



MOTORCYCLE
LEGAL FOUNDATION

BEGINNER MOTORCYCLE GUIDEBOOK

**"BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN THE CURIOUS
NEWBIE AND SUCCESSFUL RIDER"**



Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Acquiring your Motorcycle License	2
The Right Motorcycle	4
Purchasing a Motorcycle	7
The Right Gear	10
The Right Insurance	13
Maintenance	15
Navigating Weather	18
Accidents	22
Riding and Safety Protocols	24
Conclusion	28
Index	29



BEGINNER MOTORCYCLE GUIDEBOOK



"BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN THE CURIOUS NEWBIE AND SUCCESSFUL RIDER"

Introduction

Thank you for downloading our beginner motorcycle guidebook! We aim to provide simplified, structured guidance on the fundamentals of owning and operating a motorcycle.

The chapters within will cover everything that you need to know from acquiring your motorcycle license to finding and purchasing the right motorcycle. We'll go over how to find the right gear and choose the best insurance for your new bike. Lastly, we'll provide tips on motorcycle maintenance, navigating weather, as well as introduce you to some important riding and safety protocols. We hope that this material can serve as a great go-to resource for you -- and, if you have any questions, [please feel free to reach out](#) to our team of experts.

Acquiring Your Motorcycle License



So you're interested in getting your motorcycle license? Great! Remember, **the specific requirements for obtaining a motorcycle license vary by state**, however, the general process is the same nationwide.

Understanding Your State's Requirements

The first thing that you're going to need to do is figure out what your state's requirements are. Each state's requirements for obtaining a license can be different -- click [here](#) to locate your state's guidelines.

Acquire your learner's permit by passing a written test and eye exam/Practice

Study your state's handbook/take these license [practice test\(s\)](#). Your written test will include theoretical questions on some of the following topics:

- [Common safety practices](#)
 - [Your state's motorcycle laws](#)
 - [Motorcycle technique](#)
 - [Motorcycle terminology](#)
-

Once you have your learner's permit and you're able to practice legally, you should do so. **You'll ideally want to practice in safe, low risk areas such as large, empty parking lots.** Depending on your state, your permit may come with specifics pertaining to when you can ride and how you need to be observed when practicing, etc. Practice the following riding techniques:

- [Getting accustomed to the positioning on your motorcycle](#)
- [Accelerating and stopping/handling](#)
- [Turn/hand signals](#)
- [Familiarizing yourself with the clutch](#)

License test

The formatting for a motorcycle license test is different than it is with a regular vehicle. The proctor will observe your ability to handle your motorcycle on a closed course. -- then, depending on the state, you may be required to allow the proctor to observe you on a public street, interacting with traffic. If the on-road portion of the test is required, you'll need to provide a follow-car with a driver for the proctor to observe you from.

Choose a motorcycle that you're comfortable and confident with. The bike you test with must have a valid license plate, insurance, and registration along with another rider who's licensed to operate the test bike. Another important note; make sure you arrive at your test with everything you're required to bring. You can be failed for not bringing what's required on test day. You can get a list of what you'll need to have from your DMV.

Remember, don't over-think or ruminate over the stress of this new experience. Just relax and do your best -- and if you don't pass your exam on the first try, that's ok. You can always retake the test.

The Right Motorcycle



Identifying the purpose of your motorcycle

The very first thing that you want to establish is what your initial goals are with a motorcycle. What are you planning to use the motorcycle for? Commuting? Off-roading? Weekend pleasure riding? What appeals to you about the idea of motorcycling? For example, if you're interested in moto-cross, then you are not going to be well-suited with a Harley Davidson cruiser model. These are the critical questions that you'll want to process before moving forward.

Basic types of motorcycles

There are many different types of motorcycles and, at first, it may be a bit difficult to comprehend all of your options. Even if you have a basic idea of what you're interested in using the motorcycle for, there are many models that will get the job done. Here's a basic breakdown of the different types of bikes.

