



# TRANSPORTATION REVIEW

## MOTORCYCLE SAFETY

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The popularity of motorcycling as a transportation option and recreational pursuit continues to increase in the United States. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) estimates that more than 7.9 million motorcycles were registered in 2009, and they were driven close to 20.8 billion miles. The Motorcycle Industry Council notes that motorcycle sales increased by more than 7 percent in the first quarter of 2011.

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), motorcyclist fatalities increased for 11 years between 1997 and 2008, reaching an all-time high of 5,312 in 2008. In 2009, however, the number of deaths declined for the first time in more than a decade to 4,462. Still, motorcycle fatalities accounted for 13 percent of total traffic fatalities, even as overall traffic fatalities in 2009 dropped to the lowest numbers and rates since 1949. NHTSA notes that, “Per vehicle mile traveled in 2009, motorcyclists were about 25 times more likely than passenger car occupants to die in a motor vehicle traffic crash and 5 times more likely to be injured.”

To reduce the percentage of deaths and injuries from motorcycle crashes, the federal government and states continue to refine and expand existing safety programs and laws. These programs address the importance of using motorcycle helmets that comply with Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard (FMVSS) No. 218, increasing the number of properly licensed motorcycle operators, training riders how to properly operate a motorcycle, and separating the use of alcohol and other drugs from motorcycle operation.

This report provides an overview of motorcycle safety, including federal regulations and guidelines, information about current and notable trends in state policy that address motorcycle safety, and the effectiveness of these efforts.

### FEDERAL ACTION

On Aug. 10, 2005, President George W. Bush signed into law the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU). This legislation authorized \$286.4 billion in funding for highways, traffic safety and transit. Provisions in SAFETEA-LU also authorized the Section 2010 Motorcyclist Safety grant program for fiscal years 2006 through 2009. To qualify for funds under this program, a state needs to satisfy one of six criteria in the initial fiscal year in which it qualifies for grant funding and two of six criteria in subsequent fiscal years. The eligibility criteria are:

- Motorcycle rider training courses,
- Motorcycle awareness program,
- Reduction of fatalities and crashes involving motorcycles,
- Impaired driving program,

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- Reduction of fatalities and accidents involving impaired motorcyclists, and
- Fees collected from motorcyclists for training and safety programs used for motorcycle training and safety programs.

The grant funds under this program can be used for various activities, including improvements to motorcycle safety training, recruiting and retaining motorcycle safety instructors, and creating public awareness campaigns. Continuing resolutions by Congress have extended the life of the Section 2010 grant program, and states have received a combined total of \$39 million since FY 2006. Surface transportation reauthorization is pending as of late 2011.

In 2008, NHTSA contracted with the Windwalker Corporation and Highway Safety Services LLC, to develop Model National Standards for Entry-Level Motorcycle Rider Training. The standards were designed to serve as a model for all novice motorcycle rider training programs conducted in the United States and to establish baseline content that all riders should be taught in such entry-level classes. (For more information, see <http://www.nhtsa.gov/staticfiles/nti/pdf/811503.pdf>.)

In November 2010, the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) added motorcycle safety to its Most Wanted List of Transportation Safety Improvements, in response to the doubling of motorcycle fatalities from 1997 to 2009. NTSB continues to support adoption in all states of universal motorcycle helmet use laws that specify compliance with FMVSS No. 21.

## STATE ACTION

### *Helmet Laws*

Numbers from 2009 indicate that, in crashes with fatalities, only 59 percent of motorcyclists were wearing helmets. NHTSA estimates that helmets saved the lives of 1,483 motorcyclists in 2009, with an estimated economic savings of \$2.39 billion. NHTSA states that, “Helmets are estimated to be 37 percent effective in preventing fatal injuries to motorcycle riders and 41 percent for motorcycle passengers.” NHTSA also estimates that an additional 732 lives could have been saved in 2009 if all motorcyclists had worn helmets, which could have provided an additional \$1.16 billion in estimated economic savings.

