

# The Riding Season is here what will YOU do to become a safer rider?

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The ice and snow have melted and the warmth of the sun is welcomed with open arms. Warmer weather and longer days make a great recipe for riding your motorcycle.

There were 13 AF motorcycle fatalities in FY14 compared to 18 in FY13. To date, ACC has had six motorcycle fatalities in FY15 compared to one in FY14. The average age in those FY15 fatalities is 34, and speed was a factor in three of the fatalities. Yes, the riding season is here, so what are you going to do to become a safer rider?

Unless you live in a warm climate, you probably put your motorcycle in storage or parked it for the winter months. Before you unpack your motorcycle and put it back on the road, there are a few things to consider. Training, licensing, repairs, PPE, and wingman/mentorship are basic areas to help you become a safer rider this season.

Air Force motorcycle operators should receive initial training, intermediate training within a year, and refresher training within five years. Motorcycle operators must also possess a valid motorcycle license or permit.

Repairs to your motorcycle are a must. Many of you are great with keeping your motorcycles in top condition during the riding season, but there is no excuse not to catch up on maintenance when it is parked for the

winter. Change the oil, fluids, and adjust the chain and lubricate your motorcycle. Always perform a T-CLOCS inspection of your motorcycle before you put it on the road.

There is a saying about riding a motorcycle ... it's not if you will fall, but when you will fall. With the probability of being involved in an accident or a routine spill, we have to protect ourselves. Wear an approved Department of Transportation helmet, sturdy over the ankle footwear, long-sleeved shirt, long trousers, and full fingered gloves. Materials such as leather and Kevlar provide the operator additional protection. To protect your eyes use your full face shield, goggles, or wrap around glasses that meet or exceed American National Standards Institute standards.

Mentorship and riding with your wingmen are great ways to enjoy riding. Before you set off on your group ride, decide on the environment/route you will travel, provide feedback, and consider the experience level in the group.

Recently, we lost a mentor during a group ride. The mentor planned the route and did everything right with the group. Due to traffic, several members became separated. The mentor stopped at a dam to wait for the other riders to catch up. While waiting, he and a friend used a Go-Pro camera to film him riding down a long winding road. On the way back up to the starting point, he traveled at a high rate of speed, failed to negotiate a curve, and struck a sign. The mentor died of a fractured vertebra and blunt trauma. We must always follow the rules and ride within our ability.

So, before you set out for the open road: get trained, repair your motorcycle, catch up on scheduled maintenance, perform T-CLOCS and join a mentorship ride. Don't forget to Check 3 and keep it shiny side up!

