



# Florida

**1** of **28**

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

**1** of **16**

states, the District of Columbia and Guam without a motorcycle advisory committee.

In July 2008, Florida will be one of only three states to require all motorcyclists to complete a rider education program.

Only state that requires a special traffic law and substance abuse course for all license applicants.

Year	Motor Vehicle Fatalities	Motor Vehicle Registrations	Motorcycle Fatalities	Motorcycle Registrations
2004	3,244 (3,257)	8,440,792	432 (388)	461,935
2005	3,518 (3,533)	8,311,702	468 (441)	516,126 (455,379)
2006	3,374 (3,365)	7,425,148	562 (521)	588,962 (569,664)

The data in parentheses was provided by the State of Florida.

- In Florida, motorcycle fatalities represented 13 percent of all motor vehicle fatalities but 5 percent of registered vehicles in 2004; 13 percent of fatalities but 6 percent of registered vehicles in 2005; and 17 percent of fatalities but 8 percent of registered vehicles in 2006.

#### GENERAL

- The Florida State Safety Office is the lead agency for motorcycle safety in Florida.
- Florida's motorcycle safety coalition is being reconstructed.
- Motorcycle crashes are a priority crash problem in Florida.
- Florida is revising its strategic motorcycle strategic plan. Motorcycles are included in an emphasis area of the state's Strategic Highway Safety Plan.
- NHTSA conducted an assessment of Florida's motorcycle safety program in February 2008. A similar assessment was also conducted in 2000.

#### RIDER EDUCATION AND TRAINING

- The Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles directs/oversees the state's rider training program.
- Rider education is mandatory for applicants under 21. On July 1, 2008 rider training will be required of all applicants for a motorcycle license and/or registration.
- The Florida rider training program uses the MSF's curriculum, and courses are available statewide.
- Training capacity is not an issue in Florida.
- Florida has a *Sharing the Road* program. The Florida DOT partnered with the Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles in both 2006 and 2007 to implement a public information and education campaign. The campaign focuses on the dangers of impaired riding, the benefits of protective gear, the importance of sharing the road and the need for proper licensing and endorsements. Sharing the road materials and presentations were developed and disseminated to the general public to increase awareness of motorcyclists. Law enforcement and judicial representatives were also targeted with materials and presentations to help them better understand the critical nature of this situation and the importance of riders being properly trained and licensed.



Other methods of outreach such as press releases, community fairs, local television and radio talk shows (English and Spanish), conventions, conferences, motorcycle rallies and direct mailings were also utilized. Partnerships with groups such as motorcycle dealers, repair shops, AARP, AAA, Community Safety Action Teams and other safety organizations were established and utilized to disseminate materials and information to the general public. Presentations to service organizations such as Kiwanis and Rotary Clubs encouraged awareness of motorcyclists on the highway. Florida Highway Patrol motorcycle squads were also utilized to assist in community education and special activities. Videos explaining safe motorcycle operation and motorist awareness were shown in driver license offices and provided to public high school driver education programs.

- Sharing the road information is included in the state's license manual.
- Both the *Traffic Law and Substance Abuse Education Course* and the *Basic Driver Improvement Course* have a share the road with motorcycles component.
- Motorcyclist conspicuity is addressed in the rider training courses offered in the state and at all motorcycle events. It is also promoted as a part of the Florida's *Ride Legal. Ride Smart.* motorcycle safety campaign. Florida's *Ride Legal. Ride Smart.* is a multi-issue safety campaign. The campaign includes activities designed to increase motorist awareness of motorcycles, decrease impaired riding, increase helmet and protective equipment use, increase proper licensure and promote rider education and awareness. The campaign utilizes public service announcements, outdoor advertising as well as promotional materials that can be distributed at motorcycle rallies, community fairs and conventions. All of the outreach materials are produced in English and Spanish.

