

Sharing the road: 1.5m can save a life

COLUMN - June 29 started like any other morning until I witnessed the first of two bicycle-related accidents within just a few hours. On my way to work, while driving along Donald Road between Risiville and Meyerton, I passed a cyclist whose buckled back wheel told the story of a motorist who had hit them. Thankfully, the cyclist, possibly on a morning commute, was standing upright and seemed physically okay. But the image stayed with me. A few hours later, I drove past another scene, this time in Golf Road in Three Rivers, where a child had been knocked off his bicycle by a vehicle.

Two crashes. One morning. One region. Later that same day, professional cyclist Reinhardt Janse van Rensburg posted online about a driver who swerved at him on an open, quiet road, then slowed down to hurl profanities. The very next post I saw was the heartbreaking news of a young South African athlete, mistakenly believed to have died in a cycling accident.

As an avid recreational cyclist myself, I ride not for medals or prize money, but for fresh air, clarity, and peace of mind. But increasingly, the roads we ride on are becoming hostile. Not just risky, hostile.

South Africa has a serious road awareness problem, and it's getting worse.

The "1.5m rule" — the minimum recommended passing distance between a motorist and a cyclist — exists for a reason. It's the difference between life and death.

The Pedal Power Association and other organisations have long advocated for this to be standard in driver education.

Yet many motorists still don't know it, or worse, ignore it. The question has to be asked: if these vehicles had given the cyclists enough clearance, would these accidents have

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**Editorial
comment**



happened? Every cyclist on the road is someone's partner, child, parent, or friend. They deserve the same respect and right to safety as anyone behind the wheel. Motorists: slow down. Be patient. Give space. It's not just a courtesy, it's a responsibility.