

IBC's top 10 tips for motorcyclists

Canadians are gearing up for the last long weekend of the summer, the weather forecast is great and motorcyclists are planning to take to the roads for fun and entertainment.

In addition to the millions of cars and trucks in Ontario, there are more than 200,000 registered motorcycles and mopeds.

Steve Kee, director of media and digital communications with the Insurance Bureau of Canada (IBC), is also a weekend motorcycle rider. He offered this advice to his fellow motorcyclists: "Our roads are busy and compared to cars and trucks, we are small and can go unnoticed. Be aware of your surroundings and assume that drivers don't see you."

"I try to leave extra room to make a quick stop or unexpected lane change," he added. "I'm always aware that in a collision between a car and a bike, I'm not likely to come out very well."

IBC's top 10 tips for a safe motorcycle ride

1. Drive what you can control. Often, people buy motorcycles that are too powerful for them to handle. Ask your dealer if you can test drive the bike before you buy it.
2. Take a safety course. Be aware of your limits on a motorcycle. What would happen if you had to quickly avoid a road hazard?
3. Ride according to weather and road conditions. Check the forecast and keep your eyes on the road ahead.
4. Wear a DOT approved helmet. Choose the helmet best suited for how you ride, and replace your helmet based on manufacturer specifications, usually every five years.
5. Wear clothing that will protect you in a fall. Heavy denim or leather jackets and pants aren't just stylish; they help prevent nasty cuts and burns if you fall.
6. Stay focused on the road. The cold reality is that motorcyclists are 30 times more likely to die in a collision than people in a car, according to the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety.
7. Always be seen. Assume car drivers can't see you, so leave them plenty of room. Also, wear clothing or reflective materials that allow you to be seen.
8. Ride in the proper position in the lane. Know where you should be positioned in the lane and never drive along the middle of the lane where there is oil build up from cars.
9. Practise riding with others. When riding as a group form a staggered pattern.
10. Stop frequently. Being rested will help you focus on the roads.