



Motorcycle safety

There are lots of benefits to riding a motorcycle, but it can be much more hazardous than driving a car. There are a few extra things you need to do to stay safe.

Motorcyclists are particularly vulnerable because they're less protected than motorists, and the instability of motorcycles makes them more prone to crashing. This means riders' injuries tend to be more severe than those of other road users.

Knowing the necessary skills and understanding the road environment can help reduce your motorcycle crash risk.

Safety equipment

Wearing the right equipment is vital to staying safe when riding a motorcycle. It can help prevent common rider injuries, and could mean the difference between an inconvenient tumble off your bike and a serious injury that results in never being able to ride again.

You should:

- wear an approved helmet – it's required by law, and can significantly reduce the risk of head and neck injuries in a crash
- make sure your whole body is covered in sturdy protective clothing and footwear
- use impact protectors over joints like knees, hips, elbows and shoulders
- make sure your legs are protected, because they're the part of your body most likely to be injured in a crash
- avoid having any external pockets or straps that could become tear points or snag on something during a crash
- wear reflective or light-coloured clothing for greater visibility

- make sure all of your gear fits properly
- wear a clear or amber tinted visor for night-time and wet weather riding
- wear good winter gloves in colder conditions to reduce body fatigue – make sure they don't restrict your fingers and hands from effectively operating controls like brake and clutch levers and indicators.

Dress appropriately

Being too cold or too hot can affect your riding through distraction, fatigue and dehydration, so it's important to dress appropriately.

In summer, wear clothing with good ventilation to protect you from the heat. This allows the wind to flow through the clothing and over your skin, which evaporates sweat. Drink lots of water too.

In winter, use insulated waterproof and windproof materials to protect you from the cold. Wear close-fitting openings around your neck, wrists and waist. Covered zips will also reduce leakage of warm air.

Motorcyclists are particularly vulnerable to severe injuries due to a number of factors

How to stay safe on the road

- Be attentive. Good vision is very important, and you should position yourself so you have the best possible view of any potential hazards on the road ahead. Continuously check ahead and behind for hazards.
- Watch your speed. A higher speed reduces your ability to control your motorcycle and negotiate curves. It also creates a greater chance of running off the road.
- For better control when braking, use all four fingers on the brake lever.
- Hard braking when the road is wet or muddy can lead to loss of control.
- Know your bike and your skill level – each bike reacts differently and has its own characteristics.
- Never ride fatigued or affected by alcohol or drugs. Even some prescription drugs can impair your ability to ride, so seek medical advice from your doctor or pharmacist about possible side effects of your medication.
- If you pull up behind a stationary vehicle on an uphill inline, leave enough space in front of you in case the vehicle rolls back when moving off.
- If a driver looks like they're about to change lanes in multi-lane traffic, slow down until you're sure you know what they're doing.
- Be aware of advisory speeds for corners and adjust your speed to suit.
- Never assume drivers know where you are, particularly if you're in their blind spot.
- Watch out for changes in the road service that could affect traction and stability, such as uneven pit covers, damaged bitumen, unsealed roadworks and puddles.
- If possible, don't ride on line and pavement markings as they may not have as much traction as the bitumen.

Lane filtering

- Lane filtering has been legal in SA since April 2017 and is covered under section 151A of the Australian Road Rules.
- It's important that it's done at a safe speed. By law, lane filtering is restricted to 30km/h.
- It's only permitted by R and R-Date licence holders. Riders with a P1 provisional or learner's permit, and moped riders with a car licence only must not lane filter.
- This is a very risky manoeuvre – it pays to be particularly alert to your surroundings and always anticipate that a car driver will do the unexpected.

Tips for safe lane filtering

- Watch for gaps in traffic where cars may have stopped to allow vehicles to turn into side roads or driveways, across your path.
- Be aware of pedestrians crossing between stopped cars.
- Avoid filtering around curves or corners where the visibility ahead is restricted.
- Take extra care around trucks as they can have large blind spots.
- Cover the front-brake lever with two fingers in case you have to stop quickly.



We're here to help

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