

Safety Corner



This month's safety article is going to address First Aid. No, not administering First Aid, for I am not qualified to provide instruction on that topic. However; before we leave that part of it entirely, I would strongly encourage you to take a basic first aid course, if for no other reason than competently knowing what to do in an emergency for yourself and your family. I spent more years in the law enforcement community than I care to discuss, and on a schedule dictated by umbrella safety organizations we were required to take first responder recertification. Most of the training stays with you and to this day, if I were confronted with an injury or medical emergency I have more than an average concept of what I need to do or, in many cases, not do. So mull this over for a while and consider if it is in your best interests to invest some time and energy to take a course that could someday possibly save

yours, a family members or a friend's life.



Enough said on that and now onto what I am talking about, First Aid Kits. Do you keep one on your bike? If you don't you should, for the kit might just come in handy for one of your buddies to apply some sort of first aid to the kit's owner, and yes that would be you. We do live in an area that has readily accessible Emergency Services, but at some time or another all of us travel outside of this emergency network and into some areas that are fun to ride in, very scenic, and very sparsely populated. EMT Services are still available if your phone works; however in many locations there is limited cell service. If you can't rely on professional services, have a backup plan.

If your response is that you do carry a first aid kit, then kudos, and hopefully you will never need it. However, since buying the kit, have you looked into it, to inventory what's in the kit? I fall into the latter category; I bought a "HOG" first aid kit and never thoroughly looked into the kit until just recently. I was unpleasantly surprised to find out what the kit does not contain. It has some basics, tape, sterile dressings, some latex gloves, band aids, Benadryl tabs, a pair of scissors, a small antiseptic ointment, a small instant cold compress, and a few other items including a small first aid handbook. The handbook contains some useful information, and the time to read it would not be when you need to apply some level of first aid. The kit lacks compression bandages, an airway breather, and significant sterile dressings, among other things. Don't get me wrong, I'm not saying what's in the kit is worthless, but I am saying it would probably need some supplies beyond what was in the kit.

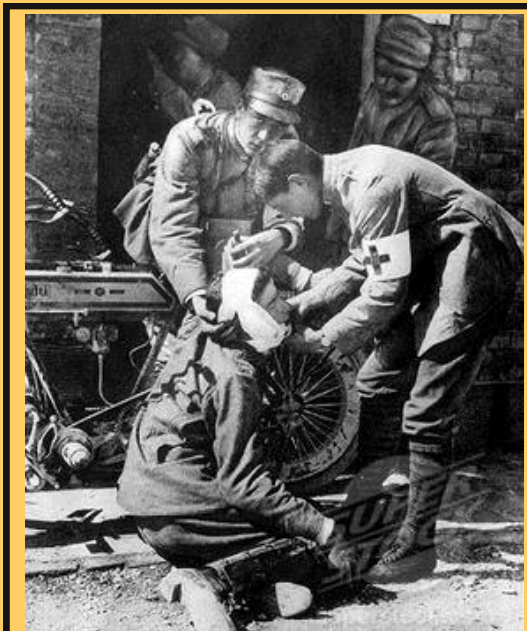


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Knowing space is limited on our bikes, here are some suggestions for inclusion in a first aid kit that may better serve your needs.

- A good pair of scissors is a must for cutting away heavy clothing.
- Several pairs of latex gloves are recommended. They don't take up much space and they obviously provide a barrier against body fluids should you need to help somebody else, or to put someone at ease that is helping you.
- A number of triage bandages which you can either purchase or make yourself from an unbleached muslin fabric. These can be cut to your needs and are useful as a sling for a broken or dislocated arm, and for use as a pressure bandage.
- A few sterile gauze pads which are obviously useful for covering a wound. You might also find some paper tape very useful for securing wound dressings. Paper tape is very handy as it is easily removed without pulling out hair as other types of tape have a habit of doing.
- A bottle of distilled or filtered water is excellent for washing out wounds or for dehydration.
- As mentioned earlier a pocket mask for providing CPR without the concern of a body fluid transfer. However first responder training of late has deemphasized the pulmonary resuscitation in favor of cardiac resuscitation, so the decision to get a mask is entirely your call.
- Individual packets of eye wash.



World War I, Italian dispatch motorcycle rider receiving first aid, 1915

- A small container of disinfectant wash, for your hands.
- A small first aid book.

When considering whether to put a first aid kit together, keep in mind an old adage regarding those who ride bikes; there are the ones who have gone down and the ones who will go down. With this in mind I would strongly encourage you to give this some consideration, as the person it may be used on might well be yourself. If you shop around, you will readily find kits specifically designed for motorcycle riders and with that as a starter kit, you can add additional items to enhance the kits versatility. Remember, the time to get a kit is now, not right after you or your friend has gone down.

As always ride safe and enjoy the fantastic weather that has settled in. We live in a great area to enjoy the sport and let's do what we can to keep it safe.

Jerry