



**NTSB**

# ***SAFETY ALERT***

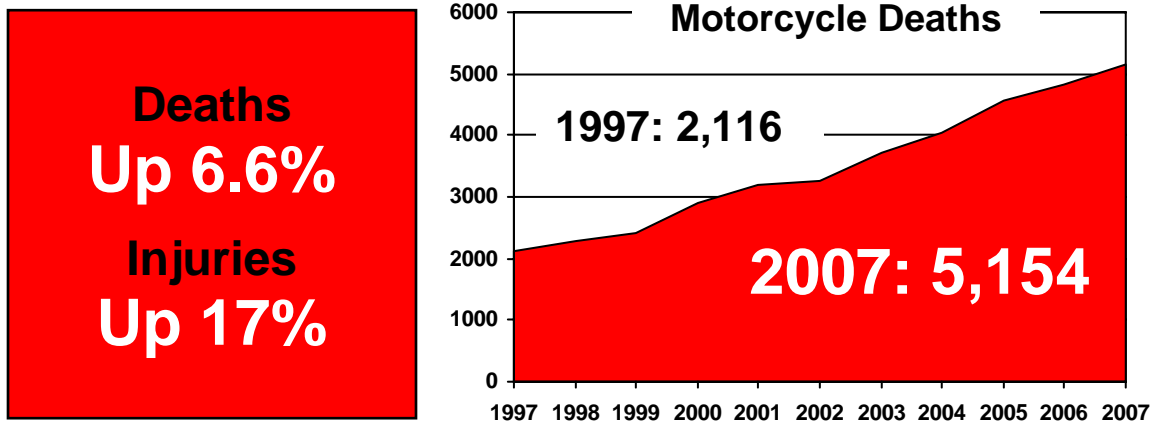
National Transportation Safety Board

## ★ **Alarming Rise in Motorcycle Deaths**

***Requiring safety helmets saves lives, reduces injuries***

### ***The problem***

- Deaths from motorcycle crashes have more than doubled in the past decade – from 2,116 in 1997 to 5,154 in 2007 — up 6.6% from 4,837 in 2006.
- Another 103,000 people were injured in motorcycle crashes in 2007 — up 17% from 88,000 in 2006.



- The yearly number of motorcycle deaths is more than double the annual total number of people killed in all aviation, rail, marine and pipeline accidents combined.
- Head injuries are a leading cause of death in motorcycle crashes.

### ***Helmets save lives***

- DOT-compliant helmets are extremely effective. They can prevent injury and death from motorcycle crashes.
- If you are in a crash without a helmet, you are three times more likely to have brain injuries.
- Wearing a helmet reduces the overall risk of dying in a crash by 37%.
- In addition to preventing fatalities, helmets reduce the need for ambulance service, hospitalization, intensive care, rehabilitation, and long-term care.
- Wearing a helmet does *not* increase the risk of other types of injury.

## ***Motorcycle helmet laws***

- 20 states, D.C., and 4 territories have universal helmet laws requiring all riders and passengers to wear helmets; 27 states and 1 territory have partial laws requiring minors and or passengers to wear helmets; 3 states have no helmet laws.
- States that have repealed laws requiring all riders and passengers to wear helmets have seen dramatically lower helmet usage rates and significant increases in deaths and injuries.
- Partial laws do not protect younger riders. Only universal helmet laws significantly reduce fatality rates for riders aged 15-20.

## ***Helmet laws affect everyone***

- In addition to the tragic loss of life, the economic cost to society is enormous. In 2005, motorcyclists without helmets were involved in 36 percent of all motorcycle crashes, but represented 70 percent of the total cost of all motorcycle crashes – \$12.2 billion.
- Medical and other costs for unhelmeted riders involved in crashes are staggering, estimated at \$310,000 per accident. That's more than four times the overall cost of accidents involving helmeted riders.

## ***What should you know and do?***

- When you ride a motorcycle, always wear a helmet – each and every time. Whether your ride will be long or short, at highway speeds or neighborhood cruising, a helmet is the only way to protect your head if a crash occurs. And, make sure that anyone who rides with you also wears a helmet.
- Make sure your helmet meets the federal safety standard (DOT FMVSS 218) by checking for the “DOT” sticker on the back of the helmet. Novelty (non-compliant) helmets offer no protection in a crash.
- Talk to or write your local and state legislators and urge them to adopt NTSB safety recommendations to require that *all* motorcycle riders and passengers wear FMVSS 218-compliant helmets.

## ***Need more information?***

- NTSB motorcycle helmet recommendations to the States are on the NTSB website:

<http://ntsb.gov/Recs/letters/2007/> They are recommendations H-07-37, H-07-38, H-07-39 and H-07-40.

Find the NTSB home page here: [www.ntsbt.gov](http://www.ntsbt.gov)