

M4: Englisch

Be safe and enjoy your ride!

When motorcyclists talk about riding their vehicle, you will often hear the words excitement, thrill and “kick”. Passionate bikers will tell you there’s nothing comparable to racing down long roads on two wheels, feeling the cold wind in your face and seeing houses and trees fly by. But that thrill can be dangerous if you’re not careful.

Accidents happen. Statistics don’t lie: when motorcycles crash, their riders get hurt. In road accidents, motorcyclists are injured in nearly all cases according to the accident statistics. In too many cases, they even die.

In 2018 46,210 motorcyclists (riding on two wheels) were injured in road accidents. And according to Germany’s Federal Statistical Office, motorcyclists were at least five times more likely to be killed in an accident than people in passenger vehicles like cars and trucks, which offer more protection. That’s not stopping people from riding though. In 2018 around 4.4 million motorcycle registrations were listed by the German Federal Statistical Office.

However, a lot of motorcycle accidents are preventable and there are precautions that can help reduce the severity of injuries.

Here are some tips that can help you to stay safe on the road:

1) Speed kills. Stick to the speed limits. They are neither a joke nor a mere recommendation. The faster you are going, the fewer chances you have to react to incidents occurring. Roughly more than 20% of all motorcycle accidents result from speeding.

2) Practise your skills. You have to know your skills and how your bike reacts when you have to brake in an emergency. Motorcyclists must find a balance between braking and steering in order to avoid collisions and falling or sliding over the road.

3) Stay focussed. If you’re feeling very distracted, emotional, sick or just tired, you had better leave the bike in the garage until you feel OK again. Otherwise you’re far more likely to make a mistake that can have serious consequences.

4) Don’t drink and drive. Alcohol slows your reaction time and messes with your judgment. In other words, when you drink and drive, you’re more likely to make mistakes. So if you’re going to drink, don’t ride. Your family, and everyone else on the road, will appreciate it.

5) Watch your bike. Regularly check tyres, brakes, controls, lights, oil, the chassis and stands. This quick safety inspection will give you a reassuring feeling and prevent you becoming stranded on the road with a broken-down machine.

6) Be seen. Make yourself as visible as possible. Motorcycles are a fair bit smaller than cars so they slip neatly into blind spots. Furthermore, some drivers just don’t pay enough attention.

7) Others make mistakes too. Crossroads are particularly dangerous. When other drivers don’t see bikes, they often violate the biker’s right of way or turn right in front of them and sometimes even

bump into the motorcycle. Be alert and careful as you proceed over crossroads. Watch every part of the road before you cross it. Ride defensively and be prepared for other drivers' mistakes.

40 **8) Solid clothing.** Wear appropriate motorcycle clothes. Protect your hands with thick gloves and your arms and legs with good-quality gear like leather jackets and chaps. All motorcycle shops stock clothing that shields your skin, and they often sell items designed to be breathable even in hot weather. Some jackets have a special mesh integrated into the fabric to protect you in case of an accident. In the event of a minor collision or falling over or off the vehicle, really good protection can mean the difference between going home or spending weeks in a hospital.

9) Now, it's your turn! Do you have more ideas or tips for a safe ride?

Vocabulary Box

¹⁴ **preventable** – vermeidbar; ¹⁴ **precaution** – Vorsichtsmaßnahme, Vorkehrung; ¹⁵ **severity** – Schwere, Ausmaß; ¹⁷ **mere recommendation** – reine Empfehlung; ¹⁸ **incident** – Vorfall, Zwischenfall; ¹⁸ **to occur** – sich ereignen, stattfinden; ¹⁹ **speeding** – Geschwindigkeitsüberschreitung; ²¹ **to steer** – steuern, lenken; ²¹ **to avoid** – vermeiden, umgehen; ²² **collision** – Zusammenstoß, Auffahrunfall; ²⁸ **to appreciate sth.** – etw. begrüßen, wertschätzen; ²⁹ **controls** – Kontrollleuchten, Steuerelemente; ²⁹ **chassis** – Fahrgestell/-rahmen; ²⁹ **stands** – Zweirad-Seitenständer/-stütze; ³⁰ **reassuring** – beruhigend; ³³ **blind spot** – blinder Fleck; im Straßenverkehr: toter Winkel; ³⁵ **to violate** – missachten; ³⁵ **right of way** – Vorfahrt; ³⁶ **to be alert** – wachsam sein; ³⁶ **proceed** – weiterlaufen; ³⁹ **gear** – Schutzkleidung; ³⁹ **chaps** – Motorradhose; ⁴² **mesh** – Netz/Innenfutter; ⁴² **fabric** – Stoff

Questions and tasks relating to the article:

- 1) How many motorcyclists were injured in accidents in 2018?
- 2) How many motorcycles were registered in 2018?
- 3) Explain why motorcyclists are hurt in nearly all of their accidents.
- 4) Explain the connection between the consumption of alcohol and your individual reaction time.
- 5) Write down three questions about this article and let your partner answer them.

Further tasks:

- 6) What are your top five tips for safe travel by motorcycle? Rank them from one to five.
- 7) Present your top five to your partner. What advice is the same as his or hers and where do you differ? Agree on a final top three. Present your selection in class.
- 8) Prepare a poster, picture story or video clip for a "drive carefully campaign" for motorcyclists.