

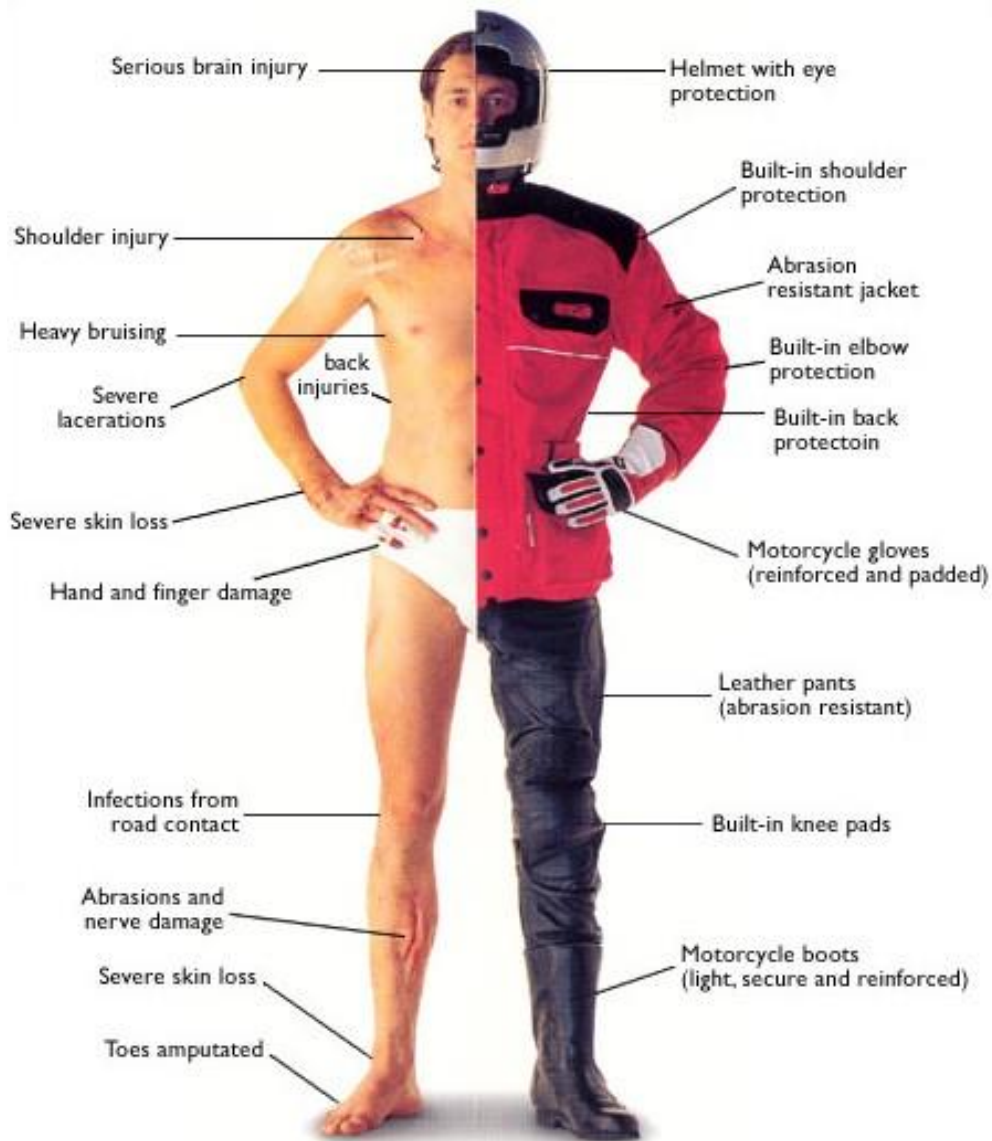
Motorcyclist Protective Gear

Why? What? How to Choose?

Purpose of protective gear

Motorcyclist protective gear is designed to reduce the severity of the most common rider injuries particularly from falling and sliding on the ground. Effective gear will prevent or reduce the severity of abrasions, friction burns, cuts and lacerations. No clothing can guarantee full protection against all injuries, however, riders wearing motorcyclist specific protective clothing are less likely to be seriously injured and less likely to be hospitalized.

