

Motorcycle Safety

On average, 166,000 of Americans are hospitalized as a result of a motorcycle accidents each year, and worse yet, nearly 5,000 will die from motorcycle accidents. Numerous others will be crippled for life, even though there are safety measures in place to reduce injury and fatality. There are three primary reasons that have been identified to explain these numbers:

1. Motorcycles are harder to see than a car.
2. Motorcycles are open air vehicles, and offer no protection for the rider.
3. Since it's on two wheels, handling can be difficult with skidding often ending in a crash.

Follow these simple safety tips and you can safely enjoy the sense of freedom and control that comes from riding a motorcycle:

1. Always wear a helmet as well as eye and face protection.
2. Never ride a motorcycle while under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
3. Ride with extreme care. Steering, accelerating and braking require skill and a high degree of coordination.
4. Get licensed (all states require a motorcycle license).
5. If you are a new rider, take a motorcycle safe riding class. Take one even if you think you are an experienced rider. You'll be surprised what you didn't know.
6. Drive Defensively. Do not expect that car drivers will give you the right-of-way.
7. Avoid the center of the lane where debris and oil droppings from cars accumulate. Also watch for other hazards including pot holes, cracks, sand, etc.
8. Wear a proper outfit – leather gloves, jacket and boots will protect you from “road rash.”
9. Always ride with your headlight on if permitted by traffic laws even during the daytime. It will make you more visible to other drivers.
10. Apply reflective tape to your helmet.
11. Maintain your bike regularly. Make sure the brakes are in order. Do routine chain and engine checks before riding.
12. Follow all rules of the road and don't speed. Nearly 40 percent of riders killed were speeding.
13. Watch out for other vehicles coming from driveways and side streets.
14. Don't let anyone ride with you as a passenger until you are a skilled rider.

There have been numerous studies, surveys, and tests conducted, and they all point to wearing a helmet as one of the most important safety tips to follow. One particular study from the University of Southern California showed that out of 900 motorcycle crashes, 980 head and neck injuries occurred. The study was conducted in 1990, but the results still apply to today; that the largest factor in preventing/reducing neck and head injuries is to wear a helmet.

Without a helmet, your chance of surviving a motorcycle accident is not very high. Many riders believe that it is their constitutional right to have the freedom to wear a helmet or not. Cases about this have even reached the U.S. Supreme Court. Although riders still have that freedom to choose in the U.S., one has to decide if it is really worth it. Motorcycle helmets have increased in both comfort and safety over the years, so the correct choice should be easy to make.

About the Author

The [Minneapolis Minnesota law firm](#) of Schwebel Goetz and Sieben can provide a [motorcycle accident attorney or lawyer](#) to Minneapolis MN motorcycle injury victims.

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