

**Think**  
before you  
**hit the**  
**road**



BECAUSE [ENOUGH IS ENOUGH]



Queensland Government  
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## **T**he growth in fatal crashes in Queensland involving a motorbike is alarming.

Too many motorbike riders are dying on our roads.

Queensland's road toll has seen a steady increase in motorbike fatalities each year since 2001. Last year there were double the number of fatalities of 2001. In 2005, motorbike fatalities were 20% of our total road toll.

Whilst it is acknowledged that motorbike riders aren't always at fault, being prepared before you hit the road is one of the best ways to enjoy riding your motorbike in Queensland safely.

Not only does your motorbike need to be in top condition, but so do you. Before you even get on your bike, you need to plan your ride and make sure you're mentally equipped for what might happen on the road.

Speed, rider inattention, fatigue, alcohol and drugs can all lead to fatal crashes. Also take into account whether you feel comfortable riding in the conditions around you – night time, wet weather and winding roads can also affect your riding competency.

This guide has been prepared with your safety in mind with everything from pre-ride checklists, handy tips and what to do in an emergency situation.

**So be prepared, hit the road and enjoy your ride.**

Visit our website at  
[www.motorbikesafety.qld.gov.au](http://www.motorbikesafety.qld.gov.au)



# Buying a motorbike



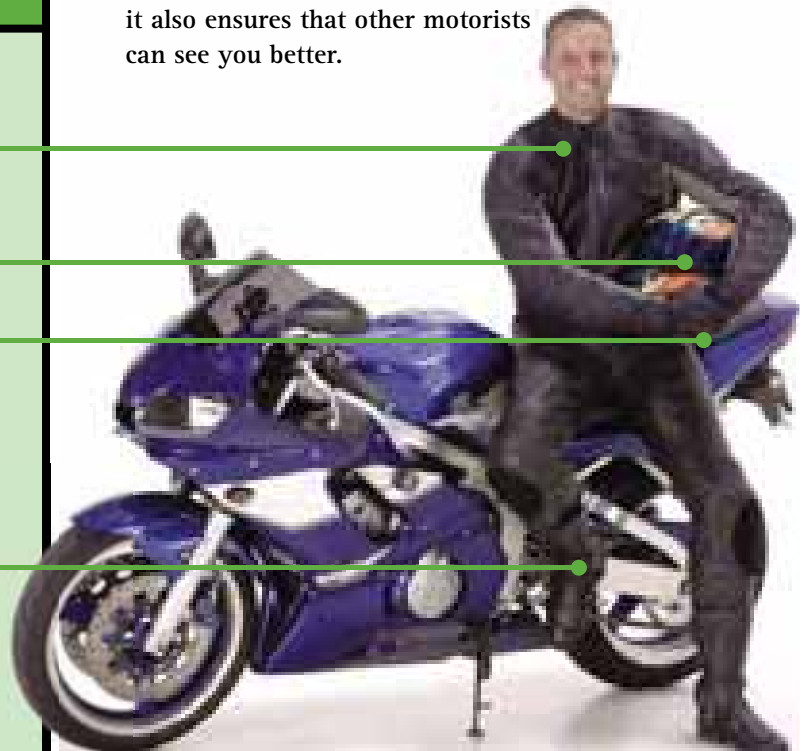
When looking to buy a motorbike, it's important to consider not only the type of bike that you want, but what will be most suitable for your needs.

- Always look at the engine size (or the mL capacity) and decide on the capacity that will suit your ability.
- Always make sure that you are appropriately licensed to ride the size of bike before you buy it and take into account your own strength and height.
- If you are buying a road bike (this includes commuter, sports and touring bikes), make sure that the bike suits your level of experience. Competition bikes should be used just for that and should stay off the road.

# Safety gear

- Leather jackets with double layering and double stitching are abrasion resistant and padding provides extra protection. For equivalent in a non-leather alternative, choose clothing that is labelled to European Standards (EN13595).
- Fitted approved helmet (meets AS 1698) with face shield or visor.
- Gloves need to be comfortable, padded and able to improve your grip.
- Make sure all your safety gear is in good shape – no scratches on your visors or goggles, no rips in your leathers and no dents or weak spots on the shell or inside of your helmet.
- Boots need to be light, secure and reinforced.
- Bright coloured and reflective protective clothing increases your visibility to other road users.

The safety gear that you wear when riding a motorbike not only helps protect you in the event of a crash, it also ensures that other motorists can see you better.



# Pre-Ride Checklist

These are some points for you to check on your motorbike before you hit the road – especially when you're getting ready for a long ride:

- Check tyre pressure and tread?
- Are the front and rear brakes working?
- Are the headlights, indicators and brake lights working, and clean?
- Are the clutch and throttle operating smoothly?
- Is there enough petrol, oil and water for the motorbike to perform at its best?
- Is the drive chain fitted correctly and oiled properly?
- Does the bike sound OK?

# Riding tips

## Road sharing

- Be seen when riding. Make sure you give yourself the best road position possible, either in front of the car or behind the back window.
- Remember to ride within your safety zone. Always keep three seconds between you and the car in front.
- In wet conditions, allow a little bit extra room for braking.
- Large trucks can cause handling problems when they pass. If you can see or hear them approaching, move to the other side of the lane.

## Braking

- When pulling up to a stop, stay within your lane with enough room in front of you.
- Don't apply brakes too quickly as you risk locking up your tyres. Apply both your front and back brakes lightly, then more firmly as you approach your stopping point.
- In an emergency, grip the bike handles firmly and apply the brakes. You also need to look for an area to swerve or pull over to, away from danger.
- Always remember that if you start to skid, you need to try and maintain your wheels moving to provide the traction to rectify the situation. Ease off your brakes and make sure you're not applying the throttle in order to bring the bike to a safe stop.

