

ARTICLE

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Wearing The Right Gear Can Save A Motorcyclist's Hide



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For a motorcyclist, protective clothing is not a luxury, but a necessity. Studies have found that motorcyclists who wear proper attire sustain fewer injuries in motorcycle crashes than those who do

not. And while it is true that protective clothing will do little to shield riders involved in high-speed crashes, most motorcycle accidents occur at low speeds. In these types of accidents, motorcyclists are most likely to suffer injuries to the arms, legs and head. Wearing a helmet and the right type of clothing can help protect these vulnerable parts from road rash; abrasions; and facial, [head and other injuries](#).

In addition to wearing a helmet, which is required of every motorcyclist in New Jersey, other types of protective clothing a motorcycle rider should invest in include:

- A durable motorcycle **jacket** made out of leather, nylon or Kevlar that has sleeves long enough to cover the wrists while riding, and heavy padding in the elbow, spine and shoulder areas
- Long **pants** made out of leather, nylon or Kevlar to provide full protection to the legs
- **Gloves** that are thick enough to provide protection, but also thin enough so the motorcyclist still can control the bike; a pair should be bought each for warm weather and cold weather riding
- Leather **boots** that have thick rubber soles and are tall enough to at least go over the ankles
- **Eye protection**, whether goggles, a helmet visor or something else, to help keep debris and wind out of the eyes

The failure of motorists to see motorcycles is one of the principle reasons for motorcycle-car collisions. A British study found that those who wear bright or reflective clothing while riding motorcycles have a 37 percent decreased chance of being in accidents. Accordingly, when riding during the day motorcyclists should opt for bright colored clothing and at night, reflective clothing to help make them more visible to drivers.

Motorcycle Accidents Responsible for More than 5,000 2008 Deaths in U.S.

Even as the number of motor vehicle accidents in the U.S. continues to decline, the number of [motorcycle accidents](#) continues to rise. According to data collected by the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration, 5,290 motorcyclists died and another 78,000 were injured in 2008 U.S. accidents, a 2 percent increase over the previous year's numbers.

Each year in New Jersey, 2,500 motorcyclists are involved in accidents and an estimated 70 of these riders die from their injuries. From 2003 to 2007, 377 motorcyclists died on New Jersey roadways. More than half of all New Jersey motorcycle accidents occur at intersections, and motorcyclists are more likely to be hit in the front of the bike than in the rear.

Because motorcyclists do not have the benefit of airbags, steel frames and other safety protections, the severity of injury they suffer in collisions with cars is often catastrophic. The potential for motorcyclists to suffer life-ending injuries increases when they are involved in accidents with large vehicles like semitrucks and buses.

Some of the types of injuries that may result from a motorcycle accident include:

- [Traumatic brain injuries](#)
- [Spinal cord injuries](#)
- Paralysis
- Amputation
- Neck and back injuries
- Severe burns from exhaust pipes
- Disfigurement
- Road rash and other abrasions
- Fractures

Taking Action After a Motorcycle Accident

Those who have been injured in motorcycle accidents caused by other drivers should not be required to pay for losses the motorcyclists did not cause. Some of the legal options that may be available to an injured motorcyclist include:

Filing a civil lawsuit against the negligent driver. An estimated two-thirds of motorcycle accidents occur because drivers do not look for motorcyclists. When a negligent driver causes the accident, he or she should be held liable for any injuries caused by the negligent act, including the injured motorcyclist's medical expenses, lost income and bike repair costs.

Filing a negligent roadway design claim against the city. While many motorcycle accidents are caused by bad drivers, sometimes they may be caused by defects in roadway design or other dangerous highway conditions. In such a case, the injured motorcycle rider may be able to file a claim for damages against the municipality or other governmental body responsible for the design and maintenance of the road.

Filing a products liability claim against a parts or equipment manufacturer. If the accident was caused by a defect in the motorcycle or a part on the motorcycle, or if the motorcyclist sustained

greater injury due to a defective product, then the injured motorcyclist may be able to bring a [products liability claim](#) against the product manufacturer, seller and others in the chain of distribution.

Filing a wrongful death claim. In cases when someone dies from a motorcycle-motor vehicle collision, the family of the decedent can file a wrongful death suit against the at-fault driver. Under New Jersey law, [wrongful death claims](#) are brought by the executor or administrator of the decedent's estate on behalf of the surviving family members.

Some of the types of compensation that may be available in motorcycle accident cases include:

- Past, current and future medical expenses
- Loss of wages and other earnings
- Rehabilitation costs
- Property damage, including costs to repair or replace the motorcycle
- Pain and suffering

Contact an Experienced Motorcycle Accident Attorney

If you have been injured in a motorcycle accident with a larger vehicle, [contact an experienced personal injury lawyer](#) quickly to avoid missing any deadlines for filing a lawsuit. An attorney experienced in helping motorcycle accident victims can educate you about your legal rights.