



[Preventing Motorcycle Accidents and Injuries](#)

by [John Demas](#) on 02/11/09 at 2:11 pm

Hollywood actors and movies have been glamorizing motorcycle riding for years. Many film buffs still recall Marlon Brando in “The Wild One,” Steve McQueen in “The Great Escape” and Peter Fonda in “Easy Rider.” Although such films have become a staple in the film industry, the actual real world experience of riding a “bike” is rarely as glamorous. In fact, motorcycles can be very dangerous. Even if you’re convinced you’re an excellent rider, you’ll always be vulnerable to the worst car drivers on the road who may be drunk, speeding or simply distracted and unaware of your presence. In fact, a twenty-year-old Sacramento rider recently lost his life after colliding with a woman driving a Honda Accord.

<http://www.sacbee.com/static/weblogs/crime/archives/019198.html>

Our government’s most recent National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) statistics contain a number of startling facts about motorcycle accidents. For example, during 2007, the last full year for which we have comprehensive statistics, 5,154 American motorcyclists were killed in accidents. (See the NHTSA’s Motorcycles Traffic Safety Facts Sheet; 2007 Data: DOT HS 810 990). It can be found at the following Internet URL:

<http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/portal/site/nhtsa/menuitem.6a6eaf83cf719ad24ec86e10dba046a0/>

As that 2007 Fact Sheet indicates, the number of motorcycle fatalities has more than doubled since 1997. Injuries have also come close to doubling during that same time period. All responsible drivers should be asking themselves what they can personally do to decrease these devastating statistics. Perhaps the following is the most telling statement contained in that Fact Sheet: “NHTSA estimates that helmets saved 1,784 motorcyclists’ lives in 2007 . . . 800 more [lives] could have been saved if all motorcyclists had worn helmets.” (See <http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/portal/site/nhtsa/menuitem.6a6eaf83cf719ad24ec86e10dba046a0/>).

Since wearing helmets is a key component to making motorcycle riding safer, it’s time to once again debate whether comprehensive legislation should be passed making it mandatory for all motorcyclists to wear helmets.

General Tips for Safeguarding the Lives of Motorcycle Riders

- Never ride any motorcycle without knowing if it has been fully serviced recently. Check the tire treads and be sure the gears and brakes are in good working order.
- Only purchase the size of bike you need and be sure you can lift it up should it fall to the ground.
Never make even short trips on your bike without wearing a helmet. It doesn't matter how far you're planning to travel - injuries or death can always occur.
- With more than four million registered motorcycles in the United States, it's in everyone's best interests to try and help their riders remain safe. If you're driving a car or other large vehicle, remember that it's your duty to share the road. If you want to ride a motorcycle, don't be lazy - obtain the proper training and licensing.
Our government estimates that nearly one-third of all motorcycle accidents involve poorly trained or improperly licensed drivers.
<http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/people/injury/pedbimot/motorcycle/motosafety.html>
- Invest in the leather or other heavy fabric garments and boots that are likely to minimize your injuries if you do have an accident. Only ride a bike that makes it possible for you to rest both feet on the ground when you stop.
- Follow all of the laws of the road. Remember that motorcycles don't have the same balance and center of gravity that cars have — carefully slow down when making turns.
- Limit your travels when the road surfaces are wet or slick. Avoid riding on gravel surfaces.
- If you're going to take along a passenger, be sure your bike has a back seat and pegs for your friend's feet to rest upon.
- If you're driving a car, remember to always try to keep All vehicles in view. An accident between a car and a motorcycle can sometimes be as deadly as one between two larger vehicles. Of course, it's always more courteous to share the road, regardless of what the other person is driving.

Those who keep all of the suggestions listed above in mind while driving, should be able to help minimize the dangers we all face out on this country's roads and highways.