

The Motorcycle Helmet You Want May Not Be As Safe As You Think!

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**The Motorcycle Helmet You Want May Not Be As Safe As You Think!**

**By Michael Holmes**

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Choosing the right Motorcycle helmet can make a difference....

...literally between life and death. But how does an ordinary guy in the street make an informed decision about what kind of helmets give the best protection? There are so many makes, models and styles. Not to mention DOT approved, Snell approved, ECE approved! It is enough to make you go goggle eyed when confronted with so much information.

Tests have shown that it is perfectly possible to suffer a fatal injury falling off a stationary bike if you hit your unprotected head on the kerb, so clearly choosing the right helmet is important.

But which one?

Wouldn't it be easier if someone just said, "Look, when you are in a crash, you need to protect this part of you head, because this is the part that is most likely to get hurt"...

Well that's what I thought. But it wasn't that easy. The kind of information you need to make that kind of call requires someone, somewhere to look at a whole bunch of motorcycle crashes, look at the motorcycle helmet damage, assess where point of impact occurred and put the information into a form that allows ordinary motorcyclists (like you and me) to make a decision for themselves.

However, the good news is that if you look hard enough, the information is available. A study was carried out a few years ago by Deitmar Otte, at the Medizinische Hochschule in Hannover, Germany on the damage incurred to helmets worn by motorcyclists involved in accidents. His analysis was extremely detailed; in fact it was far too detailed for me to go into here, but it was extremely important.

What I am going to do is tell you in a nutshell, what parts of your head are most likely to be hurt in a motorcycle accident, based on Herr Otte's findings. The rest is up to you...

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Take a motorcycle helmet and look at it from the front. Now imagine it is divided into three sections; the top (the cranium area) the middle (the area most likely covered by the visor) and the bottom (on a full face helmet, this would be the chin guard area).

If you were involved in a motorcycle accident, and you hit your head you would have a 35% chance of the impact occurring to your chin area, 10% to your visor area, and 22% chance of the impact occurring to your front cranium area.

Now turn the helmet around. Looking at it from the back, divide it in two down the middle. In an accident, if you hit you head, you have a 16% chance of impact occurring on the back of you head to the left side, and a 17% chance of impact occurring on the back right side.

Conclusion? Well, this is only my personal conclusion but I would say the following...

The safest helmets are full face helmets...

Second would be three quarter helmets with visors...

Third would be half helmets...

Last would be novelty helmets.

There are lots of reasons people wear helmets. However, if safety is you main consideration, then take a good look at the full face helmets on the market, take some time and find one which you can wear comfortably on every ride.

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Michael Holmes is a enthusiast for all thing motorcycle. His website, <http://www.motorcycleparts-accessories-andmore.com>, is a great resource of articles aimed at motorcyclists of all levels, including a page specifically for motorcycle helmets.

### **Why You Should Not Buy A Used Motorcycle Helmet**

**By Low Jeremy**

A motorcycle helmet is one of those essentials that will help save your life should you have an accident while riding your bike. This will protect your head from a damaging and even potentially fatal head injury. Motorcycle helmets are so important that state lawmakers have even included a directive in the state laws that orders all people riding the motorcycle to wear helmets.

Some people though do not understand the importance of this accessory. In fact, some people do not even like wearing it because it is too heavy and too suffocating. Others find it a killjoy to not be able to feel the wind on their faces when riding a motorbike.

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Motorcycle helmets are not really that expensive but they are also not cheap. Some who are not that well-informed will probably save all their money for the motorcycle leaving a really small budget for safety gears like the helmet. Some even buy used helmets instead of new ones. This, however, is one practice that should not be encouraged.

Using used helmets is extremely dangerous and impractical. Used helmets are actually worthless and what is more you cannot really tell whether they are damaged or not. You won't even be able to tell if they are relatively new ones or not. This is because the helmet is made from a hard outer shell that envelops a layer of expanded polystyrene. You will never be able to tell if the expanded polystyrene is already compressed or not unless you cut the outer shell. An already compressed polystyrene layer will not protect you from an accident.

Another thing that you should consider is the fact that polystyrene becomes brittle as it ages. This is the reason why old helmets should be exchanged for new ones in a couple of years as it may not be able to absorb much of the impact when an accident does happen. The polystyrene layer is also easily damaged by the sun and by chemicals such as gas vapors.

Motor bikers who always place their helmet near the gas tank will also unknowingly damage the lining of the helmet. It is also not a good idea to always let the helmet sit under the heat of the sun. If you can, try to park your motorbike in areas that are shaded. Pointed objects may also compromise the lifespan of the helmet by piercing through the polystyrene layer inside.

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