

MOTORCYCLE SAFETY TIPS

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As a motorcyclist this article is near to my heart. My husband, Jeff, and I have taken trips all over Indiana and Kentucky, and to places like Milwaukee, WI and Gatlinburg, TN. We make an annual pilgrimage to Daytona Beach, FL to celebrate the end of my chemo treatments for breast cancer.

Motorcycle fatalities account for 11 percent of all highway fatalities annually, which doesn't sound too bad until you know that motorcycles represent only 3 percent of all vehicles registered in the U.S. One of the main reasons motorcyclists are killed in crashes is due to the fact the motorcycle provides virtually no protection in a crash, as compared to a car. Approximately 80 percent of reported motorcycle crashes result in injury or death, compared with 20 percent of automobiles. With warmer weather upon us the number of motorcycles you see on the road will be increasing in numbers. Hopefully, after reading these safety tips, everyone will have a safe ride.



All motorcyclists' should attend a motorcycle rider training course. ABATE, which is the state agency responsible for motorcycle testing, offers training courses. You can call 1-800-23-ABATE Monday-Friday 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. or visit their website at <http://www.abateofindiana.org>, to register for a beginner or advanced course. 25 percent of motorcycle operators that were killed in a crash were not licensed or were improperly licensed to operate a motorcycle. By not obtaining a motorcycle license, riders are cheating themselves, and their passengers by bypassing the only method available to ensure they have the knowledge and skill to safely and skillfully operate a motorcycle.

Never drive a motorcycle when under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Almost 50 percent of all fatal single vehicle motorcycle crashes involve alcohol.

Wear the right safety gear, including a DOT or DOT/Snell approved helmet and eye protection, even though this is not required by Indiana law. Wear clothing that will provide some protection from "road burn." Gloves are recommended for the driver. Leather boots are the best type of footwear. Upper body clothing should be brightly colored for day riding and retro-reflective for night riding, as a high percentage of car vs. motorcycle crashes occur because the driver of the other vehicle failed to see the rider. "Assume you are invisible to other motorists and operate your motorcycle accordingly." Also, if you are driving an automobile, "Check twice to save a life."

When you are out on the road be especially careful at intersections, as 50 percent of motorcycle/vehicle accidents occur here.

Do not purchase a motorcycle that is more powerful than you can safely handle. Large motorcycles are heavy, and you must be strong enough to push it, or pick it up if you drop it. However, you also need to keep in mind smaller bikes may not have the speed, performance and ride you'll need if you plan on taking long distance road trips. Select a motorcycle that fits, you should be able to touch the ground with both feet when astride the motorcycle. Check the location of the controls and make sure you can reach and operate them with ease and comfort. After you make the purchase read your owner's manual thoroughly.



If you will be carrying a passenger, make sure the motorcycle is equipped with a passenger seat, footpegs and backrest. Riding with a passenger requires more skill than riding alone, you should delay riding a passenger until you have considerable solo riding time in.

Information for this article was obtained from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration at www.nhtsa.dot.gov.