SCOOTERS



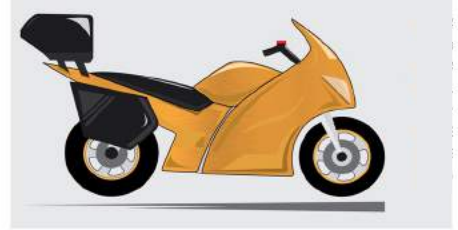
- Best for commuting in the city (not meant for highway use)
- Lower seat height
- Upright neutral riding position with mid-range handlebars
- Usually contains small front fairing or none
- Engine sizes range from 50 cc to 500 cc
- Great choice for new riders and all- skill levels

MOPEDS



- Best for commuting in the city (not meant for highway use)
- Lower seat height
- Upright neutral riding position with mid-range handlebars
- Usually has no front fairing
- Engine sizes are 50 cc and under, a hybrid powertrain, or 100% electric powered
- Great choice for new riders and all- skill levels

SPORT TOURING



- All- purpose functionality with extra storage space
- Average to taller seat height
- Upright neutral riding position with mid-range handlebars
- Equipped with medium to large front fairing
- Engine sizes range from 750 cc to 1,300 cc
- Ideal for intermediate/advanced riders

DUAL SPORT



- Ideal for both on and limited off- road riding
- Taller seat height
- Upright neutral riding position with mid-range handlebars
- Usually contains small front fairing
- Engine sizes can range from 125 cc to 800 cc
- Good for all- skill levels (be sure you can sit comfortably with your feet on the ground)

STANDARD



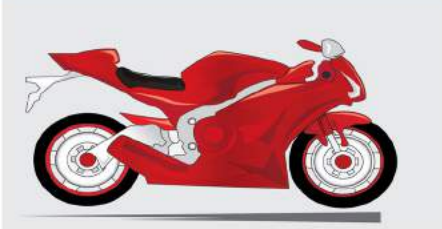
- All- purpose functionality, from touring to commuting
- Average seat height
- Upright neutral riding position with low to mid-range handlebars
- Usually contains small front fairing or none
- Engine sizes range from 125cc to 1,000 cc
- Great choice for new riders and all skill levels

CRUISER



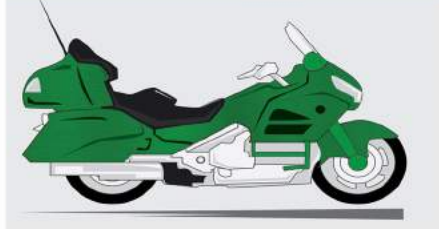
- Best for commuting and weekend riding
- Lower seat height
- Learned back riding position with mid-range handlebars
- Usually contains small front fairing or none
- Engine sizes range from 125cc to 1,000 cc
- Good for all- skill levels

SPORT BIKE



- Best for track riding, fast riding, or weekend riding
- Taller seat height
- Forward leaning riding position with low-range handlebars
- Complete fairing with a shorter windscreen to maximize aerodynamics
- Engine sizes range from 500 cc to 1,300 cc
- Ideal for intermediate/advanced riders due to speed of bike

TOURING



- Best for extended riding periods
- Average seat height equipped with wide seats made for comfort
- Upright neutral riding position with mid-range handlebars
- Contains large front fairing to protect the rider from elements
- Engine sizes range from 1,000 cc to 1,800 cc
- Ideal for intermediate/advanced riders due to weight and size

OFF-ROAD



- Best for off- road trail riding
- Taller seat height to accommodate large suspension travel
- Upright neutral riding position with mid-range handlebars
- Usually contains small front fairing or none
- Engine sizes range from 125 cc to 450 cc (also available as 2-stroke or 4-stroke engines)
- Good for all- skill levels

Now that you have an understanding of the different types of motorcycles, let's shift gears towards "sizing yourself." **In addition to finding the right type of motorcycle, you'll also want to make sure that it's the right fit!** The best way to figure out what will accommodate your body is to go to a motorcycle dealership and try several different models.

