INTRODUCTION

In 2016, there were 5,286 motorcycle riders killed on public roadways in the United States, a 5.1 percent increase from 2015. Motorcyclists are at greater risk of injury during collisions—in 2016, motorcyclists were 28 times more likely than passenger car occupants to be fatally injured in a traffic collision, per vehicle miles traveled. In 2016 only 65.3 percent of U.S. motorcyclists wore helmets. In states with universal helmet laws requiring all riders to wear helmets, the known helmet use rate among fatally injured motorcyclists ranged from 66 percent to 100 percent in 2016, while in states without such laws, the rate was lower, ranging widely from 0 percent to 69 percent. In California, which does have a universal helmet law, the known helmet use rate among fatally injured motorcyclists in 2016 was high (95.3 percent). Estimates maintain that helmets saved 308 lives in California in 2016, and that 10 additional lives could have been saved if all motorcyclists wore helmets.

Motorcycle Safety

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CALIFORNIA FACTS

Motorcycling is popular in California, with more motorcyclists than any other U.S. state. Since 2012, the state has seen a 22.6% increase in motorcycle fatalities from 447 in 2012 to 548 in 2016.

Among the fatalities in 2016, a total of 25 motorcyclists were not wearing helmets, a 21.9% reduction from 2012.

Los Angeles, San Diego, Riverside, San Bernardino and Orange Counties in Southern California, along with Sacramento and Alameda Counties in Northern California, have the highest number of fatal and severe injuries among motorcyclists.

The rural counties of Sierra, Alpine, Trinity, Plumas, Tuolomne and Inyo have the highest rates of fatal and severe injury per 100K population by county.

The vast majority (92.0%) of fatal and severe motorcycle collision victims were males. Most (50.2%) of the victims, men or women, were ages 15 to 34, while adults between the ages of 35 and 64 comprised 44% of the victims.
CALIFORNIA DATA
(continued)

- Unsafe speed (30.8% of collisions), followed by improper turning (18.7%) and right-of-way violations by automobiles (18.4%) were the most frequent primary collision factors for fatal and severe motorcyclist collisions.

- Broadside collisions comprised the most frequent crash type (26.4% of motorcycle collisions), followed by overturned (18.1%), hit objects (17.1%), rear-end (14.8%), and sideswipe (13.2).

- The number of injured riders was markedly higher between 3pm and 6pm, with 25.4% of fatalities and severe injuries occurring during this time period.

- Fatalities and severe injuries were highest on Saturday and Sunday, followed by Friday. These three days accounted for 52.6% of motorcycle fatalities and severe injuries.

- Over half (60.4%) of motorcycle fatalities and severe injuries occurred in urban areas compared with 39.6% on rural roads. Only about 16% of travel took place on rural roads.

- A little under half (49.1%) of all motorcycle fatalities occurred on non-interstate principal arterials (high-capacity urban roads). The next most common locations for motorcycle fatalities were non-interstate minor arterials (15.1%) and non-interstate collectors (low-to-moderate-capacity roads which serve to move traffic from residential streets to arterial roads) at 14.6%.

REFERENCES