

Motorcycle Fatalities on the Rise: Addressing the Growing Risk

By Juan Aguilar

The Naval Enterprise reported 30 motorcycle crashes in November, with one resulting in a fatality. California led in motorcycle crashes for the 22nd consecutive month with 14 reported, accounting for over a third of the incidents (47%); Hawaii and Virginia followed with four each, equaling 26%. Florida and North Carolina each had three crashes, comprising 20%. The remaining incidents occurred in Maryland and Spain.

Based on November's reporting, 50% of mishaps involved riders 25 years old and under and 73% involved personnel E-5 or below, continuing the upward trend of crashes occurring amongst our younger and lower-ranked riders. Accurately reporting individuals' age is essential for identifying at-risk demographics.

Considering it's only the second month of the fiscal year, the Department of the Navy (DON) has recognized a concerning increase in motorcycle-related fatalities and mishaps with Navy and Marine Corps personnel.

This troubling rise highlights the urgent need for enhanced rider safety measures. The data reveals running off the road is a leading cause of fatalities and mishaps. These incidents often occur when riders make evasive maneuvers to avoid collisions, causing them to lose control in offroad environments. This information underscores the need for improved training on safe evasive techniques and better preparation for handling unpredictable conditions, particularly when attempting to avoid crashes.

Overturn and rollover incidents also account for a significant share of fatalities and mishaps. These typically occur during high-speed maneuvers or when riders attempt to avoid collisions with other vehicles, animals or obstacles. In these situations, riders often make an abrupt sharp turn or swerve, which can cause the motorcycle to flip and/or roll.

This pattern emphasizes the critical need for training focused on balance, counter-steering and proper cornering techniques to prevent loss of control. Focused rider education on safely navigating curves and turns –

At a Glance

USN
Rider fatalities this report: 1
Rider fatalities for FY 26: 6

USMC
Rider fatalities this report: 0
Rider fatalities for FY 26: 2

Totals this report
Non-fatal crashes: 29
Fatalities: 1


especially at high speeds – could significantly reduce rollover mishaps.

Collisions with moving vehicles remain a major concern, particularly in off-duty settings, where riders face the unpredictability of civilian traffic. These incidents emphasize the need for defensive riding practices, as well as heightened situational awareness and risk management to navigate busy roads more safely. Promoting defensive strategies, particularly in high-traffic areas, remains a vital step toward mitigating these risks.

Collisions with animals or stationary objects contributed to a significant number of fatalities and mishaps, often occurring during high-speed maneuvers or when riders are forced into evasive actions. These events highlight the need for riders to develop advanced hazard recognition skills and safe maneuvering techniques, especially at higher speeds. Training in hazard anticipation and reinforcing speed control could help reduce the frequency of these dangerous incidents.


Overall, while helmet and use of PPE remains high, the data reveals rider behavior and environmental factors, such as speed and lack of situational awareness, are directly responsible for fatalities and injuries. To address these challenges, there must be a renewed focus on comprehensive rider training, especially in defensive strategies, speed management, hazard awareness,

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EFFECTIVE
1 OCT 2025

ALL DON
MOTORCYCLE
RIDERS
MUST BE
REGISTERED



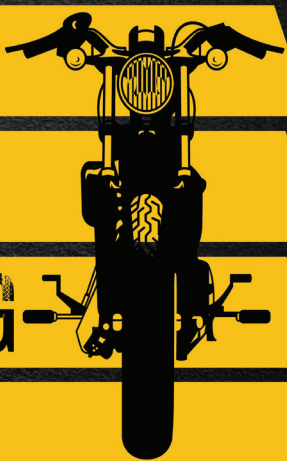
MOTORCYCLE

UNIT

SAFETY

TRACKING

TOOL



evasive maneuvers, and techniques to avoid overturns and rollovers.

As a community, the Navy and Marine Corps must continue prioritizing education, mentorship and accountability in motorcycle operations. Leaders at all levels should ensure riders are not only trained but also encouraged to pursue advanced courses, maintain licensing and practice defensive riding.

Amid the critical mission of ensuring combat readiness, motorcycle safety representatives (MSR), supervisors, collateral-duty safety officers and command leadership must

continue to ensure our personnel stay current with their training and licensing.

Remember:

- Detailed and accurate reporting helps ensure data collected reflects actual circumstances.
- Comprehensive data allows for identifying patterns and trends, such as common causes, locations or times of day when crashes occur.
- Every detail matters in the pursuit of safety. Do not ignore even minor factors, as this raises risk and may result in a collision.

Remove one factor and the crash may not have occurred.