According to our guide on [how to choose a motorcycle that fits your height an size](#), we advise that you give yourself many attempts trying different models:

"This will allow you to get a feel for the weight distribution from side to side and the overall feel of the motorcycle. An additional check can be made for the distance from seat to foot and hand controls, as well as how easy it is to reach the ground. Published seat height measurements are a good way to compare motorcycles of a particular type, and you can check them against your inseam to identify a rough estimate of whether it will fit you while standing. We found a nifty motorcycle [ergonomic simulator](#) that you can try out before you head to the dealership. You simply input your height and inseam, and the potential bike you're choosing to see if it's a comfortable fit. It'll give you a good head start on which models to try first."

Spending time trying out different motorcycle types will allow you to **fully comprehend the difference in sizing and thus find what suits you best.** If you'd like to check out some of the recommended beginner motorcycles that we've compiled, click [here](#).

Purchasing a Motorcycle



Understanding your options

There's a cost-to-benefit analysis that you will have to do whenever you consider buying a motorcycle through an independent seller versus buying one through a dealership. Let's break down some of the benefits of each option.

First and foremost, **dealerships are generally going to be more expensive than purchasing through an independent seller.** The extra cost you may encounter by going through a dealership will often come with a purchase that you can find more reliable, though. Businesses who depend on selling motorcycles for a living are going to be concerned with their reputation and ratings, whereas a private seller may not be. Dealerships will also tend to have more extensive customer service (both during and after the sale). Benefits such as warranties, comprehensive paperwork, trained service staff, financing and other accommodations help to promote a smooth transaction.

On the other hand, purchasing through an independent seller isn't necessarily a bad idea, it's just implicitly less reliable in general. One benefit you could argue that purchasing from an independent seller: While a **dealership** needs to make a profit on each vehicle, a **private seller** doesn't have the same concern. Private sellers are often more willing to negotiate to ensure that their motorcycle is sold fast.

The analyses above are general guidelines, and there are always exceptions. People end up with reliable purchases from independent sellers all the time. Be mindful of these guidelines, but always assess all of your options as well.

Value

Research for the fair market value using one of the following options:

- [Kelly Blue Book](#)
- [NADA Guides](#)
- [Cycle Trader](#)
- [Autotrader](#)
- [Craigslist](#)

Don't forget to identify modification specs and factor them into the value of the motorcycle. Also, consider any potential additional fees (sales tax, delivery fee, dealer prep fee, etc.) when budgeting for your bike.

Evaluation and Inspection

When you find an ad that you're interested in, create a list of notes on the advertised motorcycle. Sometimes when you're in the moment, you can forget about important specifics you wanted to inquire about, which is why having notes is a good idea.

When you arrive for your appointment, try and acquire the following from seller: Service history, VIN/Title History/Owner's Manual, Factory Toolkit. You can use our [Used Motorcycle Inspection Checklist](#) to make sure that you're looking for all of the right things before you make your purchase!

- **Service history:** The service history will allow you to see what's been done to the motorcycle and when in terms of service. It's generally a good sign when an owner can provide documentation showing the attention given to the bike over the years.

- **VIN/title history:** The VIN# is going to allow you to research if the vehicle has been wrecked or stolen in the past. The title history will allow you to see how many times (and when) the vehicle has been registered.

- **Owner's manual:** The owner's manual will have all of the information about the vehicle, it's features, and when it should be serviced based on mileage. The internet makes finding information about a vehicle and troubleshooting much more accessible nowadays, but having the original owner's manual can provide very useful as you will most certainly eventually need the information it contains.

- **Factory toolkit:** A factory toolkit is a small pouch of tools usually kept under the seat of a motorcycle, used for roadside maintenance and emergency repairs. If the bike doesn't come with it's own toolkit, you can always order one at a later time.

