

RIDER DOWN

JANUARY 2026

Revving Up Safety

Lessons from 2025 and Strategies for Safer Rides Ahead

By Juan Aguilar

In January, the Naval Enterprise recorded 33 motorcycle crashes, with one resulting in a fatality. California continues to be a high-risk area, accounting for 16 reported crashes (48%) overall; North Carolina and Washington followed, with three reported crashes each, equaling 18%. The remaining incidents occurred in various areas throughout the continental United States, as well as Hawaii, Guam, Spain and Japan.

With the new year underway, it's important to analyze the motorcycle safety trends from 2025 to reassess our strategy for protecting our Sailors and Marines in 2026.

The data reveals a persistent challenge with motorcycle/private motor vehicle (PMV-2) crashes with riders 29 and under, particularly those E-5 and below, which accounted for over 70% of these incidents.

The Navy and Marine Corps experienced a

steady rate of motorcycle crashes in 2025, with younger riders, 29 years and under, accounting for over 70% of total crashes and 24 fatalities, primarily due to inexperience and exposure to higher risk behaviors. With this age group recording over 270 incidents, clearly targeted interventions to improve rider awareness, skill development and safety practices are urgently needed.

The most frequent causes of mishaps were collisions with moving vehicles, overturns/rollovers and running off the road, all of which remain significant risks. These causes underscore the critical importance of defensive riding, along with the need for increased visibility through high-visibility gear and improved road awareness.

Weekend riding was identified as a high-risk period, likely due to recreational riding longer distances and unfamiliar routes, which increases exposure to potential hazards.

The spring and summer months were the most

At a Glance

USN
Rider fatalities this report: 1
Rider fatalities for FY26: 8

USMC
Rider fatalities this report: 0
Rider fatalities for FY26: 3

Totals this report
Non-fatal crashes: 32
Fatalities: 1

dangerous, as increased riding activity during favorable weather conditions contributed to a rise in mishaps. Conversely, December marked the lowest number of incidents, likely due to adverse weather conditions limiting riding opportunities.

Areas for Improvement in 2026

As we approach spring, leaders must intensify their focus on the following areas to reduce crashes and save lives:

Targeted Training: Leaders must prioritize addressing the needs of younger riders, particularly those 29 and under. Our programs must emphasize defensive riding, road hazard awareness and fatigue management. Leaders should encourage riders to pursue advanced courses beyond the minimum requirements.

Personal protective equipment (PPE): Continue enforcing and promoting the use of required PPE; it is essential. Safety campaigns should specifically highlight the life-saving benefits of high-visibility gear to improve rider visibility on the road.

High-Risk Period Awareness: Safety campaigns should promote increased awareness of elevated risks associated with weekend and seasonal (spring/summer) riding. These campaigns should provide practical tips for navigating recreational routes safely and during high-traffic times.

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EFFECTIVE
1 OCT 2025

ALL DON
MOTORCYCLE
RIDERS
MUST BE
REGISTERED

MOTORCYCLE
UNIT
SAFETY
TRACKING
TOOL

Leadership and Mentorship: Command leadership, safety officers, supervisors and motorcycle safety representatives (MSR) are the cornerstone of creating a strong risk culture. Your continued diligent oversight of training, licensing and mentorship is critical to our naval success. Leaders at all levels should ensure riders are not only trained but encouraged to pursue advanced courses, remain licensed and practice defensive riding.

Ensure Accurate Rider Reporting

Accurate reporting and thorough investigation are the bedrock of our risk analysis and program effectiveness. Reporting the individuals' ages is essential for identifying at-risk demographics. To ensure safety data analysts have a clear picture of our rider population, the following actions are required:

- **Individual Rider Responsibility:** All riders

must log into the Risk Management Information (RMI) reporting system, accept the "Terms and Conditions" and verify their account information is up to date, specifically ensuring the question, "Is Motorcycle Rider?" field is set to "Yes." (If the "Is Motorcycle Rider?" field is set to "No," the individual will not populate on any motorcycle-related reports.)

