



## Driving on the Right Side of the Road Motorcycle Safety



### JUST THE FACTS

#### Nationally:

- In 2008, 5,312 motorcyclists were killed in traffic crashes.<sup>1</sup> On average, over 14 motorcyclists died each day and 96,000 total motorcyclists were injured.<sup>2</sup>
- In 2009, 4,469 motorcyclists were killed in traffic crashes.<sup>3</sup>
- In 2010, 4,502 motorcyclists were killed in traffic crashes.<sup>4</sup>
- NHTSA estimates that helmets saved the lives of 1,829 motorcyclists in 2008; if all motorcyclists had worn helmets, an additional 823 lives could have been saved.<sup>5</sup>
- Helmets are highly effective in preventing head injuries, which often require extensive treatment and may result in lifelong disability. Motorcyclists without helmets are three times more likely to suffer traumatic brain injuries than motorcyclists with helmets.<sup>6</sup>

#### Texas:

- In 2008, 480 motorcyclists were killed, 62% of which did not wear helmets. That year, 9% of motorcyclist fatalities happened in Texas.<sup>7</sup>
- In 2009, Texas had 426 motorcyclist fatalities, where nearly 65% (275) victims failed to wear a helmet.<sup>8</sup>
- In 2010, there were 435 motorcyclist fatalities in Texas (drivers and passengers combined), 242 of which the victims were not wearing helmets.<sup>9</sup>
- In 2011, there were 479 motorcyclist fatalities in Texas (drivers and passengers combined), 246 of which the victims were not wearing helmets.<sup>10</sup>

### IT'S THE LAW

- Motorcyclists and their passengers may only ride on permanent and regular seats firmly attached to the motorcycle.<sup>11</sup>
- Motorcyclists and passengers who are under 21 must wear helmets when operating a motorcycle.<sup>12</sup>
- Riders over 21 may ride without a helmet only if they have completed a motorcycle safety course or are covered by a health insurance plan providing the person with medical benefits for injuries incurred from a motorcycle accident.<sup>13</sup>
- The penalty for not wearing a helmet is a fine of up to \$50 plus court costs.<sup>14</sup> A person operating a motorcycle commits an offense if he or she is carrying a passenger who is not wearing approved safety headgear.<sup>15</sup>
- A person under 17 who holds a restricted motorcycle or moped license, during the 12-month period following issuance of the license, may not operate a motorcycle or moped between midnight and 5 a.m. unless:
  - The person is in sight of a parent or guardian; or
  - The operation of the vehicle is necessary for the operator to attend or participate in an employment- or school-related activity, or because of a medical emergency; or
  - While using a wireless communication device, except in case of emergency.<sup>16</sup>
- A person may operate a motorcycle with a regular license or restricted Class M license. A person is eligible for a restricted motorcycle license if he or she:
  - Is between the ages of 15 and 18;
  - Has completed and passed an approved motorcycle operator training course; and

For more information: [www.tmcec.com/mtsj](http://www.tmcec.com/mtsj), [www.drsr.info](http://www.drsr.info), or [www.texaslr.org](http://www.texaslr.org)

- Has had his or her application signed by a parent or guardian or appropriate substitute.<sup>17</sup>

## KEEP IT SAFE

### Responsible motorcyclists should:

- Turn on their headlights and ride defensively<sup>18</sup>
- Avoid the center of the lane where debris and oil build up<sup>19</sup>
- Ride at a safe speed and never ride after drinking alcohol<sup>20</sup>
- Take a course to learn or reinforce safe riding techniques<sup>21</sup>
- Wear protective gear<sup>22</sup>
- Wear bright colored clothing so they can be seen by other motorists<sup>23</sup>
- Become familiar with the motorcycle by checking the motorcycle equipment<sup>24</sup>

<sup>1</sup> National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS) Encyclopedia, Retrieved on August 31, 2012 from <http://www-fars.nhtsa.dot.gov/Main/index.aspx>, (hereinafter referred to as FARS).

<sup>2</sup> NHTSA, Traffic Safety Facts: 2008 Data, Motorcycles, DOT HS 811159, Retrieved on April 28, 2011 from <http://www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/pubs/811159.pdf>, (hereinafter referred to as 2008 Traffic Safety Facts).

<sup>3</sup> See FARS – endnote 1

<sup>4</sup> See FARS – endnote 1

<sup>5</sup> See 2008 Traffic Safety Facts – endnote 2

<sup>6</sup> NHTSA, Traffic Safety Facts, Laws: Motorcycle Helmet Use Laws, Jan. 2008, DOT HS 810887W

<sup>7</sup> See 2008 Traffic Safety Facts – endnote 2

<sup>8</sup> NHTSA Traffic Safety Facts, Texas 2005-2009, [http://www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/departments/nrd-30/ncsa/STSI/48\\_TX/2009/48\\_TX\\_2009.htm](http://www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/departments/nrd-30/ncsa/STSI/48_TX/2009/48_TX_2009.htm).

<sup>9</sup> Texas Department of Transportation, Motorcyclist Fatalities and Injuries by Age Group and Helmet Use, Retrieved on August 31, 2012 from [http://ftp.dot.state.tx.us/pub/txdot-info/trf/crash\\_statistics/2010/09\\_2010\\_11.pdf](http://ftp.dot.state.tx.us/pub/txdot-info/trf/crash_statistics/2010/09_2010_11.pdf).

<sup>10</sup> Texas Department of Transportation, Motorcyclist Fatalities and Injuries by Age Group and Helmet Use, Retrieved on August 31, 2012 from [http://ftp.dot.state.tx.us/pub/txdot-info/trf/crash\\_statistics/2011/09\\_2011.pdf](http://ftp.dot.state.tx.us/pub/txdot-info/trf/crash_statistics/2011/09_2011.pdf).

<sup>11</sup> Texas Transportation Code, Section 545.416 (Riding on Motorcycle).

<sup>12</sup> Texas Department of Transportation, *Motorcycle Safety*, Retrieved on August 31, 2012 from <http://www.txdot.gov/safety/tips/motorcycles.htm>, (hereinafter referred to as *TxDOT Motorcycle Safety*).

<sup>13</sup> Texas Transportation Code, Section 661.003 (Offenses Relating to Not Wearing Protective Headgear).

<sup>14</sup> Texas Transportation Code, Section 661.003(h).

<sup>15</sup> Texas Transportation Code, Section 661.003(b).

<sup>16</sup> Texas Transportation Code, Section 545.424(b).

<sup>17</sup> Texas Transportation Code, Section 521.224(c), Texas Transportation Code, Section 521.145.

<sup>18</sup> See *TxDOT Motorcycle Safety* – endnote 12

<sup>19</sup> See *TxDOT Motorcycle Safety* – endnote 12

<sup>20</sup> See *TxDOT Motorcycle Safety* – endnote 12

<sup>21</sup> See *TxDOT Motorcycle Safety* – endnote 12

<sup>22</sup> Texas Department of Public Safety, *Motorcycle Operator's Manual*, <http://www.txdps.state.tx.us/InternetForms/Forms/DL-8.pdf>, (hereinafter referred to as *TxDOT Motorcycle Operator's Manual*)

<sup>23</sup> Motorcycle Safety Foundation, *Motorcycle Operator Manual*, Retrieved on August 31, 2012 from [http://www.msfsa.org/downloads/mom\\_v16\\_color\\_hi\\_res.pdf](http://www.msfsa.org/downloads/mom_v16_color_hi_res.pdf).

<sup>24</sup> See *TxDOT Motorcycle Operator's Manual* – endnote 22