



## Campaign



**3 - 9 June 2024**

**#MotorcycleSafety**

**Toolkit for fire and rescue services**

# Motorcycle safety week

## Introduction

The aim of the week is

- To raise awareness of risks and behaviours which can lead to motorcycle related fatal and serious injury collisions, particularly poor maintenance, and substandard PPE
- Educate and provide advice to influence positive motorcycle user behaviour and encourage all forms of enhanced rider training
- To increase delivery and attendance at Biker Down and all other motorcycle safety courses currently delivered by FRSs and their partners

The week has been timed to support the [National Roads Partnership Operations Calendar](#).

## National statistics

Motorcycles make up around 1% of road traffic, but it is estimated in 2023 accounted for 20% of road fatalities and around 12% of road casualties in Great Britain.

[The Department for Transport publish data – Report road casualties Great Britain: motorcyclist factsheet 2022 is the latest available.](#)

Some main findings:

- In 2022, 350 motorcyclists were killed in Great Britain, whilst 5,618 were reported to be seriously injured and 10,975 slightly injured
- The overall number of motorcyclist casualties fell each year from 2014 to 2020, but increased between 2020 and 2022
- Between 2021 and 2022, motorcyclist fatalities increased by 13% while motorcyclist traffic increased by 12%
- Between 2018 and 2022, 66% of motorcycle fatalities occurred on rural roads compared to 41% in traffic

[Reported road casualty statistics in Great Britain: interactive dashboard](#) is a useful resource to see latest available data by police and local highway authority area.

## Northern Ireland

Northern Ireland statistics are recorded and published by the [Police Service of Northern Ireland](#)

# Messages to support motorcycle safety

Many fire services run Biker Down sessions, this initiative was developed by Kent Fire and Rescue Service and NFCC is supportive of this as one of the available courses to improve rider education.

If your area is supporting Biker Down it is an opportunity to promote the sessions.

**For those FRS who currently do not deliver the Biker Down course but are interested in finding out more Kent FRS Biker Down team can advise and help you look into this.**

**Contact [james.sanderson@kent.fire-uk.org](mailto:james.sanderson@kent.fire-uk.org)**

You can also help promote other motorcycle training courses in your area as part of the week.

In 2023 NFCC worked with RoSPA and supported the launch of the [Novice Riders Hub](#) – this has useful online resources which can be linked to as part of the week and as via FRS websites at any time of year.

## Helmets

A motorcycle helmet is the most important part of your kit – getting it right can save your life.

To travel safely and legally you **must** wear a safety helmet that meets one of the following:

- British Standard BS 6658:1985 and carry the BSI Kitemark
- UNECE Regulation 22.05
- a European Economic Area member standard offering at least the same safety and protection as BS 6658:1985, and carry a mark equivalent to the BSI Kitemark

### SHARP - the helmet safety scheme

The [Safety Helmet Assessment and Rating Programme \(SHARP\)](#) shows you approved helmets and how much protection they offer.

[FRSs can order leaflets with advice about motorcycle helmets free from the SHARP website](#)

### Avoid buying a second-hand helmet.

If a helmet has had an impact either from a collision or by being dropped it may no longer offer you sufficient protection. You may not be able to see this damage. Internal linings will have shaped to the first owner's head, it will therefore not fit or reshape to your head properly, reducing level of protection.

Motorcycle helmets have a limited life span. Manufacturers generally recommend a properly maintained, regularly used helmet should be replaced about every 3-5 years.

- You can pay a big price if you buy counterfeit or fake motorcycle helmets. You're being ripped off and riding illegally. These helmets won't properly protect in a collision or fall.

Make sure your helmet is safe and legal by buying from reputable retailers  
#MotorcycleSafety

- Second hand motorcycle helmets might look ok, but helmets have a limited lifespan. The materials may not provide full impact protection. Helmets must be replaced after an impact – including being dropped. Fit is important and second hand is rarely the best fit  
#MotorcycleSafety
- Choose the right helmet for your needs, budget and safety. Buy new, from a reputable retailer, and take a look @transportgovuk SHARP helmet safety scheme website for help and advice <https://sharp.dft.gov.uk/> #MotorcycleSafety

## PPE

Apart from helmets there is no law that requires a rider to wear protective clothing whilst riding a motorcycle. But wearing the right protective gear can protect riders from serious injury so is strongly recommended.

Just like with helmets there is a trade in fake, substandard or counterfeit goods. Motorcycle clothing that is designed to protect you in an impact or slide is classed as PPE and must comply with safety regulations and carry a safety mark (CE, UKCA or UKNI), ratings for the level of protection and user information and warnings. It will also have a rating from AAA (highest level of protection) to B (urban riding without impact protection).

- The right riding gear isn't jeans and trainers! The right protective clothing can reduce the risk of injury if you're in a collision. Buy clothing that suits your ride. You might need protection for your elbows, knees back, chest and shoulders. Riders should wear boots to protect their ankles and gloves to protect hands #MotorcycleSafety
- Always buy your protective gear from reputable retailers. They can offer you the right advice on the right kit for your ride. Buyer beware the market for counterfeit and fake gear is big. Don't get scammed, don't ride unprotected #MotorcycleSafety

## Maintenance

Whether you ride your motorcycle every day or you're getting ready to take to the road as the weather improves, maintenance of your bike is important to help you ride safely and legally.

### POWDERS check can help keep you safe

**Petrol** – Check you have enough fuel for your journey to prevent breakdowns and putting yourself or others at risk.

**Oil** - Reservoirs have upper and lower marks, and the oil level is usually checkable via a window in the engine casing if not use a dipstick to check. Ensure your motorcycle parked upright on level ground. The correct oil level will prevent your engine seizing up.

**Water** – Check coolant levels keep them topped up, running out of coolant can cause your engine to overheat which will damage your motorcycle.

**Damage/Drive chain** – Check the motorcycle over for any signs of damage this includes checking for chain tension and lubrication and damage to sprocket teeth. If your bike has a belt rather than chain, you should check for signs of damage such as cracking and drying.

**Electrics** – Check all lights including brakes and indicators are all working. Check cables are secure, and they or termination points are not worn as this can lead to failure of systems such as clutch, brakes or lighting.

**Rubber** - Check your tyres once a week. They should be in good condition and legal. Check tyre pressure when your tyres are cold and ensure they are set at the correct pressure as recommended by the manufacturer.

**Self** – Make sure you are fit to drive, not tired or under the influence of alcohol, drugs or any medicines which may affect your riding. Plan your route especially if you are taking your motorcycle out on a longer ride and make sure you take frequent breaks.

## Tyres

More information and resources about tyre safety for motorcycles can be found on the [TyreSafe website](#) ( they also have some great advice and resources for other modes of transport too!)

Over inflated motorcycle tyres can affect road grip and under inflated can cause problems with braking and handling. Look for cracks, bulges or objects embedded in the tread. Make sure your tyres are wearing evenly, if they're not your tyre pressures may be incorrect, or wheel assembly may be incorrectly balanced. Ensure tyres are clean and free of oil and grease, wash them with the detergent if necessary. Check your tyre tread depth. It must be no less than 1mm around the circumference of the middle three quarters of the tyre. If in doubt advice should always be sought from a professional.

- Whether you ride your motorcycle every day or you're getting ready to ride as the weather improves, maintaining your motorcycle is crucial to keeping you safe. The POWDERS check can help keep you safe #MotorcycleSafety
- Motorcycles need legal, correctly inflated and maintained tyres to ride safely, braking and handling on motorcycles. Check your tyres for uneven wear, embedded objects, cracks, or bulging as part of your regular maintenance. For great advice see <https://www.tyresafe.org/motorbike-tyre-safety/> #MotorcycleSafety

## The Thinking Biker

The average driver spends less than a second looking each way at junctions, we really need them to recognise you and your bike clearly! Being seen isn't just about dressing from head to foot in Day-Glo yellow or fitting more lights to your bike than a Mod's scooter has mirrors! It's about considering your visibility, before the start of the journey and the environments you will be riding in.

What may get you noticed in a busy city street may not have the same visibility enhancing qualities as the gear you may wear on late summers evening when scratching around on those idyllic country lanes. Standing out has never been about merging in with the crowd, dress to be different to the background but also try to present solid blocks of colour so your silhouette is easily recognisable at a glance. Consider the environment, background, light conditions, and colour clash to background potential.

