

2007 BP MS150 Training Series - Safety Feedback #1

As promised, I have some good safety feedback that I wanted to share with you.

I have split these items off from the weekly training note in order to keep the length and focus of each note down. PLEASE give yourself a few minutes to read the tips and discussion below, spend some time absorbing this information, and think specifically about how you can use this to make your ride safer and more enjoyable.

Before I share the safety tips, a few notes for the ride tomorrow...

- The sign-in will be in the covered pavilion in the NW corner and we will line up on the street west of the park
- PLEASE don't block the local streets
- Please leave the parking on the north side of the park near the pavilion open for the our volunteers so we can transfer LOTS of food/drinks

- PLEASE carpool
- Please don't bring your bikes to the registration table
 - It makes things more congested
 - Riders could trip
 - Check in as soon as you arrive, then, get your bike ready
 - If you are running late, set your alarm 20 minutes earlier next week!
- If you are paying tomorrow, remember that the fee is \$85
 - Checks are payable to ConocoPhillips Bike Club
 - Cash should be in an envelope before you come
 - Include the name(s) of all rider(s) the fee covers on the check or envelope

OK, now put your safety cap on...

I have collected some good info on the following:

- **BE CAREFUL when riders take a fall**
- **Observations from a SAG Volunteer**
- **Communicate - Don't be a stealth rider**
- **NO Cell phones**
- **DON'T Mess With Texas!**
- **Aero Bars - NOT (in a group)**
- **Discussion - Bikes Taking the Lane**
- **Peak Performance Nutrition (seminar, Feb 21)**

BE CAREFUL when riders take a fall

I took a pretty hard blow to my head in a fall last week and fractured my neck. I did not have any identification on and I would hate to imagine what could have happened while being moved off of the road. Please urge riders to use caution when assisting downed riders and stress the importance of carrying proper identification at all times.

Thank you for your dedication to the cause. Hope to ride again next year.

Observations from a SAG Volunteer

I was helping navigate the traffic light and right turn at the intersection of 359 and 1093. The VAST majority of the group obeyed the traffic light and was courteous to vehicle traffic. However, there were still a few hot shots who believe that red lights don't apply to cyclists. Fortunately, the vehicle drivers were paying very close attention to the riders and didn't get upset when they got cut off by the riders (I would have!). Ironically, most of the "law breakers" were the 20+mph experienced riders who should know better.

No accidents or near misses from our group (but I saw one rider from another group who nearly got hit as he cut across two lanes of traffic without even a back glance to see the truck directly behind him).

Just to let you know, your safety speeches really are having an impact on the majority of the group. I appreciate your willingness to work so hard on this each year and hope to volunteer for you again.

Communicate - Don't be a stealth rider

I usually ride by myself or with a buddy or two. On many occasions, I feel the presence of other riders behind me, but I do not know the number. Therefore when passing, all I can say is that there are riders behind. Sometimes, I am not even sure if the riders are still there or if they are going to drop the pace and draft behind the riders I intend to pass. I know they are there because when I relinquish my pulling duties to my buddies, they let me back in line, so they do not get any closer to the front of the line. This week, after, I we burned ourselves out, we let the entire group of riders go. It turned out there were about 20 riders, behind us. I do not think I got one "Thanks" or "Nice Pull" They are welcome!!

NO Cell phones

Tell Marshall I read 100% of your email...and it was actually quite good. Seriously, one thing I saw last week was an experienced rider answering his cell phone. If the call is that important, pull over and talk. So foolish.

DON'T Mess With Texas!

In line with healthy lifestyle and environment could you please add a blurb in your mails about taking candy wrappers to a bin in stead of discarding them on the side of the road?

Aero Bars - NOT (in a group)

Among all the safety Do's and Don'ts we need to inform/remind people to never ride on aero bars in a group. The last accident I witnessed was the result of someone who appeared to be experienced riding on the aero bars in a group.

The aero dropped position is suitable for solo riding but NOT in a group. You have less control of the bike and the brakes are not near your hands.

Discussion - Bikes Taking the Lane

I will keep this short but wanted to alert you to an unsafe rider situation.

Along the backstretch, probably about the last 3-4 miles or so there was a rider who rode all along the middle stripe. That area is two lane as you know. On several occasions vehicles approached and they never moved. Cars had to drive along behind the rider and ended up passing on the opposite side of the road. Additionally, riders came up behind at a faster rate of speed and suddenly had to stop because there was a glut of riders clustered behind the car(s) which were behind the rider. I observed this repeatedly until I passed. I called out "Car Back" as did other riders but they never moved off the center stripe. Thought you would want to know.

SEM Comment: I wanted to be sure I understood the law so, with some great help from BP Captain, Critz Cullen, local cycling coach/legend Bill Edwards, and input from expert/safe cyclists, Steve Earle and Mark LeBlanc, here is what the law states and some great perspective on the issue of bikes taking the lane:

Texas law states:

(Cyclists) "...shall ride as near as practicable to the right curb or edge of the roadway." The legislation further states that riders: "riding two abreast may not impede the normal and reasonable flow of traffic on the roadway. Persons may not ride more than two abreast unless they are riding on a part of a roadway set aside for the exclusive operation of bicycles."

A key part of the law is the following exception: "(B) a road that is too narrow for a bicycle and a motor vehicle to safely travel side by side."

I believe that one should try never to annoy motorists by riding out in the middle of the lane unless it is totally unsafe not to do so. I also do not recommend riding right on the edge of the road when cars are approaching from behind, because if they try to crowd you, there is nowhere to go but off-road, which could hurt like mad if you go down.

If you ride right on the edge, it actually encourages drivers to crowd you because there is a tendency for them to believe they should not cross the yellow line, especially if it is a double

yellow line. This is especially true of the "bubbas" who seem to never want to cross over a double line even if there is no traffic at all on the road. Instead they would rather try to crowd you right off the road while passing.

Here's what I recommend to my clients: Ride about 18 inches from the right side of a narrow road. Use your rear view mirror to see the cars coming from behind, and you can then tell if they are going to move over to pass you, or if they are going to "hold their line" and crowd you. In the latter case, wait until just before they pass you, and then swerve about one foot to the right so they can not clip you with their rear-view mirror. Waiting until just before they pass prevents them from "aiming at you" at the last minute.

I have saved my life on many occasions by using this technique against an aggressive van, RV, or pick-up truck. And, it is perfectly legal!

Also, never respond to an abusive driver. Do not ever "flip the bird" or scream at a driver. It simply gives them all the more "justification" for being mean to cyclists.

Peak Performance Nutrition (seminar, Feb 21)
By Catherine Kruppa, MS, RD, LD

Are you an athlete or fitness enthusiast?
Would you like to eat to fuel your active lifestyle and improve your performance?

This seminar will help you to:

- Estimate your energy needs based on your activity level.
- Develop an eating plan to maximize your workout
- Discuss the effect of nutrition on muscle strength, endurance and performance
- Learn what to eat before, during and after exercise
- Provide recommendations for fluid replacement
- Advise you on the latest research on supplements.

This seminar is open to all cyclists

February 21, 2007
6:00 p.m. in The Houstonian Club Library
Cost: \$20
RSVP to 713-316-2707 or ckruppa@houstonian.com

OK, I'll see many of you in Sealy tomorrow...

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