

Daytime Rear Lighting for Cyclists

After tragic death of Darren Strudwick I researched causes of cycling deaths. Rear end collisions are the most common cause of death for cyclists with a higher incidence on country roads. This has motivated me to encourage all cyclists to use bright rear lights during the day. I am uncertain if this would have helped in Darren's case. However after deciding to use daytime rear lights I have noticed many cars take a much wider margin when passing me. It makes me feel that I am doing more to communicate my presence on the road to other vehicles.

ATSB ROAD SAFETY REPORT

July 2006

Deaths of cyclists due to road crashes:

"The most common type of crash in which cyclists were fatally injured was the Cyclist being hit from behind by a motor vehicle travelling in the same lane in the same direction. Cyclists riding on rural roads are particularly at risk of being run over from behind. From 1996 to 2004, there were at least 58 cases where a cyclist was run over by a motor vehicle coming from behind. This kind of crash occurred in urban as well as in rural areas but 38 cases occurred on rural roads, most during the day."

This paper is available here: www.infrastructure.gov.au/roads/safety/.../death_cyclists_road.pdf

Please look at these links to see the good rear lights in action during the day:

Overcast day:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qn0mXtWvIUy>

Bright sunlight head on heading into a slight curve.

http://dc230.4shared.com/download/7sm0sh6T/Rear_Light_Cycling_0001.wmv

My general recommendations are to get a 0.5 to 1watt rear light that flashes in a burst mode pattern.

The factors that I can see holding cyclists back from using daytime lights:

1. Weight of the lights. They weigh less than 100g. With many less than 50g.
2. Battery life. A 1 watt light will last about 30 hrs on a set of batteries. The best way around the problem is to use 2 sets of rechargeable batteries and exchange on a regular basis. You can get smart rechargers which will cycle the battery if you recharge often.
3. Effort to use the light. Given the evidence that drivers hit cyclists they cannot see it makes sense to put in the little effort to protect yourself.

Thanks for reading and considering.

Safe Riding,

Allen Chong

SWCC