

Motorcycle Safety & Laws



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Motorcycle Safety Facts

- Nationwide, motorcycle crash fatalities have increased every year since 2000.
- In Texas, motorcycle-related fatalities have increased more than 11% over the previous year.
- There were 104,000 motorcycle crashes in the U.S. in 2006
- A motorcyclist is 37 times more likely to die in a crash than passenger car occupants.

Motorcycle Safety Facts

- Of all motorcycle riders killed in crashes in 2007, 49% are over 40 years of age.
- 27% of motorcycle operators involved in fatal crashes were legally intoxicated (only 23% for passenger car crashes).
- 1 out of 4 motorcycle operators involved in fatal crashes did not have a valid motorcycle license.
- Per miles traveled, the number of deaths on motorcycles in 2006 was about 35 times the number in cars.

Motorcycle Safety Facts

- 90% of motorcycle operators killed are male.
- In 2006, 4,810 motorcyclists were killed – an increase of 5 percent over the 4,576 motorcyclists killed in 2005.
- Nationwide, there were 88,000 motorcyclists injured during 2006.
- Motorcycle registrations have increased for the last 9 years by 63%.

Why Do People Ride?

- Freedom
- Recreation
- Thrill & Danger
- Cost Saving

What IS a Motorcycle?

A motorcycle IS:

- a motor vehicle designed to propel itself with no more than 3 wheels in contact with the ground. (T.C.§502.001)
- a m/c equipped with a rider's saddle (T.C.§541.201(9))
- a m/c equipped with a sidecar (T.C.§525.001(b))
- a “motor-driven cycle” with less than a 250 cc engine (T.C.§541.201(10))
- a moped (T.C.§541.201(8))



What is NOT a Motorcycle?

A motorcycle is NOT:

- **an electric bicycle** (T.C.§541.201)
- **a pocket bike/mini-motor bike** (T.C.§ 551.301(3))
- **motorized mobility device** (T.C.§ 542.009)
- **motor assisted scooter** (T.C.§ 551.351)



Texas Helmet Law – *“to be, or not to be?”*

True or False?

It is illegal for someone over 21 years of age to ride a motorcycle on a public street in Texas without wearing a helmet?

Texas Helmet Law – *“to be, or not to be?”*

TRUE

- A person commits an offense in Texas if he operates a motorcycle without an approved helmet. (T.C. Sec. 661.003(h))
- But, there is an exception!

Helmet Law Exceptions

- **Sec. 661.003(C) provides an exception if:**
 - **was over 21 at time of offense, and**
 - **successfully completed a motorcycle operator training and safety course**
- **Or**
- **had health insurance providing at least \$10,000 in coverage for injuries sustained as a result of an accident on a motorcycle.**

Helmet Laws - Facts

- The year after Texas went from a universal helmet law to a weakened helmet law, motorcycle operator fatalities increased 31%.
- Hospital costs for motorcyclists injured in crashes were more than \$10,000 in 75% of the cases.

Helmet Exemption Stickers



DPS issues “Helmet Exemption Sticker” to persons who:

- make application and pay a \$5.00 fee;
- own the motorcycle listed on the application;
- provide either (1) proof of successful completion of the Basic or Advanced Motorcycle Operator Training Course, or (2) proof of health insurance coverage

Persons with helmet exemption stickers are presumed to meet the training or insurance requirements for riding without a helmet.

Helmets

- Helmets must be DOT approved
- Some helmets do not qualify
- No specific violation, but a person could be charged with using “non DOT approved” equipment.

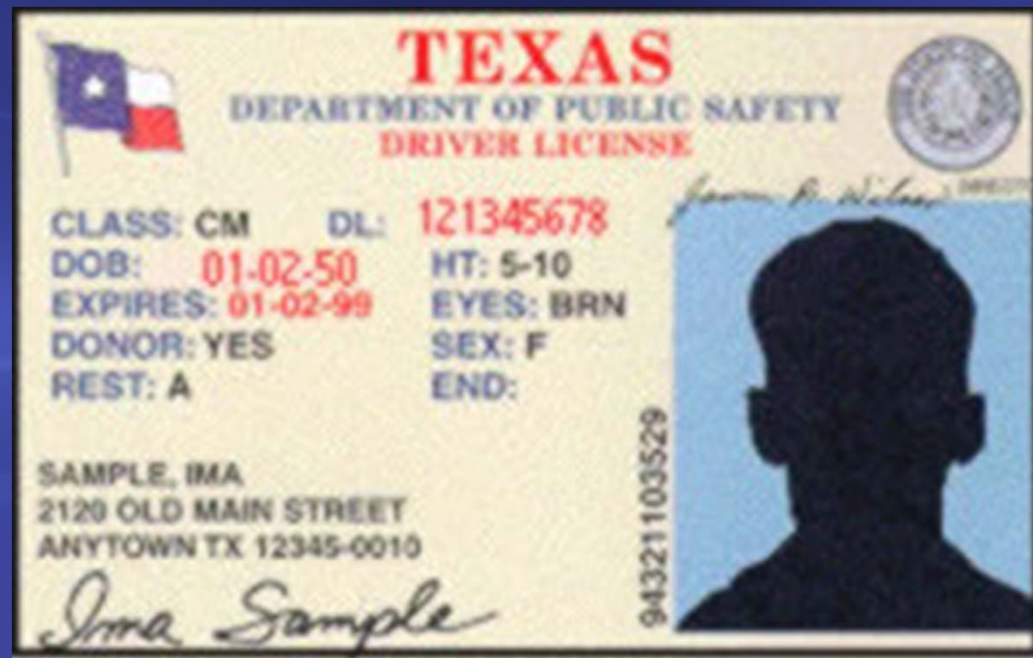


Motorcycle Operator Training Course

- Equivalent to D.S.C. certificate if violation occurred while operating motorcycle.
- Class requirements are set by statute and administrative rules
- Class is 17 hours long
- Average course fee is \$190
- Will allow rider to ride without helmet.

Motorcycle Licenses

A person is required to have a Class M license to operate a motorcycle or moped on public roadways.



Motorcycle Licenses

- **Class M - No Restrictions**
 - authorized to operate a motorcycle or moped
- **Class M - Restriction Code “I”**
 - engine must be 250 cc or less
 - at least 15 or older but under 18 years of age
- **Class M - Restriction Code “K”**
 - vehicle must be “moped”
 - at least 15 years of age
- **Class M - Restriction Code “J”**
 - Operated with licensed operator over 21 within sight.

Proposed Legislation

"Preview of Coming Attractions"

- **HB 339** – Time and Hour Restrictions for New Riders under 18
- **HB 454** – Removal of Points on Driving Record by Completion of a DSC
- **HB 662** – Ban on Use of Cell Phones in School Zones
- **HB 827** – Increased Protection for Vulnerable Road Users (including Motorcycles)

Proposed Legislation

"Preview of Coming Attractions"

- **HB 1569** – Prohibits Discrimination Against Motorcyclists in Public Accommodations
- **SB 488** – Increased Protection for Vulnerable Road Users (including Motorcycles)
- **SB 506** – Increased Penalties for Driving in congested Traffic Conditions
- **SB 772** – No Cell Phone Use By Minors While Operating a Motorcycle