- **MSR Action:** MSRs with the Motorcycle Unit Safety Tracking Tool (MUSTT) role are empowered to correct rider accounts on behalf of personnel. MSRs should regularly review rider data to ensure all riders are correctly captured in RMI for accurate training and compliance tracking.

- MSRs can navigate to Admin > search accounts, locate the appropriate rider and update the account using the same criteria. Properly using MUSTT access ensures all

eligible riders are correctly captured in RMI and correct training compliance is provided.

A Call to Action for Every Rider

Every detail matters in the pursuit of risk control. Do not ignore even minor factors, as this raises your risk and may result in a mishap. Factors were provided from crashes on the following pages based on the information presented in the operations and the investigator's reports; most are still under investigation.

When reviewing the crash narratives on the following pages, consider other factors that may have influenced the mishap. Remove one factor and the crash may not have occurred.

Engage, reflect, and ride safely.

Rider Down: Important tool to have

The *Rider Down* reports are indispensable tools in your arsenal and should be integral to safety and training briefs. Their detailed insights and analysis are invaluable in understanding the factors contributing to crashes and formulating preventive measures.

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



U.S. Marines with 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing and I Marine Expeditionary Force participate in alternating track rides during an advanced rider track day hosted by 3rd MAW Motorcycle Program at Apex Riding Center in Perris, California, Jan. 12, 2026. (U.S. Marine Corps photo by Lance Cpl. Samantha Devine)

By the numbers

- 14 (42%) crashes involved colliding with a moving vehicle.
- 13 (40%) crashes involved a rollover/overtake.
- 3 (9%) crashes had a rider who ran off the road.
- 2 (6%) crash involved colliding with an animal or object
- 1 (3%) crash had no data provided.

By the clock

- Midnight- 3:59 a.m. – 1 (3%)
- 4 a.m.-7:59 a.m. – 4 (12%)
- 8 a.m. - 11:59 a.m. – 7 (21%)
- noon - 3:59 p.m. – 8 (24%)
- 4 p.m. - 7:59 p.m. – 10 (30%)
- 8 p.m. - 11:59 p.m. – 3 (10%)

By the day

Weekdays – 14 (42%)
Weekend – 19 (58%)



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

Rider Down

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.

Crash data can be obtained from Naval Safety Command.



CRASH REPORTS

Motorcycle Crash Legend

NR represents information not reported

Red entries represent

Marine Corps-specific mishaps
(all times local)

Fatal Crashes

Jan. 3, 7:10 p.m., 32-year-old E-7

Location: Fountain Inn, South Carolina

Remarks: Rider was traveling south on a local road when they ran off the right side of the road, struck a fire hydrant and then collided with a tree. Both rider and passenger sustained fatal injuries as a result of the crash.

Nonfatal Crashes

Jan. 1, 6 a.m., 19-year-old E-2

Location: Naha, Japan

Remarks: Rider was involved in a serious crash while operating an electric scooter. While riding, the rider became distracted and collided with a concrete barrier, which propelled both the rider and the scooter into a nearby tree. The rider sustained a severe head injury.

Jan. 2, 3 p.m., 21-year-old E-5

Location: Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

Remarks: Rider was traveling eastbound on a local road when they lost control of the motorcycle. The motorcycle was laid over on its right side and departed the paved surface, coming to a stop approximately 50 feet off the road. The rider was transported to the hospital by ambulance and treated for a broken arm.

Jan. 4, 3:30 p.m., 21-year-old E-3

Location: Havelock, North Carolina

Remarks: Rider was operating their motorcycle when they collided with a vehicle. The rider sustained open fractures to the leg and shoulder requiring surgery.

Jan. 5, 3:15 p.m., 30-year-old E-6

Location: North Chicago, Illinois

Remarks: Rider was departing a military installation on a motorcycle and making a left turn on a roadway at approximately 5 mph with a 10 to 20-degree lean. During the turn, the rear tire contacted a patch of black ice, causing the motorcycle and rider to slide several times before falling onto the left side. After reaching a safe location, the rider contacted a friend for assistance. The rider completed BRC in May 2025.

