

ALABAMA & MOTORCYCLE SAFETY:

- Victoria Rumble

The following report was published in 2008 by the Governor's Highway Safety Administration.

Alabama is 1 of 28 states and Puerto Rico where the Highway Safety Office is the lead agency for motorcycle safety.

Alabama ranks 1 of 8 states, the District of Columbia and Guam, that hasn't identified motorcycle crashes as a priority crash problem.

Alabama is 1 of 20 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico that has a universal helmet law.

Alabama is 1 of 6 states, the District of Columbia and Guam without a Sharing The Road program.

Alabama is 1 of 16 states, the District of Columbia, and Guam without a motorcycle advisory committee.

Alabama is 1 of 12 states, the District of Columbia and Guam without a motorcycle safety plan.

Alabama is 1 of 2 states that doesn't offer rider education waivers.

Alabama is 1 of 9 states whose Strategic Highway Safety Plan doesn't include motorcycle safety.

YEAR	MOTORCYCLE FATALITIES	MOTORCYCLE REGISTRATIONS
2004	75	81,086
2005	62	93,468
2006	105 (106)	104,075

(Number in parenthesis was provided by the State of Alabama)

In Alabama, motorcycle fatalities represented 6 percent of all motor vehicle fatalities but 5 percent of registered vehicles in 2004; 5 percent of fatalities but 5 percent of registered vehicles in 2005; and 9 percent of fatalities but 6 percent of registered vehicles in 2006.

GENERAL:

- * The Alabama Office of Highway Safety is the lead agency for motorcycle safety.
- * Alabama does not have an active statewide motorcycle advisory committee.
- * Alabama does not have a specific motorcycle safety plan.
- * Motorcycle Safety is not an element of Alabama's Strategic Highway Safety Plan.
- * Motorcycle crashes are not a priority crash problem.

RIDER EDUCATION AND TRAINING:

- * The Alabama Traffic Safety Center (ATSC) at University of Montevallo is responsible for motorcycle training and education. The ATSC offers the MSF's Basic and Experienced Rider Courses.
- * Harley Davidson also offers two programs in the State.
- * Rider education is not mandatory in Alabama
- * Training capacity is an issue in Alabama. The state lacks the training facilities to address the current training needs of motorcyclists, especially in lower Alabama. Current funding levels do not allow for the additional training sites to meet the needs of the growing motorcyclist population.
- * Conspicuity information is provided in the state's education courses and rider license manual.
- * Alabama does not have a *Sharing the Road* program. At this point, [study published in 2008], there are no plans to develop a program.
- * Information about sharing the road with motorcycles is included in the state's driving manual and is a required component of the curriculum for novice automobile drivers.

LICENSING:

- * The minimum age to apply for a motorcycle license or endorsement is 14. A person who is at least 14 years of age may apply for a restricted license to operate a motor-driven cycle. A person who has attained the age of 16 and who has been issued a class M driver license may operate either a motorcycle or motor-driven cycle.
- * Alabama's licensing requirements only include a multiple choice written exam. A successful road test or rider's skill evaluation test is not required.
- * There are no outreach programs to encourage or ensure proper licensing.
- * Currently, Alabama makes no provisions for waivers for rider education.

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT:

- * Alabama has a universal helmet law.
- * In 2006, 10 of the 105 motorcyclists who died in crashes weren't wearing helmets.
- * Alabama provides information concerning the law and the benefits of helmet use in its MSF rider courses as well as the state's motorcycle operator's manual.
- * Alabama does not offer any special training to help local and state law enforcement officers detect non-compliant helmets.

IMPAIRED MOTORCYCLING:

- * Information about impaired riding is included in the MSF courses and in the rider's manual.
- * Alabama does not have any special programs to detect impaired motorcyclists.
- * All of the state's impaired driving mobilization campaigns include motorcyclists.

RESOURCES AND FUNDING:

- * The Alabama Motorcycle Safety Program (AMSP) is funded through an assessment of moving violation convictions.
- * Alabama did not qualify for a 2010 Motorcyclist Safety Grant.
- * In 2007, AMSP received a one-time federal grant of \$75,390 to purchase 22 training motorcycles and one motorcycle hauling trailer to allow additional training courses throughout the state. Alabama did not commit any federal funding to motorcycle safety in 2004, 2005, or 2006.

NOTE:

There is an additional rider safety course being taught in Alabama which is not listed in this report. Instructors for R.I.D.E. (Riders Institute for Defensive Education) have been police motorcycle operators. <http://ridemotorschool.com/aboutus.php>. Birmingham and Pelham: 205-585-RIDE.