
Motorcycle Safety Tips

Please note that this is not an exhaustive list of information on motorcycle safety. You are encouraged to read the specifications and requirements for your motorcycle prior to travel.

University liability insurance covers liability arising out of the operation of miscellaneous vehicles while engaged in university related business. Motorcycles should register with the [Department of Risk Management & Safety](#) to be eligible for coverage.

University employees, driving a motorcycle on university business, are encouraged to attend a motorcycle safety course such as the one offered by the [Alabama Traffic Center](#).

Under [Alabama law](#) motorcycle operators and passengers must wear helmets when driving.

Under [Alabama law](#), “every person, before operating any motor-driven cycle upon a public highway in this state, shall register it with the [Director of Public Safety](#) and procure an operator's license.”

Motorcyclists must abide by the same traffic rules and regulations as other motorists. Before taking a motorcycle on a public road, employees are encouraged to become familiar with traffic rules and regulations and any special requirements for motorcycles.

General Safety Tips

Be visible:

- Motorists often have trouble seeing motorcycles and reacting correctly and in time.
- Make sure your headlight works and is on day and night.
- Use reflective strips or decals on your clothing and on your motorcycle.
- Flash your brake light when you are slowing down and before stopping.
- Automobiles, particularly large vehicles, have blind spots making it difficult for motorists to see motorcycles. Do not linger in any potential blind spots. If you suspect a motorist does not see you, do not hesitate to use your horn.

Dress for safety:

- Wear a quality helmet and eye protection. Please refer to helmet specifications as required by [Alabama law](#).
- Wear bright clothing and a light-colored helmet.
- Always wear suitable, protective clothing. If leather is impractical, opt for long sleeves and pants, over-the-ankle boots, and gloves.
- Remember, the only thing between you and the road is your protective gear.

Apply defensive driving techniques:

- Know and follow the rules of the road and abide by the posted speed limit.
- Maintain a safe speed relative to your experience and the driving environment.
- Avoid distractions. Pay attention.
- Constantly scan the road for changing conditions including: weather changes; road surface, shape and shoulder changes; traffic and congestion; construction; objects on the road; and animals that may be on the road, or just off the road's edge.

- Check your mirrors often and scan the road ahead. Anticipate what other motorists may do and give yourself ample space and time to respond to their actions while also giving others the time and space to respond to yours.
- Ride in the part of a lane where you are most visible.
- Avoid making sudden moves or weaving between lanes.
- Watch for turning vehicles, particularly those towing trailers, and be ready to respond.
- Signal your next move in advance. Use a hand signal if possible, in addition to your motorcycle's turn signal.
- Don't ride when tired or under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs. Also, avoid [drug impaired driving](#) when you are taking certain prescribed or over the counter medications that may cause impaired judgment, anxiety, restlessness, dizziness, numbness, lightheadedness, euphoria, drowsiness, relaxation, nausea, headache, hostility or excitement. When in doubt, consult your physician or pharmacist prior to taking any medication.

Know your bike and how to use it:

- Depending on the type of motorcycle, employees are encouraged to find an off-highway area or vacant parking lot and practice until use of all controls becomes automatic and you have become thoroughly familiar with the requirements for maintaining balance, making turns, stopping, and shifting.
- Develop your riding techniques and know your motorcycle before operating it in heavy traffic. Be especially cautious in conditions such as wet, icy or sandy roads, high winds, and uneven surfaces.
- Some motorcycles are built especially for trail use, with special tires and suspension. Other motorcycles have special characteristics for highway use, such as tires designed to grip pavement, and more powerful braking systems. Employees are encouraged to consult with the owner's manual or the manufacturer of the motorcycle as to speed, use and terrain requirements.

For more information on motorcycle safety please visit the following sites:

[Alabama Motorcycle Operator Manual](#)

[Alabama Driver Manual](#)

[National Highway Traffic Safety Administration – Motorcycle Safety Program](#)

[Motorcycle Safety Foundation](#)

[Motorcycle Safety Foundation – Safety Brochure](#)

[Motorcycle Safety Foundation – Riding Tips](#)

[Motorcycle Safety Foundation – Pre-Ride Checklist](#)

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