

Dept. of Transportation: State Patrol reminds motorists to look twice, share the road with motorcycles

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Motorcycle fatalities increased 40% in 2020 over the previous five years average. May is national “Motorcycle Safety Awareness Month” and the Wisconsin State Patrol is asking motorcyclists and all other motorists to share the road, be alert and safe. 2020 preliminary data for Wisconsin shows there were 2,095 motorcycle crashes, 1,788 motorcyclists injured and 112 motorcycle fatalities.

As warm weather returns, more motorcyclists will be on Wisconsin roads. “Drivers must be in the habit of looking for motorcyclists,” Wisconsin State Patrol Captain Jason Zeeh said, “and motorcyclists should watch for other vehicles and get properly trained and licensed. Together we can save lives.”

Motorcycle crashes often occur when a car or truck driver changes lanes, turns left or pulls out in front of a motorcycle. Motorcycles are smaller and more difficult to see, especially in your blind spot. Failure to yield the right of way to another vehicle ([state law 346.18](#)) can result in a \$175 citation, but penalties are much more severe if the violation results in someone getting injured or killed.

Motorcyclists can do their part by getting properly licensed, wearing visible and protective equipment, and carefully scanning ahead for potential hazards such as gravel, debris or wildlife in the roadway.

Motorcyclists have two options to get the required Class M license: pass a motorcycle driving skills test after making an [appointment](#) at a [Division of Motor Vehicles service center](#) or successfully complete a [WisDOT-approved rider education course](#). Motorcyclists who successfully complete an approved safety

course earn a skills test waiver used to obtain their Class M license.

“Whether a person is brand new to motorcycling or a returning rider, a safety course is a wise investment,” Captain Zeeh said. “Safety along our roadways requires all drivers to share the road, watch their speed, eliminate distractions and be alert.”