



Rider Down is a monthly update of motorcycle crashes that occurred throughout the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps. The data in this publication reflects what was reported during the time period covered.



Information contained in the report is based on preliminary data and is provided for hazard awareness and training purposes only. The Naval Safety Command recommends Motorcycle Safety Representatives use this information for training and mentorship programs and forward to others who may have an interest.



Obtain official crash data from Naval Safety Command

Navy	Total non-fatal crashes this report: 19	Marine Corps
Rider fatalities this report: 3	Total fatalities this report: 4	Rider fatality this report: 1
Rider fatalities for FY 25: 10		Rider fatalities for FY 25: 6

A guide to winter motorcycle safety

By Juan Aguilar

As the winter season sets in, motorcycle riders face entirely different challenges than the warmer months. Lower temperatures, harsher weather conditions and the potential for icy roads make winter riding risky. However, with the right approach, winter can still be an enjoyable time to ride.

The wear of proper personal protective equipment (PPE) is a key consideration for safe winter riding. The following information is to provide practical insights and advice for motorcyclists braving the cold months while ensuring their safety and comfort.

In December, the Naval Enterprise recorded 23 motorcycle crashes, four of which resulted in fatalities. For the 11th month in a row, California led in motorcycle crashes with seven reportable – almost a third of the incidents (30%), followed by Virginia with six (26%), Japan with three (14%) and Florida with two crashes (9%). The remaining crashes occurred throughout the United States, including one in Bahrain.

Almost a quarter of the crashes reported had minimal or no data regarding age reported; 26% of the crashes involved riders between the ages of 22 to 25 years. Thirty percent of the crashes occurred between noon and 4 p.m. and 26% of the

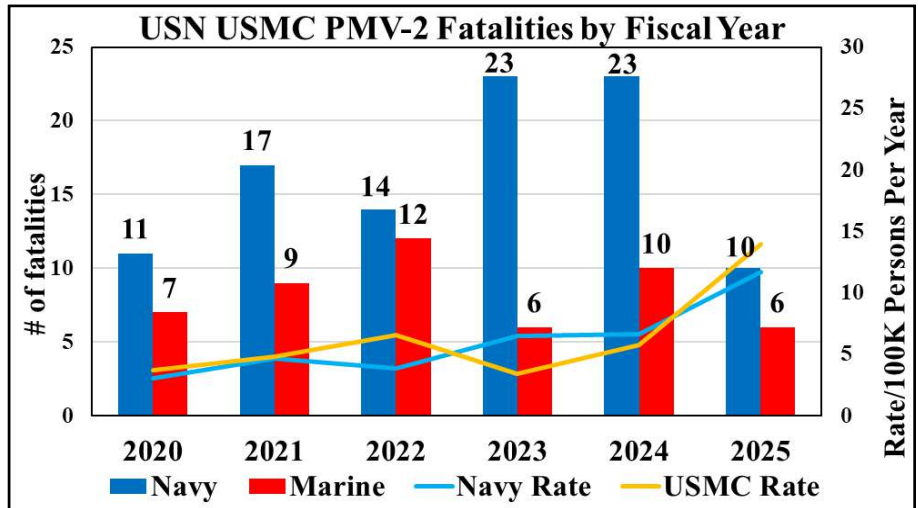


Figure 1 depicts Navy and Marine Corps' reported motorcycle fatalities by fiscal year. The numbers reflect the entire fiscal year for FY20 through FY25; FY25 data is current to the end of the reporting month (December).

crashes occurred between 4 p.m. and 8 p.m. Additionally, 61% of the crashes occurred on weekdays and 39% on the weekends.

It's crucial to pay attention to the factors behind this month's motorcycle crashes and understand that detailed and accurate reports help ensure the data collected reflects the actual circumstances of each incident. Comprehensive data allows for

Winter riding

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identifying patterns and trends, such as common causes, locations or times of day when crashes occur. These statistics emphasize the critical importance of motorcycle safety awareness and proactive measures to prevent future tragedies.