Jan. 6, 2:30 p.m., 29-year-old E-5

Location: San Diego, California

Remarks: Rider was riding their motorcycle home from work when a car pulled out of a driveway, leading to a collision. The rider sustained an arm fracture and was scheduled for surgery.

Jan. 9, 5 p.m., 23-year-old E-5

Location: Camp Lejeune, North Carolina

Remarks: Rider was leaving the barracks area and proceeding through an intersection when a car pulled out and contacted the motorcycle. The impact caused the rider to be thrown to the ground. Emergency medical personnel transported the rider to hospital for evaluation and the rider was later released. At the time of the incident, the rider was wearing all required PPE.

Jan. 10, 5:45 a.m., 27-year-old E-5

Location: Oak Harbor, Washington

Remarks: Rider lost control while turning downhill on a roadway, causing the motorcycle to slide and the rider to fall to the ground. The roadway surface was dry at the time of the incident. The rider was transported to an emergency room and medical evaluation determined the rider sustained a scapula fracture that did not require surgery; pain medication and a sling were provided.

Jan. 10, 10:15 a.m., 25-year-old E-4

Location: Norfolk, Virginia

Remarks: Rider was making a left turn on a wet road; the motorcycle's rear tire slid out, causing the bike to drop onto the rider's left leg. The rider, who initially felt uninjured, later went to the ER for knee pain. Medical staff found no critical injuries and the rider lost no time from work.

Jan. 10, 10:36 a.m., 24-year-old E-4

Location: San Diego, California

Remarks: Rider was involved in a motorcycle crash, colliding with a moving vehicle. The incident caused road rash and contusions. The rider missed workdays as a result of the injuries.

Jan. 12, 5 p.m., 20-year-old E-2

Location: San Diego, California

Remarks: Rider was involved in a motorcycle crash resulting in serious injuries. Emergency medical personnel found the rider unresponsive at the scene and transported the individual to hospital for emergency surgery. The rider was wearing PPE at the time of the accident, including head protection and a protective jacket; eye and foot protection are unknown. The rider possessed a valid motorcycle license/permit and had completed BRC.

Acronyms

BRC: Basic Rider Course

ER: emergency room

LLD: light & limited duty

NR: No data or not reported

PPE: personal protective equipment

SIQ: sick in quarters

Jan. 15, 6:30 p.m., 34-year-old E-7

Location: San Diego, California

Remarks: Rider was involved in a motorcycle crash, colliding with a passenger vehicle while heading home. Emergency responders transported the rider to a hospital ER for further medical evaluation. The rider was wearing proper PPE at the time of the incident.

Jan 16, 7:15 a.m., 33-year-old O-4

Location: Fallbrook, California

Remarks: Rider was involved in a motorcycle crash when a civilian truck turned left into the roadway and collided with the rider's motorcycle. Rider sustained a broken ring finger.

Jan. 16, 2:35 p.m., 22-year-old E-5

Location: Mount Vernon, Washington

Remarks: Rider was traveling southbound on a local interstate. While negotiating the exit ramp, the rider's rear wheel contacted loose gravel, causing the motorcycle to lose traction and slide uncontrollably. Two accompanying individuals rendered immediate assistance and emergency medical services were contacted. The rider was transported by ambulance to the hospital, where diagnostic imaging confirmed a fractured fibula. A cast was applied until surgical repair of the fibula was performed later that week.

Jan. 17, 1 a.m., 27-year-old E-3

Location: San Diego, California

Remarks: Rider was operating a motorcycle at night when a golf cart illegally made a U-turn and collided with the motorcycle. Rider sustained a concussion and a cervical sprain.

