

Dept. of Transportation: Share the road with motorcycles to prevent crashes, injuries

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As Wisconsin's summer weather settles in, motorcycle season is in full gear, which means drivers will be sharing the road with smaller vehicles through fall.

The Wisconsin State Patrol's [June Law of the Month](#) reminds vehicle drivers and motorcyclists to share the road to keep all travelers safe.

There are roughly 2,000 motorcycle crashes every year in Wisconsin, involving hundreds of injuries and dozens of fatalities.

"When we share the road, we also share the responsibility to make every trip as safe as possible for all road users," Superintendent Tim Carnahan said. "Vehicle drivers and motorcyclists need to be aware of each other on the roads and look twice before changing lanes or making turns."

Motorcyclists are 27 times more likely to die in a crash than other motorists, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

Driving near motorcycles

Motorcycles are smaller than the average vehicle, so they can be harder to see on the roads and it's easy to misjudge their speed and distance. Drivers are asked to use caution when traveling near motorcycles.

Drivers are encouraged to:

- Look twice for motorcycles; many crashes happen when drivers pull out from

a stop sign, turn left, or change lanes

- Keep a safe following distance from a motorcycle; they have a shorter stopping distance so if a motorcycle needs to stop suddenly, you need more room to avoid a collision
- Avoid distractions and drive sober

Riding safely

Sharing the road is a two-way street, so motorcyclists need to do their part to be visible and follow the same rules of the road as other vehicles. Safe riding practices help reduce the number of fatalities and injuries on the roads.

Riders should consider the following:

- Avoid distractions and ride sober
- Know and observe all traffic laws, including obeying the speed limit
- Ride defensively and don't take risks
- Scan the road ahead carefully, especially on curves, looking for gravel and sand
- Do not share a lane with another vehicle; staggered riding is suggested for multiple motorcycles

Protective, high visibility clothing and safety gear is recommended and helmets are strongly encouraged to prevent serious injury in a crash. Helmets are required by state law for riders under 18. In Wisconsin, 69% of motorcyclists who died in crashes were not wearing a helmet (2018-2021).

Training and education

Training and education are key to prevent motorcycle crashes and injuries. The Wisconsin Department of Transportation's partners provide [rider courses](#) to help motorcyclists earn their motorcycle license and improve rider skills. A motorcycle license is required to ride in Wisconsin.



View the June Law of the Month video and news release online:

<https://wisconsindot.gov/Pages/about-wisdot/newsroom/law/lom.aspx>