



OCCUPANT PROTECTION

ALL-RIDER MOTORCYCLE HELMET LAWS

Issue

Motorcycles are the most hazardous form of motor vehicle transportation.

Impact

In 2021, 5,932 motorcycle riders were killed, an 8% increase from the previous year. This is the highest fatality total in a single year since data collection began in 1975.

Solutions

Laws, Technology
and Roadway Safety
Infrastructure

All-Rider Helmet Requirements Are Effective, Reduce Costs and are Supported by the Public – According to a Government Accountability Office (GAO) report, “laws requiring all motorcyclists to wear helmets are the only strategy proved to be effective in reducing motorcyclist fatalities.”

Safety Technology to Prevent Motorcycle Crashes

- Proven collision avoidance systems in vehicles including AEB, LDW, BSD, rear AEB, and rear-cross traffic alert should be required to detect and safely respond, as appropriate, to vulnerable road users (VRUs) including motorcycle riders.
- Motorcycle anti-lock braking systems were associated with a 22% reduction in the rate of fatal crash involvements, according to IIHS research, and should be required as standard equipment.

Road Safety Infrastructure Improvements and the Safe System Approach



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The Facts

- In 2021, when helmet use was known, 39% of motorcyclists killed were not wearing a helmet.
- The observed use rate of U.S. DOT-compliant helmets among motorcycle riders was just over 86% in states with all-rider helmet laws, compared to only 53% in other states in 2021.
- Motorcycle helmets reduce the risk of head injury by 69% and reduce the risk of death by 42%.
- Annually, motorcycle crashes cost nearly \$17 billion in economic impacts and \$107 billion in societal harms measured by comprehensive costs based on 2019 data. Accounting for inflation alone, in 2023, this would equate to over \$20 billion in economic impacts, and over \$127 billion in societal harm. Serious injuries and fatalities accounted for 83% of total comprehensive costs of motorcycle crashes, compared to 60% of the total comprehensive costs of all motor vehicle crashes.
- According to NHTSA, in 2021, there were 9.6 times as many unhelmeted fatalities (2,038 fatalities) in states without a universal helmet law compared to states with a universal helmet law (213 fatalities).
- In states without all-rider helmet laws, 57% of motorcyclists killed in 2021 were not wearing helmets, compared to 10% in states with such laws.
- In Michigan, which repealed its all-rider law in 2012, there would have been 26 fewer motorcycle crash deaths (a 21% reduction) that year if the helmet mandate was still in place, according to the University of Michigan Transportation Research Institute. Additionally, in the remainder of the year after the helmet repeal was enacted, only 74% of motorcycle riders involved in crashes were helmeted, compared to 98% in the same time period of the previous four years.
- A survey found a strong majority (82%) of Americans favored state laws requiring all motorcycle riders to wear helmets.



- According to the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), in states with only youth-specific helmet laws, helmet use has decreased and youth mortality has increased. Serious traumatic brain injury among young riders was 38% higher in states with only age-specific laws compared to states with all-rider helmet laws.
- All-rider motorcycle helmet law repeal efforts, which include motorcycle education and training requirements, fail to meet the safety benefit provided by a universal helmet law. There is no scientific evidence that motorcycle rider training reduces crash risk.

[Click here to learn more](#)



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Advocacy

Motorcycle Rider Group Pushes State Legislatures to Retain Existing All-Rider Motorcycle Helmet Requirements and Enact New Ones

holland
sentinel.com

“My Take: Preventing motorcycle rider deaths”

9/4/22

SPOTLIGHT: SMARTER FIGHTS FOR MOTORCYCLIST SAFETY

[Skilled Motorcyclist Association—Responsible, Trained, and Educated Riders \(SMARTER\)](#) is a nonprofit motorcyclist education association for riders, rider educators, policymakers, legislators, and others who care about the safety of motorcyclists. For more than 16 years, SMARTER has advocated for all-rider motorcycle helmet laws because the research proves they save lives, prevent injuries, and reduce medical care costs. Advocates has worked with SMARTER on dozens of legislative efforts during the past decade.

SMARTER’s voice is critical in state legislatures when efforts to weaken existing laws for helmet requirements are considered, which is unfortunately an annual occurrence. Oftentimes other rider groups will paint their position with a broad brush, messaging that riders are opposed to all-rider helmet requirements. SMARTER’s advocacy shows this is not true; many riders support all-rider helmet laws.

SMARTER believes motorcycle riders, motorcyclist safety advocates, and policy decision makers make better decisions when they are based on factual knowledge and the conclusions of quality research. The mission of SMARTER is, therefore, to gather, examine, catalogue, share, post, and distribute motorcyclist safety information and research and to advocate for the use of such knowledge as the basis of decisions.

The SMARTER website contains more than 400 research reports in 20 topic areas and makes their position clear:

Based on the research conclusions, SMARTER [supports](#) the enactment of all-rider helmet requirements and opposes the repeal or weakening of existing all-rider laws.

LOOKING TO 2024

SMARTER, [Advocates](#) and other public health and safety groups will continue the fight to keep riders safe by requiring helmet use for all riders and opposing efforts to repeal these laws. Rider fatalities and injuries are preventable, and the research is clear. Helmet use saves lives and all-rider motorcycle helmet requirements ensure helmets are worn.

In 2024 Advocates will work with SMARTER on opportunities to enact all-rider motorcycle helmet requirements as well as oppose those measures that would weaken existing laws. Our partnership on the federal level will continue to ensure the rule for AEB detects and responds to all road users, that vehicles equipped with ADS are required to appropriately detect and respond to motorcyclists and other VRUs, and to advance Anti-lock Braking System (ABS) as standard equipment for motorcycles, among other measures.