The Right Gear



Ensuring that you have a quality set of gear to ride with — and that you wear it often — is paramount to your well-being as a rider. We've seen too many people who have been in seemingly minor motorcycle accidents but have come out with significant injuries due to not wearing enough gear. **Investing in proper equipment is something you will always end up regretting after it's too late, and you're paying the price in hospital bills.** We advise adopting the "All The Gear All The Time" (**ATGATT**), which we'll cover later on in this guide. In the meantime, take a look at our comprehensive content with everything you need to know about safety gear below.

[Helmets](#)

Whether the law requires it or not, you should always wear a helmet. Helmets saved an almost 1,800 lives in 2015 — and an estimated 740 more could have been saved if they had decided to use a helmet. The vital necessity that it is to wear a helmet has motivated us to assemble a [guide](#) on the different things to look for when choosing the safest motorcycle helmet, from motorcycle helmet types and safety standards to helmet fit and safety features.

We've also created a [guide](#) that accommodates more for the beginner as well.

Jackets

There are a lot of materials available for motorcycle jackets from leather to synthetics that offer great protection, style, and function. Leather may look great with your rugged cruiser or flashy with your sports model, but a well-designed synthetic may suit your long touring motorcycle better over 1,000 miles of open road. The jacket should fit comfortably without being too big and bulky, and offer the function you need. You can visit [this resource](#) to help you make an educated decision on your next motorcycle jacket.

Pants

Motorcycle pants tend to be overlooked as riding gear because often riders think jeans are acceptable enough to get the job done. Motorcycle pants offer protection from the environment as well as ventilation and armor in the most beneficial areas. Visibility is also a key design feature, whether that's in a bright color design or a retro-reflective covering. Just as motorcycle jackets come in different materials and styles, motorcycle pants are complementary in that respect. Textile, leather, denim, and kevlar are different materials used in pants and they can be used singly or in combination with each other depending on what riding style they are made for. Take a look at some of our recommended options on pants, check out our guide on [motorcycle safety gear](#).

Boots

Motorcycle boots are designed with many accommodations for riding and a large emphasis on safety that make them unique from your regular pair of boots. Some of the features motorcycle boots can come with are built-in ankle protection, increased torsional stiffness for reduced flexing, and oil-resistant soles for a firm grip on the ground (as well as being stylish footwear!). As with the other categories for gear, fulfill your curiosities about boots with our specified [guide](#).

Gloves

If you fall on a motorcycle, there's a 99% chance that you're going to utilize your hands in an effort to protect yourself from further injury. A rudimentary Google search on "road rash hands" will give you all the motivation you need to make sure you're always wearing gloves while riding. Quoted from the glove section of our [safety gear guide](#), "Among the different styles of gloves available, there are a lot of choices to consider. Some want the protection and light weight of a full race glove with carbon / Kevlar knuckles, ventilation, and wrist protection. If that's too much, perhaps a touring glove that offers great protection, ventilation, and heating for hot and cold riding, and can go everywhere and do anything. If you plan to ride in a more urban setting, there are great offerings in a lightweight glove that don't extend past your wrist that make it easy to ride with a jacket."

There are so many options to choose from. Choose the pair of gloves that will be best suited and most accommodating for your individual needs when riding.

The Right Insurance



There are a lot of variables that can affect whether or not your motorcycle insurance company will cover you in the event of an accident. Type of motorcycle, age of rider, the experience of the rider, rider's riding demographic, driving record, to name a few. Because of all of these different factors, it's very difficult to make suggestions on which insurance policies would suit an individual best. **Let's get you more acclimated to how insurance works and the common types of coverage that are offered so you can make the best-educated decision.**

Types of coverage

Motorcycle Liability Insurance

States with mandatory motorcycle insurance laws require liability insurance, the term used for a combination of bodily injury and property damage coverages. Some states might require other types of coverage, so it's a good idea to check with your state's motor vehicle office. Our article on motorcycle insurance [here](#) will provide more depth on liability as well as show you state-by-state insurance requirements.