From 1992 to 1995, as part of an incentive package for states to pass motorcycle helmet laws covering all riders, the Intermodal Surface Transportation Equity Act (ISTEA) required states to pass motorcycle helmet laws that applied to all riders or to have funds transferred from highway construction accounts to highway safety accounts. The National Highway System Designation Act of 1995 repealed these sanctions, however. Since then, six states—Arkansas, Florida, Kentucky, Louisiana, Pennsylvania and Texas—have weakened what were universal motorcycle helmet use laws.

- In 1997, Arkansas and Texas became the first states since 1983 to repeal laws requiring all motorcyclists to wear helmets.
- In Kentucky, helmet use declined from 96 percent before the law change in 1998, to 56 percent afterward.



### *Enacted Laws Associated with Helmet Use, 2008-2011*

- In 2009, Maine amended its helmet law to require motorcycle operators and passengers under age 18 to wear a helmet.
- North Dakota amended its helmet law to clarify that a helmet must meet federal requirements.
- Utah passed legislation allowing a court to waive \$8 of a moving traffic violation fine charged to motorcyclists who are age 18 years or older and wearing protective headgear.

In 2011, six states—Hawaii, Illinois, Massachusetts, New York, North Dakota and Virginia—introduced bills strengthening helmet requirements. Attempts to weaken motorcycle helmet use were more common, however. Legislation introduced in 10 states—California, Delaware, Michigan, Mississippi, Nebraska, New York, North Carolina, Oregon, Tennessee and West Virginia—attempted to weaken helmet use requirements.

Whether states are attempting to expand their helmet laws to cover all riders or to limit them to a certain age group, motorcycle helmet use laws are continually being addressed and refined by state legislators.

### *Notable 2011 Helmet Legislation*

- Illinois, one of three states that have no motorcycle helmet use requirement, considered two measures to require helmet use. One would have applied to all users, while the other would have required helmets for all riders under age 26. Both bills are still active.
- In Delaware, a requirement that a helmet must be available on a motorcycle, but not necessarily be worn, is the subject of attempts to strengthen and weaken the law. The Delaware General Assembly repealed the requirement to carry a helmet in 2011, but it was vetoed by the governor. News reports indicate the governor will push for a universal helmet law in 2012.
- Michigan introduced three measures attempting to require those under age 21 to wear helmets. All would have required riders over age 21 to carry a certain amount of insurance coverage and complete motorcycle safety education.
- A failed Hawaii resolution would have requested the Department of Health to gather statistics on injuries riders without helmets on motorcycles, mopeds, bicycles and ATVs in the state.

### *Education and Licensing*

Another area where state legislatures have grappled with the issue of motorcycle safety is through laws specific to licensing and education requirements. As of 2011, 49 states have state-funded motorcycle safety programs, and all states require a special endorsement to operate a motorcycle.

Nearly all states provide a motorcycle operator learner's permit. These permits are valid for varying lengths of time, ranging from 60 days to two years. In some states, however, riders can

continually renew learner's permits without ever completing the process to obtain a full motorcycle operator's license or endorsement on their driver's license. In most states, the learner's permit is accompanied by various restrictions, including supervised riding, knowledge and skills tests, times of operation, passenger restrictions, and required helmet and eye protection use. Thirty-one state licensing agencies use one of the Motorcycle Safety Foundation's (MSF) four model skills tests, and 29 states incorporate the MSF knowledge test into their licensing program.

During the 1980s, the MSF developed model legislation for state-funded motorcycle rider education programs. The MSF designed the model legislation as a tool for state legislators who are interested in motorcycle safety. Rider education programs provide basic lessons about how to operate motorcycles on streets and highways.

