

## #71 MOTORIZED DIRT BIKE SAFETY



According to data available from the U. S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, a total of about 32,000 youth aged 8 to 18 years were treated in hospitals for motorized dirt bike injuries during 2007. In order of occurrence, fractures (34%) followed by contusions (25%), strain and sprains (17%), lacerations (14%), and concussions (5%) were the most frequent types of dirt bike injuries.

### California Motorcycle License Requirements (On-Road)

- You must be 15 1/2 years old to obtain a learner's permit and hold the learner's permit for at least six months before taking the license tests.
- If you are under 21, you must successfully complete a motorcycle basic rider course given by the California Motorcycle Safety Program (CMSP) and administered by the California Highway Patrol.
- You must be at least 16 years old to take the motorcycle knowledge test and motorcycle skills test. You must successfully pass both tests to become licensed.

### California Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) Requirements

- All vehicles operated on public lands must be registered with the California Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV).
- The DMV will issue a green or red sticker for OHVs that will only be operated off highway. Vehicles with red stickers can only be operated during designated times, whereas those with green stickers can be operated at all times.
- No person shall operate an OHV on any forest-covered land, brush-covered land, or grass-covered land unless the vehicle is equipped with a spark arrester maintained in effective working order.
- An OHV operated between sunset and sunrise must display at least one headlight that enables an operator to see clearly 200 feet ahead and red taillight visible for 200 feet.
- An OHV may not be driven in a manner that endangers the safety of other persons or their property or animals.
- No motor vehicle shall exceed 15 mph within 50 feet of any campground, campsite, or concentration of people or animals.

### Motorized Dirt Bike Safety Precautions

- A California motorcycle license is not required to ride a dirt bike on private land.
- 4-H members must attend an approved dirt bike school certified by the Motorcycle Safety Foundation or the adult volunteer project leader must be a qualified dirt bike instructor and make safety an integral part of the 4-H project curriculum. See <http://training.msf-usa.org/RES/> for additional information on training.
- Always wear appropriate personal protective equipment, including a motorcycle helmet that meets Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard 218 and displaying a "DOT" emblem, eye protection, high-top boots or shoes, gloves, long pants and long sleeve shirt, chest protector, knee guards, and kidney belts.
- Thoroughly review and understand information provided in the motorcycle operator's manual with particular attention given to descriptions of safety procedures.
- Before using, always inspect the motorcycle for damage or disrepair. If a motorcycle fails the pre-use inspection, notify your group leader, parent, or guardian and remove the motorcycle from use.
- Always ride the dirt bike within your abilities. Maintain your control of direction, speed, and balance.
- Drive with courtesy and be prepared to yield the right-of-way at any time.
- Keep your feet on the footpegs. Do not drag your feet or you may lose control of the dirt bike.
- Approach curves and hill tops with caution. Assume there are obstructions ahead and begin to slow and be prepared to stop.
- Reduce speed as you enter turns. Learn how to properly lean into turns.
- Always keep to the right side on roads or trails.
- Maintain a cushion of safety space around your dirt bike. Keep at least a two second following distance from traffic in front of you.
- Always search ahead and to the sides of your route to locate and avoid potential hazards.
- If you suffer an injury while riding a dirt bike, tell your group leader, parent, or guardian. Seek medical attention if the injury is serious.