

# **MOTORCYCLE SAFETY**

## **1998**

### **Virginia Statistics**

In 1998, there were 1,231 motorcycle crashes. *(DMV)*

Forty-four motorcycle occupants were killed in 1998. *(DMV)*

In 1998, 1,105 motorcycle occupants were injured. *(DMV)*

Of the 1,231 motorcycle crashes in 1998, 36 were fatal crashes, 1,028 were personal injury crashes, and 167 were property damage crashes. *(DMV)*

In 1998, there were 65,857 motorcycles registered in Virginia with 1.9% involved in crashes. *(DMV)*

### **National Statistics**

In 1998, 2,284 motorcyclists were killed and an additional 49,000 were injured in traffic crashes. *(NHTSA)*

In 1998, motorcyclists accounted for 6% of total traffic fatalities, 6% of all occupant fatalities, and 2% of all occupants injured. *(NHTSA)*

In 1998, 30% of the motorcycles involved in fatal crashes collided with a fixed object, compared to 17% for passenger cars, 11% for light trucks, and 3% for large trucks. *(NHTSA)*

More than half of all motorcyclists involved in fatal crashes in 1998 collided with another motor vehicle. *(NHTSA)*

Nearly 1 out of 5 motorcyclists involved in fatal crashes in 1998 were operating with an invalid license at the time of the crash. *(NHTSA)*

Most crashes happen on short trips (less than 5 miles long), just a few minutes after starting out. *(DMV)*

### **Alcohol:**

The percentage of alcohol involvement was more than 50% higher for motorcyclists than for drivers of passenger vehicles. (*NHTSA*)

In 1998, 32% of all fatally injured motorcycle operators were intoxicated. (*NHTSA*)

Almost half (45%) of the 954 motorcycle operators who died in single-vehicle crashes in 1998 were intoxicated. (*NHTSA*)

Almost 6% of the motorcycle operators involved in fatal crashes in 1998 had at least one previous conviction for driving while intoxicated, compared to about 4% of passenger vehicle drivers. (*NHTSA*)

Motorcycle operators killed in traffic crashes at night were 3 times as likely to be intoxicated as those killed during the day. (*NHTSA*)

The reported helmet use rate for intoxicated motorcycle operators killed in traffic crashes in 1998 was 46%, compared with 59% for those who were sober. (*NHTSA*)

### **Helmets:**

One out of every five motorcycle crashes reported results in head or neck injuries, the worst type of injuries you can get. (*DMV*)

An unhelmeted rider is 40% more likely to suffer a fatal head injury than a helmeted rider. (*IIHS*)

Helmets are estimated to be 29% effective in preventing motorcyclist fatalities. (*NHTSA*)

Motorcycle helmets are 67% effective in preventing brain injuries. (*NHTSA*)

Reported helmet use rates for fatally injured motorcyclists in 1998 were 54% for operators and 45% for passengers. (*NHTSA*)

Helmets saved approximately 500 motorcyclists' lives in 1998, and 307 more could have been saved if all motorcyclists had worn helmets. (*NHTSA*)

NHTSA estimates that \$12.1 billion was saved from 1984-1998 because of the use of motorcycle helmets; an additional \$10.4 billion would have been saved if all motorcyclists had worn helmets. (*NHTSA*)

A study of more than 900 motorcycle accidents, where 40% of the riders wore helmets, failed to find even one case in which a helmet kept a rider from spotting danger. (*DMV*)

### **Speed:**

The most common factor contributing to motorcycle crashes is driving too fast for conditions. (*NHTSA*)

In 1998, 41% of all motorcyclists involved in fatal crashes were speeding. (*NHTSA*)

Even low-speed crashes can be fatal. Most riders are going slower than 30 mph when they get injured. At these speeds, helmets can cut both the number and the severity of head injuries by half. (*DMV*)

## **Virginia Requirements**

If you operate a motorcycle in Virginia, you must hold a valid Class M endorsement or motorcycle driver's license. (*DMV*)

If you own and operate a motorcycle, you must have a Virginia title, registration card and license plate. (*DMV*)

Motorcyclists in Virginia must wear an approved protective helmet. (*DMV*)

Motorcyclists must wear a face shield or safety glasses/goggles or the motorcycle must be equipped with a windshield type approved by the Virginia State Police. (*DMV*)

Passengers on motorcycles must also wear an approved helmet. (*DMV*)

When you report for your motorcycle driving test you must have: (*DMV*)  
an approved helmet with a face shield and safety glasses or goggles  
your motorcycle with a valid license plate and a current inspection sticker

Wear proper protective clothing, including long pants and long-sleeved shirt or jacket, boots or shoes that cover the ankles and riding gloves. (*DMV*)