

## **Enjoy Motorcycle Riding Season**

Every year, the majority of [traffic fatalities](#) involving motorcycles occurs between May and September, a time of year which has been dubbed "riding season" due to the influx of motorcyclists on the roads. In anticipation of this year's riding season, the Illinois Department of Transportation's Division of Safety aims to protect Illinois motorists with the implementation of the "Gear Up" campaign, a [motorcycle safety](#) initiative.

"Motorcyclists are among the most vulnerable of highway users, and we want to work together to promote motorcycle safety and help protect all of the motoring public," said Illinois Transportation Secretary Gary Hannig in an IDOT press release announcing the launch of the campaign. Motorcycles represent slightly less than 3 percent of total vehicle registrations. However, motorcycle fatalities represent almost 14 percent of all [vehicle fatalities](#) statewide. While the actual causes of these crashes are often difficult to determine, it has been found that there are several problem areas over which [motorcycle](#) riders themselves have a degree of control.

Through the "Gear Up" campaign, IDOT is encouraging motorcyclists to take control of their own safety, offering these suggestions for staying safe during riding season:

- Dress with the proper riding gear. Riders should employ the use of a quality DOT-approved helmet to protect from devastating [head injuries](#). Goggles or glasses constructed of shatter-resistant materials will help protect eyes. Jackets, long pants and gloves constructed of sturdy material will help protect the rider's body in case of a fall. Strong over-the-ankle footwear will help protect ankles and feet. The use of high-visibility clothing for riders is an effective tool to enhance safety by alerting other drivers of your presence.
- Utilize a reputable preventive maintenance program for motorcycle equipment. Before the first ride of the season, motorcycles should be thoroughly inspected and serviced by a professional mechanic.
- Make sure all motorcyclists are properly licensed. About 20 percent of motorcyclists killed in crashes are not properly licensed.
- Obey traffic laws. Motorcyclists who obey traffic laws significantly improve their chances for a safe ride.
- DON'T DRINK AND RIDE. The use of alcohol plays a negative role in about 40 percent of motorcycle fatalities.
- Never ride beyond your ability. Riding skills improve with experience and training. Riders who are patient and gain these skills before trying advanced maneuvers increase their chances for a safe ride.

In addition to these safety guidelines, IDOT is also offering free motorcycle training for all skill levels during the 2011 training season. IDOT encourages all riders to take advantage of these opportunities to improve riding skills and to learn about proven strategies for managing the inevitable risks of motorcycling. To learn about these free training courses, visit [www.startseeingmotorcycles.org](http://www.startseeingmotorcycles.org).

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