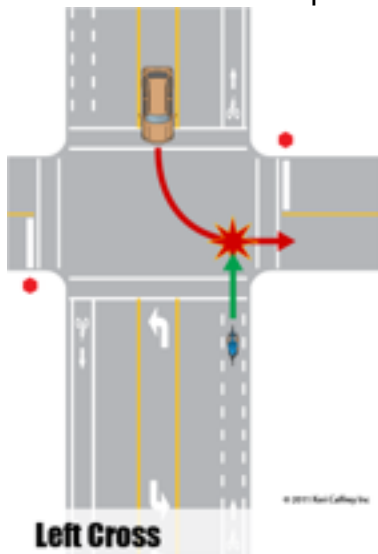
Solution:

Always, *always* be wary of riding on the right of cars. Cars have a blindspot on the right and back right of their vehicle where bikes can easily go unnoticed. Without being visible, it is much easier for drivers to make seemingly unexpected decisions that can lead to a crash. Try to maintain a safe distance between you and the car in front of you, even when stopped at [an intersection](#), to give yourself time to react and be easily noticed by other drivers.

2) Left Cross

Occurs when:

- A driver fails to notice a cyclist riding across a side street, driveway, or intersection, turning left in front of (or into) the rider.
- A rider fails to notice an obscured or distance left-turning driver and rides across a street into the car's path.



Solution:

While awareness is key to any cyclist, it is *especially* vital in urban environments where cars are driving every which way. Try to rid yourself of things like earbuds (which can deprive you of important auditory information on the road) and stay as attentive as possible to your surroundings. It is also vital to stand out visually when riding. Take advantage of things like neon bike gear, a head light, and/or reflectors to stay easily seen.

3) Door Slam

Occurs when:

- A rider is passing a string of parked cars on the street and a parked driver opens their door, not noticing the cyclist behind them.
- A rider is taking a shortcut through a parking lot when a parked driver opens their door in front of (or into) the cyclist.



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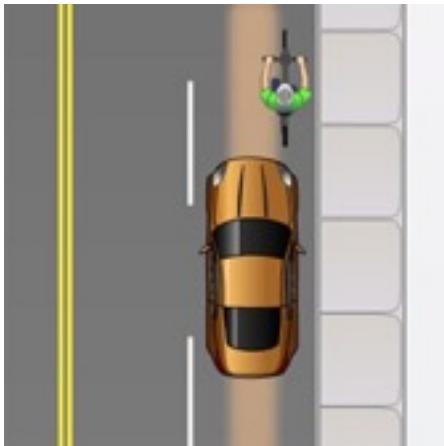
Solution:

While they may seem harmless, parked cars can cause a lot of damage to cyclists. In a normal dangerous scenario, most riders have even a sliver of time to assess the situation and react accordingly by slowing down or swerving. Car doors can be so sudden and unexpected that it means the rider hits them full force, causing serious (or even fatal) injury. Try to avoid parked cars if possible, and if forced to ride beside them, always keep a distance of at least 4 feet to be safe.

4) Getting Rear-Ended

Occurs when:

- A rider swerves to avoid a parked car, road obstruction, or weather hazard, and ends up veering into the path of a car trailing behind them.
- A driver tries to speed up or pass a cyclist and ends up hitting them from behind or along the side of the bike.



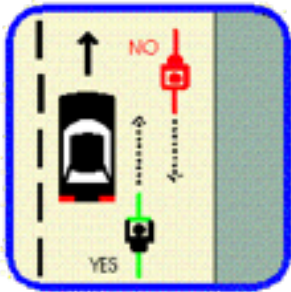
Solution:

As for the former, it is extremely necessary to prepare beforehand on how you will address certain road hazards if they arise. As a general rule of thumb, be sure to never swerve to the left if at all possible when avoiding debris. Try to slow down gradually or swerve to the right, and only act otherwise if not given the choice. As for the latter, be sure to equip your bike with visibility gear (even in the rear of your bike) especially for those riding in the evening — the majority of rear end crashes occur at this time.

5) Wrong-Way Crash

Occurs when:

- A cyclist travels against the flow of traffic and a car makes a right turn from a side street or driveway, directly into the cyclist or their travel path.



Solution:

Cyclists should *never* ride on the left side of the street, against the flow of traffic. Not only does this greatly increase a rider's chance for a crash (since most drivers never look to their right before turning right), but crashes that do occur are significantly more lethal due to opposing forces. It is also illegal in the United States to ride against the flow of traffic — because cyclists qualify as vehicles when on the road, they are expected to travel on the street in the same direction as all other cars.

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