- **Collision:** If your motorcycle is damaged in an accident, collision coverage pays for its repair or replacement regardless of who was at fault in causing the accident. The cost of collision or comprehensive coverage depends in part on the deductible you select. A deductible is the amount of money you must put toward the cost of repairs or replacing the motorcycle. Higher deductibles usually lower the cost of the policy.

- **Comprehensive:** If your motorcycle is stolen or is damaged in a non-collision incident, such as a tree limb falling on it, comprehensive coverage pays the cost of repair or replacement of your motorcycle.

- **Medical Payments:** This optional coverage pays your medical expenses for injuries you suffer as a result of an accident. Payments are made regardless of who might have been at fault in causing the accident.

- **Underinsured/Uninsured motorist:** Unlike liability insurance that pays the claims of other people, underinsured and uninsured motorist coverages protect you. If you are injured in an accident caused by an uninsured motorist or a motorist whose insurance coverage is insufficient to pay the damages you incur, uninsured and underinsured coverages are intended to provide compensation to you.

There are many more types of coverage out there (personal injury protection, trip interruption coverage, roadside assistance, etc.) It's generally a good idea to consult with a trusted insurance professional to cover all of your options.

Common rate deductions

- Clean driving record
- Package deals (Purchasing multiple policies, insuring more than one motorcycle, etc.)
- Completing motorcycle training courses
- Membership to a motorcycle rider's organization
- Paying your policy in full

When it comes to filing a claim, questions like "what type of claim do I need to file?" or "what can I collect in property damage or injuries with my claim?" arise naturally. Read our article on [how to file a motorcycle accident insurance claim](#) to get started.

Maintenance



A good way to approach motorcycle maintenance is with the mindset that you're going to inevitably spend time on it, no matter what. **You can either spend an hour in the garage doing upkeep, or you can spend an hour on the side of the road waiting for assistance.** There's also a certain sense of empowerment and pride you feel every time you get on your bike and know that everything's just right — and that you had an impact on that.

Performing maintenance on a motorcycle is generally easier than it is on a car. So, what to check and when to check it? Fortunately, the owner's/service manual provided with motorcycles has a list of recommended tasks and a schedule for you to follow. If you're diligent with the prescribed upkeep, it'll go a long way with preservation.



Initial Walkthrough

- Leaking Fluids (radiator, oil filter, fork seals)
- Unnecessary rubbing/friction on your bike between parts
- Lenses/Lights issues



Final Drive

- Excessive wear on sprocket teeth
- Excessive wear on chain
- Cracks and/or improper tension on the belt drive
- Swap out your gear oil (shaft drive)
- Clean and lubricate chain



Filters

- Air filter
- Fuel filter



Fluids

- Refer to the owner's manual for fluid changing schedule
- Assuming you're not hitting your mileage requirements to change your oil, change it once a year
- Clear out radiator every two years (liquid cooling)



Brakes

- Brake pads
- Shoe life (drum brake)
- Clean and grease slide pins



Tire / Wheels

- Integrity of the rubber
- Tread depth
- Wheel bearings
- Steering-head bearings



Controls

- Lube throttle/clutch cables
- Replacing hydraulic clutch fluid (hydraulic clutch)
- Check for the condition of your fasteners (handlebar clamps, triple clamps, axle nuts, shift linkage).



Battery

- Age of battery (if it's older than 5 years, consider a replacement)



Winterization

- Change your fluids
- Check your coolant/anti-freeze
- Wash your motorcycle
- Lubricate moving parts
- Protect your leather
- Stabilize your gasoline
- Prepare your engine
- Plug up your exhaust
- Store your battery
- Select a protective environment
- Prevent flat spots on your tires

Winterization

Ensuring your motorcycle gets winterized properly is another often-overlooked part of maintenance that can end up costing you big time. Dead batteries, rusty gas tanks and bad carburetors are all amongst the many detrimental outcomes you face when not winterizing your ride properly. Here's a list of the essentials you'll need to take care in order to prep your bike for some slumber time during the winter.

