

# Cycling & Health — Road Dangers

The health benefits and years of life gained from getting about by bike greatly outweigh the dangers of the road. Nonetheless, in 2014, serious injury to cyclists in Scotland was nearly 16% higher than the 2004-2008 average, with 155 reported cases, and can only partly be explained by higher levels of cycling. For that same year, we analysed our case data alongside other publicly available research. The findings showed that the main risk of collision between a cyclist and motor vehicle is at junctions, particularly on urban roads.

## Junctions

Cyclists are especially vulnerable at road junctions. Extra care should be taken when approaching or moving away from a junction. Drivers can pull out in front of a cyclist. Drivers may turn left in front of you without signalling, or may go straight on despite signalling. Always get eye contact, ride defensively and expect the unexpected.



## Roundabouts

Roundabouts present a considerable hazard to cyclists. As well as the risk provided by road defects on or around roundabouts, including diesel spills, there's the added hazard of drivers not seeing cyclists as they concentrate on larger moving vehicles.



## Dooring

Dooring occurs when a motorist opens the door of their vehicle without first checking for oncoming traffic. Motorists making a manoeuvre without checking their mirrors may not spot a cyclist alongside their vehicle. Try to ride outside the door zone when passing parked cars.

## Road Surface Defects

Potholes and other road surface defects are particularly hazardous for cyclists. Hitting potholes or adjusting ride lines to avoid potholes in busy traffic can lead to impact injuries. Claims against Roads Authorities can be tricky so photographs and measurements are essential. The case of Robinson v Scottish Borders Council 2016 brought by Cycle Law Scotland highlights the issues and confirms roads inspectors must consider all traffic not just motorised.



## Working to increase cycling and safety

Much more can and should be done to improve road share culture including building segregated infrastructure where possible, cycling training, education and legislation in the form of presumed liability. You can help fight for such changes by speaking to or emailing your MSPs.

## What to do at a crash scene

**Contact** the police by phoning 999 if anyone is injured or the collision has caused an obstruction on the road; **note** the details of the driver involved including the car **registration** number and take lots of **photos** before writing down what had happened while everything is still fresh in your memory. Then call the **Cycle Law Scotland** team on **0333 555 7783**.



by **Jodi Gordon**  
Cycling Lawyer

**Cycle Law**  
**Scotland**

**0131 473 6402**