



## FACT SHEET

## Motorcycle Helmets

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Motorcycles are the most hazardous form of motor vehicle transportation.<sup>1</sup> In 2013, 4,668 motorcyclists were killed.<sup>2</sup> Additionally, 88,000 more were injured on our nation's roads in 2013.<sup>3</sup> NHTSA estimates that helmets saved the lives of 1,630 motorcyclists in 2013 and that 715 more lives in all states could have been saved if all motorcyclists had worn helmets.<sup>4</sup> The number of motorcycle crash fatalities has more than doubled since a low of 2,116 motorcycle crash deaths in 1997.<sup>5</sup> All-rider helmet laws increase motorcycle helmet use, decrease deaths and injuries and save taxpayer dollars.

### Helmets Save Lives & Reduce Health Care Costs

- According to a 2012 Government Accountability Office (GAO) report, “laws requiring all motorcyclists to wear helmets are the only strategy proved to be effective in reducing motorcyclist fatalities.”<sup>6</sup>
- In states without an all-rider helmet law 59% of the motorcyclists killed were not wearing helmets, as opposed to only 8% in states with all-rider helmet laws in 2013.<sup>7</sup>
- Annually, motorcycle crashes cost \$12.9 billion in economic impacts, and \$66 billion in societal harm as measured by comprehensive costs based on 2010 data. Compared to other motor vehicle crashes, these costs are disproportionately caused by fatalities and serious injuries.<sup>8</sup>
- Motorcycle helmets are currently preventing \$17 billion in societal harm annually, but another \$8 billion in harm could be prevented if all motorcyclists wore helmets.<sup>9</sup>
- Per vehicle mile traveled, motorcyclists were more than 26 times more likely to die in a traffic crash than occupants of passenger cars.<sup>10</sup>
- In Michigan, which repealed its all-rider law in 2012, there would have been 26 fewer motorcycle crash deaths (a 21% reduction) if the helmet mandate was still in place, according to the University of Michigan Transportation Research Institute.<sup>11</sup> Additionally, in the remainder of the year after the helmet repeal was enacted (April of 2012), only 74% of motorcyclists involved in crashes were helmeted, compared to 98% in the same time period of the previous four years.<sup>12</sup>
- In states with an all-rider helmet law, use of a helmet resulted in economic costs saved to society of \$725 per registered motorcycle, compared with \$198 per registered motorcycle in states without such a law.<sup>13</sup>
  - Helmets are currently saving \$2.7 billion in economic costs annually.<sup>14</sup>

- In 2013, motorcyclists represented 14% of the total traffic fatalities, yet accounted for only 3% of all registered vehicles in the United States.<sup>15</sup>
- By an overwhelming majority (80%), Americans favor state laws requiring all motorcyclists to wear helmets.<sup>16</sup>
- Motorcycle helmets reduce the risk of head injury by 69% and reduce the risk of death by 42%.<sup>17</sup>
- When crashes occur, motorcyclists need adequate head protection to prevent one of the leading causes of death and disability in America -- head injuries.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Economic and Societal Impact of Motor Vehicle Crashes, 2010 (Revised), NHTSA, May 2015 (Revised), DOT HS 812 013, available at <http://www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/Pubs/812013.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Traffic Safety Facts. 2013 Data: Motorcycles, NHTSA, May 2015, DOT HS 812 148, available at <http://www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/Pubs/812148.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Traffic Safety Facts. 2013 Data: Motorcycles, NHTSA, May 2015, DOT HS 812 148, available at <http://www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/Pubs/812148.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> Traffic Safety Facts. 2013 Data: Motorcycles, NHTSA, May 2015, DOT HS 812 148, available at <http://www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/Pubs/812148.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> Traffic Safety Facts 2013: A Compilation of Motor Vehicle Crash Data from the Fatality Analysis Reporting System and the General Estimates System, NHTSA, 2015, DOT HS 812 139, available at <http://www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/Pubs/812139.pdf>.

<sup>6</sup> Motorcycle Safety: Increasing Federal Flexibility and Identifying Research Priorities Would Help Support States' Safety Efforts, GAO, 2012, GAO-13-42, available at <http://www.gao.gov/assets/660/650037.pdf> .

<sup>7</sup> Traffic Safety Facts. 2013 Data: Motorcycles, NHTSA, May 2015, DOT HS 812 148, available at <http://www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/Pubs/812148.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> The Economic and Societal Impact of Motor Vehicle Crashes, 2010 (Revised), NHTSA, May 2015 (Revised), DOT HS 812 013, available at <http://www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/Pubs/812013.pdf>.

<sup>9</sup> The Economic and Societal Impact of Motor Vehicle Crashes, 2010 (Revised), NHTSA, May 2015 (Revised), DOT HS 812 013, available at <http://www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/Pubs/812013.pdf>.

<sup>10</sup> Traffic Safety Facts. 2013 Data: Motorcycles, NHTSA, May 2015, DOT HS 812 148, available at <http://www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/Pubs/812148.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> Flannagan CA, Analysis of Motorcycle Crashes: Comparison of 2012 to Previous Years, 18<sup>th</sup> Michigan Traffic Safety Summit, 2013.

<sup>12</sup> Flannagan CA, Analysis of Motorcycle Crashes: Comparison of 2012 to Previous Years, 18<sup>th</sup> Michigan Traffic Safety Summit, 2013.

<sup>13</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Helmet use Among Motorcyclists Who Died in Crashes and Economic Cost Savings Associated With State Motorcycle Helmet Laws – United States, 2008-2010, MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep, 61(23), 425-430, 2012.

<sup>14</sup> The Economic and Societal Impact of Motor Vehicle Crashes, 2010 (Revised), NHTSA, May 2015 (Revised), DOT HS 812 013, available at <http://www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/Pubs/812013.pdf>.

<sup>15</sup> Traffic Safety Facts. 2013 Data: Motorcycles, NHTSA, May 2015, DOT HS 812 148, available at <http://www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/Pubs/812148.pdf>

<sup>16</sup> Louis Harris and Peter Harris Research Group, Inc., *Survey of the Attitudes of the American People of Highway and Auto Safety*, June, 2004. Available online at: <http://saferoads.org/press/press2004/Roadmap2005/12HarrisPoll.pdf> (Accessed Nov. 11, 2013).

<sup>17</sup> Liu BC, Ivers R, Norton R, Boufous S, Blows S, Lo SK, *Helmets for preventing injury in motorcycle riders (Review)*, The Cochrane Library, Issue 1, 2009. Available online at: <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/14651858.CD004333.pub3/abstract> (Accessed Nov. 11, 2013).

<sup>18</sup> Coronado VG, Xu L., Basavaraju SV, McGuire LC, Wald MM, Faul MD, Guzman BR, JD Hemphill, *Surveillance for Traumatic Brain Injury--Related Deaths --- United States, 1997--2007*, MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep, 60(05), 1-32, 2011, available at <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/pdf/ss/ss6005.pdf>.