

Note: Upper-body clothing should be brightly colored. Lightweight reflective orange or yellow vests can be worn over jackets. The use of retro-reflective material on clothing, the helmet, and the motorcycle helps make the motorcyclist visible to other motorists, especially at night. Many vehicle/motorcycle crashes occur because the driver of the other vehicle failed to see the motorcyclist.

Gloves

Durable, non-slip gloves are recommended to permit a firm grip on the controls. Leather gloves are excellent, as are special fabric gloves with leather palms and grip strips on the fingers. Gauntlet-type gloves keep air out of a motorcyclist's sleeves.

Footwear

Proper footwear affords protection for the feet, ankles, and lower parts of the legs. Leather boots and durable athletic sneakers that cover the ankles should be worn. Sandals, sneakers and similar footwear with dangling laces should be avoided since they can get in the way and provide little protection from impact.



Quick Tips

- ▶ Get trained and licensed.
- ▶ Wear protective gear and a lawful helmet.
- ▶ Ride within your personal limits.
- ▶ Make yourself visible.
- ▶ Ride with courtesy and respect.
- ▶ Avoid tailgating.
- ▶ Adhere to posted speed limits.
- ▶ Understand traffic laws, including ordinances in your community.
- ▶ Use signals when appropriate.
- ▶ Ride drug and alcohol-free.
- ▶ Have 360-degree awareness.
- ▶ Be a lifelong learner.

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Experience and Knowledge:

The Keys to Safe Motorcycle Riding



Motorcycling is a fun, exciting way to travel and experience Virginia. However, riding a motorcycle demands a heightened level of focus and additional training. Virginia's motorcycle requirements prioritize the safety of both motorcyclists and fellow road travelers. Continue reading to discover the essential steps for riding responsibly and legally.

Get Trained

Whether you are a novice or an experienced rider, training helps to not only develop skills but keep them at their sharpest. The Virginia Rider Training Program has classes for both novice and experienced riders taught by certified motorcycle safety instructors. **76% of motorcyclists involved in crashes haven't taken the course.**

Offered at community colleges and other locations throughout the state, the Virginia Rider Training Program gives you the opportunity to learn new techniques and practice your skills in a controlled, safe environment. Best of all? If you don't yet have your Virginia motorcycle endorsement, you can earn it by taking this course, waiving the DMV knowledge and road skills test in the process.



Scan to find courses near you.

Get Licensed

To operate a motorcycle in Virginia, you must have a motorcycle endorsement on your driver's license or a motorcycle-only driver's license.

The type of endorsement you receive depends on the type of bike you plan to operate – two-

wheeled (M2), three-wheeled (M3) or both (M) – and the training or testing you've completed. There are three ways to obtain your motorcycle endorsement in Virginia:

1. Pass the Virginia Rider Training Program course which requires no additional DMV testing, or
2. Pass the DMV motorcycle knowledge exam, hold a learner's permit for 30 days, and pass the motorcycle road skills test, or
3. Transfer in your out-of-state motorcycle endorsement when you move to Virginia

One-in-four motorcyclists who crash in Virginia don't have an endorsement. Riding without an endorsement is not only not safe, it is also against the law. If convicted, you can be punished by a year in jail and up to a \$2,500 fine.



Get Your Gear On

Helmets

A helmet is the most important safety equipment a motorcyclist wears. A rider with no helmet is 40% more likely to suffer a fatal head injury than a helmeted rider.

In Virginia, motorcyclists and their passengers must wear an approved motorcycle helmet that meets or exceeds United States Department of Transportation standards. Helmets certified by the Snell Memorial Foundation and the American National Standards Institute are also good to look for.

Eye Protection

Motorcycle riders must protect their eyes to prevent their vision from being impaired. Eye protection is always recommended, even on motorcycles with windshields. Proper protection includes quality goggles, glasses with plastic or safety lenses or a helmet equipped with a face shield. Goggles, glasses and face shields should be scratch-free, shatterproof and well-ventilated to prevent fog buildup. Only clear shields should be used at night since tinted shields make it more difficult to see.

Jackets and Pants

Clothing worn when riding a motorcycle should provide some measure of protection from abrasion in the event of a crash. The clothing should be of durable material (for example, special synthetic material or leather). Jackets should have long sleeves. Long pants should be worn and not be baggy or flared at the bottom so they don't get tangled with the chain, foot-peg, or anything else on the sides of a motorcycle.