Quality gear can save your hide!
All the gear every time you ride!



Protective gear organizing framework

The Skilled Motorcyclist Association – Responsible, Trained and Educated Riders Inc. (SMARTER at www.smarter-usa.org) has proposed the 4-C's as a framework for thinking about motorcyclist riding gear. The 4-C's are Covered, Comfortable, Conspicuous, Contemporary and are defined as follows:

Covered = protected, enclosed, sheltered, guarded

Comfortable = snug, cozy, relaxed, secure

Conspicuous = visible, noticeable, obvious, eye-catching, striking

Contemporary = modern, current, fashionable, up-to-date

Depending on the riding environment and individual rider needs, this may be a balance among the 4-C's. For example, a daily commute in an urban environment might place a high priority on impact risk as riding speeds tend to be lower and road surfaces less abrasive but impact risk is high as collisions with cars and roadside objects is more likely. A high priority on abrasion resistance might be deemed important in a rural environment where, in the event of a crash, higher speeds might result in a long slide on a very abrasive road surface.

Covered

Abrasion-resistant materials are essential to protect riders' skin and muscles when they slide on the road during a crash. All the seams and fasteners (usually zippers) must remain intact as the jacket/pants resistance to abrasion is only effective if the gear doesn't come apart during a crash. Armor is also necessary for the parts of the body such as palms of hands, shoulders, elbows, hips and knees which are most likely to take a direct impact in a crash.

Comfortable

Protective clothing can be uncomfortable in hot conditions because the materials used tend to prevent a rider's sweat from evaporating. A key for comfort is for the clothing to be breathable. While breathability is important so is warmth. The gear chosen must be adjustable for the temperature and weather conditions.

Conspicuous

"Conspicuity" is a word meaning visibility or noticeability. Riders who make themselves and their motorcycles more conspicuous (HighViz) increases their visibility making it more likely that other motorists will see them in the traffic mix or even from long distances away. This means it is less likely a motorist will violate the riders' right of way by turning in front of them or changing lanes into their path.

Contemporary

Other words for contemporary are fashionable, current, modern and up-to-date. Fashionable gear will help riders feel good about their choices and increase the likelihood of wearing their gear on every ride. Current, modern and up-to-date gear is much more likely to be constructed with the best materials for abrasion resistance, breathability, impact resistance with the best armor, seam burst resistance and convenience features like pockets, reflective materials and adjustability for conditions.

Assessing and evaluating gear

Riders are encouraged to buy the best gear they can afford. Riders should look first to ensure the gear being considered fits the general principles outlined by the 4-C's.

Search online for reviews such as the Motorcycle Riding Gear Guide published by WebBikeWorld (<https://www.webbikeworld.com/motorcycle-riding-gear/>). Guides such as this will help riders learn more about the gear that they are considering from well curated careful assessments/recommendations made by the experienced moto-journalists. Curation is the process of sifting through the vast world of content and information available online, then identifying, organization and sharing the information.

Curation is not, however, a scientific testing process as is done by the Motorcycle Clothing Assessment Program (MotoCAP <https://www.motocap.com.au/>). MotoCAP is an independent, free resource supported by governments and private road safety organizations across Australia and New Zealand. MotoCAP tests gear using rigorous, scientific methods to provide ratings for motorcyclists to choose the right gear with the best protection and breathability for their ride.

Summary

Riders are encouraged to buy the best gear they can afford. Effective gear will prevent or reduce the severity of abrasions, friction burns, cuts and lacerations including having skin and muscle stripped from your body. Use the 4-C's of covered, comfortable, conspicuous and contemporary as guiding principles for initial gear assessment. Read moto-journalist assessments and recommendations and check MotoCAP for scientific evaluation. If possible, visit a dealer to try on the gear you are considering. If you buy online, before making a purchase, ensure returns are possible in case the size/comfort do not meet expectations.