- Change your fluids
- Check your coolant/anti-freeze
- Wash your motorcycle
- Lubricate moving parts
- Protect your leather
- Stabilize your gasoline
- Prepare your engine
- Plug up your exhaust
- Store your battery
- Select a protective environment
- Prevent flat spots on your tires

Finally, *do not* start your motorcycle periodically through winter (as some guides may suggest). Doing so can create condensation in the engine and exhaust system.

If you have questions on the specifics of each item in our winterization list, you can read even more about the topic in our [motorcycle winterization guide](#).

Navigating Weather



It's inevitable that you will eventually encounter unfavorable weather conditions in your career riding motorcycles. **Riding a motorcycle through rough weather conditions can be a much bigger deal than it is for a regular vehicle.** The two main types of weather that pose a threat to riders are rain and wind. In this section we'll cover how to prepare and navigate through both.

Rain

Reduced traction and decreased visibility are some of the more [common dangers presented by rain](#). If you're riding in heavy rain, puddles can often hide obstacles on the road from your visibility. The distance that you travel behind other vehicles will need to increase due to lack of traction -- and you will need to be cognizant of utilizing alternate routes that may be safer. Take a look at our guide below on the essentials you need to have covered for rain.

THE MOTORCYCLIST'S GUIDE TO RIDING IN THE RAIN

GEAR UP

Waterproof your gear for any riding conditions



BEFORE YOU RIDE CHECKLIST

Conduct the following prior to your riding adventure



Tires

Check that your tires are inflated properly and have the proper tread depth.



Brakes

Ensure your brakes are functioning properly and identify the wear on the brake pads.



Oil & Brake Fluid

Inspect your motorcycle for any oil or brake fluid leakage.



Route

Map an alternate route and/or rest stop to take shelter when the rain starts to pour.



Defogging

Wipe down your windshield, goggles, and/or helmet visors with anti-fogging treatments.

BEWARE OF WET RIDING CONDITIONS

Be alert of dangerous road conditions in order to navigate the streets safely



Reduced Traction

Rain unveils oils that create slippery, wet surfaces that reduces the traction on your tires. Try to avoid riding on painted lines, manhole covers, tar snakes, puddles, and metal crossings. When possible, ride behind the vehicle's tire tracks, as they have already propelled some of the water away and allow you to gain better traction.



Obscured Obstacles

Abundant rainfall can obscure potholes and uneven surfaces on the road that can be hazardous to your safety. Slow down as much as possible, squeeze your clutch, and coast through the puddle. At higher speed conditions, try to maintain your speed and avoid abrupt changes as it can reduce the traction of your motorcycle.



Decreased Visibility

Visibility is reduced for both motorcyclists and vehicles while riding in the rain. Consider wearing reflective and/or bright-colored riding gear to increase your visibility in the road. Adjust accordingly to weather conditions and practice riding defensively.



Increase Braking Distance

Braking distance should be increased due to the lack of traction on the wet roads. Ride as vertical as possible to allow your tires to have the best contact path with the road. While braking, apply a lighter application to the front brakes.



Lightning

If lightning strikes during your ride, find an indoor rest stop immediately and wait it out. Riding in the elements on a metal contraption during a thunderstorm is asking for trouble!

YOU'RE READY TO GO
RIDE SAFELY!

Wind

Wind can pose a threat coming from any direction. Let's go over the different directions of wind and how to combat them below.