Winter riding can be a rewarding experience, offering crisp air and a sense of adventure, but it also presents significant risks. By understanding the challenges of winter riding and investing in proper PPE, motorcyclists can reduce these risks and enjoy their rides safely. Helmets, gloves, jackets, boots and other protective gear must be chosen carefully to ensure warmth, comfort and safety. Along with proper gear, regular motorcycle maintenance ensures the bike remains in optimal condition for winter. Whether you ride casually or during your daily commute, prioritizing safety and preparation is essential for winter riding success.

Amidst the critical mission of ensuring operational readiness, the diligent efforts of motorcycle safety representatives (MSRs), supervisors and collateral duty safety officers help keep your Sailors and Marines current with their training and licensing. The *Rider Down* reports are indispensable tools in your arsenal, integral to safety and training briefs. Their detailed insights and analysis are invaluable in understanding the factors contributing to crashes and formulating preventive measures.

Winter riding introduces a variety of unique challenges for motorcyclists. These challenges extend beyond simple discomfort due to cold weather and can affect safety, visibility and riding performance. Cold temperatures create discomfort and can impair a rider's physical abilities. Cold fingers can hinder riders' ability to operate the throttle or brakes effectively, while frostbite and hypothermia are a serious concern during long rides in freezing temperatures. Icy and snowy conditions lead to slippery roads, reducing the available grip of tires. This increases the risk of losing control of the bike. Black ice, which often goes unnoticed, is hazardous because it can cause sudden and unpredictable loss of traction.

Winter frequently comes with rain, snow and fog, which reduce visibility for riders and other drivers. Shorter daylight hours and frequent overcast skies compound these issues, making it harder to see and be seen on the road. Wet or icy roads increase stopping distances significantly, so riders must be even more cautious when approaching intersections or slowing down. Braking too hard or too suddenly can cause a skid or loss of control. While road salt is used to melt ice, it can damage your bike's components. This makes cleaning your motorcycle after rides even more important to avoid rust and corrosion.

The proper PPE is crucial for winter riders to protect against crashes and incidents, combat the cold and ensure control over the motorcycle. *Check out the graphic on page 6.* A full-face helmet is essential in winter, protecting against wind and cold air. It also helps prevent visor fogging, which can impair visibility. Anti-fog visors or inserts, along with insulated liners,

By the numbers

- **8 (35%) crashes had no details reported.**
- **8 (35%) crashes involved loss of control.**
- **5 (22%) crashes involved PMV-4s hitting a rider.**
- **2 (8%) crashes involved colliding with moving vehicle.**

offer added protection. Insulated and waterproof gloves, such as those made from Thinsulate or Gore-Tex, are crucial to keep hands warm and dry. Heated gloves are an excellent option for extended cold-weather rides. Winter jackets and pants should be insulated, waterproof and offer crash protection. A layering system helps maintain warmth while providing mobility.

Additionally, reflective strips and high-visibility gear are essential for low-light conditions. Boots should be insulated, waterproof and provide a solid grip on icy surfaces. Boots with impact protection and anti-slip soles ensure stability in cold weather. A balaclava or neck warmer shields against the cold, while heated neck wraps can provide additional warmth in extreme conditions. Consider wearing reflective vests or strips and adding LED lights to your bike to improve visibility.

Maintaining your motorcycle is also key to winter safety. Winter tires offer better grip in cold, wet or snowy conditions. Ensure they are correctly inflated and in good condition. Freezing temperatures can drain batteries quickly. If storing your bike, remove and periodically charge the battery. Cold weather thickens oil, reducing its viscosity. Use the appropriate oils for winter and check fluid levels regularly.

To those with Risk Management Information (RMI) access, we've integrated *Rider Down* reports within RMI. Once logged into RMI, click on the left-hand tab under "Pubs and Refs" homepage and proceed to "Motorcycle Rubber Side Down" to subscribe to and view these issues. The site contains the current year motorcycle publications produced by NAVSAFECOM for Navy and Marine Corps MSRs, riders and safety professionals.

