

# Sharing the Road with Motorcycles

FACT  
sheet

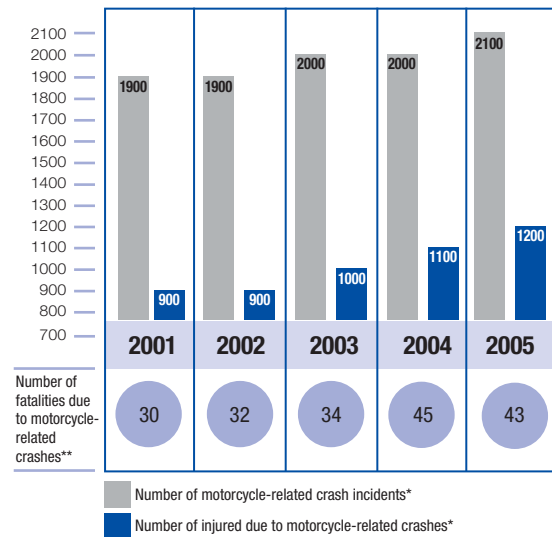
## Trends

### 2005 motorcycle-involved crashes in B.C.

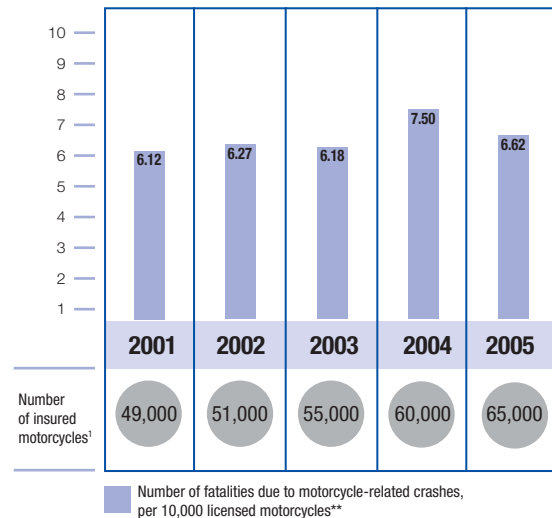
- Single-vehicle motorcycle crashes occur most frequently in rural undeveloped areas (60% rural, 37% urban, 3% other). They occur at high speeds (91% are speeds of 50 km/h or over) and at curves where the rider loses control and leaves the roadway. \*\*
- Multi-vehicle crashes, where at least one motorcycle was involved, occur most frequently in urban areas (71% urban, 25% rural, 4% other). They occur at lower speeds (76% are speeds of 50 km/h or under) and at intersections where the driver of the other vehicle violates a motorcyclist's right of way (Failing to yield right of way 28%) or fails to notice the motorcyclist (Driving without due care and/or driver inattentive 18%).\*\*
- Most motorcycle-involved crashes occur on a weekend (Friday, Saturday and Sunday).\*
- Most motorcycle-involved crashes occur from May to September with the peaks in July and August.\*
- Motorcycle-involved crashes tend to occur during peak traffic volumes periods (noon to 9 pm).\*

\* ICBC-reported incidents  
\*\* Police-reported incidents

Motorcycle-related crashes, injuries and fatalities (2001 – 2005)



Fatalities per 10,000 licensed motorcycles (2001 – 2005)



<sup>1</sup> Since these are seasonal vehicles, the number shown are taken from the month when the majority of these vehicles are insured.

2005 fatality count is not fixed. Fatality data continues to settle over time.

## Safety tips – for riders

### Make yourself visible

- Watch out for vehicles turning at intersections.
- Check vehicles approaching from behind when stopped in traffic.
- Slow down and take it easy in the curves.
- Never assume other motorists see you.
- Wear bright and reflective protection clothing. Add extra reflective material to your clothing or wear a reflective vest.
- Always wear a helmet.

### Protection

**Helmets** — are mandatory in B.C. Make sure your helmet has a sticker to show that it meets current safety standards. Choose a bright colour and add some reflective tape to the sides and back for more visibility. Avoid buying a used helmet. It may have been in a crash, and the damage may not be obvious.

**Protective clothing** — can provide some protection during a crash and protect you from weather and debris. Being warm and dry will help you stay alert and maintain coordination. Choose clothing that is designed for motorcycle riding and wear it in layers so you can adjust to changing conditions. Jeans give only minimum protection. Never ride in lightweight pants or shorts.

