

Motorcycle Safety:

- 1. Medication, alcohol and riding.** If you take prescription drugs know whether the medication has known side effects such as slowed reaction times, dizziness, drowsiness and so on. Talk to your doctor about your medications, medical history, and how safe riding may be affected by them. Ride alcohol free! Forty-two percent of the motorcycle riders that died in single vehicle crashes in 2015 were alcohol impaired.
- 2. Protect yourself and any passenger by using All the Gear All the Time.** If you ride in a state where helmet use is up to you, choose to wear a helmet. Head injuries can be very serious, even if they occur at low speeds without a helmet. Helmets cannot prevent head injuries in all instances, but there's little question that they can reduce severity of head injuries or prevent them altogether in a variety of circumstances. **Modern riding jackets** are tough, can be armored up, made with high visibility fluorescent and/or reflective materials and can be lightweight and ventilated or made of mesh to be cool in warm weather. **Riding gloves, riding pants, boots and eye protection** can combine to offer great protection from head to foot with comfort in most all riding conditions.
- 3. Situational awareness.** Keep your head on a swivel and use the rear-view mirrors to monitor what's going on 360° around you. Try to keep space between you and other traffic; don't be a tailgater and don't let other drivers tailgate you. The more space you keep between you and the other motorist, the less likely it is their mistake will involve you. Situational awareness can help you anticipate problems and avoid them.
- 4. Speed reduces your options.** Every time your speed doubles, your stopping distance roughly quadruples. So, if you can stop in 50 feet from 30 mph, for example, at 60 mph, your stopping distance goes up to about 200 feet. It's not just about obeying the speed limit—it's about giving yourself more options for stopping and evasive action that can be done safely. Consider reducing your speed below the speed limit in some situations such as wet pavement, poor visibility, and ground cover such as brush or crops tall enough to conceal wildlife and other vehicles entering intersections.
- 5. Be able to count on your machine.** That means a quick pre-ride check on tires, attachments, oil, coolant (if applicable), brake fluid, chain or drive belt condition and tension, lights, brake light, turn signal and horn function. Anything not working properly, loose, out of adjustment, low fluid levels and so on can cause unexpected problems while under way and some things can affect control of the bike.
- 6. Think about special hazards that can come up in certain times of the year.** If you ride out in farm country, standing crops like corn can conceal moving hazards such as deer, bear even wild turkey and dogs that are big enough to take a bike down in a collision. Be particularly cautious during late summer and early fall riding when harvesting and hunting seasons are underway. Watch for farmers harvesting. This may cause deer or other animals to suddenly enter the road.



- 7. Heighten your vision.** A lot of riders wear dark wrap-around glasses, which work fine in bright sunlight in areas where deep shadows are infrequent. However, if your route includes a lot of areas of dark shadows at the roadside, such as in forested areas, you may want to consider lightly tinted eyewear. If there is a lot of shadow or the day is going to be overcast, certain types of amber riding glasses or face shield may be helpful in increasing contrast.
- 8. Know the road and if you don't, be cautious.** When you're traveling in unfamiliar country, take it easy. The next blind corner may be concealing gravel or sand on the road, an off-camber, decreasing radius corner or a one-lane bridge with a gravel truck taking up all of it.
- 9. Consider training.** Whether you're a rider with some experience, a former rider who has been away from the sport for some years and are now returning or are a new motorcycle owner, joining the ranks of riders for the first time, and professionally delivered training can make you a better rider. Major motorcycle manufacturers offer great rider training programs around the country such as [Harley-Davidson's Rider's Edge Course](#) with programs for new riders and experienced riders alike. [Honda has MSF basic and advanced rider training](#), as well.
- 10. Focus.** Perhaps nothing is more central to safety than the rider's focus on the task at hand. Avoid allowing anything to intrude on your attention to the road, your speed, changes in road conditions, weather, traffic and roadside hazards and other vehicles. One of the major causes of motorcycle accidents identified in the landmark Hurt report on motorcycle crashes was when other drivers (i.e. automobile drivers) said they didn't see the motorcyclist. That means the motorcyclist has two countermeasures—increase your visibility to other drivers and make sure you see them in case they don't see you