
PREPARING TO RIDE

What you do before you start a trip goes a long way toward determining whether or not you'll get where you want to go safely. Before taking off on any trip, a safe rider makes a point to:

1. **Wear the right gear.**
 2. **Become familiar with the motorcycle.**
 3. **Check the motorcycle equipment.**
 4. **Be a responsible rider.**
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WEAR THE RIGHT GEAR

When you ride, your gear is “right” if it protects you. In any crash, you have a far better chance of avoiding serious injury if you wear:

- **An approved helmet.**
- **Face or eye protection.**
- **Protective clothing.**

HELMET USE

Crashes can occur — particularly among untrained, beginning riders. And one out of every five motorcycle crashes results in head or neck injuries. Head injuries are just as severe as neck injuries — and far more common. Crash analyses show that head and neck injuries account for a majority of serious and fatal injuries to motorcyclists. Research also shows that, with few exceptions, head and neck injuries are reduced by properly wearing an approved helmet.

Some riders don't wear helmets because they think helmets will limit their view to the sides. Others wear helmets only on long trips or when riding at high speeds. Here are some facts to consider:

- **An approved helmet** lets you see as far to the sides as necessary. A study of more than 900 motorcycle crashes, where 40% of the riders wore helmets, did not find even one case in which a helmet kept a rider from spotting danger.
- **Most crashes happen** on short trips (less than five miles long), just a few minutes after starting out.
- **Most riders** are riding slower than 30 mph when a crash occurs. At these speeds, helmets can cut both the number and the severity of head injuries by half.

No matter what the speed, helmeted riders are three times more likely to survive head injuries than those not wearing helmets at the time of the crash.

HELMET SELECTION

There are two primary types of helmets, providing two different levels of coverage: three-quarter and full face.

Whichever style you choose, you can get the most protection by making sure that the helmet:

