

## Motorcycle Awareness Month

May is motorcycle awareness month. This month, the Motorcycle Safety Foundation would like to remind all riders of a few basic rules to follow to ensure that everyone, riders and non-riders alike, can enjoy a beautiful and safe spring season.

**1. Get properly trained and licensed** - The best first ride is an MSF *RiderCourse*<sup>SM</sup>. Riding is serious fun and proper training is crucial. However, half of all riders today have never taken a proper safety class. To help motorcyclists earn an endorsement or license, MSF offers progressive instruction to motorcyclists of all skill levels, starting with the Basic *RiderCourse* for beginning riders that includes five hours of classroom instruction and 10 hours of riding exercises in a controlled environment. Riders who already have basic skills and a license can hone their techniques in one of MSF's advanced *RiderCourses* or MSF's new Street *RiderCourse*, part of the new CORE Curricula being announced in 2010, which takes riders beyond the traditional controlled learning environment and into real-world traffic. MSF recommends every new rider enroll in the Basic *RiderCourse* and encourages riders to get as much training as possible, no matter how skilled they may be. Even the pros practice the basics to keep their skills sharp.

**2. Wear all protective gear, all the time** - T-shirts and shorts are good for the beach, but not for riding a motorcycle. Riders should gear up properly before every ride, even if just riding down the street on an errand. Wearing a DOT-compliant helmet and eye protection is the law in many states, and is strongly recommended everywhere else. Wearing boots that cover over the ankle, long pants, and a riding jacket is also advisable. Built-in body armor is a smart addition, and can look pretty cool too.

**3. Ride unimpaired by alcohol or other drugs** - Bikes and booze don't mix. Government studies show that 46% of riders killed in motorcycle crashes had been drinking. While under the influence of alcohol or other drugs, a motorcyclist's necessary skills, including agility, perception and awareness, are decreased dramatically. In fact, having a blood-alcohol content greater than 0.05% increases the risk of crashing by about 40-times. So while it is bad enough to try to get behind the wheel of a car while buzzed or drunk, hopping on a machine that requires maximum control and concentration is simply stupid.

**4. Ride within your own skill limits and obey traffic laws** - Every rider should know the limits of their ability, and not attempt to exceed them. Humans weren't designed to fly, and unless you're a trained professional on a closed course, stunting, high speed or tricks can only cause you trouble. Follow all traffic laws and be conscious of how road conditions may affect your riding. MSF now offers an online *Rider Perception Challenge* to help riders gauge and improve their visual awareness of road signs and common collision traps, which can be taken free at [www.msf-usa.org/riderperception](http://www.msf-usa.org/riderperception). Using sharp skills and common sense will keep you alive; trying to be Superman will not.

**5. Be a lifelong learner by taking refresher *RiderCourses*** - Motorcyclists should keep in mind that no matter how often or how long they've been riding, there is always room to learn something new. Taking an advanced course to brush up on the basics and work on perfecting

current skills is a smart move for any rider. MSF's CORE Curricula programs include two new *Street RiderCourses* for training in traffic and the *Advanced RiderCourse - SportBike Techniques* course for intensive maneuvering drills, among other classes to keep expanding motorcyclists' learning experiences.

The Motorcycle Safety Foundation hopes riders will follow these rules and suggestions for everyone's benefit, and to ensure a safe Motorcycle Awareness Month for 2010.

The Motorcycle Safety Foundation promotes safety through rider training and education, operator licensing tests and public information programs. The MSF works with the federal government, state agencies, the military and others to offer training for all skill levels so riders can enjoy a lifetime of safe, responsible motorcycling. Standards established by the MSF have been recognized worldwide since 1973.

The MSF is a not-for-profit organization sponsored by BMW, BRP, Ducati, Harley-Davidson, Honda, Kawasaki, KTM, Piaggio, Suzuki, Triumph, Victory and Yamaha. For safety information or to enroll in the *RiderCourse* nearest you, visit [www.msf-usa.org](http://www.msf-usa.org) or call (800) 446-9227.

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