More information, videos and archived newsletters can be found on the NAVSAFECOM website: <https://navalsafetycommand.navy.mil/Media/Mags-Pubs/Motorcycle-Rider-Down-Reports-Newsletters/>. Also visit the CAC-enabled site for more tools and resources, <https://intelshare.intelink.gov/sites/nsc/Pages/PMV-2.aspx>.

In the pursuit of safety, every detail matters. Do not ignore even minor factors, as this raises your risk and may result in a crash. Factors were provided from the crashes on the following pages based on the information presented in the operations and investigators' reports, most of which are still under investigation. Remove one factor and the crash may not have occurred.

When reviewing the crash narratives on the following pages, consider other factors that may have influenced the crashes. It's a call to action for riders to engage, reflect and ask themselves, "What would I have done differently?"



Motorcycle Crashes

December 2024



Motorcycle Crash Legend

NR represents information not reported

Red entries represent Marine Corps-specific crashes

All times local

Fatal Crashes

Dec. 1, time and age NR E-4

Location: Norfolk, Virginia

Remarks: Rider was involved in a fatal motorcycle crash. Service member had recently completed BRC in May 2024 and was past due for ARC training.

Dec. 13, 9:37 p.m., 39-year-old E-6

Location: El Cajon, California

Remarks: Rider was involved in a fatal motorcycle crash. Service member lost control and collided with the median.

Dec. 15, 4:35 a.m., age NR E-3

Location: Menifee, California

Remarks: Rider was involved in a fatal motorcycle crash. Rider impacted a PMV-4 and was pronounced deceased at the scene.

Dec. 28, 11:45 p.m., 26-year-old E-4

Location: San Diego, California

Remarks: Rider lost control of the motorcycle on a highway interchange and collided with the guardrail. Medical personnel responded to the scene and the service member was pronounced deceased at 12:04 a.m. The driver's license and girlfriend on scene confirmed the rider's identity. The service member wore head protection and gloves. *BRC was completed in February 2024 with no follow-on training.*

Nonfatal Crashes

Dec. 1, 6:30 p.m., 19-year-old E-3

Location: Urasoe, Japan

Remarks: Rider was involved in a motorcycle crash. While riding motorcycle, the service member collided with a parked PMV-4. The rider was transported to a hospital due to multiple fractures and internal injuries.

Dec. 2, 6:30 p.m., 32-year-old E-7

Location: Temecula, California

Remarks: Rider was on a local highway heading home. About 20 minutes away from their house they were hit on the left side of their motorcycle by a civilian changing lanes going about 30-40 mph. The civilian's vehicle impacted the motorcycle from the driver's side. Due to the impact, the service member was knocked off the road and spun out to the left shoulder of the freeway. Rider sustained injuries to the knee and soreness to left leg and hip.

Dec. 2, 2:30 p.m., 24-year-old E-5

Location: Iwakuni, Japan

Remarks: Rider was going around the bend in a parking lot. They were

taking a left turn, operating at low speed and thought they had shifted from first gear to second before the bend, but the motorcycle was in neutral. The rider glanced down to verify and correct the gear when they lost control of the motorcycle. The motorcycle slid into the oncoming lane, where a PMV-4 turned right at the bend. The motorcycle hit the bumper and became pinned under the right forward tire. The PMV-4 driver put the vehicle into reverse to unpin the rider's legs and several Marines on site assisted them to the side of the road, where they waited for emergency personnel to arrive. No further information on injuries.

Dec. 3, 5:50 a.m., 23-year-old E-4

Location: Norfolk, Virginia

Rider rode their scooter to work, lost traction and fishtailed on dry pine needles. Rider fell on their left side, reported to sick call and was given medication and two days SIQ.