## Road surfaces

- Queensland roads vary from sealed to unsealed, highways to regional laneways. Always look at the ride ahead, especially at night. Scan the road for potholes, loose gravel or speed bumps.
- If you need to ride in the centre of the lane, always be careful of oil that's often found in the middle from other vehicles.
  - When it's raining, try and find the tyre tracks left by cars and ride on those rather than on the wet bitumen surface.
  - When riding around bends, be careful that you don't end up in gravel or loose rocks.



## Ride within your safety zone

**Ahead:** The best protection you can have is space between you and others. Under normal riding conditions try to keep at least a 3 second space between you and the vehicle ahead.

**The Sides:** Keep plenty of space to your sides. Move from one side of the lane to another to increase the distance from other cars. You should change lane position as traffic conditions change.

**Behind:** If you are being followed too closely, increase your 3 second gap to the vehicle in front to give you more time to stop and the tailgater more time to react. Alternatively, change lanes or slow down and let the tailgater overtake.

# Emergency situations

In case of an emergency, it is best to carry your driver licence and a mobile phone on you at all times. If you are physically able to make a mobile phone call to 000, try to describe your road position by using road marker descriptors from the side of the road. More information on what to do in an emergency is available on [www.motorbikesafety.qld.gov.au](http://www.motorbikesafety.qld.gov.au)

## Cut back the Risks

It's an unfortunate fact that riders are at fault in 84% of fatal crashes involving motorbikes. Don't add to the risks of riding by contributing to your own downfall.

The most common causes of crashes are speed, rider inattention, alcohol and drugs.

Don't become another statistic:

- Keep to the speed limit and drive according to the conditions.
- Stay alert to your environment and other motorists.
- Take breaks and survive the ride.
- Avoid alcohol and drugs whenever you're planning to ride.

## Swerving

Obviously there will be times when unexpected situations appear when riding. If you need to swerve to avoid a crash:

- Lean into the swerve and then try to correct the motion as quickly as possible.
- Be careful when swerving that you don't end up in another crash. Make sure it's safe whatever direction you pull your bike and ensure that you don't cause someone else to crash.



# Loads

## Steering shakes

Having the 'wobbles' or 'steering shakes' can occur at any speed due to incorrect tyre pressure or weight on the bike not distributed properly. So make sure you've loaded your bike properly and that there's nothing loose. Check your tyre pressure regularly.

If it happens:

- Grip the handlebars firmly – but do not try to correct the steering as you may end up oversteering and crashing. Don't fight the wobbles – stay on your bike.
- Gradually decelerate and don't brake suddenly. Once the shaking stops, pull over where it's safe.

## Blow-outs and punctures

If you have a blow-out or rapid puncture while riding:

- Hold the handgrips firmly and try to steer straight.
- Don't apply the brake to the punctured tyre – just gradually close the throttle down.
- If the front tyre has gone flat, shift your weight as much as you can to the rear of the bike – if it is the rear tyre, move forward as much as you can.
- As you slow down gradually steer off the road.

Loads need to be carried safely and securely.

- Keep the load low.
- Keep the load forward of the rear axle – tank bags are ideal.
- Distribute the load evenly.
- Secure the load with cords, cargo nets or ropes.
- Check the load when you regularly stop.

## Pillions

You must have held a provisional or open licence for at least 12 months before you can carry a pillion.

If you are a learner, your pillion must hold an open motorbike licence for that class for a minimum of 12 months. Remember, your pillion passenger is your responsibility – they need to have a proper seat, be well protected, and wear a helmet.

To adjust for a passenger you should:

- Ride at a lower speed and slow down earlier than usual when stopping.
- Allow a greater following distance.
- Avoid conversation so you won't be distracted.
- Instruct your passenger before you hit the road – they need to hold you or the motorbike securely, lean with you, and keep both feet on the foot pegs at all times.



# Queensland's top ride.

Glorious one day,  
perfect the next.



Mt Glorious → Mt Nebo → Esk →  
Hamilton Range → Warrego Highway

Queensland is famous all over the world with riders who appreciate our wide open spaces, testing winding stretches and undulating topography. There are literally dozens of rides that any bike rider will tell you are the best. But for sheer variety of riding conditions, scenery and stop-offs – you'll find it hard to go past this for a day on the road.

The run along Waterworks Road outbound from Brisbane on the way to Mt Glorious is probably the best known and most used motorbike road near Brisbane, and no wonder. The run through The Gap, onto Mt Nebo and eventually Mt Glorious is a swift succession of corners, mostly through Brisbane Forest Park. It's the equal of any road in Australia.

Take the opportunity to stop and have a chat at Mt Glorious because there's a good chance you'll come across some great bikes here and top cafés. Going on through Dundas, Crossdale and Caboonbah, around Wivenhoe Dam to Esk, is almost as much fun as the twin mounts road, but with far fewer other bikes.

From Esk, it's into the Hamilton Range, up towards Hampton. This stretch has some spectacular scenery, and to keep things interesting, quite a few surprising changes – rainforest to open, mile-wide views and back to rainforest. This 46km section of the ride just seems to get better the more times you ride it!



Just down from Hampton, on the Toowoomba Road, is the small town of Cabarlah and the historic Farmers Arms Hotel which is famous for its Sunday lunchtime roasts.

When it's time to head home you can retrace your route, but after a long day in the saddle you may prefer a gentle drift down to Toowoomba and home via the Warrego Highway.

**Peter Thoeming is the author of the Australia Motorcycle Atlas – Published by Hema Maps.**

**It's an invaluable reference for any bike enthusiast.**





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