### *Oregon*

In 2009, Oregon enacted what appears to be a first-of-its-kind measure, which requires motor vehicle insurers to provide an "appropriate" reduction in premium charges for motorcycle coverage if the principal driver has completed a motorcycle rider education course. HB 2370 requires motorcycle rider education courses to issue a certificate that can be presented to an insurer. The discount applies for three years after completion of the course and applies only to one motorcycle.

Oregon also enacted three other laws related to motorcycle safety in 2009:

- SB 124 increases the penalty for operating a motorcycle without a motorcycle endorsement and requires the court to suspend a fine if the motorcycle operator completes a motorcycle education course and obtains a motorcycle endorsement.
- SB 546 directs the Department of Transportation to include on the driver's license examination at least two questions pertaining to safe driving practices around motorcyclists. The law also requires anyone applying for the first time for a motorcycle endorsement to complete a motorcycle rider education course and directs the Department of Transportation to phase in a motorcycle rider education course program for people age 21 and older, and raises from \$28 to \$38 the fee for a motorcycle endorsement.
- HB 2370 requires motor vehicle insurers to reduce premium charges for motorcycle coverage if the principal driver has completed a motorcycle rider education course.

### *Other Notable 2008-2011 Safety and Education Legislation*

- Arizona created a Motorcycle Safety Fund that receives \$1 for every motorcycle registration collected by the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) Motor Vehicle Division. The director of the Governor's Office of Highway Safety, after consultation with the Arizona Motorcycle Safety Advisory Council, will use money from the fund to implement and support voluntary motorcycle education, awareness and other programs. Arizona also extended the safety advisory council's sunset date to 2016. The council is composed of five members who have experience in motorcycle safety and who are appointed by the governor for three-year terms.

- In 2011, Nebraska eliminated its Motorcycle Safety Education Fund, which was used to subsidize new motorcycle training courses, schools and instructors. According to the bill’s official statement of intent, the fund was eliminated because “no other driver training program receives this kind of subsidy from the State.” Fee set-asides for the fund will now remain in the Highway Trust Fund and DMV Cash Fund. The law provides definitions of driving course, motorcycle safety course, motorcycle safety instructor and motorcycle trainer, and also permits the DMV to adopt rules and regulations establishing requirements for motorcycle safety courses. It also creates a new \$100 fee to certify or renew certification for each motorcycle safety course.
- In New Jersey, the law clarifies that anyone who passes a road test for a motorcycle license or endorsement on a motorcycle with an engine displacement of less than 231 cubic centimeters (cm<sup>3</sup>) will be issued a license restricting him or her to operating a motorcycle with an engine displacement of less than 500 cm.<sup>3</sup> Those who test on a motorcycle with an engine displacement of more than 231 cm<sup>3</sup> or who pass an approved motorcycle safety education course will be issued a license without engine restrictions. The law also prohibits low-speed motorcycles from operating on limited-access interstate highways or public roads or highways with speed limits in excess of 35 mph. It also clarifies that the holder of a motorcycle examination permit cannot drive a motorcycle from 30 minutes after sunset to 30 minutes before sunrise, cannot carry other passengers, and cannot drive on a toll road or any limited-access interstate highway.
- California passed legislation in 2010 that restricts permit holders from carrying passengers and driving after dark.
- North Carolina clarified that a permit holder cannot carry a passenger and also required a permit applicant under age 18 to pass a motorcycle safety course.
- Washington passed a law disallowing issuance of more than three motorcycle permits to an applicant within a five-year period.

### *Motorcycles and Traffic Actuated Signals*

States continue to enact laws that allow motorcycles and other two-wheeled vehicles to proceed through a stoplight if sensors in the roadway do not detect the vehicle’s presence. These sensors, which act as traffic signal triggers, basically detect the presence of metal—such as a vehicle’s wheels, engine block or vehicle frame. Motorcycle groups allege that motorcycles do not activate these signals and state that this can cause uncertain driving conditions for motorcyclists who are unsure how to deal with the dilemma. Since 2002, when Minnesota passed a law allowing bicycles and motorcycles to proceed through a stoplight, grassroots groups have championed legislation to bring certainty and clarity to a potentially unsafe and confusing situation for riders.

