



# MCIWEST-MCB CAMP PENDLETON

## 2017 Critical Days of Summer Newsletter

Week 14: 21 Aug - 25 Aug 2017



## Motorcycle Safety

(Courtesy: Consumer Reports)

Motorcycles are fun and fuel efficient. That's not news to anyone who's ridden one. But neither is the fact that they're also way more dangerous than a car. The cold reality is that motorcyclists are 30 times more likely to die in a crash than people in a car, according to the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS). And nearly half of all motorcycle deaths are the result of single-vehicle crashes.

The numbers are even scarier for older riders, who are increasingly taking up or returning to motorcycling after many years. Because of slower reflexes, weaker eyesight, more brittle bones, and other disadvantages, riders over 60 years old are three times more likely to be hospitalized after a crash than younger ones.

Still, many enthusiasts enjoy a lifetime of riding without injury. The key to optimizing your odds is to be prepared and avoid risks. Keep in mind that 48 percent of fatalities in 2010 involved speeding, according to the IIHS, and alcohol was a factor in 42 percent. Eliminate those factors and you've dramatically reduced your risk. Below are some more tips to help you stay safe on two wheels.



### **Don't buy more bike than you can handle.**

If you've been off of motorcycles for awhile, you may be surprised by the performance of today's bikes. Even models with small-displacement engines are notably faster and more powerful than they were 10 or 20 years ago.

### **When shopping for a bike, start with one that fits you.**

When seated, you should easily be able to rest both feet flat on the ground without having to be on tiptoes. Handlebars and controls should be within easy reach. Choose a model that's easy for you to get on and off the center stand; if it feels too heavy, it probably is. A smaller model with a 250- to 300-cc engine can make a great starter or commuter bike. If you plan on doing a lot of highway riding, you might want one with an engine in the 500- to 750-cc range so you can easily keep up with traffic.

### **Antilock brakes.**

Now available on a wide array of models, antilock brakes are a proven lifesaver. IIHS data shows that motorcycles equipped with ABS brakes were **37 percent less likely to be involved in a fatal crash** than bikes without it. "No matter what kind of rider you are, ABS can brake better than you.

The reason is simple; locking up the brakes in a panic stop robs the rider of any steering control. That can easily lead to a skid and crash, which can result in serious injury. ABS helps you retain steering control during an emergency stop, and it can be especially valuable in slippery conditions.

This critical feature is now standard on many high-end models and adds only a few hundred dollars to the price of more basic bikes. You may be able to offset some of the cost with an insurance discount. Either way, it's a worthwhile investment in your safety.

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### Hone your skills.

As Honda's Jon Seidel puts it, "There is nothing we could say or advise more than to go find a Motorcycle Safety Foundation (MSF) riding course in your area. That's critical, absolutely critical." An MSF course or similar class can teach you the basics, as well as advanced techniques, such as how to perform evasive emergency maneuvers. The cost ranges from free [on base] to about \$350. An approved safety course may make you eligible for an insurance discount and, in some states, to skip the road-test and/or the written test part of the licensing process. Some motorcycle manufacturers offer a credit toward the cost of a new motorcycle or training if a rider signs up for an MSF course.

### Use your head.

Yes, helmets are an emotional topic for some riders. But the facts show the risk. Riders without a helmet are 40 percent more likely to suffer a fatal head injury in a crash and are three times more likely to suffer brain injuries, than those with helmets, according to government studies.

When Texas and Arkansas repealed their helmet laws, they saw a **31- and 21-percent increase** in motorcycle fatalities, respectively. "It is absolute insanity to repeal helmet laws," says Orly Avitzur, M.D., a neurologist and a Consumer Reports medical adviser. "Because helmets do save lives, it is insanity to expose the skull and the brain to potential trauma that could be prevented or at least mitigated."

A full-face helmet that's approved by the Department of Transportation is the best choice. (Look for a DOT certification sticker on the helmet.) Modern helmets are strong, light weight, and comfortable, and they cut down on wind noise and fatigue. Keep in mind that helmets deteriorate over time, and may not be safe even if they look fine. The Snell Memorial Foundation, an independent helmet testing and standards-

setting organization, recommends replacing a helmet every five years, or sooner if it's been damaged or has been in a crash. Beyond potential deterioration due to aging and exposure to hair oils and chemicals, Snell points out that there is often a notable improvement over that time in helmet design and materials.

