

RIDE SAFE-YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

The sight of a dead motorcyclist lying in his own pool of blood covered with newspapers is certainly a traumatic experience for road users. The deaths involving motorcyclists are an alarming 3,600 or 58% of the total 6,275 deaths due to accidents in 2006. Hence, the need for road safety programmes and initiatives to focus on this most vulnerable group of our road users.

Motorcyclists are more vulnerable to injuries in accidents because they have no seatbelts or outside protection other than the helmet. Indeed, the helmet is the only protection that motorcyclists have and yet, we see many riders and pillion riders who roam around the city and country side without helmets and many who wear helmets do not buckle them.

Just wearing a helmet is not enough. A helmet can only protect ones head from serious injury if it is properly buckled also it has to be properly fastened and compliant to SIRIM or equivalent international safety standard helmets. Beware! There are cheap helmets available, but these helmets are dangerous and are a safety hazard as they are not compliant as far as the minimum safety standards are concerned.

However, wearing a 'safety compliant helmet' can help by reducing seventy percent of injury to the head. As a motorcyclist you can reduce accident risks and prevent accidents by:

Hazard : **Poor Visibilty of riders to other road users because of dark coloured attire**

Remedy: Make sure that you can be seen. Always use bright coloured attire.

Hazard: **Tailgating**

Remedy: Never, ever tailgate as tailgating reduces the chances for you to react to sudden breaks from the vehicle in front of you. Similarly, never allow another vehicle too close to you, . If someone is tailgating you, give left signal ,slow down and allow rear driver to overtake.

Hazard: **Racing on public roads.**

Solution: . Racing on the road can lead to tragedy as the chances of losing control of a motorbike are much higher at higher speeds. Research shows that if a motorcyclist has an accident at speeds beyond a speed of 40kmph he/she is likely to have a serious injury. Racing is safe for the racing track because of the controlled environment such as safety zone/crash barrier etc

Hazard: **Bikes are small and vulnerable**

Solution: Be alert. Anticipate danger to enable early response to minimize risks. Remember to always use your mirrors and signals to ensure it is safe to change lane or turn, before change lane/turning .As the smaller vehicle motorcyclists and pillions have a 17 times higher probability of a serious injury in an accident compared to cars.

Hazard: **Road rage**

Solution: Always keep a level head and walk away from confrontations with other road users. Combating road rage is the responsibility of the police. Therefore never retaliate in anger. Your duty is to merely report road rage.

Hazard: **Dangerous lane changes and weaving**

Solution: Avoid weaving through traffic to avoid accidents, due to sudden lane changes .Always practice safe lane change through the mirror signal and maneuver .Weaving is for the racing track and should be avoided without exception.

Hazard: **Using mobile phone while driving/riding**

Solution: While riding a car or motorbike, It is required that both hands always be on the handle/steering wheel. Removing one hand from the

handle/steering wheel to use a mobile phone tips the safety balance and reduces rider/driver concentration and alertness. The use of hands free is equally dangerous as it causes loss of concentration.

Hazard: **Drunk driving/riding**

Solution: Car drivers/motorcyclists should never ride/drive under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Driving/riding under the influence of alcohol or drugs is like driving blind folded – you have no idea what you are doing. If you drink. Don't Drive/ride

Hazard: **Overloading**

Solution **The maximum capacity of a car is 5 persons and bike 2 persons.** Riding/driving with excess capacity compromises steering control and braking efficiency and is therefore dangerous. .

Hazard: **Adult helmets are meant for adults, children need to wear child helmets.**

Solution: Children need to wear child helmets too. Ensure that the helmets for children are of good quality and properly fastened.

There is no excuse for people with or for those who are indifferent to road rules. These groups of people endanger the lives of innocent road users who abide with road laws. Patience and discipline on the road are important virtues as by having these qualities you can make difference and contribute to safety on the road.

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