Laws in 11 states—Arkansas, Idaho, Illinois, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia and Wisconsin—now allow both motorcycles and bicycles to proceed through a stoplight after a certain amount of time if the traffic control signal does not detect their presence. North Carolina’s law covers only motorcycles. Typically, these measures allow motorcycles, bicycles or other two-wheeled vehicles such as scooters or mopeds, and three-wheeled

## HANDLEBAR HEIGHT

Most states have some restriction on motorcycle handlebar height, according to the MSF. In 15 states, the maximum handlebar height is 15 inches above the seat. Fourteen states require that handle grips to be below shoulder height. Massachusetts includes both these restrictions in its regulations. Oklahoma does not allow handlebars above the driver's eye level. Washington and Wisconsin allow handlebars to be up to 30 inches above the seat. Sixteen states do not appear to restrict handlebar positioning and height.

In 2010, the Indiana legislature became the latest state to enact handlebar restrictions legislatively. The law requires motorcycles to be equipped with handlebars that rise no higher than the driver's shoulders when seated on the motorcycle.

## VULNERABLE USERS

State legislatures have taken serious steps to protect vulnerable users of the road, such as motorcyclists, bicyclists, pedestrians and others. The North Carolina legislature enacted a law in 2011 that assesses a \$200 fine for anyone who causes a motorcycle to change travel lanes or go off the road; a \$500 fine is assessed for a driver who causes a motorcyclist to crash in such a situation.

In 2009, the Georgia legislature revised penalties for anyone who causes serious injury to a motorcyclist, bicyclist, pedestrian or farmer. The fine for a first offense is \$250, in addition to any other penalties stipulated, and convictions are to be reported to the Department of Driver Services. A second offense within a five-year period results in a fine of \$500 to \$1,000 and imprisonment for 10 days to 12 months. These fines mandatory fines cannot be suspended.

vehicles to proceed through a stoplight after a prescribed amount of time if the intersection is clear of any vehicles with the right-of-way. All these provisions were enacted within the past decade; measures in Illinois, Kansas and Virginia passed in 2011.

California and Washington have used another tactic—dealing with the underlying technology issue. Both now require traffic signal control devices to detect bicycles and motorcycles. The Washington law requires all future installation of vehicle-activated traffic control signals to register the presence of motorcycles and bicycles. It also encourages marking intersections to denote where the signal detection is so two-wheeled vehicles can be positioned to activate the signal.

In Ohio, the State Department of Transportation (DOT) did not believe the issue needed to be addressed legislatively. It was concerned that motorists might be confused if they saw a two- or three-wheeled vehicle proceed through a stoplight. Instead, the DOT created a program so riders could report a signal that did not register their presence, and the DOT would attempt to remedy the situation. The solution has met with approval from the motorcycling and bicycling communities thus far.

Controlled intersections and adherence to traffic signals by all road users reduce the likelihood that a crash, injury or fatality will occur. Pavement sensors that trigger traffic signals require proper calibration and maintenance so they can detect the magnetic signature of motorcycles and other small vehicles without being oversensitive to the presence of vehicles in other lanes. Motorcycle riders and groups are encouraged to work with state departments of transportation or other appropriate entities if they encounter a traffic signal that does not detect the presence of a motorcycle.

### *Child Passenger Laws*

Few states explicitly regulate child passengers travelling on motorcycles. In at least five states—Arkansas, Hawaii, Louisiana, Texas and Washington—such regulations exist. Texas amended its traffic safety statutes in 2009 to prohibit a child under age 5 from riding on a motorcycle, although a child may ride in a sidecar attached to the motorcycle. Washington's law prohibits child passengers under age 5 on motorcycles in any instance. Louisiana prohibits passengers younger than age 5 from riding as a passenger unless they are properly seated and wearing a helmet. Arkansas prohibits passengers under age 8, while Hawaii prohibits those under age 7. Hawaii's law, however, allows child passengers to ride in a three-wheeled motorcycle with a full body enclosed cab and a seat belt or child restraint system.

