

Cycling in the cities and safety concerns

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It has been striking to read in the news about so many cycling accidents resulting in fatalities, the majority of which have been caused by collisions with HGVs. In 2015, of every nine cyclists killed in London, seven were struck by an HGV.

When an HGV collides with a cyclist, the outcome is often devastating for the cyclist, due to the size and force of the vehicle. Furthermore, cyclists are often not seen by drivers due to their lorries' potentially amplified blind-spots.

Fortunately, this has come to the attention of those able to do something about it. Transport for London (TfL) have introduced some safety measures under the [Safer Lorries Scheme](#) requiring HGVs over 3.5 tonnes to have extra mirrors and side-bars to help prevent cyclists being pulled under them in the event of a collision.



A former traffic policeman at the [Metropolitan Police](#), James Dawes, has also invented two devices to stop cyclists being dragged under tipper-lorries in the hope that this will reduce the number of road deaths, particularly in the capital. Having seen multiple fatal accidents involving cyclists, he came to notice that the

most catastrophic injuries were suffered when cyclists were dragged into the gap between the front and back wheels of trucks. After leaving his job at the Metropolitan Police Traffic Unit, he invented the [DawesGuard®](#).

The [DawesGuard®](#) looks very much like an inflatable skirt and acts as a permanently deployed barrier. However, on tricky terrain, the 'skirt' can be retracted for manoeuvrability and redeployed. Having been rigorously tested on the streets of London, it has proven an effective shield, preventing cyclists and pedestrians from sliding under vehicles.

At a cost of £3,000 this device comes at a price but one which is probably affordable to larger transport firms and a small price to pay compared to the personal and financial cost of such serious accidents.

For £150 Dawes' also produces the [PeoplePanel®](#), a smooth side guard cover made of shatter resistant plastic, which also maximises warning signage. During a collision, the [PeoplePanel®](#) prevents entanglement and its soft edges can prevent the type of injuries often sustained from standard open under-run bars or sharp edged aluminium warning signs.



Both products are recommended by TfL's [Fleet Operator Recognition Scheme](#).

In the long-term, and even more ambitious is the London Mayor, Sadiq Khan's plan to prohibit the most dangerous lorries from London's roads by 2020. The [Direct Vision Standard](#) will assess an HGV drivers' visibility from the cab in relation to other road users. Each vehicle would be scored on a scale of 1 to 5 stars. Only HGVs with 3 stars and above would be permitted to use the roads in the capital by 2020.

With a combination of improved standards and technology, the hope is that cyclists will be better protected from accidents and lives can be saved.

Cyclists are particularly vulnerable road-users and it is staggering how little infrastructure is in place in terms of health and safety regulations and insurance to cover the event of an accident.

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Note: This is not legal advice; it is intended to provide information of general interest about current legal issues.