

Helmets - Your Decision

Helmet laws are different from state to state. Several states have revised their helmet requirements. Of the states that require helmet use, almost 100% of the motorcyclists were compliant. Of the states that lowered the limits on helmet use, governed by age, medical coverage and years of licensed biking, the helmet use fell to 50%. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration studied the results of the repeal of the universal helmet law in Louisiana and Kentucky. After the repeal, the fatality rate increased between 50 to 100%. Injuries increased as well.

Motorcyclists who are injured in an accident that do not wear helmets, are three times as likely to suffer a brain injury compared to those who do. Motorcyclists who are killed while wearing FMVSS 218 compliant helmets usually have other fatal injuries as well. If a helmet is also Snell compliant, it does not mean that it meets higher safety standards.

The average treatment cost for a motorcycle accident-related head injury is \$43,000.
The annual cost of serving one brain-injured individual in an inpatient setting is \$100,000.

Traumatic Brain Injuries Are Costly... For A Lifetime

- Permanent disability and impairment
- Long-term nursing care
- Physical therapy and rehabilitation
- Emotional and monetary costs to the family of the victim
- Costs to welfare and other social services

NHTSA estimates that helmets saved the lives of 1,158 motorcyclists in 2003.
If all motorcyclists had worn helmets, an additional 640 lives could have been saved.

Source: <http://www.saferoads.org/>

It is never wise to buy a used helmet. If you are wearing your helmet while involved in an accident, throw it away and buy a new one. The importance of choosing a helmet that fits properly and is comfortable is apparent. It is advisable to try on different sizes and makes and the same size in different makes. Keep it on for a while in the store. See if you feel any pressure points that will make you uncomfortable. How is the weight of the helmet? You shouldn't be able to twist it or pull it off when strapped. You absolutely should be able to have full visibility on the sides. The brighter the helmet, the more visible/safer you will be. Reflective tape is a great improvement to visibility. The helmet should have vents for air flow for comfort and to reduce fogging. Some helmets have removable liners. If you want a tinted shield to help you with the sun, it is beneficial to also have a clear replacement shield with you for night riding. You can buy tinted film to cover just the highest portion of the shield. Want to buy online; go to a store first to get the exact make and model that fits you best.