California and North Carolina enacted laws in 2010 that limit passengers on a motorcycle unless the operator has reached a certain age or educational requirement. The amended California law prohibits anyone with a motorcycle instruction permit to carry a passenger. North Carolina's law prohibits anyone under age 18 who holds a motorcycle learner's permit from carrying a passenger.

## EVIDENCE OF EFFECTIVENESS: HELMETS AND RIDER EDUCATION

### *Helmets*

Helmets are important safety equipment because they mitigate the severity of injuries to the head and brain, according to NHTSA. All motorcycle helmets sold in the United States must meet FMVSS No. 218. Use of FMVSS No. 218-compliant motorcycle helmets decreased from 67 percent in 2009 to 54 percent in 2010. Motorcycle helmets, when used, are estimated to prevent 37 percent of fatal injuries and 67 percent of brain injuries to motorcyclists.

Helmets that are not certified by a manufacturer to meet the minimum safety performance requirements of FMVSS No. 218 are called “novelty helmets.” Motorcycle riders sometimes prefer such helmets because they are less bulky and look sportier. A NHTSA report states that compliance tests show novelty helmets perform significantly worse than compliant helmets and offer wearers no protection in the event of a crash. Motorcyclists who wear novelty helmets are more likely to sustain fatal head injuries if, during the crash, the rider falls to the ground and his or her head hits a paved road or another object. The NHTSA study determined that novelty helmets will not protect motorcycle riders during crashes from either impact or penetration threats and likely will not stay on riders’ heads during crashes. Observational studies report the use of novelty helmets in states that require a helmet be worn by all motorcyclists increased from 11 percent in 2009 to 22 percent in 2010.

Safety advocates and motorcycle rider groups disagree about the effectiveness of helmet use laws. The American Motorcyclists Association (AMA) and other rider groups argue that preventing crashes is critical to motorcycle safety and that mandatory helmet laws do nothing to reduce crashes. Instead, motorcycle safety training and driver education about motorcycles would be more effective, since they claim automobile drivers cause many of the crashes. Motorcycle rider groups contend that helmet laws interfere with their individual freedom and assert that adults are capable of assessing risks and making their own decisions about wearing a helmet.

On the other hand, safety advocates agree that pre-crash factors (rider education and increasing motorists’ awareness of motorcycles) are important components to improving motorcycle safety. They also contend, however, that improving motorcycle safety requires a comprehensive approach that addresses the crash factors (head and brain protection in the event of a crash) and post-crash factors (rapid emergency response to crash scenes) to better serve the needs of motorcyclists who may be involved in crashes. Motorcycle rider groups assert that car drivers are the cause of many of the motorcycle crashes. NHTSA asserts this is only partially true, however, because the statement does not consider the overall crash and takes into account only multi-vehicle crashes, not single-vehicle crashes. Nationally, nearly half of all fatal motorcycle crashes are single-vehicle crashes that involve only the motorcyclist. The remainder are multi-vehicle crashes, in some of which car drivers are responsible. The enactment of helmet use laws that require all motorcyclists, regardless of age, to wear an FMVSS No. 218-compliant motorcycle helmet are low-cost actions that all states can take to provide immediate benefits—increasing motorcycle helmet use, increasing the number of motorcyclists’ lives saved, reducing the number of traumatic brain injury cases associated with motorcycle crashes, and reducing the economic cost to the state.

