



## **Motorcycle Safety: A Few Precautions Can Save Your Life**

by [John Demas](#) on 12/08/09 at 3:51 pm

### **Overview**

Yet another Sacramento resident has died as a result of a motorcycle accident. In late September, 54-year-old Christopher Wells was riding his Harley on the Capital City Freeway when suddenly, everything went wrong. Wells was in the process of changing lanes when another driver began doing the same thing. Responding to the other driver, Wells applied his brakes, only to lose control of his motorcycle. The California Highway Patrol said Wells was wearing a helmet and abiding by the speed limit at the time of the collision. Less than two weeks later, Wells passed away as a result of the serious injuries he sustained in that late September accident.

While we may never know all of the facts that contributed to the Wells accident, we can still benefit from simply acknowledging that riding a motorcycle can be a very dangerous activity. Fortunately, recent California statistics indicate that many cyclists are beginning to exercise greater caution. The year 2009 is the first one since 1998 to show an actual decline in motorcycle fatalities. This abrupt change may make you wonder which safety precautions are keeping our cyclists safer.

### **Helpful Safety Tips**

Here are some general safety tips that may help you enjoy riding your motorcycle for many more years to come:

- Always wear quality protective gear (like leather gloves, a good helmet and proper boots);
- Whatever your age, plan on taking new driver or refresher training classes offered by The California Motorcyclist Safety Program. Being a skilled car, truck or ATV driver doesn't necessarily make you a skilled cyclist. Different skills must be mastered for each unique vehicle;
- Avoid purchasing one of the heavier bikes as your first one. Give yourself time to master the many different types of maneuvers required for safely riding a medium-sized motorcycle before risking your life on one of the heavier ones.
- Postpone buying or riding one of the smaller bikes known for their great speed when you first start riding a motorcycle. There's no sense in shortening your lifespan just because

you're too impatient to first acquire the skills required for some of the more specialized bikes;

- Always ask an experienced buddy to ride his (or her) own motorcycle alongside you when you first start riding. You may need someone to give you critical pointers or summon help if you're injured;
- Even if you've been riding a motorcycle for many years, respect your life enough to review online resources that can alert you to important changes in the laws affecting cyclists;
- During poor weather conditions, never assume that you can just as easily maneuver your motorcycle around town or on highways; drivers of cars and trucks are less likely to notice you in such conditions;
- Stop weaving in and out of traffic just to save a bit of time. Being 10 minutes closer to home or the office when fatally injured won't comfort anyone who cares about you;
- Consider just using your car during rush hour or when attending major sporting or entertainment events on weekends. Nighttime weekend events attract far too many people who think nothing of mixing alcohol and driving;
- Be doubly considerate of other drivers - most other vehicles weigh a lot more than yours and can seriously hurt you upon impact.

We hope these tips will help you keep safely riding your motorcycle for many years to come. You can still enjoy the thrill of riding a motorcycle while observing the most basic safety precautions.

Demas & Rosenthal has been helping motorcycle injury victims for nearly twenty years.