**Protect your eyes and face** — constant wind can make your eyes water, which can prevent you from being able to see hazards. Flying insects, dust and debris can hurt your eyes and face. The best protection is a full-face helmet with a built-in face shield because it protects both your eyes and your face.

### Traction

Traction can be affected by many factors, including wet roads, fluid spills, sand, gravel, highway sealant, railroad tracks, rain grooves and potholes. Many falls are caused by road surface conditions. Keep your eyes open for potential problems.

### Communication

**Make eye contact** — never assume that other road users see you. Always try to make eye contact with drivers who may be about to pull into your path.

**Read vehicle language** — remember — even if they see you — drivers, cyclists and pedestrians often don't have an accurate sense of your distance or realize how fast you are approaching. Don't rely on the judgment of other road users.

**Intersections** — a common type of intersection crash for motorcycles involves an oncoming vehicle turning left in front of a motorcycle. Always be cautious when you see an oncoming driver signalling to turn left.

**Leaving a highway** — if you're turning left from a highway, watch your mirrors and make sure you have plenty of space behind. The drivers behind may not be prepared to slow down for you.

### Curves

Many motorcycle crashes happen in curves. A rider may go off the road, or cross over the centre line and ride into oncoming traffic. Avoid this by observing the road ahead, slowing down and choosing the correct lane position, before you enter a curve.

### Pre-trip check

Always check your motorcycle before riding. The pre-trip check doesn't take long and will soon become routine and automatic. Your check should include:

- Tires — air pressure, tread and condition
- Wheels and rims — check for damage or cracks
- Drive system — chain, belt and shaft — check for tension, lubrication, wear, leaks
- Electrical — lights, brake lights, turn signals, horn and engine cut-off switch
- Fluids — check oil, coolant, fuel, leaks etc.
- Clutch — when you squeeze the clutch lever, the cable should move smoothly and feel tight
- Throttle — should snap back when you let it go
- Mirrors — clean, adjusted, securely fastened
- Brakes — check front and rear brakes to make sure they feel firm and work well.

For more information, pick up a copy of *RoadSense for Riders — BC's Safe Riding Guide* at your local driver licensing office

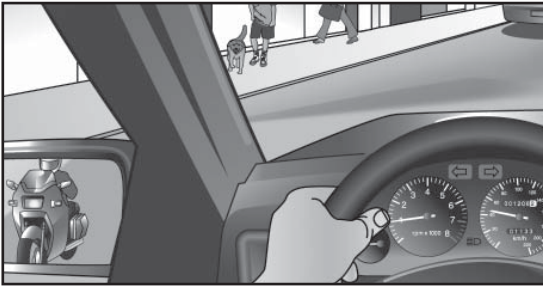
## Safety tips – for drivers

Like cyclists and pedestrians, motorcycle riders are vulnerable road users. They don't have the protection of an external frame, seatbelts or bumpers, and are sometimes difficult to see.

### Watching for motorcyclists

**Scan at intersections** — look carefully for motorcycles when you come to an intersection:

- When turning left, look for oncoming motorcycles. Motorcycles can be hard to see, especially at night, at dusk, in bad weather or in heavy traffic. It is also difficult to judge how fast they are approaching.
- When driving through an intersection, watch for an oncoming motorcycle that may be turning left.



**Watch for clues** — sometimes a motorcycle's turn signals are hard to see. Watch the rider for clues; if the rider shoulder checks or the motorcycle leans, the rider is probably planning to change lanes, adjust lane position or turn.

### Communication

**Make eye contact** — establish eye contact with the rider whenever possible.

**Read vehicle language** — don't assume that a rider in the left part of the lane is planning to turn left. Motorcyclists often ride in the left part of the lane to make themselves more visible.

### Space margins

**Allow side margins** — never try to share a lane with a motorcycle. A motorcycle needs the whole lane to travel safely.

**Allow enough following distance** — allow at least three seconds of following distance when you are behind a motorcycle because:

- Motorcycles can stop abruptly
- Motorcyclists can skid and fall because of poor road conditions. You need to leave plenty of room to stop safely.

**Allow plenty of space when passing** — your vehicle may throw dirt or water in the rider's face and pose a serious hazard to the rider.

*The information in this fact sheet is intended to provide general information only. Nothing is intended to provide legal or professional advice or to be relied on in any dispute, claim, action, demand or proceeding. ICBC does not accept liability for any damage or injury resulting from reliance on the information in this publication.*

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