June 2026

Motorcyclists

ROAD SAFETY FACTSHEETS / ALL ROAD USERS

Who is a motorcyclist?

A motorcyclist is anyone riding a powered two-wheeled vehicle, such as a motorcycle, scooter, or moped. Motorcyclists are classified as vulnerable road users due to the absence of structural protection. Despite making up only approx 4.5% of registered vehicles, they account for 21% of all road deaths in Australia.

Who is most at risk?

Young males (17–25)

Young riders aged 17–25 are disproportionately at risk. Although they represent just 11% of registered motorcycles, they are involved in 42% of crashes. Males account for 94% of all motorcyclist fatalities.

Inexperienced riders

Rider skill and experience are critical safety factors. Novice riders have significantly higher crash rates, and nearly a third of fatalities in some states involve unlicensed riders.

Motorcyclist safety tips

1. **Always wear appropriate protective gear:** approved helmet, jacket, gloves, pants, and boots. Protective clothing can prevent or significantly reduce injuries in a crash.
2. **Ride in a visible road position.** Avoid lingering in blind spots. Position yourself so you can be seen in the mirrors of surrounding vehicles.
3. **Use your headlight at all times,** day and night. This significantly improves your visibility to other drivers at intersections and on multi-lane roads.
4. **Anticipate hazards.** Scan well ahead, watch for turning vehicles, and take extra care at intersections, the most common location for multi-vehicle motorcycle crashes in urban areas.
5. **Adjust speed for road conditions.** Motorcycles are far more sensitive than cars to wet roads, gravel, and uneven surfaces. Slow down in adverse conditions.
6. **Never ride under the influence** of alcohol or drugs. Impairment dramatically reduces reaction time, balance, and the ability to respond to hazards.

Why motorcyclist safety matters

Motorcyclists are 36 times more likely to be killed per kilometre travelled than other motorised vehicle users. Fatalities have increased by 32% between 2017 and 2024.

Two-thirds of multi-vehicle motorcycle crashes are caused by other drivers. Always assume you haven't been seen. Position yourself to be visible, leave an escape route, and never rely on other road users to keep you safe.

Risk factors for motorcyclist crashes

- Speed
- Not seen by drivers
- Intersections
- Alcohol & drugs
- Road surface
- No protective gear

Motorcyclists safety statistics

- In 2024, there were 278 motorcyclist deaths in Australia
- Motorcyclists make up just 4.5% of registered vehicles, but account for 21% of road deaths
- Motorcyclist fatalities increased by 32% between 2017 and 2024
- The death rate per kilometre travelled is 36 times higher for motorcyclists than for other motorised road users
- 69% of motorcyclist deaths in 2024 occurred during daytime hours

For more information on vulnerable road users, visit:
www.roadsense.org.au/resources

Information on this fact sheet is general only and is accurate at the time of publishing. Always follow road laws, workplace requirements, and your organisation's safety policies.

ROAD SENSE AUSTRALIA