



USEP-OHIO PARENT TIP: Grandparents on Bikes

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Grandparents riding motorcycles, sometimes called *Vroomers* or *Weekend Warriors* have increased in the last few years, including some of my friends - and they scare me! Nearly 1/2 of the motorcyclists killed since 2005 were over 40 (up from 1/4 less than 10 years ago). Some call themselves “born-again bikers”, because they rode years ago and decide to try it again. But traffic around them has gotten bigger and faster. Even a slight error can upset the delicate balance of mass, momentum and power! Age definitely works against older riders.

Dean Thompson of the Motorcycle Safety Foundation says, “The older riders who haven’t ridden for years, must face differences in their bodies. Traffic has changed, motorcycles have changed. Their reflexes aren’t as good, their vision and hearing aren’t as good, and they don’t have the same endurance levels or muscle tone. Their legs aren’t what they used to be.”

Dealing with diminishing reflexes and increasing traffic is endangering riders and their passengers, who are sometimes their grandchildren! Even if a child is wearing protective gear and follows all safety recommendations, riding a motorcycle still poses a safety risk.

The wind, the extreme heat of some motorcycle chassis, difficulty being seen by other drivers, and simple slips on the road, all make riders much more likely to sustain serious injury, than if riding within the protection of a car. I hope that grandparents who know the risks will decide not to take their grandkids on a joyride, or ride them to school. One of the main reasons motorcyclists are killed

in crashes is because the motorcycle itself provides virtually no protection in a crash. For example, approximately 80 % of reported motorcycle crashes result in injury or death; a comparable figure for automobiles is about 20%.

Collisions with unforgiving elements on the road like fences, signs and posts cause concussion and brain damage (as the head contacts other vehicles or objects); broken joints (commonly shoulder and pelvis; also elbows, hips, knees, wrists, fingers, spine and neck); and soft tissue damage, abrasion or disfigurement.

The USA Hurt Report concluded that the likelihood of injury to motorcyclists is extremely high – 98% of the multiple vehicle collisions and 96% of single vehicle incidents resulted in some kind of injury to the motorcycle rider; 45% resulted in more than a minor injury. According to the Insurance Information Institute, motorcycle crash fatalities have increased for nine years in a row. Motorcyclists were 34 times more likely than passenger car occupants to die in a crash in 2005, per vehicle mile traveled, and 8 times more likely to be injured. Older motorcyclists now account for about half of all rider fatalities!

NHTSA (National Highway Traffic Safety Administration) data show that in 2005, 47 % of riders killed were age 40 or over. Please think twice before taking your grandchild for a ride on a motorcycle. It only takes one small slip or error to change your lives forever!

For more information go to Motorcycle Safety Foundation

<http://www.msf-usa.org>; for passenger

safety tips, see <http://www.dmv.org>; visit www.motorcycle.ohio.gov

for more Ohio-specific information and www.publicsafety.ohio.gov

for a free video and more resources.

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