### Wear the right gear.

Jeans, a T-shirt, and sandals are recipes for a painful disaster on a bike. Instead, you want gear that will protect you from wind chill, flying bugs and debris, and, yes, lots of road rash if you should slide out. For maximum protection, go for a leather or other reinforced jacket, gloves, full pants, and over-the-ankle footwear, even in summer. Specially designed jackets with rugged padding and breathable mesh material provide protection as well as ventilation for riding in warm weather. You'll also want effective eye protection; don't rely on eyeglasses or a bike's windscreen. Use a helmet visor or goggles. And keep in mind that car drivers who have hit a motorcycle rider often say they just didn't see them, so choose gear in bright colors.

### Be defensive.

A recent study by the University of South Florida's Center for Urban Transportation Research found that in collisions involving a motorcycle and a car, car drivers were at fault 60 percent of the time. So, you need to be extra alert, especially in this age of epidemic phone use and texting behind the wheel. Keep an eye out for cars suddenly changing lanes or pulling out from side streets. And don't tailgate; keeping a safe following distance is critical, both to ensure you have enough stopping distance and so you have time to react to obstacles in the road. An object that a car might easily straddle could be a serious hazard when on a bike.

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### **Avoid bad weather.**

Slippery conditions reduce your margin for error. Rain not only cuts your visibility but reduces your tires' grip on the road, which can make cornering tricky. If you need to ride in the rain, remember that the most dangerous time is right after precipitation begins, as the water can cause oil residue to rise to the top. And avoid making sudden maneuvers. Be especially gentle with the brakes, throttle, and steering to avoid sliding. When riding in strong side winds, be proactive in anticipating the potential push from the side by moving to the side of the lane the wind is coming from. This will give you some leeway in the lane, should a gust nudge you.

### **Watch for road hazards.**

A motorcycle has less contact with the pavement than a car. Sand, wet leaves, or pebbles can cause a bike to slide unexpectedly, easily resulting in a spill. Bumps and potholes that you might barely notice in a car can pose serious danger when on a bike. If you can't avoid them, slow down as much as possible before encountering them, with minimal steering input. Railroad tracks and other hazards should be approached as close to a right angle as possible, to reduce the chances of a skid.

### **Be ready to roll.**

Before each ride, do a quick walk-around to make sure your lights, horn, and directional signals are working properly. Check the chain, belt, or shaft and the brakes. And inspect the tires for wear and make sure they're set at the proper pressure. Motorcycle mechanics say they routinely see worn-out brakes and improperly inflated tires that greatly increase safety risks. When tires are under-inflated, "handling gets really hard, steering gets hard, and the bike doesn't want to lean," says Mike Franklin, owner of Mike's Garage in Los Angeles.

## **Riding in Uniform**

### **MCO P1020.34G W/CH 1-5**

#### **Para. 3024. PROTECTIVE MOTORCYCLE CLOTHING**

"...**a protective jacket designed for motorcycle safety** (may include impact resistant shoulder and elbow pads), and a high-visibility reflective vest **are authorized for wear by Marines in uniform** while operating or riding as passengers on a motorcycle, MOPED, motorscooter, or similar two or three-wheeled vehicle. MARADMIN 322/05

"The safety equipment described will be worn whenever directed by Marine Corps safety regulations. When helmets are worn, chinstraps/eye protection will be properly fastened and in place. Reflective vests must not be covered or concealed. ***Protective riding gear will contain minimal visible organizational insignia, reference to manufacturer/motorcycle brands, graphics or wording.*** All gear will be removed immediately upon dismounting the motorcycle. MARADMIN 322/05

### **A HOODIE/SWEATSHIRT IS NOT AUTHORIZED FOR WEAR OVER ANY MARINE CORPS UNIFORM**

### **BOOTS & UTES IS AN AUTHORIZED PT UNIFORM... NOT AUTHORIZED MOTORCYCLE RIDING ATTIRE**



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## Links/ Resources

- Naval Safety Center
  - <http://www.public.navy.mil/NAVSAFECEN>
- National Highway Transportation Safety Administration (NHTSA)
  - <https://www.nhtsa.gov/risky-driving/seat-belts>
- Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS)
- Consumer Reports – Motorcycle Safety
  - <http://www.consumerreports.org/cro/2013/04/10-motorcycle-safety-tips-for-new-riders/index.htm>
- Motorcycle Safety Foundation
  - <https://www.msf-usa.org/>
- Lee Parks – Total Control
  - <http://totalcontroltraining.net/>
- Total Control Advanced Riding Clinic
  - <http://totalcontroltraining.net/>



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