

Gloves

Durable, non-slip gloves are recommended to permit a firm grip on the controls. Leather gloves are excellent, as are special fabric gloves with leather palms and grip strips on the fingers. Gauntlet-type gloves keep air out of a motorcyclist's sleeves.

Footwear

Proper footwear affords protection for the feet, ankles, and lower parts of the legs. Leather boots are best. Durable athletic shoes that cover the ankles are a good second choice. Sandals, sneakers and similar footwear should not be used since they provide little protection from abrasions or a crushing impact. Motorcyclists should avoid dangling laces that can get in their way.

Safety Information

- ▶ Treat other motorists with courtesy and respect
- ▶ Avoid tailgating
- ▶ Obey posted speed limits
- ▶ Know and obey traffic laws, including ordinances in your community
- ▶ Avoid excessive noise by leaving the stock muffler in place or using a muffler of equivalent noise reduction
- ▶ Use signals when appropriate
- ▶ Ride drug and alcohol free

Be courteous. The practices of some riders are offensive to other motorists, such as weaving in and out of stalled traffic or riding on shoulders. Being inconsiderate of other motorists creates a negative image for all riders, and can cause crashes.

Resources

For more information about motorcycle safety, visit DMV's Virginia Highway Safety Office website at www.dmvNOW.com/highwaysafety. For more information about the Virginia Rider Training Program, visit www.learn2ride.com. For a list of Virginia Rider Training Program course locations, visit www.dmv.virginia.gov/drivers/#m_course.html.

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Virginia Highway Safety Office

The Keys to Safe Motorcycle Riding

DMV 212 (08/10/2015)
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Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles

A motorcycle can offer you freedom, excitement and a fun way to travel. However, operating a motorcycle requires extra concentration and additional training. Virginia's motorcycle requirements are designed to ensure the safety of motorcyclists as well as others traveling on the road.



Motorcycle Classifications

If you operate a motorcycle in Virginia, you must hold a valid motorcycle classification designation on your driver's license, or have a driver's license restricted to the operation of a motorcycle.

When applying for a new motorcycle classification, riders will be asked to indicate the type of motorcycle they wish to operate, two-wheeled or three-wheeled. The appropriate classification, M2 for two-wheeled or M3 for three-wheeled, will be marked on the license once DMV staff determines the applicant has passed the road test on the type of motorcycle he/she has indicated or has completed an acceptable motorcycle rider training course. Riders who test on both two-wheeled and three-wheeled

motorcycles or complete training courses for both types of vehicles will receive an M classification. An M classification signifies that the license holder is permitted to operate two-wheeled and three-wheeled motorcycles.

Riders renewing a Virginia license or transferring a motorcycle class from another state with any motorcycle classification designation will be issued the same classification that is currently on their license.

If a person is convicted of operating a motorcycle without being properly licensed, he or she faces a Class 1 Misdemeanor punishable by up to a \$2,500 fine and one year in jail.

Virginia Rider Training Program

Classes are designed for both beginning riders and experienced riders, and are taught by certified motorcycle safety instructors. Classes will provide you with the opportunity to learn new techniques and practice your skills in a controlled, safe environment. Classes are offered at community colleges and other locations throughout the state. For information about a course near you, call 1-800-435-5137 or www.dmv.virginia.gov/drivers/#m_course.html

Helmets

A helmet is the most important safety equipment a motorcyclist wears. Helmets are about 29 percent effective in preventing motorcycle deaths and about 67 percent effective in preventing brain injuries. A rider with no helmet is 40 percent more likely to suffer a fatal head injury than is a helmeted rider.

In Virginia, motorcyclists and their passengers must wear an approved motorcycle helmet that meets or exceeds the standards and specifications of the Snell Memorial Foundation, the American National Standards Institute or the United States Department of Transportation.

Eye Protection

Motorcycle riders must protect their eyes against insects, dirt, rocks or other debris. Even the wind can cause the eyes to tear and blur vision, and good vision is imperative when riding. Motorcycle operators should choose quality goggles, glasses with plastic or safety lenses or a helmet equipped with a face shield. Goggles, glasses and face shields should be scratch free, shatterproof and well-ventilated to prevent fog buildup. Only clear shields should be used at night since tinted shields make it more difficult to see. Even if the motorcycle has a windshield, eye protection is recommended.

Jackets and Pants

In the event of a crash, clothing worn should provide some measure of protection from abrasion. Clothing should be made of a durable material, such as leather. Jackets should be long sleeved. Long pants, not shorts, should be worn. They should not be baggy or flared at the bottom to prevent entanglement with the chain, kick starter, foot-pegs or other protrusions on the sides of a motorcycle.

Upper body clothing should be brightly colored. Some motorcyclists wear lightweight reflective orange or yellow vests over their jackets.

Use of retro-reflective material on clothing, helmet and the motorcycle helps make you visible to other motorists, especially at night. Many vehicle/motorcycle crashes occur because the driver of the other vehicle failed to see the motorcyclist in time to avoid the crash.

