

# Protect Your Head

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I have a quick question for you. Does Florida have a helmet law? Many people answer that question “no”.

You might be surprised to learn that we do have a helmet law. The reason many people think that we don't is

because it is not a very strong statute. Anyone under the age of 21 who rides a motorcycle must wear a US Department of Transportation (DOT) approved helmet. Riders over the age of 21 may ride helmetless provided they have \$10,000 worth of medical insurance. That is just about enough money to get you to the hospital after a crash. If we have to convince you to wear a helmet, you really don't have anything to put into it anyway.

A quality helmet is essential to safe riding and there are things to look for to determine whether or not your helmet is a good helmet. First, make certain it is manufactured to US DOT standards. It generally will have a DOT sticker on the back of the helmet. Beware of imitation DOT stickers put on a novelty helmet to make it appear as if it was DOT certified. Other quality helmets are made to Snell Memorial Foundation specifications or the Economic Community of Europe standards. You can always look for the label inside the helmet under the comfort liner.

Caring for your helmet is fairly simple. Make certain that you do not use any harsh chemicals to clean your helmet. A good method of getting off all those bugs you hit is to place a damp cloth on the helmet to allow the moisture to soften the bugs then wipe off with a damp cloth. Avoid drilling your helmet for any reason. Remove the comfort liner periodically to wash away the sweat, this is Florida!

Helmet components can wear out over time. Most manufacturers recommend replacing your helmet every five years. A few recommend every three years. If in doubt, follow the manufacturers recommendations.

The glues, resins, and other materials used to manufacture a helmet can affect the liner. Sweat, oils, and cosmetics can also have an impact on your helmet. Something else to consider is technological improvements. The industry is constantly improving on materials and designs to make a safer helmet for us so stop wearing that 1970's helmet!.



If you have a face shield on your helmet, make certain it is free of grime and scratches that would hinder your vision. A trick I learned from a seasoned rider (I didn't say old, Wes) is to take black tape and put it on the bottom edge of the face shield. Then when you ride with the shield in the up position, the tape will act as a sun visor. Of course, you must have other eye protection on as Florida requires all motorcyclists to wear eye protection while riding. Just so you know, your windshield does not count for eye protection.

Head and eyes! (See what I did there?)

Mark