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MOTORISED TWO-WHEELERS

Motorcyclists and moped riders →

Motorcyclists and moped riders

95% of road accidents are caused by bad human behaviour. The greatest risk for the motorcyclist is actually the motorcyclist.

What the law says

Wearing an approved crash helmet is compulsory, and the chinstrap must be done up.

Did you know?

- 46% of accidents are due to speed not suited to the situation
- 42% of motorcycle accidents occur within 10 kilometres of the motorcyclist's home
- More than 90% of motorcycle accidents occur in one of these six typical situations:
 - Accident in a left-hand bend. Never forget that nearly all accidents involving a motorcyclist alone are due to excessive, unsuitable speed



- Accident in a right-hand bend. The motorcyclist must adopt an anticipatory, defensive style



- Priority refused by a vehicle turning left to a motorcyclist approaching in the opposite direction. Slow down and always be prepared to brake



- Collision with the vehicle preceding the motorcyclist as it turns left.
The Highway Code is there to make the road safe for all users - but you have to keep to it as well.



- Rear-end collision. A motorcyclist who anticipates, by being aware of the typical danger situations, and maintains the proper safety distance can avoid dangerous encounters and accidents that are just waiting to happen.



- Failure of another vehicle to allow you priority.
Conviviality in terms of road safety also means compensating for any mistakes made by other road users. Even if you as motorcyclist aren't the one at fault, you can avoid certain accidents by anticipating even more.



Some advice

Clothing

- Choose clothes that cover your entire body, in leather or anti-abrasion fabric, with reinforcements to protect those parts of the body that are most exposed if you fall. Always avoid synthetic linings such as nylon which could, if you slide, melt onto your skin and cause serious injuries
- Jacket: Choose a jacket with built-in protection for your back and reinforcements at the elbow and shoulder
- Gloves: Try before you buy. Go for gloves in leather with reinforcements over the knuckles and the palms, with a fastening strap so they stay in place if you slide
- Footwear: Go for ankle boots or special motorcycle boots. They should be non-slip, in leather, sufficiently flexible to allow you to feel the controls properly, and with reinforcements to protect your ankles

Wearing reflecting items means that you can be seen - don't forget that many accidents are caused by other road users not being able to see motorcyclists and moped riders properly.

Helmet

- Choose a new helmet, and check that it is an approved model that meets European standards
- Go for a full-face helmet rather than a jet helmet, as it gives more protection, particularly for your face and jaw
- It is normal for the helmet to be a close fit to start with; over time, the padding on the inside will settle. If you wear glasses, don't forget to wear them when you are trying the helmet on before you buy. Buying a helmet on the Internet is not to be recommended, as it's essential to try it on first
- Adjust the chinstrap and always do it up - if you don't, the helmet won't stay on if you fall, and you will be totally unprotected
- Your helmet is for you only - don't lend it to anyone else
- After a fall or an accident, it is essential to replace your helmet. It's possible that the internal structure has been damaged even though it's not visible to the naked eye. That's why you should never buy a second-hand helmet

The importance of where you look

- Where you look is fundamental when riding a motorcycle, as it determines your trajectory. Riding safely also involves being on the alert at all times, so that you are never taken by surprise
- To have a good trajectory, keep your eyes on where you want to go. If you are looking elsewhere, you will tend to steer towards a different place altogether. Look as far ahead as possible, and in a curve keep your eyes on the end of the bend. Your movement follows your eyes - your motorcycle will always go in the direction you are looking
- If there is an obstacle, it's better to concentrate on the open space where you want to end up. Looking directly at the obstacle is the best way of riding straight into it
- Use your observation to carry out a running analysis of everything around you (movements of other road users, state of the road, etc.) so that you can make out the dangers, assess the risks, and reach the best decision for taking action according to the circumstances (changing trajectory, slowing down, etc.)

Riding position

- A good riding position will allow you to take action quickly and accurately, reduce the effects of fatigue, and give you better control of your balance at low speeds
- Sit as close as possible to the fuel tank (so that your own centre of gravity is as close as possible to that of the motorcycle), keep your arms and shoulders loose, your arms slightly bent, your knees tight against the fuel tank, and your back straight, leaning slightly forward
- Going round bends, your head should not follow the angle of your body
- On a scooter, position your legs facing forwards, with your feet resting properly on the footrest

Controlling braking

- Good braking uses both brakes (front and rear) at the same time, gradually, using all the fingers of the hand. Apply the right amount of pressure to the controls (brake lever and pedal) so that the wheels don't lock; otherwise braking is less effective or there is a risk of skidding, or even falling
- Take care in the rain! On a wet road, the brakes lock sooner. Braking on road markings will make you slide

The technique of counter-steering

To take a bend at less than 30 to 40 km/h, it's logical to turn the handlebars - to the right to turn right, to the left to turn left. Above a certain speed (30 to 40 km/h), you need to lean the motorcycle over to overcome the centrifugal force (which pulls you to the outer edge of the bend). There is a technique for this, called counter-steering. In fact, you have to turn the handlebars to the left to turn to the right, and vice versa.

Carrying a passenger

To be able to carry a passenger, your motorcycle must be fitted with:

- footrests
- a seat separate from yours (double seat), with a handle to hold on to

Passengers are exposed to the same risks as you, so they need to be properly equipped, with:

- a helmet that fits properly (with chinstrap adjusted and done up)
- sturdy clothing covering the whole body
- ankle boots
- and gloves

Before setting off, ask your passenger to keep to a number of safety rules:

- sit as close to you as possible so that he/she can feel your movements and hold on to you
- not put his/her feet on the ground if you stop
- avoid any sudden movements, and make the same movements as you

Your motorcycle

- Choose a motorcycle that is:
 - suited to your style of riding, and
 - appropriate for your height and weight
- Try it out before you buy
- Adjust the pedals, seat, mirrors, etc.



Watch out for hazards

- Parked cars - a door could be opened at any time, or a pedestrian could step out
- Things that could make you slide - unsuitable speed, road markings, dead leaves in the autumn, mud or fuel on the road, sand, gravel, etc.
- Potholes or an uneven road surface
- Not forgetting flying insects, particularly in the summer (bees and wasps, for instance), which could get into the sleeve of your jacket, or the neck of your jacket if it is open, or into your helmet if the visor is not fully closed

Most of these hazards are at least partly foreseeable. They can be detected by careful observation and good analysis of your surroundings.

Toolbox

- Presentation by the driver training centre (Centre de Formation pour Conducteurs - versions in **French** and **German**)

Sources: [Driver training centre](#) (Centre de Formation pour Conducteurs - Luxembourg), [La Prévention Routière](#) (France) (Association for the prevention of road accidents)