

In gathering motorcycle safety-related information, I came across these links and information (08/2003):

<http://www.mrf.org/>

<http://www.insurancejournal.com/magazines/west/2002/01/28/newsbriefs>

PIFC WANTS HELMET LAW TO REMAIN

A bill that would permit motorcyclists 18 and older to discard their helmets will do nothing but increase the number of motorcycle-related injury accidents and deaths in California, according to the Personal Insurance Federation of California (PIFC). According to Michael Gunning, senior legislative advocate for PIFC, while SB 1057 (Morrow) mandates individuals who discard their helmets to have medical insurance, there is nothing in the bill to enforce this requirement. The current law requiring all motorcyclists to wear helmets was enacted on Jan. 1, 1992. Overall, the California Highway Patrol (CHP) reports motorcycle fatalities and injuries have decreased by over 50 percent since the helmet law that enactment. According to a study released Jan. 8, 2002, by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS), the repeal of helmet use laws in some states and the weakening of the laws in others are contributing factors to an increase in motorcyclist deaths.

<http://www.iadesign.ca/hawk/safety.html>

<http://www.ama-assn.org/ama/pub/article/2036-2519.html>

Delivering Informational Materials to Motorcyclists and Other Motorists

Automobile interference with the right-of-way of motorcyclists is a main cause of multi-vehicle motorcycle crashes.²⁶ Such crashes occur because motorists either fail to see the motorcycle or misjudge its speed and distance. Prevention of multi-vehicle crashes requires that motorists be aware of the special characteristics of motorcycles so that they can interact safely with motorcycles in everyday driving situations.

Informational materials are available for truck and automobile drivers to increase their awareness of motorcycles; materials are also available for motorcyclists to increase their awareness of state rider education, training and licensing programs, the dangers of riding while impaired by alcohol and other drugs, and the use of appropriate protective equipment.³⁰ More research is needed to evaluate public information campaigns and their effectiveness in reaching target audiences, inducing desired behavioral changes, and ultimately improving motorcycle safety.²⁶

Reducing the Number of Alcohol-Impaired Motorcyclists

Alcohol-related deaths among motorcyclists are higher than in any other driver group. According to the NHTSA, more than half of all motorcyclists killed in traffic crashes have measurable amounts of alcohol in their blood.²⁵ In 1996, 30% of fatally injured motorcycle operators were intoxicated (i.e., blood alcohol concentration of 0.10 grams per deciliter or greater) compared with 19% of passenger car drivers.

The adverse effects of alcohol on motor vehicle drivers are well-documented.³¹ Increased efforts are needed to prevent alcohol-related crashes and to educate all drivers that alcohol use, even at low levels, impairs driving performance and poses significant health and safety risks.

Improving Motorcycles and Highway Environments

Motorcycles have changed considerably in the past 20 years, with technical improvements in safety, design, and performance.²⁶ Many motorcycles are now manufactured with bodywork featuring graphics that may be more visible to oncoming traffic. Full-time (or daytime running) headlights have been required on motorcycles since the late 1970s. Variable-intensity or

modulating headlamps have also been allowed by federal statute since 1986. To improve braking performance, anti-lock brakes and integrated braking systems are available on some motorcycles to replace dual braking systems. As these technologies and enhancements are available, research is needed to document their operational, performance, and safety benefits, as well as their effectiveness in reducing motorcycle crash rates.²⁶

The highway environment is often overlooked as a motorcycle hazard.²⁶ Guardrails, potholes, road gratings, and railroad tracks are examples of possible roadway hazards for motorcyclists. More research is needed to identify motorcycle hazards in the highway environment and develop cost-effective interventions.²⁶

http://www.fleet-central.com/af/passnews_c.cfm?rank=1004

U.S. Traffic Fatality Rate Increased in 2000

April 3, 2001

WASHINGTON, DC--According to preliminary statistics released Thursday by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, there were 1.6 deaths per 100 million vehicle miles traveled last year, a slight increase over 1.5 deaths in 1999. This was the first time in 24 years that the rate at which U.S. motorists and passengers died in traffic accidents.

The increase represents a reversal of a decades-long trend in overall highway safety. The statistics could change when final results are compiled in May. In the meantime, researchers at the agency and highway safety advocates are searching for answers.

Overall, 41,800 people died in traffic accidents in 2000, up from 41,611 traffic deaths in 1999. Some analysts blame a spike in the number of motorcycle-related deaths. Other experts cite an ongoing shift among U.S. consumers from cars to sport-utility vehicles and other light trucks, which are more prone to rollover accidents. Seat-belt use is a continuing concern. And some experts blame higher speed limits and an increase in unfavorable motorist behavior and driving habits.

The biggest increase in traffic fatalities in 2000 came among motorcycle riders. There were 2,680 motorcycle deaths in 2000, up from 2,472 in 1999, an 8 percent increase and 27 percent spike since 1997. The number of deaths involving SUVs, vans and pickup trucks increased 1.7 percent last year to 11,439. Alcohol use remained the largest single factor associated with traffic deaths. There were 16,068 alcohol-related deaths in 2000 -- or 38 percent of all traffic deaths.

<http://www.ridefullthrottle.com/bikernewsarchive.htm>

Biker News Archive

5/11/03

Motorcycling-related fatalities were up 3-percent for the year 2002 compared to the previous year, according to preliminary estimates released by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, the American Motorcyclist Association reports.

Meanwhile, overall highway fatalities were up about 1.5 percent in 2002 to 42,850, compared to 42,116 in 2001, the traffic agency said. That represents the highest number of fatalities since 1990. The federal agency's preliminary report states that 3,276 motorcyclists lost their lives on America's roads in 2002, or 95 more than the 3,181 lives lost in 2001.

While deaths are up, the preliminary report estimate shows that the increase in motorcyclist fatalities over the past several years has slowed, even though motorcycle sales continued at near-record levels.

"The slowdown is a hopeful sign, but there is still a lot we can do to save motorcyclist lives on our nation's highways," said Ed Mooreland, AMA vice president for government relations." The top priority for anyone interested in saving lives should be legislation in Congress to fund comprehensive research into the causes of motorcycle crashes. All motorcyclists are encouraged to contact their State Representatives and ask them to support House funding for the motor-vehicle safety research that is included in HR 5559.

<http://www.ssabate.org/page0005.htm>

"ODD" ACCIDENTS OUTNUMBER MOTORCYCLE FATALITIES According to the National Safety Council, more people were killed in "odd" accidents than on motorcycles in 1999, points out Joe "Cowboy" Dickey. "Of those who might have survived with a helmet, stair walkers led the list," stated Cowboy, former State Coordinator for ABATE of Pennsylvania and a member of the NCOM Board of Directors.

Check these killers out:

- * Bitten by a dog (25)
- * Stung by a hornet, wasp, or bee (43)
- * Scalded to death by hot tap water (51)
- * Struck by lightning (64)
- * Occupant of commercial bus or train (116)
- * Drowned in a bathtub (320)
- * Accidentally suffocated or strangled in bed (330)
- * Fell off of a ladder (375)
- * Fell down stairs or steps (1,421)

http://www.geocities.com/rt_66.geo/helmet.html **Helmets and Helmet Laws in the USA**

http://www.americanmotorcycleclub.com/news/articles/NHSTA_seeks_comments_on_national_traffic_safety_study.shtml