Dec. 4, 8:15 a.m., 21-year-old E-4

Location: Norfolk, Virginia

Remarks: Rider was involved in a motorcycle crash on a public roadway, resulting in a broken wrist. The rider underwent surgery and was expected to have a 14-day convalescent leave for recovery. The service member will require 30 days of limited duty before returning to regular duties. *This incident emphasizes the importance of protective gear and road safety.*

Dec. 5, 11:20 a.m., 25-year-old E-5

Location: Norfolk, Virginia

Remarks: Rider left work for lunch and turned right onto a street. At the same time, another driver, exiting a nearby Starbucks, failed to see the service member and struck the rider's motorcycle from behind. Rider was thrown off and suffered road rash on an arm and leg. The service member was taken to a hospital, treated for minor injuries and released.

Dec. 5, 1:30 p.m., 35-year-old E-6

Location: San Diego, California

Remarks: Rider was riding their motorcycle home from work. While

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Acronyms

ARC: advanced rider course

BRC: basic rider course

EMS: emergency medical services

ERC: experienced rider course

LLD: light & limited duty

MSR: motorcycle safety representative

PMV-2: private motor vehicle 2 wheel (motorcycle)

PMV-4: private motor vehicle 4 wheel (automobile)

PPE: personal protective equipment

SIQ: sick in quarters

Motorcycle Crashes

December 2024

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turning right on a street, the rider was in the left turning lane and a civilian driver was in the right turning lane. Both vehicles started moving when the light turned green, but the civilian drove straight and struck the service member. The civilian continued driving a short distance and stopped as the rider got up. The rider did not get a chance to collect the civilian's information before the police arrived. The service member went to hospital for a check-up and was treated for abrasions on their right knee, which was swollen. *Rider wore all required PPE, including a helmet, pants and over-ankle boots.*

Dec. 6, 7:24 a.m., 23-year-old grade NR
 Location: Jacksonville, Florida
 Remarks: Rider was involved in a motorcycle crash at a local intersection. The service member received medical assistance from an unknown bystander and was subsequently treated for injuries at a hospital. Rider was wearing the appropriate PPE including helmet, eye protection, boots, gloves and a jacket. The rider completed the BRC in November 2021.

Dec. 8, 2 a.m., 21-year-old E-4
 Location: Camp Lejeune, North Carolina
 Remarks: Rider was riding their motorcycle when they stopped at a

