

# Motorcycle Riders Foundation Motorcycle Statistics Fact or Fiction?



**Analysis** A number of inaccuracies, inconsistencies, and erroneous conclusions have been uncovered in examining recent data related to motorcycle crashes, injuries, and fatalities published by the Centers for Disease Control as well as by news outlets reporting on such data. If the information is incorrect it can only lead to theories and conclusions which are also incorrect or, at the very least, highly suspect.

**Solution** Since much of the data is erroneous, the conclusions based on that data are also erroneous. The only true solutions to motorcycle safety are proactive measures which prevent collisions from occurring at all rather than reactive steps that may or may not offer some level of injury mitigation after a crash has already taken place. Rider education which prepares motorcyclists to interact with other roadway users by learning and practicing the skills necessary for hazard avoidance and developing a strategy to deal with real world traffic is the primary component of a comprehensive motorcycle safety plan. Additionally, educating all motor vehicle operators to be alert and free of impairment as they share the road with others is critical in deterring crashes caused by inattention.

## Training and Awareness are the Keys...



Examples of how the motorcycling community works to address and implement these measures are as follows:

**Lobby** for state legislated rider education programs and work with state program coordinators to develop, promote and improve training courses.

**Present** "Share the Road" programs to driver education classes, civic and social organizations and public meetings.

**Introduce** "Right of Way" legislation that provides prosecutors more opportunities in cases where a motorist's negligence causes injury or death to another.

**Create** Motorcycle Safety and Awareness Month to remind all motor vehicle operators of motorcyclists' presence on the road.

**Deliver** "Ride Straight" messages within the motorcycling culture encouraging everyone to ride and drive free of impairments.

*For more information, contact the Motorcycle Riders Foundation, 202-546-0983, [legislative@mrf.org](mailto:legislative@mrf.org)*



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**Possible Errors?** When errors and inaccuracies are discovered in reports or statistics, it calls into question the integrity of the results. None of these facts are intended to argue against motorcycle helmet use, but rather to demonstrate that a mandatory motorcycle helmet law is not the solution to motorcycle safety.

**FACT There is no evidence to support the claim that laws allowing adult motorcycle riders to choose whether or not to wear a helmet result in increased health care costs.** In its recent review of hospital expenses around the country, the Kaiser Family Foundation broke down inpatient hospital expenses per day in 2012. They did this for each state and the District of Columbia. From that information they were able to estimate how much a single day of inpatient care costs in each state. The average daily cost for states which had mandatory motorcycle helmet laws was \$2,047. The average daily cost for states which allowed adult riders to choose whether or not to wear a motorcycle helmet was \$1,987.

**FACT There is no evidence to support the claim that laws allowing adult motorcycle riders to choose whether or not to wear a helmet result in increased yearly health care premiums.** The most recent report of the Joint Economic Committee of the United States Congress on state by state premiums looked at yearly premium payments through 2006. The average yearly premium in 2006 for single coverage health care in states which had mandatory motorcycle helmet laws was \$4,390. The average yearly premium for single coverage health care in states which allowed adult riders to choose whether or not to wear a motorcycle helmet was \$4,335. Likewise, the average yearly premium for family coverage health care in states which had mandatory motorcycle helmet laws \$11,847. The average yearly premium for family coverage health care in states which allowed adult riders to choose whether or not to wear a motorcycle helmet was \$11,490.

**FACT There is no evidence to support the claim that laws allowing adult motorcycle riders to choose whether or not to wear a helmet result in increased monthly health care premiums.** The most recent report on the subject of average monthly individual health care premiums by the Kaiser Family Foundation looked at average monthly individual health care premiums by state for the year 2013. The average monthly individual health care premium in states which had mandatory motorcycle helmet laws was \$267.53. The average monthly individual health care premium in states which allowed adult riders to choose whether or not to wear a motorcycle helmet was \$245.26.

**FACT There is no evidence to support the claim that laws allowing adult motorcycle riders to choose whether or not to wear a helmet result in increased motor vehicle insurance rates.** Insure.com recently released its report on motor vehicle insurance rates for 2014, which looks at average motor vehicle insurance rates for each state. The average motor vehicle insurance rate in states which had mandatory motorcycle helmet laws was \$1,582.45. The average motor vehicle insurance rate in states which allowed adult riders to choose whether or not to wear a motorcycle helmet was \$1,451.45.

**FACT Groups such as the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety take the position that training and education is of little to no value when it comes to motorcycle safety, and that universal motorcycle helmet laws are the key to saving the lives of riders.** Yet according to the latest information published by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), between 2005 and 2012 motorcycle registrations have increased 36% nationwide while motorcycle fatalities per 100,000 registered motorcycles have decreased 20%. Additionally, motorcycle vehicle miles traveled have increased 104% during that same timeframe, while motorcycle fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles traveled have decreased 47%. Between 2005 and 2012 there has been an increased emphasis on motorcycle training and education, with 47 states currently having state legislated motorcycle training programs in place. During that same time frame not a single state promulgated a universal helmet law. In fact, one state, Michigan, repealed their universal helmet law and gave adult riders the right to choose whether or not to wear a motorcycle helmet.

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