### *Education Programs*

Some states attempt to improve motorcycle safety through a variety of programs designed to train inexperienced motorcyclists. Illinois, for example, has a Cycle Rider Safety Training Program. It was established in 1976 after the Illinois Department of Transportation found that both motorcycle ridership and the number of crashes and fatalities involving motorcycles were increasing. Research in Illinois showed that most motorcyclists were riding without training and that more than 90 percent were self-taught. Through the Cycle Rider Safety Training Program, Illinois was able to educate 136,800 students between 1976 and 1996. Motorcycle crashes in Illinois decreased by more than 45 percent, and fatalities decreased by 57 percent between 1976 and 1995.

In 2009, Florida implemented its Motorcycle Safety Strategic Plan—which included formation of a Motorcycle Safety Coalition and new rider training requirements—and saw a 13.6 percent decrease in fatalities and a 12.7 percent reduction in injuries.

The AMA supports voluntary—but not mandatory—rider education programs for motorcyclists. Training programs, according to these groups, should be offered as a licensing incentive so that, if the motorcyclist completes a rider education course, he or she receives a full license to immediately operate any motorcycle on public roads.

NHTSA and the MSF cooperatively funded a study to determine the effectiveness of entry-level riders who completed multiple levels of training versus a single entry-level training course, then compared the driving, citation and crash experience of study participants. Field research began in early 2007, and the study was extended through 2011. The University of North Carolina's Highway Safety Research Center is evaluating the research to examine the benefits of rider education and determine its effect on crash avoidance skills.

### *Alcohol Programs*

In 2009, alcohol was detected in 36 percent of motorcycle drivers in fatal crashes. Motorcyclists were more likely to have a blood alcohol content of .08 g/dL or higher than other motor vehicle drivers. NHTSA conducted research on a closed course where study participants who were experienced riders were dosed to certain Blood Alcohol Concentration and tasked with completing entry-level training course exercises to determine alcohol's negative effects on motorcyclists' driving skills. NHTSA also has sponsored training courses to help law enforcement officers identify cues—such as drifting during a curve in the road, inattentiveness to their surroundings, trouble balancing their motorcycle at a stop—that may indicate whether a motorcyclist is driving impaired.

Several anti-drunk driving programs have been designed to inform the public about the hazards of drinking and driving a passenger vehicle, but few programs educate the public about the problem of riding a motorcycle under the influence. The MSF includes a module on the dangers of impaired riding in its entry-level training course. Wisconsin developed an education program to expand and supplement the MSF's alcohol module in all of the state rider education courses. For real-life emphasis, the supplemental course materials developed by Wisconsin illustrate the process that occurs when a motorcyclist is arrested for riding under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

## CONCLUSION

Riding a motorcycle requires tremendous skill and awareness. Motorcycles offer little forgiveness for error and provide very little protection against rider mistakes, regardless of who is at fault when a crash occurs. Eighty percent of motorcycle riders who are involved in a crash are either injured or killed.

Enacting motorcycle helmet use laws for all motorcyclists, regardless of age, is a low-cost action many states have taken to increase the level of motorcycle safety and decrease the number of deaths and injuries associated with motorcycle crashes.

State laws that require special endorsements on driver's licenses to operate a motorcycle and mandatory rider education help ensure that motorcyclists possess the necessary skills to safely operate a motorcycle and avoid crash scenarios. States can encourage motorcycle riders to complete the licensing process by limiting the number of times riders can apply to renew a learner's permit before being they must complete the licensing process.

