

HELMET SAFETY

There are two organizations setting safety standards for motorcycle helmets in the United States, the US Department of Transportation (DOT) and the Snell Memorial Foundation. DOT sets the minimum standards that all helmets sold for motorcycling on public streets must meet.

“Why do I want to buy a helmet that meets the Snell standard and has a Snell sticker on the helmet?”

Snell standards exceed the standards required by the DOT. Helmets meeting Snell Standards provide the highest level of protection available.

“How long should I keep a helmet before I replace it?”

What happens is that many manufacturers use glue to put the liner into the shell. In some cases, the glue will degrade the liner. Also liners will degrade from perspiration and hair oils. And they become compacted through normal use. Only the individual using the helmet knows how the helmet has been treated. If the helmet has been damaged in any way, the helmet should be considered unsafe and replaced. Under normal conditions a well cared for helmet may last up to five years. There are helmet liners that a rider can wear under the helmet that will help keep the inside of the helmet cleaner. One brand is called Head Skins and they are made of cotton or satin. They can be washed in the washing machine.

“How do I know if a helmet is going to be comfortable for a long trip?”

When you are going to buy a new helmet, try it on and wear it around the store to make sure it will fit and is comfortable. Make sure the chin strap is fastened and you have full visibility while wearing the helmet. The folks that sell helmets normally recommend this and will encourage you to make sure it fits properly. They don't want you to return a helmet because it is uncomfortable or just does not fit properly.

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