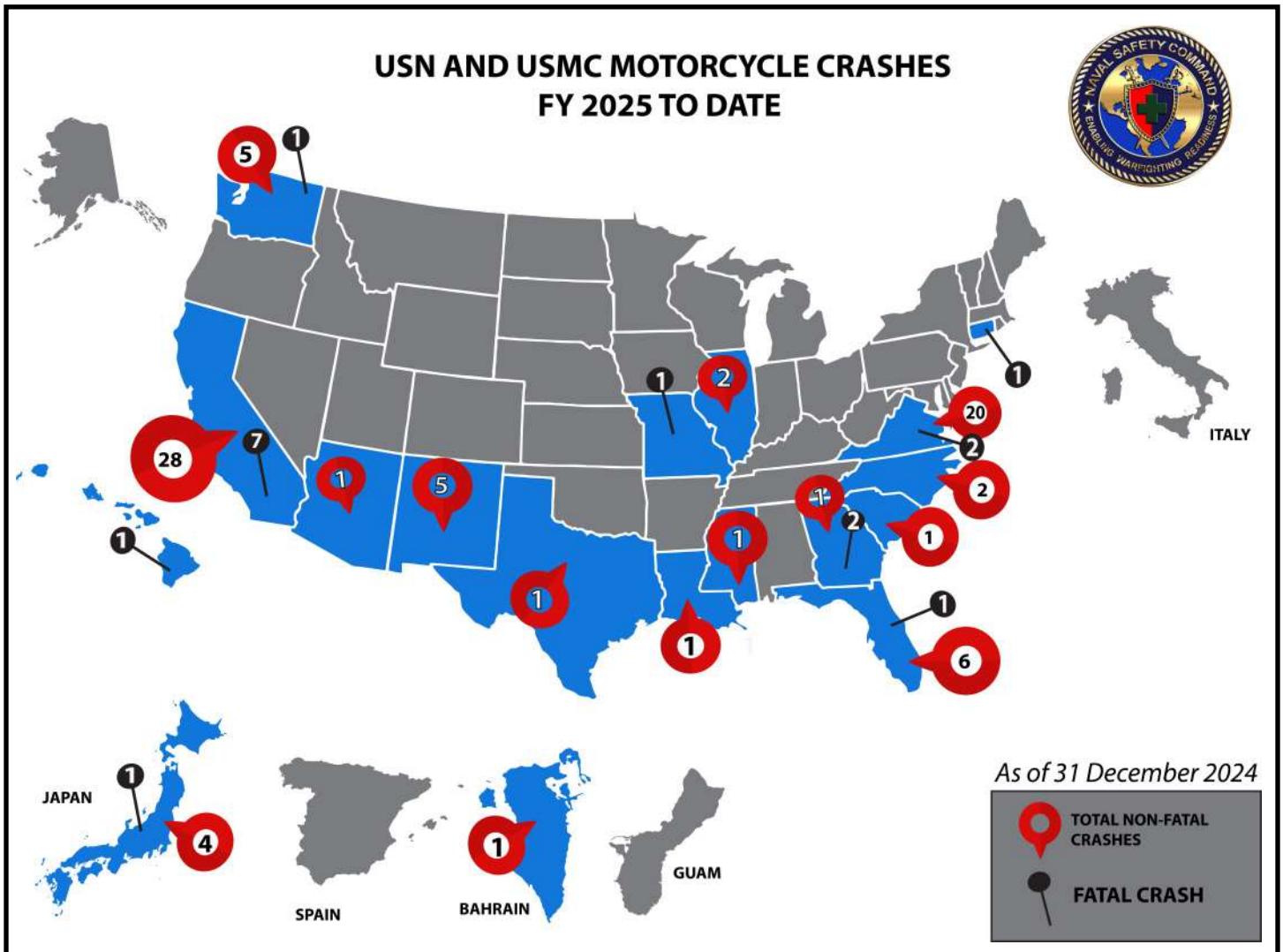
traffic light and turned left. During a slow-speed turn, a vehicle from the rear overtook and cut off the motorcycle, forcing the rider to slow down and fall over.

Dec. 9, 12 p.m., 25-year-old E-5
 Location: Newport News, Virginia
 Remarks: Rider was operating their motorcycle when they lost control, resulting in a crash. The rider was transported to hospital with multiple injuries. *Rider wore all required PPE and completed the ERC in November 2020.*

Dec. 9, 2 p.m., 37-year-old E-6
 Location: Temecula, California
 Remarks: Rider was driving their motorcycle on a highway in the middle lane at approximately 15-20 mph; a PMV-4 driver in the left lane switched lanes and hit the service member on the left side of their motorcycle, causing them to be ejected. The service member went to a hospital for right leg pain, left shoulder pain, stiff back and painful neck.

Dec. 10, 6 p.m., 25-year-old E-4
 Location: Everett, Washington
 Rider was involved in a motorcycle crash on a local interstate. The

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Motorcycle Crashes

December 2024

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incident occurred under unclear circumstances, but initial observations suggest the incident may have been caused by rider error. The service member was wearing all required PPE during the incident and is current with motorcycle safety course training. The service member was transported to a hospital, where surgery was performed on the arm and ankle.

Dec. 11, 6:30 a.m., 20-year-old E-3

Location: Fort Worth, Texas

Remarks: Rider was commuting to work when they were suddenly cut off by an SUV, causing them to collide with the rear-right side of the SUV. The SUV fled the scene and the rider contacted emergency services immediately. The rider was transported to the ER for further evaluation.

What started as a typical morning commute quickly turned into a traumatic experience.