## APPENDIX. MOTORCYCLE HELMET USE REQUIREMENTS

All Riders	Specific Segment of Riders (Usually under age 18 or age 21)	No Helmet Required
Alabama	Alaska <sup>1</sup>	Illinois
California	Arizona	Iowa
Georgia	Arkansas	New Hampshire
Louisiana	Colorado	
Maryland	Connecticut	
Massachusetts	Delaware	
Michigan	Florida <sup>2</sup>	
Mississippi	Hawaii	
Missouri	Idaho	
Nebraska	Indiana	
Nevada	Kansas	
New Jersey	Kentucky <sup>3</sup>	
New York	Maine <sup>4</sup>	
North Carolina	Minnesota <sup>5</sup>	
Oregon	Montana	
Tennessee	New Mexico	
Vermont	North Dakota <sup>6</sup>	
Virginia	Ohio <sup>7</sup>	
Washington	Oklahoma	
West Virginia	Pennsylvania <sup>8</sup>	
District of Columbia	Rhode Island <sup>9</sup>	
Puerto Rico <sup>12</sup>	South Carolina	
American Samoa	South Dakota	
Guam	Texas <sup>10</sup>	
Northern Marianas	Utah	
Virgin Islands	Wisconsin <sup>11</sup>	
	Wyoming	

### Notes

1. Alaska's motorcycle helmet use law covers passengers of all ages, operators younger than age 18, and operators with instructional permits.

2. In Florida, the law requires that all riders younger than age 21 wear helmets, without exception. Those age 21 and older can ride without helmets only if they can show proof that they are covered by a medical insurance policy.

3. In Kentucky, the law requires that all riders younger than age 21 wear helmets, without exception. Those age 21 and older can ride without helmets only if they can show proof that they are covered by a medical insurance policy. Motorcycle helmet laws in Kentucky also cover operators with instructional/learner's permits.

4. Motorcycle helmet laws in Maine cover operators with instructional/learner's permits. Maine's motorcycle helmet use law also covers passengers ages 17 and younger and passengers if their operators are required to wear a helmet.

5. Motorcycle helmet laws in Minnesota cover operators with instructional/learner's permits.

6. North Dakota's motorcycle helmet use law covers all passengers traveling with operators who are covered by the law.

7. Ohio's motorcycle helmet use law covers all operators during the first year of licensure and all passengers of operators who are covered by the law.

8. Pennsylvania's motorcycle helmet use law covers all operators during the first two years of licensure unless the operator has completed the safety course approved by PennDOT or the Motorcycle Safety Foundation.

9. Rhode Island's motorcycle helmet use law covers all passengers (regardless of age) and all operators during the first year of licensure (regardless of age).

10. Texas exempts riders age 21 or older if they can either show proof of successfully completing a motorcycle operator training and safety course or can show proof of having a medical insurance policy. A peace officer cannot stop or detain a person who is the operator of or a passenger on a motorcycle for the sole purpose of determining whether the person has successfully completed the motorcycle operator training and safety course or is covered by a health insurance plan.

11. Motorcycle helmet laws in Wisconsin cover operators with instructional/learner's permits.

12. Puerto Rico strengthened its motorcycle law in 2007. The law requires riders to wear helmets, boots, gloves and reflective gear while riding at night. The law also imposed new testing requirements.

**Sources:** National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, NCSL, and the Insurance Institute For Highway Safety, 2011.

## RESOURCES

- American Motorcyclist Association  
[www.ama-cycle.org/](http://www.ama-cycle.org/)
- Insurance Institute for Highway Safety  
[www.iihs.org/](http://www.iihs.org/)
- Minnesota Motorcycle Safety Center  
[www.motorcyclesafety.state.mn.us/latest/MMSCHome.asp?cid=2](http://www.motorcyclesafety.state.mn.us/latest/MMSCHome.asp?cid=2)
- Motorcycle Riders' Foundation  
[www.mrf.org](http://www.mrf.org)
- Motorcycle Safety Foundation  
[www.msf-usa.org/](http://www.msf-usa.org/)
- National Transportation Safety Board  
<http://www.nts.gov/>
- NHTSA  
<http://www.nhtsa.gov/Safety/Motorcycles>  
[www.nhtsa.dot.gov/](http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/)
- StateNet  
[www.statenet.com/](http://www.statenet.com/)
- Triple AAA Digest of Motor Laws  
<http://drivinglaws.aaa.com/>
- State of Florida Department of Transportation  
<http://www.ridesmartflorida.com/dataandstatistics.htm>



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