

Hidden In Plain Sight

IN NATURE, THE CHAMELEON HAS THE ABILITY TO camouflage itself, matching its surroundings. This ability gives the reptile an edge when attacking its prey, but more importantly, it's a key defensive system for survival. Man has to

work to replicate and perfect hiding from others (primarily in the military and hunting fields). However, the art of blending in with our surroundings as motorcyclists can have a devastating effect.

In a previous issue, I discussed information that was principally for nonriding drivers of motor vehicles (aka cages). While the topics included points that they should be aware of when it comes to motorcycles, spinning that information can easily become an issue we as riders need to be aware of.

The infamous statement "I didn't see him" should be a driving force, encouraging us to approach certain scenarios differently to get a positive outcome — nothing happening can be a great thing at times! I've heard many riders, instructors, etc. state that we should consider ourselves invisible to the driving world around us. While that may be a good start, and something close to the truth, we need to look at steps that we can take to protect ourselves whether we're invisible or not.

One point I've mentioned several times when it comes to being conspicuous is the gear we wear while riding. Bright colors and reflective materials work far better than the traditional black with which bikers have usually been associated. I recently attended an event where at least 70 percent of the attendees were wearing hi-viz gear and clothing. Is hi-viz slowly becoming the new black? Couldn't hurt.

Something we can do when it comes to our machines is install additional lighting. It just makes sense that more illumination to the front, rear, or sides should hopefully increase your visibility. It couldn't hurt anything, except maybe your wallet. But if it prevents a conflict or injury, I

certainly think it would be worth the cost.

Is there anything else we can do while riding? Absolutely. Many within the safety skills industry feel that an important consideration is lane positioning. Where we place ourselves for a situation or scenario can make a major difference as to what could or couldn't happen to us. Lane positioning requires constant adjustment. When moving, situations change as quickly as we roll. We want to keep

ourselves in the best position to receive the best visual input as well as increase our visibility to those around us.

These constant adjustments require a better sense of awareness. We need to constantly take in all the information and play the what-if game. If you're always taking in your surroundings, you'll recognize things that you can adjust for before any problems occur. If you're in traffic, or riding within a town or city, you should definitely consider that you may blend into the surroundings and not be seen. Though there is no definitive corrective action, it could be as simple as slowing down to adjust for anything that could pop up. Covering your controls for a quick reaction or shifting lane positions prior to intersections can be useful, but maybe just your movement will make others aware of you.

The one thing I'm a bit leery of is flashing your headlights. There is a chance that a driver may interpret the information differently, and while your intention was to bring awareness, he might consider it as a signal to proceed into your path of travel. The same can be said for oscillating headlights. Though I've heard many positive comments from users of these devices, I've also been told of the times that drivers didn't know what was going on and mistook the lights for a signal to proceed.

Even if we wear the brightest of gear, install the brightest illumination available, become vigilant and always adjust correctly for the conditions we encounter, can that guarantee the elimination of the risks of other vehicles and drivers? Definitely not. But I believe, as do many others, that each step we take is one step closer to reducing the risks and likelihood of living in the world of the chameleon, where we are hidden in plain sight. **AIM**



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