

Idaho Motorcycle Fatality Summary
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For the last four five years, I have been gathering data from the State of Idaho Vehicle Collision Reports for Motorcycles for the years 2009 through 2014. This project began during one of the initial planning sessions for the Idaho Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP) Motorcycle Safety Committee. One of the strategies outlined was to analyze the data and identify some of the circumstances contributing to Idaho's motorcycle fatalities. This analysis continues to be a work in progress and more information and data will be added if it becomes available. This document includes reports from 2010 through 2014. The 2009 data has been archived. Most studies of this type require 5 years of data to be considered accurate. This is not a government study. It has been formulated by a motorcyclist. Factual knowledge is the only agenda.

There were 28 fatalities in 2010, 17 fatalities in 2011, 22 fatalities in 2012, 26 fatalities in 2013, and 25 fatalities in 2014 included in 116 reports. Moped and scooter crashes are included. Two reports include 2 victims. Six of these 118 fatalities were passengers. The following chart is a sampling of causation factors. Some crashes include multiple factors. While it is possible that some of the single vehicle crashes may have been affected by an unreported animal or other vehicle, there is no data, physical evidence, or statements within the reports to support such occurrences.

Rider error means that the actions of the rider caused the crash. Driver error means that an automobile or other vehicle type caused the crash.

Alcohol and drug use continues to be a significant factor in fatalities. The goal is to provide accurate information about impairment. However, it is sometimes difficult to ascertain the effect that impairment may have had in a fatal crash. All levels of alcohol impairment are recorded but those that are under the legal limit are noted as such. It is recognized that some degree of impairment begins below the legal limit. In addition, THC/marijuana use can be detected by a blood test for approximately 30 days. Therefore when a rider tests positive for THC and/or has a low to moderate BAC level, it is difficult to determine to what degree they were under the influence at the time of the crash. But because of the positive drug test, the crash must be recorded as impairment involved. Alcohol/drug use by the drivers of other vehicles shall also be recorded as impairment involved but noted as such. Prescription drugs for depression and others that do not specifically restrict driving may also be a factor in crashes, but because they are legal they are not recorded in the percentages for impairment.

Single Vehicle Crashes	68		Multi-Vehicle Crashes	48
Rider Error	58		Rider Error	22
Questionable Rider Error	1		Driver Error <small>Notes 1, 3</small>	23
Run-off corner	49		Rider Violated Driver's ROW	3
Wild/Domestic Animal	7		Run-off Corner-Head on Crash	5
Positive Alcohol/Drug Test	31		Rider Rear-ended Rider	3
Medical	0		Positive Alcohol/Drug Test <small>Notes 2, 3</small>	13
Equipment Failure	2		Equipment Failure	1
Weather	1		Traffic Ccontrol Failure	1

Note 1. One of the 23 fatalities that were driver error had contributing line-of-sight issues. The signal operation at that intersection has since been changed.

Note 2. One of these was an intoxicated automobile driver and one rider was under the legal limit at .049.

Note 3. One of these is a car violating a motorcyclist's right of way and the rider was intoxicated. (.205)

Of the total 118 fatalities, 80 crashes were identified as rider error and 1 is questionable. This means up to 81 out of 116 crashes were due to rider error. Twenty three of the crashes are without question the fault of another vehicle operator. This analysis does not include detailed information on serious injuries, levels of injury or other involved crashes.

It should be noted that 30 fatalities were from out of state (27 riders, 3 passengers). Twenty were endorsed, two were not, and the rest of the endorsement information is unknown. Of the 89 Idaho riders involved in fatal crashes, 53 had their motorcycle endorsement, and 36 did not. Two of the riders had no driver's license at all, and 2 were riding on suspended licenses. Of the 89 Idaho riders, only 11 had passed an Idaho rider training course and one had failed. One Washington licensed rider had passed an Idaho training course. Some of these riders may have been trained in other states but such information is unavailable. In five crashes, the rider survived but the passenger did not.

It is commonly believed that motorcycle fatalities are generally young men on sport bikes and/or riders not wearing helmets. Here is what the data tells us on these topics:

Ages of the Fatalities		Types of Motorcycles		Helmet Use	
Under 20	3	Cruiser/Tourer	83	Wore a Helmet	50
20-29	19	Sport Bikes	18	Novelty Helmet	2
30-39	16	Dual Sports	7	No Helmet	62
40-49	22	Off Road	4	Unknown	4
50-59	28	Moped/Scooter	4	Total	118
60-69	24	Total	116	Location	
70-79	4	Male	108	Rural	76
80-89	2	Female	10	Urban	40
Total	118	Total	118	Total	116

General conclusions from this analysis:

- **We (riders) are killing ourselves at a far greater rate than we had ever assumed prior to this study (70% rider error).**
- **68% of victims are over 40 years old and 42% are between the ages of 40 and 59.**
- **Corners are the biggest killers (42% run off corner).**
- **40% of involved Idaho licensed riders did not have a motorcycle endorsement.**
- **Illegal drug and alcohol use contributed in many cases (37% illegal alcohol/drug involvement by riders).**
- **Drivers violating riders' right-of-way is also a contributing factor (20%).**
- **Only 14% of involved Idaho licensed riders had passed a rider training course.**