

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

FACT OR FICTION?



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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 **Motorcycle fatalities per 100,000 registered motorcycles have been steadily declining since 2005.** In 2005 there were 73.48 motorcycle fatalities per every 100,000 registered motorcycles in the United States. That number has steadily decreased to 54.66 in 2011.

FACT **Between 2008 and 2011, jurisdictions with mandatory motorcycle helmet laws averaged 60.26 motorcycle related fatalities per 100,000 registered motorcycles.** States with laws allowing adults to choose whether or not to wear a helmet averaged 57.90 motorcycle related fatalities per 100,000 registered motorcycles during that same period.

FACT **Between 2008 and 2011, 42% of all registered motorcycles in the United States were registered in jurisdictions with mandatory motorcycle helmet laws.** Those same jurisdictions accounted for 43% of all motorcycle related fatalities. During the same timeframe, 58% of all registered motorcycles in the United States were registered in jurisdictions which allowed adult riders to choose whether or not to wear a helmet. Those same jurisdictions accounted for 57% of all motorcycle related fatalities.

FACT **Many studies on the affects of motorcycle helmet laws lack critical information necessary to draw an accurate conclusion.** In a recent study conducted by the Highway Loss Data Institute (HDLI) on Michigan's modified motorcycle helmet law and its affect on insurance claims, the HDLI admitted that it lacked information on the type of injuries associated with insurance claims, and that the lack of such information affected their analysis.

FACT **Groups such as the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) and the Centers for Disease control (CDC) often use questionable methods in coming to conclusions about the effectiveness of mandatory motorcycle helmet laws.** For instance, both groups often compare motorcycle fatalities to Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) even though there is no reliable method to determine motorcycle VMT. The Transportation Research Board of the National Academies has recently warned that there is no uniformity of motorcycle VMT estimation methods among the states, and no validation of the accuracy of various methods. They further point out that past motorcycle VMT have demonstrated a decrease in VMT despite increased motorcycle registrations and sales. Accurate conclusions may only be drawn from accurate data.

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