- **Crosswind (wind approaching from the side)**

Crosswind is arguably the most threatening type of wind as it can shift the positioning of your bike easier than headwind and tailwind. You can consider your body a sail, and the more exposed and larger area you have for wind to make contact with you, the more influenced you'll be by it. One of the best ways to combat crosswind is to stick a knee out in the direction the crosswind comes from to catch oncoming wind flowing around the motorcycle. Initially, one might think that slowing down would be the best course of action when dealing with crosswind, however that's actually not the case. To put it simply, gyroscopic force is essentially when your motorcycle is traveling at a high enough speed to make it want to leverage itself in a strong position. It's the same concept as taking your hands off of your bike while maintaining speed; your bike tends to want to remain uncompromised in position.

- **Headwind (wind approaching from the front)**

Headwind is certainly a lot easier to deal with than crosswind. You mainly want to minimize headwind by tucking lower and remaining behind your windscreen and front fairing as much as possible. Keep your limbs tucked in close to your bike to minimize exposure to headwind. Also, be aware that it can slow you down significantly -- if you're inhibiting traffic because of this then you may want to consider another route.

- **Tailwind (wind approaching from the back)**

Tailwind is probably the least threatening wind to deal with of the three. Tailwind can actually be better for gas mileage -- and because of that, be aware that it will increase your speed naturally. Take the same riding approach as you take with headwind, but also be cognizant of the possibility that you may need to brake harder due to momentum from wind.

Accidents



Motorcycles are fundamentally more dangerous than cars — statistics show that you're almost *twice* as likely to get into an accident while riding a motorcycle. Having a game plan to follow after an accident is paramount to your well-being as a rider.

Dealing with the initial shock and evaluating the situation

When you get into an accident, you're going to initially deal with some shock. Try your best to remain calm throughout and focus on evaluating the scene and figuring out what the next step is. Are there serious injuries or other emergencies? What deserves your immediate attention the most?

Call 911

Report the accident with as many pertinent details as possible. Help the dispatcher help you. 911 will dispatch the appropriate team(s) depending on the details and severity of the accident.

Collect information

Even though the Police will come to document the scene, it's still vital to collect your own evidence. Do your best to create documentation of the following:

- Vehicles
- License plates
- Injuries
- Personal information of parties involved and information of assisting law enforcement such as: badge number, report number.
- Insurance information of parties involved

Contact your insurance provider

Contacting your insurance as soon as you've been involved in an accident is best. Remember that you can decline to answer questions if you don't feel comfortable or see it as a detriment to you. Wait until consulting with a doctor and/or mechanic before reporting any damage to you or your vehicle.

Consult with an attorney

There's a lot of potential liability with motorcycle accidents. An attorney can observe the evidence, put together a position that suits and benefits you best from a legal standpoint.

Three don't dos

- DON'T engage in conversation with the other party. This particularly pertains to giving them information that can eventually be used against you.
- DON'T submit any information without preparation. Again, this mainly pertains to submitting information to insurance providers, etc. that could eventually be used against you.
- DON'T admit fault

Riding and Safety Protocols



In this section, we're going to go over some protocols and provide information for general safety and riding. We believe knowledge of these topics is vital to success in riding motorcycles — and we suggest that you familiarize yourself with them.

ATGATT

ATGATT is an acronym for “All The Gear All The Time”. Many riders are unsure about how much gear they need to use when riding. It's easy to rationalize wearing less gear when riding if a rider's perceived risk is low.

We're strong proponents that full gear should be worn at all times — even when you're taking a nice, mellow ride down the road to the grocery store. Even the smallest accidents can present life-threatening outcomes.

Invest in [quality gear](#) and wear it at all times.

Hand Signals

Hand signals are often learned during licensing exams for motorcycle riders. Also, often enough, despite being crucial to safety, hand signals are forgotten and/or given virtually no thought after initially being learned. If you're a brand new rider and you see someone using a [hand signal](#) on the road, you definitely want to know what's being communicated. Here's our animated list on motorcycle hand signals. Feel free to study this list and ask your friends to quiz you before your license test as well.



MOTORCYCLE HAND SIGNALS



Left turn
Arm and hand
extending
left, palm
facing down



Right turn
Arm out, bent
at 90° angle,
fist clenched.



