

July 29, 2003

**Honourable Judith Reid  
Minister, Transportation  
PO Box 9055  
Stn Prov Govt  
Victoria, BC  
V8W 9E2**

I am writing to report an accident that raises safety questions for cyclists using highways, especially where rumble strips have been installed on the shoulder of the road way.

**Accident Report:        Debris and Rumble Strips Cause Cycling Accident**

Name:        Norman Marcy  
Date:        July 19, 2003  
Time:        0720

Location:    North bound lane between Goldstream Bridge and entrance to Goldstream Park on Hwy 1.

I started out with the intention of cycling the Malahat and proceeding to Cowichan Lake to visit family. This is a route that I have cycled many times, each year, over the past 6 years. I had not ridden the route since the rumble strips were cut. This was my first ride of the Malahat this summer.

I left Victoria at 0630 and made good progress though there were the usually Saturday morning debris of car parts and broken glass on the shoulder of the road. I used the Galloping Goose trail for a portion of the route though my usual practice is to ride on the shoulder of the road the entire route.

I was aware of the rumble strips and had commented to others that care would be necessary if riding the route on a bike now that they were in place. My opinion was that they might be a good idea for cars but would take up a portion of the shoulder and would be rough to ride a bike in. I tested the difficulty of riding in the rumble strip at low speed at the top of the hill heading into the Goldstream area. At 15-20 kms/hr the bike shook violently but was controllable. I proceeded with caution but continued to build speed while descending in the area between the rumble strips and the concrete guardrail.

Crossing the Goldstream Bridge it is necessary to ride in the portion of the road traveled by motorized vehicles. I then returned, after the bridge, to the space next to the guardrail where the rumble strip continues. Unfortunately there was a piece of wood debris. I tried to go between the debris and the rumble strip with my bicycle, however I swerved onto the rumble strip, and at 40+ kms/hr was hard pressed to keep control of the bike. Cars were descending on the traveled portion of the road and coming up behind me. I did control the bike so as not to proceed onto the portion of the road traveled by motor vehicles, but was not able to retain full control in the strip of shoulder next to the guardrail.

I slid along the guardrail with my bike and leg taking most of the friction and abrasion. This proceeded until the front wheel encountered a gap in the concrete guardrail sections, at which the bike stopped and I proceeded over the concrete head first. I flew through the air for 4 or 5 meters while flipping and landed with the back of my head, and helmet thankfully, and back. The helmet broke just like it is supposed to and absorbed the pounding that my head would have taken. The landing was fortunately in a relatively clear space in the gravel and grass near the trees that line Goldstream.

The car that had been descending behind me stopped and the occupants offered assistance, as did a southbound driver. The southbound driver assisted me by providing a ride, even in my bloodied state, into Victoria. I am fortunate indeed to not have been severely injured, or incapacitated.

**Recommendations:**

I have learned some lessons and would make the following recommendations:

1. As a minimum there should be warning signs for cyclist of the existence and dangers of the rumble strips and the limited space available for riding. The danger of the loss of control should be part of the warning.
2. There should be painted yellow markings on the road that indicate the beginning of each section of the rumble strip.
3. There should be careful consideration of all road users needs prior to the rumble strips being installed, so that there is adequate allowance for both increased motorized vehicle safety, but also cyclist's needs are met.
4. Lack of maintenance, by the removal of debris is definitely a contributing factor to this accident. I suggest that policies and contracts in this regard be reviewed to improve safety for all users. As frequent users will attest, In some cases the same debris does sit on the shoulder for most of the high use summer months until the next scheduled sweeping.

**Future actions:**

This accident has caused me considerable pain. I write this letter 10 days after the incident and have still open wounds and bruises on my shin and knee that are very painful. My back is still painful but damage seems minimal considering the nature of the crash. I have considerable pain in my back while lifting my arms or lifting even small items. I am very lucky to have not sustained further injury or disability.

My bicycle is being repaired and helmet replaced. I expect the costs to be between \$400 and \$500.

I will not stop riding my bike, nor will many others. I will likely not stop riding the Malahat route, though I may change my behavior on the ride. I will strongly consider riding in the portion of the road traveled by motorized vehicles, as it is the safest place to ride when the shoulder is not dependably serviceable for a bicycle.

I look forward to your reply to my concerns and recommendations.

Norman Marcy  
Victoria, BC

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