

Choosing A Motorcycle Helmet

It's an argument that's being going on for a long time - whether or not people should have to wear a helmet when they're riding a motorcycle. No matter what your life philosophy might be, or how your friends and family feel about it, the reality is that the laws are there and you have to abide by them. Maybe you feel a helmet cramps your style, but the fact is that helmets save lives. On a more personal level, wearing a motorcycle helmet also means you will save on your medical costs and insurance premiums thanks to the added safety.

When it comes to choosing a motorcycle helmet, there are three main types available - full-face, three-quarter shell, and half-shell. Let us look at each one, and see what their good and bad points are.

Full-Face Motorcycle Helmets

These are definitely the safest and most secure type of helmet that you can buy. They cover the face entirely, and offer some protection to the neck. There is also a clear visor covering the eyes for added safety. The visor helps to stop dirt and debris landing in your eyes, and the bottom part of the helmet stops anything unwanted entering your mouth. A full-face motorcycle helmet is a very comfortable once it's in place, and provides the highest level of safety, but some people find them difficult to get on and off, and restrictive when they're in place.

Three-Quarter Shell Motorcycle Helmets

If you've seen a law enforcement official riding a motorbike, then chances are he or she was wearing a three-quarter shell helmet. This type of helmet covers most of the head, apart from the face, and are held in place by a chinstrap. They provide a good level of safety and security, similar to a full-face helmet. They're also much simpler to use in conjunction with some type of communication device if you're traveling with a group of motorcycle enthusiasts.

Half-Shell Motorcycle Helmets

Although this type of helmet is the least restrictive of the three types, it also offers the least amount of protection. A half-shell helmet really only protects the top of the head in an accident, hopefully preventing brain damage. The regulations in many states require a half-shell motorcycle helmet as the absolute minimum that can be worn, but for safety purposes they are very ineffective, and are quite likely to fall off in an accident, providing no protection at all.

Wearing a motorcycle helmet may not be your idea of fun, but when you consider what a dramatic effect a serious motorcycle accident could have on your quality of life, if you're still alive, then it makes sense to wear one that provides as much protection as possible

Before you go out and purchase the coolest looking helmet with a bunch of flashy designs, here are 8 tips to choosing a motorcycle helmet.

1. Size Does Matter

The old adage "bigger is better" is not necessarily true in this case. When choosing a helmet, you want to make sure that it is comfortable and snug. Fasten the straps, grab the helmet chin bar, and begin moving the helmet side to side. If it feels like the helmet is sliding on your skin and hair, then the helmet is too loose. Move the helmet up and down and if it feels like you can pull off the helmet, then it is still too loose. Keep in mind; you are going to be spending hours in your new helmet so you want to make sure that it fits you comfortably. Keep trying on different sizes until you find one that fits you comfortably.

2. Safety First

Turn over the helmet and usually you will see a DOT and maybe even a SNELL sticker. DOT and SNELL certifications are motorcycle safety standards, which put numerous helmets through rigorous testing to ensure that the helmet protects a person the way they are supposed to. DOT operates through an honor system and relies on the integrity of a company whereas SNELL does further testing. It is always a good idea to get helmets that are both DOT and SNELL approved just to be certain that you are dealing with an approved helmet. You will find that more and more manufacturers are increasingly offering their helmets with these options.

3. Type of Helmet

Another important factor is the actual type of helmet whether the helmet is a full-face helmet, an open face helmet, a shorty helmet, or a motocross helmet. It should be obvious that the full-face helmet offers the most safety in regards to type of helmet as it protects the face and back of the head. If you choose an open face or shorty helmet, keep in mind that you expose yourself to increased risk should an accident ever happen.

4. Anti-Scratch and Anti-Fog

More and more manufacturers are increasingly building their helmets to include visors that are both anti-scratch and anti-fog. If they do not, you might want to find a different helmet that has these or purchase an aftermarket visor that is equipped with anti-fog. The last thing you want is to be unable to see while riding due to a fogged up visor. In addition, you can always purchase an anti-fog spray or an anti-fog film strip.

5. Ventilation

You are probably thinking to yourself that you want a motorcycle helmet with a lot of vents so that you're not baking in your own sweat in your helmet. The problem with a lot of vents is that you're going to have an extremely noisy helmet. The more aerodynamic the helmet and the better the vents, the less noise there will be when you are riding. Of course, you can always use earplugs to tone down the noise and there are helmets with vents that can be opened and closed at will.

6. Straps

You want to consider your chinstraps as you are fitting your helmet on. How easily is it to tighten the helmet using the chinstrap? Also, if you plan on locking your helmet to your bike, then you'll want to make sure that you can easily lock your helmet on your rear trunk using the chinstrap.

7. Inner Liner

As you are fitting on a helmet, you want to make sure that the inner liner is comfortable for you. Keep in mind also that the inner liner will "break in" as you wear it more often so that it will be more comfortable as you wear it. Be sure to start with a helmet that is snug and comfortable.

8. Design

Lastly is the design of the helmet. How you choose what design and pattern you want on your helmet depends entirely on you. There are numerous top motorcycle helmet brands like AGV, Icon, Joe Rocket, Scorpion and Shoei so you are bound to find something that suits your style.