Jan. 17, 9 a.m., 19-year-old E-2

Location: Camp Pendleton, California

Remarks: Rider was traveling behind another vehicle and briefly looked down to check the fuel gauge. When looking back up, the vehicle ahead was braking abruptly and rider was unable to avoid a collision. Rider struck the rear of the vehicle, was thrown from the motorcycle and impacted head-first before flipping over the vehicle. Rider remained conscious throughout the incident. Bystanders rendered aid and emergency services transported the rider to hospital.

Jan. 17, 3 p.m., 19-year-old E-2

Location: Moreno Valley, California

Remarks: Rider was traveling on a roadway when the motorcycle struck a dirt mound, causing loss of control and resulting in a mishap. Emergency responders transported the rider to the medical facility for evaluation and the rider was later released. Rider was wearing all PPE at the time of the mishap. Rider possessed a valid motorcycle license and completed BRC in August 2025.

Jan. 17, 11:30 p.m., 23-year-old E-4

Location: Albuquerque, New Mexico

Remarks: Rider sustained multiple bone fractures, was knocked unconscious and crashed after being struck by a passenger vehicle. Emergency responders transported the rider to a medical facility for treatment. The rider completed BRC in December 2025.

Jan. 18, 10 a.m., 24-year-old E-6

Location: Chula Vista, California

Remarks: Rider was traveling home when rough terrain caused a loss of control, resulting in the rider being ejected from the motorcycle. The rider reported no significant injuries and did not seek medical attention. Rider was wearing all required PPE at the time of the incident. Rider possessed a valid motorcycle license and completed BRC in December 2025.

Jan. 18, 11 a.m., 22-year-old E-4

Location: Chaney Ranch, California

Remarks: Rider was traveling by motorcycle to a grocery store when they applied the brakes too hard while making a turn. Rider lost balance, dropped the motorcycle and fell to the side. Rider was able to stand, lift the motorcycle and continue riding, sustaining no injuries.

Jan. 19, 2 p.m., age and rank NR

Location: Bremerton, Washington

Remarks: Rider was operating a motorcycle off base when a vehicle ahead braked abruptly, causing the rider to apply the front brake aggressively and lock the front tire. The motorcycle low-sided at approximately 35 mph and the bike slid and came to rest on the rider. Rider sustained fractures to the right wrist and minor road rash to the left hand. Rider was evaluated at emergency room and treated with a cast. At the time of the mishap, rider was wearing required PPE. The injuries could have been substantially worse without protective gloves, reinforcing the critical role proper riding gear plays in reducing injury severity.

Jan. 19, 4 p.m., 26-year-old E-4

Location: Agana, Guam

Remarks: Rider was off duty and operating a motorcycle when involved in a serious crash resulting in multiple life-threatening injuries. Medical evaluation confirmed a severe spinal injury, causing loss of mobility to the legs and lower abdomen. The rider was wearing all required PPE, but it is unknown if they attended motorcycle training.

Jan 19, 7:45 p.m., 22-year-old E-4

Location: Lake Elsinore, California

Remarks: Rider was involved in a head-on motorcycle collision with

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ENABLING WARFIGHTING READINESS
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an oncoming vehicle while traveling southbound on a roadway. Rider was transported to hospital where imaging confirmed multiple serious injuries, including fractures to both arms, ribs, toes and pelvis.

Jan. 19, 8 p.m., 24-year-old E-5

Location: San Diego, California

Remarks: Rider was operating a motorcycle westbound on a major interstate. While taking a right-hand exit, rider encountered loose gravel in an area with reduced lighting, causing the motorcycle to lose traction and fall onto its right side. The rider impacted the roadway but did not receive emergency medical response at the scene. They were later transported by friends to a military medical facility for evaluation. Medical assessment identified injuries to the right knee and both elbows, resulting in three days SIQ and placement on LLD for 30 days. *Low lighting conditions limited visibility for both the rider and other motorists, increasing the likelihood of delayed hazard detection and reaction time.*

Jan. 20, 8 a.m., 35-year-old E-7

Location: San Diego, California

Remarks: Rider was traveling on a freeway and was unable to avoid a collision after the vehicle ahead decelerated abruptly. The rider sustained minor bruises and soreness and was evaluated at a medical facility before being discharged the same day. The rider was wearing all required PPE, held a valid motorcycle license and completed BRC in August 2025.