Dec. 14, 4:10 p.m., 34-year-old E-6

Location: Zama City, Japan

Remarks: Rider was riding motorcycle through an intersection and struck a Japanese national vehicle. Zama security and police responded to the scene. There were no recorded injuries at the time. The motorcycle and vehicle were damaged.

Dec. 17, 2:25 p.m., 38-year-old E-5

Location: Norfolk, Virginia

Remarks: Rider was stopped at a red light. The light went green and the rider continued driving when a sedan cut them off from the left lane to turn down the road. The rider slammed on the brakes, locked up and dumped the bike. The rider was taken to the ER for minor injuries. *The member wore all required PPE and was up to date on training.*



Petty Officer 1st Class Randy Watson checks his motorcycle's oil level prior to a winter safety ride. (U.S. Navy photo/Petty Officer 3rd Class Alexander Tidd)

Dec. 17, 5:45 p.m., age NR E-2

Location: Escondido, California

Remarks: Rider called supervisor to report they had been in a motorcycle crash and then handed the phone to a police officer. The officer confirmed no alcohol was involved and that the rider was being transported to hospital. The rider was unable to recall any details about the incident.

Dec. 21, 1:03 p.m., 38-year-old O-4

Location: Manama, Bahrain

Remarks: Rider lost control of their motorcycle while attempting to avoid a delivery driver who ran a red light. Rider hit the ground with the left side of their body, injuring their left hand. Rider was transported to a hospital for evaluation, sustained a broken ring finger and received 72 hours LLD. *The service member was wearing all required PPE and had completed ERC in January 2017; however, they had no valid motorcycle license or permit.*

Dec. 23, 7:30 p.m., age NR E-4

Location: Orange Park, Florida

Remarks: Rider was involved in a motorcycle crash and suffered a broken left kneecap, small tears in the small and large intestines and a liver bleed. The cause of the incident is unknown.

Dec. 25, 3:21 p.m., 25-year-old E-4

Location: Awendaw, South Carolina

Remarks: Rider was riding their motorcycle on a road and lost traction on loose gravel as the road curved right forcing them to go off the road. The rider was not injured.

****Even though the following crash is not PMV-2 sub-category or not reportable, it is worth referencing for training purposes.***

Dec. 29, 11 a.m., 22-year-old E-4

Location: California City, California

Remarks: Rider reported to the leading chief petty officer that they suffered injuries to their hand, ankle and neck while riding a dirt bike in the desert. Rider was transported to hospital for further evaluation. *Service member was wearing all required PPE; however, they had not attended any Navy-sponsored motorcycle safety courses.*



ENABLING WARFIGHTING READINESS

375 A Street, Norfolk, VA 23511-4399

navalsafetycommand.navy.mil

HEAD

Never expose!

HELMET

Most important gear a rider can use.

EYES, EARS & FACE

Exposure can lead to irritated eyes, noise-deafening winds and being distracted by debris such as being hit by bugs.

FACE SHIELD

Impact or shatter resistant safety glasses, goggles, wrap around glasses sealing the eye, or face shield properly attached to the helmet.

HANDS

Will not withstand abrasion.

GLOVES

Keep hands comfortable, functional and protected with full-fingered gloves or mittens designed for use on a motorcycle.

BARE LIMBS

Exposure can lead to injuries such as road rash should a crash occur.

JACKETS & PANTS

Riders and passengers shall wear a long sleeved shirt or jacket and long trousers.

FLIP FLOPS

Never expose toes and feet to potential contact with road surfaces, shift lever, brake pedal, or footrests; this can lead to injury.

BOOTS

Sturdy over-the-ankle footwear that affords protection for the feet and ankles.

BOTTOM LINE

Fool's gear identifies an unaware rider. Learn how to avoid embarrassment, ridicule and injury by completing a MSF rider course.

BOTTOM LINE

Dress for the ride as well as the crash. Proper riding gear allows you to enjoy the ride in comfort and helps minimize injury.