Stop
Arm extended
straight down,
palm facing
back.



Speed Up
Arm extended
straight out,
palm facing up,
swing upward.



Slow Down
Arm extended
straight out, palm
facing down,
swing down to
your side.



Follow Me
Arm extended
straight up
from shoulder,
palm forward.



You Lead/Come
Arm extended
upward 45°, palm
forward pointing
with index finger,
swing in arc from
back to front.



**Hazard in
Roadway**
On the left,
point with left
hand; on the
right, point
with right foot.



Single File
Arm and index
finger extended
straight up.



Double File
Arm with index
and middle
finger extended
straight up.



Comfort Stop
Forearm
extended, fist
clenched with
short up and
down motion.



**Refreshment
Stop**
Fingers
closed, thumb
to mouth.



Turn Signal On
Open and close
hand with
fingers and
thumb extended.



Pull Off
Arm positioned
as for right turn,
forearm swung
toward shoulder.



Cops Ahead
Tap on top of
helmet with
open palm down.



Fuel
Arm out to
side pointing
to tank with
finger
extended.

Lane Splitting

[Lane splitting legality](#) is specific to the state you're riding in. However, being that lane splitting is common practice in many areas of the world, it's an important aspect to riding that we should all be privy to. We advise you to follow your state's laws, however, lane splitting does exist and we'd prefer that people are lane splitting safely.

If you're unaware of what lane splitting is by definition, as well as it's different iterations, you can visit our content on lane splitting [here](#). In terms of safety, the main concept to understand is that the risk of danger while lane splitting increases as your speed does. The faster you and traffic are moving, the less time you and other commuters have to react — and being able to perceive this responsibly and reasonably is the single biggest preserving factor. A good general rule of thumb is to not utilize a lane split to pass another vehicle while traveling more than 10 mph than the traffic you're passing. The truth is, we can create as many guidelines for safely and effectively lane splitting as we'd like for people — but there's always going to be the potential for scenarios to arise that weren't covered. The vital variables that need to be mastered are responsible perception of risk and risk-taking.

Conclusion

That wraps up our motorcycle beginner handbook! Hopefully you're able to get as much enjoyment in using this guide as we have in creating it. Be on the lookout for updates as we're always intending to improve our resources as time goes on. If you have any questions, comments, or suggestions please feel free to leave them in the comments section below. We appreciate our readers input and are always open to feedback. Happy riding.

www.motorcyclelegalfoundation.com

Index

A

Accident 10, 13,14, 22, 23, 24
ATGATT 10, 24

B

Battery 16
Boots 11, 19
Brakes 16, 19, 20

C

Collision 14
Comprehensive 7, 10, 14
Controls 6,16
Cruiser 5

D

Dealership 6, 7, 8
Dual Sport 5

E

Ergonomic simulator 6

F

Factory toolkit 9
Filters 16
Fluids 16, 17,19

G

Gear 1, 10, 11, 12,16, 19, 24
Gloves 12, 19

H

Hand signals 3, 25, 26
Helmets 10

I

Independent Seller 7, 8
Inspection 8
Insurance 1,3, 13, 14, 23

J

Jackets 11,12, 19

L

Lane Splitting 27
Law 3, 10, 13 23, 27
License 1, 2, 3, 23, 25

M

Maintenance 1, 9,15, 16
Mopeds 5

O

Off - Road 5

P

Pants 11,19
Practice 2, 3, 27
Private Seller 8
Permit 2,3

R

Rain 18, 19, 20

S

Safety 1, 3, 10, 11, 12, 24, 27
Service history 9
Scooters 5
Sport Bike 5

Sport Touring 5
Standard 5

T

Technique 3
Test 2, 3, 25
Tires 16,17, 19, 20
Touring 5

U

Underinsured motorist 14
Uninsured motorist 14

V

VIN/title history 9

W

Weather 1, 18, 20
Wind 18, 19, 21
Winterization 16, 17
Wheels 16