The rider's speed decreased the time and distance available for hazard detection, evasion and braking, increasing the likelihood of loss of control or impact. Appropriate speed selection is critical to maintaining sufficient stopping distance and reaction time, particularly under reduced visibility conditions.

Jan. 22, 4:08 p.m., 21-year-old E-5

Location: Columbia, Maryland

Remarks: Rider lost control of their motorcycle at an intersection and fell off. The rider was transported by ambulance to hospital, where they underwent X-rays and further evaluation for a potential concussion and fractures. The rider was treated and released, receiving a splint and sling for their right arm and shoulder and medication for pain management and inflammation. The rider completed BRC in September 2025.

Jan. 22, 5 p.m., 24-year-old E-3

Location: Havelock, North Carolina

Remarks: Rider experienced a mechanical failure causing a loss of control and the motorcycle to be dropped. No injuries were reported and the rider was wearing all required PPE.

This highlights the importance of routine inspection, proper maintenance and addressing mechanical deficiencies prior to operation.

Jan. 23, 6:52 p.m., age and rank NR

Location: San Diego, California

Remarks: Rider was traveling home on a motorcycle when they were struck by another vehicle. The rider sustained a broken right foot.

Jan. 25, 4:30 p.m., 23-year-old E-5

Location: Oahu, Hawaii

Remarks: Rider was traveling northbound at approximately 50 mph

when the rider went wide in a turn, resulting in the right foot striking a guardrail. Rider sustained severe road burn to the inside of the right foot, with injuries extending to the tendon and bone. Rider was able to safely pull over within a short distance and emergency medical services transported the rider to hospital. Rider was wearing PPE at the time of the incident and had recently completed BRC in January 2026. The severity of the injury suggests adequate foot protection was either not worn or was insufficient to provide protection at operating speed. At approximately 50 mph, effective foot protection should include reinforced leather or equivalent motorcycle-specific footwear designed to prevent abrasion injuries.

Jan. 25, 8:30 p.m., 25-year-old E-6

Location: Kaneohe Hawaii

Location: Rider operated a motorcycle that had been stored for an extended period and recently repaired, but the required safety inspection and registration renewal was not done. Improperly secured rear fender hardware loosened due to vibration while in motion, causing the fender to contact and puncture the tire. The sudden tire failure led to a loss of control and the motorcycle falling onto the roadway. Rider sustained cuts, bruises and an injury to the left arm, and was transported to hospital for evaluation.

The incident involved maintenance deficiencies and noncompliance with required inspection and registration which should have been completed before riding.

Jan. 28, 6:10 a.m., 24-year-old E-5

Location: Oahu, Hawaii

Location: Rider was commuting to work on a scooter when a collision occurred with a stationary pickup truck stopped in gate traffic. The rider struck their head on the ground and briefly lost consciousness. Emergency medical services transported the rider to hospital, where consciousness was regained during transport. Medical evaluation determined there were no life-threatening injuries.

This incident reinforces the importance of proper helmet use to reduce the severity of head injuries.

Jan. 29, 3:51 p.m., age NR O-2

Location: Escondido, California

Remarks: Rider was involved in a motorcycle accident and sustained multiple broken bones. The rider was waiting on surgery at last report.

Jan 30, 11:33 a.m., 38-year-old E-6

Location: Rota, Spain

Remarks: Rider was operating a motor scooter northeast bound on a roadway when a passenger vehicle traveling on an intersecting route failed to yield the right of way. The vehicle collided with the rear of the scooter, resulting in a motor vehicle mishap.

A crucial reminder for every rider: While we can't control other motorists, we have absolute control over our own actions. Reckless riding doesn't just add to the dangers of being on the road — it multiplies them.

- Naval Safety Command

