



# MOTORCYCLE SAFETY

## Tips to Live By



## Safety Tip for Riders

### Dress to be seen and Protected

It's the law in B.C. – you must wear a motorcycle helmet that meets DOT, Snell M2005 or M2010 or ECE helmet safety standards. Be sure it displays the proper label and meets safety-helmet labelling requirements.

Choose a helmet with a bright, visible colour. Add reflective tape to the sides and back for greater visibility.

A full-face helmet provides the best protection in a crash, as well as protection from wind, dust, rain, insects and debris.

Avoid buying a used helmet. It may have been in a crash or the damage may not be obvious.

If you already own a helmet, replace it if you've been in a crash, it's been dropped or it's showing signs of wear. Also, make sure you check the manufacturer's manual for the helmet's expiry date.

The right gear for both riders and passengers includes an approved motorcycle helmet; protective jacket and pants; sturdy gloves that cover your wrists; and boots that protect your ankles. Street clothes offer little or no protection from the elements of a crash.

Wear a safety vest or clothing that features fluorescent material or reflective striping to help make you more visible, day and night.

### Make sure you and passengers are properly seated

The law requires that motorcycle passengers must have their feet on the foot pegs or floorboards or be properly seated in a sidecar.

You're responsible to ensure passengers younger than 16 are properly seated. Anyone who can't reach the foot pegs is not allowed to ride.

### Improve your traction

A lot of things you regularly encounter on the roads can affect your traction, such as wet roads, gravel, sand, debris, railway tracks, rain grooves, rumble strips, highway crack sealant, painted markings and potholes.

### Here are some tips to improve your traction:

Always keep your tires properly maintained and inflated.

Scan the road ahead for potential hazards.

Avoid riding in the centre of the lane (where oil and other fluids can gather), or on painted road markers.

### Do a pre-trip check

Always check your motorcycle before riding. The pre-trip check doesn't take long and will soon become routine and automatic.

### Your check should include:

- Tires – air pressure, tread and condition
- Wheels and rims – check for damage or cracks
- Drive system – chain, belt or shaft – check for tension, lubrication, wear, leaks
- Electrical – lights, brake lights, turn signals, horn and engine cut-off switch
- Fluids – check oil, coolant, fuel, leaks etc.
- Clutch – when you squeeze the clutch lever, the cable should move smoothly and feel tight
- Throttle – should snap back when you let it go
- Mirrors – clean, adjusted, securely fastened
- Brakes – check front and rear brakes to make sure they feel firm and work well.

### Communicate

Read vehicle language – never rely on other road users' judgment, or assume they'll respect your right of way. Remember, they may not see you, and even if they do, they may not accurately judge your distance or speed of approach.

When in doubt, yield the right of way.

When overtaking vehicles in traffic, be sure to watch for signal lights, front wheel movements or drivers who are shoulder checking or checking their mirrors. Do your best to stay out of drivers' blind spots.

*Between 1996 and 2010, motorcycle fatalities increased 57%*



# MOTORCYCLE SAFETY

## Tips to Live By



### Watch out for intersections

One of the most common types of intersection crashes occurs when oncoming vehicles turn left in front of motorcyclists.

When you see oncoming traffic signalling to turn left, reduce your speed and adjust your lane position to avoid a potential collision.

Never assume the driver has seen you, or correctly judged your speed.

### Always signal when leaving a highway

If you're turning left from a highway, signal well in advance of your turn and check your mirrors and make sure you have plenty of space behind. The drivers behind may not be prepared to slow down for you.

### Slow down on curves

Many motorcycle crashes occur in curves and often involve the motorcyclist going off the road or crossing the centre line into the path of oncoming traffic.

To avoid this, plan your trajectory prior to reaching the curve, and adjust your lane position and speed appropriately. Always look where you want to go.

ICBC's Learn to ride smart and Tuning up for riders guides provide great information for brushing up on your knowledge and riding skills. Pick up a copy at your local driver licensing office or download them from [icbc.com](http://icbc.com).

## Safety tips – for drivers

Motorcycle riders are similar to cyclists and pedestrians. They don't have the protection of an external frame, seatbelts or bumpers, and they're sometimes difficult to see.

### Always watch out for motorcyclists.

Scan at intersections and look carefully for motorcycles, especially those turning left.

When turning left – look for oncoming motorcycles. Motorcycles can be hard to see, especially at night, at dusk, in bad weather or in heavy traffic. It is also difficult to judge how fast they're travelling. If you see a motorcycle approaching, the safest thing to do is yield the right of way.

Watch the rider for clues – sometimes a motorcycle's turn signals are hard to see. If the rider shoulder checks or the motorcycle leans, the rider is probably planning to change lanes, adjust lane position or turn.

Don't share a lane – a motorcycle needs the whole lane to travel safely, but only share a small portion at a time. Never try to occupy the space in the lane beside a motorcycle.

### Communicate

Acknowledge the rider – whenever possible, let motorcyclists know that you've seen them.

Read vehicle language – don't assume that a rider in the left part of the lane is planning to turn left.

Motorcyclists often ride in the left part of the lane to make themselves more visible.

### Leave at least three seconds of following distance when you're behind a motorcycle because:

Motorcycles have a much shorter stopping distance than most other vehicles.

Motorcyclists can skid and fall because of poor road conditions. You need to leave plenty of room to stop safely.

Your vehicle may throw dirt or water in the rider's face and pose a serious hazard to the rider, so allow plenty of space when passing.



*SOURCE: ICBC - Sharing the Road with Motorcycles*

*The information in this publication is intended to provide general information only and is not intended to provide legal or professional advice. We have used plain language to summarize some of the terms of the policy that is the topic of this publication or help readers understand some of the laws affecting the topic of this publication at the date it was written. You should follow the more detailed wording and requirements of current applicable statutes and regulations or policy, even if they contradict the wording and requirements set out in this publication.*