

What to do after a road traffic incident

At the scene

As with all traffic incidents, it is essential that your first action is to lessen the risk of any further incidents occurring in the immediate aftermath. If necessary, safely warn other road users and divert traffic around the scene.

Next, if there have been any injuries needing attention, call the emergency services via 999.

If safe to do so, before moving your cycle at the scene, take photos to show the details of what has happened – these can be invaluable later. Ensure that you have clear pictures of any other vehicles that have been involved. Note down contact details of any witnesses and exchange yours. If other drivers have stopped to help, ask if they have dashcam footage that shows the incident, and look around for any CCTV in the area – the police may not do this.

If all involved parties have exchanged contact and insurance details, there is no need to report the incident to the police, even if there has been injury. However, there are significant benefits in doing so, as the incident will then be logged in official statistics. These are of key importance in how the police decide how to allocate their resources – without sight of the prevailing true level of collisions and poor driving, protecting vulnerable road users will be seen as less of a priority.

Emotions are inevitably heightened following a traffic incident and so try to avoid acrimony and argument for its own sake. Don't get into a

discussion regarding partial liability, in particular if you have chosen to not wear a helmet or hi-viz clothing – there is no legal requirement for this.

If there is any dispute at the scene as to perceived fault you should certainly ask the police to attend so that they can make an independent assessment.

Bear in mind that the driver might not apologise even if they are at fault because of standing advice from their own insurance company, so don't immediately assume that they are not regretful.

If you decide to continue your journey on your bike after the incident, do be alert for any unexpected changes such as pulling to one side when braking – and if you do experience anything unusual in the handling, then stop riding immediately.

Afterwards

While the incident is fresh in your mind, try to make notes of what happened, including prevailing visibility and for instance an approximation of how many cars had already safely passed you on that section of road before the incident occurred.

Damage to cycles – particularly the frame and front forks – is often not immediately apparent and can be expensive to repair. Except for minor incidents, you should get your cycle checked by your local friendly bike shop. Be prepared to pay for this and tell the driver that you'll be asking them to reimburse you.

If the incident was caused or exacerbated by poor road design or a pothole, this can be reported to Devon County Council on their website. Search for "highways problem" and "insurance claim".

If you have cycle insurance, you might have legal assistance included which will help you to claim compensation for damage and injury. If you don't have insurance then various no-win, no fee options are available – most solicitors will either be able to either assist directly or suggest a practice who can. Members of Cycling UK have access to their own helpline on 0845 4500 355.

Experiencing intimidating, poor or dangerous driving you can sometimes knock your confidence in wanting to get back onto your bike. If you share your experience with others on the Exeter Cycling Campaign Facebook page, you'll find many people who have been in similar situations who are able to encourage you, or you could consider some one-to-one cycle confidence training – search for "cycle training" on Devon County Council's website.

Remember – don't let poor or intimidating driving push you off the public highway!

RTI Checklist

1. Ensure the scene is safe
2. Assess casualties and call 999 if necessary
3. Take photos of the scene
4. Exchange details with witnesses
5. Gather further evidence – CCTV, dashcams
6. Make notes about what happened including the prevailing weather conditions
7. Have your cycle checked by a professional
8. Consider notifying the incident to the police for statistical purposes

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Operation Snap

If you have video footage of an incident then this can be submitted to Devon and Cornwall Police's Operation Snap, which will investigate road traffic offences such as dangerous driving, driving without due care and attention, contravening red traffic lights, solid white lines, etc. As Devon and Cornwall Police put it:

"Operation Snap is designed to improve road safety and to prosecute those that place others at risk. We wish to support individuals choosing a sustainable form of transport such as cycling, and recognise they are one of our more vulnerable road users. We will hold drivers to account on every occasion it is identified that the standard of driving falls below that of a careful and competent driver."

Note though that it is not an offence for a driver to safely cross a solid white line to pass a road user who is travelling at less than 10mph.

Useful links

Help, advice, and friendly support:

exetercyclingcampaign.org.uk

info@exetercyclingcampaign.org.uk

Video footage upload:

operationsnap.devon-cornwall.police.uk

Pothole reporting and insurance claims:

www.devon.gov.uk



Near misses and intimidating driving

It is not uncommon to experience close passes – generally because a driver is not paying attention, although sometimes deliberately. If you have experienced intimidating driving then do report this to the police – they will ask you for the vehicle registration, the time and location of the incident.

Talking with the police

Having reported an incident, you may be asked to visit the police station. Even though the police will likely be supportive, this can be an intimidating experience – you may be asked questions that will appear to be irrelevant (e.g. what you were wearing), or to be institutionally car-centric, or for pejorative terms such as 'speeding cyclist' to be used by others. If you drop us a message via email or our Facebook Group (address and links below) we can try to find a buddy to accompany you.

If you are asked what speed you were travelling at, and you're not sure (because you weren't recording your trip on a bike computer or your phone), then it's useful to know that the average speed for a person on a cycle is usually 8–15 mph.

Stay in touch



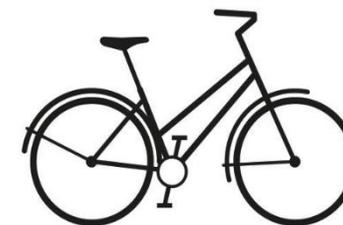
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info@exetercyclingcampaign.org.uk



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Cycling is a great way to get around, excellent for improving and maintaining your health and is environmentally friendly too. The more often that you cycle, the more your experience will help you identify and mitigate risks.

However, although it's unlikely that you'll be involved in a traffic incident when cycling, people using cycles can be vulnerable to intimidation and physical and/ or psychological hurt. Road traffic incidents (RTIs) do occur, and this guide can help you decide what to do next if you're been involved in one.