#### LICENSING

- The minimum age for a motorcycle license or endorsement is 16. However, persons holding a Florida Learner's Driver's License may not legally operate or be licensed to operate any two or three wheel motor vehicles on Florida roads, streets or highways regardless of his or her age.
- Knowledge and skills tests are required of all applicants; however, the test is waived for applicants who successfully complete a rider training course.
- A new law, effective July 1, 2008 requires all motorcyclists to complete a MSF approved rider training program before they can receive a new motorcycle license and/or registration.
- Stakeholders who encourage proper licensing include: the Florida Legislature, the Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles, the Florida Sheriff's Association, the Florida Rider Training Program, ABATE of Florida, Inc., the Florida State University Police Department, the North Florida Safety Council, the Tallahassee Police Department, the Florida Motorcycle Dealers Association, the Florida Department of Health, the Florida Highway Patrol, Florida Safe Rider, the Leon County Sheriff's Office, the Center for Urban Transportation Research, the United States Insurance Corporation and the Florida DOT.

#### PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

- Riders under 21 are required to wear a helmet. Riders 21 and older without an insurance policy that provides a minimum of \$10,000 in medical coverage specifically for motorcycle-related injuries are also required to wear a helmet.
- In 2006, 244 of the 562 riders fatally injured in crashes weren't wearing helmets.

**1** of **17**  
states without a training  
capacity problem.

**1** of **27**  
states and Puerto Rico  
with anti-impaired riding  
education efforts for  
motorcycle riders.

**1** of **21**  
states and Puerto Rico  
that includes motorcycles  
in highway engineering  
issues.

**1** of **18**  
states that had a  
NHTSA assessment  
of its motorcycle  
safety program.



# Florida

- Highway safety funds are utilized for a law enforcement training program that includes a motorcycle crash investigation component and devotes time to motorcycle safety equipment.

## **IMPAIRED MOTORCYCLING**

- All first time drivers in Florida are required to complete a four hour *Traffic Law and Substance Abuse Education Course* prior to receiving their license.
- The Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles has a public information and education campaign about the dangers of riding impaired.
- The Florida Highway Patrol's *Reduction of Alcohol Related Motorcycle Crashes* campaign includes videos/public service announcements, billboards and increased enforcement in an effort to prevent impaired riding. The campaign is designed to encourage motorcycle riders of all ages, from those on high-performance bikes to cruisers and choppers, to make sure they don't drink and ride and ride as safely as possible. The motorcycle billboards were developed by FHP in cooperation with the Florida Outdoor Advertising Association, and made possible through grant funding by the Florida DOT. Two separate billboards, representing two distinct age groups (under 21 and 30-45 year olds) were created in direct response to growing concerns expressed by the public regarding the increase of motorcycle operators on the roadways. The billboards serve as a reminder to motorcyclists to ride sober and use safe driving practices as they share the road with other motorists. The Florida Highway Patrol also developed a short anti-impaired riding video that targets riders 16 to 26 and mixes footage of actual motorcycle crashes with interviews with crash victims. The video was distributed to schools, driver training classes, television stations and made available on the Florida Highway Patrol's website.
- Florida's SFST program includes impaired motorcyclist detection tools. This NHTSA program provides training on the proper ways to conduct field sobriety testing and signs to look for with impaired drivers.

## **HIGHWAY ENGINEERING**

- A grooved pavement ahead sign is required 500 feet in advance of a milled or grooved surface open to traffic.

## **RESOURCES AND FUNDING**

- Federal safety grant funds (402 and 1010) as well as motorcycle registration fees and taxes collected by the Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles are used to support the Florida rider training program.
- Florida received a 2010 Motorcyclist Safety Grant. Funds were used to increase the number of training locations and sessions offered statewide; provide enrollees with course training materials at no cost as a recruitment incentive; train additional coaches to conduct additional classes; conduct professional development workshops to meet the continuing education requirement for current rider coaches; provide sponsor schools with new training materials to enhance their programs; and conduct a media campaign with a motorcycle endorsement and share the road message.
- \$490,000, \$300,000 and \$722,564 in federal funds were obligated to motorcycle safety in 2004, 2005 and 2006, respectively.