The thinking biker also considers positioning - consider the areas of the road that would be the best place so you can be seen. This is especially important on the approach to junctions. As new bikers we're constantly told to 'stay dominant!' As experienced bikers we must make full use of the available road space to give drivers the best possible chance of seeing us sooner. We need to be aware that size DOES matter and a motorcycles lack of it means we're easily obscured.

The Biker Down session covers how you can increase visibility as a biker and how other vehicle drivers may struggle to see a motorbike due to dazzle camouflage, motion camouflage and looming. Tried and tested rider tactics covering road positioning for visibility are covered to help make riding safer for both bikes and other vehicles.

- The first person at the scene of a motorbike collision is often another biker. Would you know what to do? Sign up to a free 3 hour #BikerDown session - it might just save a life #MotorcycleSafety
- Many collisions happen when drivers don't see the motorcyclist. It's not always because they didn't look properly. It can be the optical illusions that can make it hard to see you on the road! A free #BikerDown session can give advice and riding techniques to help avoid a collision. #MotorcycleSafety
- Biker Down is a safety session, designed by bikers to help bikers. Delivered by Fire and Rescue Services the 3-hour session is free. Sign up for advice, skills and techniques to help keep riders safe #BikerDown #MotorcycleSafety

## **Additional resources to support motorcycle safety messaging**

[RoSPA Novice Riders Hub](#)

[New Rider Hub](#)

## **Courses available to support safer riding**

### **Ridefree**

This is a free online training course that should be completed before taking moped or motorcycle compulsory basic training (CBT).

The course contains 5 online learning modules covering:

- the Highway Code and hazard perception
- clothing, equipment, and the importance of maintenance
- how a rider's behaviour can affect them and other road users

Further information at: [www.safedrivingforlife.info/ridefree](http://www.safedrivingforlife.info/ridefree)

## **The Enhanced Rider Scheme**

The Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) enhanced rider scheme checks motorcycle riding skills and provides training to help motorcyclists to improve.

The scheme can help motorcyclists to:

- become a safer rider.
- develop their motorcycling skills.

If you successfully complete the scheme, you'll get a 'DVSA certificate of competence'. You can use this to get discounts with most motorcycle insurers.

To sign up to the scheme you will need to have a full motorcycle licence and have passed your test.

The scheme is suitable if you:

- have just passed your test.
- are returning to riding after a break.
- are upgrading to a more powerful motorcycle.
- want to check your riding standard.

Further information at: [www.gov.uk/enhanced-rider-scheme](http://www.gov.uk/enhanced-rider-scheme)

## **BikeSafe Workshops**

BikeSafe is a national, police run motorcycle initiative aimed at working with motorcycle riders in a relaxed environment to raise awareness of the importance and value of progressing on to accredited post-test training.

BikeSafe workshops involve an observed ride with a police-graded motorcyclist or approved BikeSafe observer. With some local variation, BikeSafe workshops aim to cover - rider attitude, systematic methods, collision causation, cornering, positioning, overtaking, observation, braking, hazard perception and use of gears.

Further information at: [www.bikesafe.co.uk](http://www.bikesafe.co.uk)

## **Biker Down**

Biker Down is a free, three-hour course provided by fire and rescue services across the UK.

Consisting of 3 modules the course offers motorcyclists the ability to train in essential life skills and the knowledge (based on operational Firefighter training) to help them cope should they encounter or be involved in a road traffic collision. The Course is FREE to all bikers of all ages and abilities so that there is no financial barrier to taking part. Specifically, the course includes the very latest advice surrounding the thorny issue of helmet removal.

Further information Kent FRS website at: [www.bikerdown.co.uk](http://www.bikerdown.co.uk)

### **Elite Rider Programme**

The Elite Rider Programme is a one stop shop for advanced training. It was created by the Motorcycle Industry Association (MCIA), road safety and training experts, government departments and respected, associated organisations. The aims of the initiative are to increase the number of riders undertaking post-test rider training, and to motivate riders to ride considerately toward other road users and the environment.

Further information at: <https://www.eliteriderhub.co.uk>

## **Case studies for Biker Down**

Below are videos produced by FRSs to promote their Biker Down sessions. They include case studies where attendees on the session have been put their skills into use and helped at the scene of an accident.

[Biker Down Main Promo](#) Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service

[Dr Davis Mpaveanda's Story](#) Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service

[Do it for Dave](#) – Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service