



HELP MOTORCYCLISTS LIVE BETTER LONGER: PREVENT TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY

MOTORCYCLE HELMETS

Motorcycle riding poses many risks especially if riding without a helmet. Wearing a helmet is the single most important factor in surviving a motorcycle crash.

What is a traumatic brain injury?

A traumatic brain injury (TBI) is a blow or jolt to the head or a penetrating head injury that disrupts the function of the brain. A TBI can cause a brief change in mental status or bring about an extended period of unconsciousness or amnesia. Temporary or permanent problems with independent function can result from a TBI. ⁽²⁾

More than 1.5 million people sustain a TBI in the U.S. annually. Each year, 290,000 people are hospitalized and 51,000 die. Motorcycle helmets save lives and reduce brain injury severity. ⁽³⁾

Brain injuries can affect thinking skills, physical abilities, and emotional functioning. A brain injury can undermine performance at school and work, interfere with personal relationships, wreak havoc on finances, and for some people, create life-long dependence on public assistance.

KNOW THE FACTS:

- Brain injury is a leading cause of death in motorcycle crashes. ⁽³⁾
- An unhelmeted motorcyclist is 40% more likely to suffer a fatal brain injury and 15% more likely to suffer a nonfatal brain injury than a helmeted motorcyclist when involved in a crash. ⁽⁵⁾
- Motorcycle helmets are 37% effective at preventing fatality and save approximately 1,500 lives each year. (Traffic Safety Facts: 2005 Data) ⁽⁵⁾
- In 2006, 4,810 motorcyclists died in crashes. Motorcycle fatalities are at their highest level in 20 years, and now account for over 10% of all annual fatalities. ⁽⁵⁾



When Personal Choice Becomes Public Responsibility

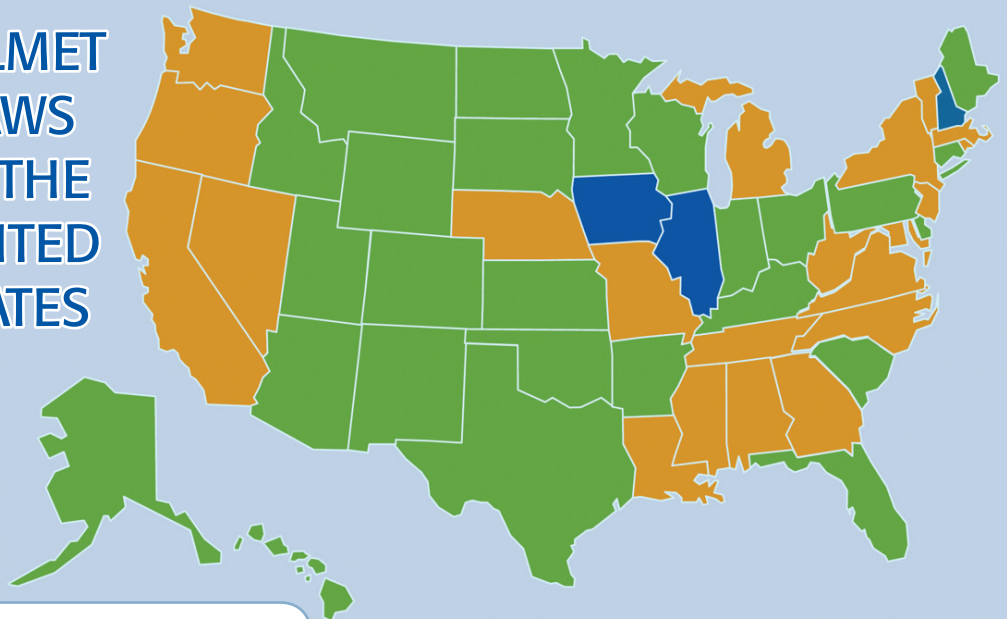
Almost half of all motorcycle crash victims do not have private health insurance, and a significant portion of the medical costs resulting from their injuries are paid by Medicare and Medicaid. ⁽⁵⁾

Research consistently demonstrates that helmet laws and helmet use reduce the fatality rate, the probability and severity of brain injuries, the cost of medical treatment, the length of hospital stay, the necessity for special medical treatments, and the probability of long-term disability. ⁽⁵⁾

An estimated \$13.2 billion was saved from 1984 through 1999 because of motorcycle helmet use. An additional \$11 Billion could have been saved if all motorcyclists had worn helmets. (NHTSA, 2000) ⁽¹⁾

Compliance is nearly 100% in states with all-rider motorcycle helmet laws compared to 34 to 54% with no helmet laws or with age-specific helmet laws.

HELMET LAWS IN THE UNITED STATES



Twenty states (AL, CA, GA, LA, MD, MA, MI, MS, MO, NE, NV, NJ, NY, NC, OR, TN, VT, VA, WA, WV) and the D.C. require helmet use by all motorcycle drivers and their passengers. ⁽⁴⁾

Twenty-seven states have laws only covering some riders, especially those younger than 18. ⁽⁴⁾

Three states (IL, IA, and NH) have no helmet requirements at all. ⁽⁴⁾

References

1. Advocates for Highway & Auto Safety, www.saferoads.org
2. Brain Injury Association of America, www.biausa.org
3. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, www.cdc.gov
4. Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, www.iihs.org
5. National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, www.nhtsa.gov