Factors for the crashes were provided on the following pages based on information presented in the operations reports and the investigator's reports. Most of these incidents are still under investigation.

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

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 subscribe to and view these publications. The site contains the current motorcycle publications produced by Naval Safety Command for Navy and Marine Corps MSRs, riders and safety professionals.



U.S. Marine Corps Lance Cpl. Marcus French, a military police officer with the Provost Marshal's Office, Headquarters and Support Battalion, conducts a personal protective equipment, registration and insurance inspection during Operation Full Stop at Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, California, Dec. 2, 2025. Operation Full Stop is designed to ensure 100% compliance with motorcycle PPE and legal regulations. (U.S. Marine Corps photo by Cpl. Jeslianne A. Torres)

By the numbers

- 11 crashes (37%) involved colliding with a moving vehicle.
- 9 crashes (30%) involved a rollover/overturn.
- 3 crashes (10%) involved riders who ran off the road.
- 3 crashes (10%) involved colliding with an animal or object.
- 3 crashes (10%) had no data reported.
- 1 crash (3%) involved a collision with a pedestrian.

By the clock

- Midnight- 3:59 a.m. – 3 (10%)
- 4 a.m.-7:59 a.m. – 4 (13%)
- 8 a.m. - 11:59 a.m. – 4 (13%)
- noon - 3:59 p.m. – 8 (27%)
- 4 p.m. - 7:59 p.m. – 8 (27%)
- 8 p.m. - 11:59 p.m. – 3 (10%)

By the day

Weekdays - 18 (60%)
Weekend - 12 (40%)



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.



Motorcycle Crash Legend

NR represents information not reported

Red entries represent

Marine Corps-specific mishaps
(all times local)

Fatal Crashes

Nov. 6, 10:45 p.m., 22-year-old E-5

Location: Honolulu, Hawaii

Remarks: Rider was involved in a fatal motorcycle crash on a local highway. The rider was speeding, lost control of the motorcycle and struck a guardrail. The rider held a motorcycle license and completed BRC. Whether PPE was worn at the time of the mishap is unknown. The motorcycle and rider were discovered along the side of the road.

Nonfatal Crashes

Nov. 1, 6:14 a.m., 36-year-old E-6

Location: Malibu, California

Remarks: Rider was operating a motorcycle at a moderate rate of speed when they misjudged a right-hand turn, causing the bike to slide. The rider sustained minor injuries to their right lower extremity and a dislocated right shoulder. After receiving a ride to the ER, their shoulder was reset and they were treated for other injuries before being released the same day. The rider holds a valid motorcycle license and has completed both BRC and ARC training.

Nov. 1, 11 p.m., 25-year-old E-5

Location: Rota, Spain

Remarks: Rider was off duty and riding a scooter when the mishap occurred. While entering a roundabout, a passenger car entered at high speed without signaling, causing the rider to fall. The rider suffered minor injuries, including scratches, bruises and two broken front teeth. The rider was wearing a helmet at the time. After treatment at the base hospital, the rider was advised to take LLD for one week.

Nov. 2, 11 a.m., age NR E-4

Location: Kaneohe, Hawaii

Remarks: Rider was traveling on a motorcycle when the vehicle ahead suddenly braked, prompting him to do the same. To avoid a collision, he swerved and lightly struck the guardrail. The rider sustained a potential broken ankle but managed to get a ride to the hospital without needing paramedic transport. The motorcycle remained operational and police were not called. There was no alcohol involved in the incident.

Nov. 4, 9:01 a.m., 34-year-old E-5

Location: National City, California

Remarks: Rider was involved in a motorcycle mishap while commuting to work. They were transported to hospital with non-lethal injuries and discharged later that day. There was no loss of time from the incident.

Nov. 4, 6:19 p.m., 20-year-old E-3

Location: Quantico, Virginia

Remarks: Rider lost traction while operating the motorcycle, causing a fall and SVM's leg to get slammed into a curb, resulting in fractures to the lower fibula and tibia. Surgery was required to treat the injuries. No further details regarding the involvement of other parties or authorities were provided.

Nov. 5, 2:44 a.m., age NR E-3

Location: Jacksonville, North Carolina

Remarks: Rider was involved in a motorcycle mishap and required facial surgery. They were transported to a local hospital for treatment.

Nov. 5, 5:30 a.m., 31-year-old O-2

Location: San Diego, California

Remarks: Rider lost traction while riding his motorcycle, which led to a fall. Following the fall, the rider was assessed and cleared as fit for full duty.

Nov. 5, 2:25 p.m., 24-year-old E-6

Location: Coronado, California

Remarks: Rider was commuting home from work, traveling southbound at about 30 mph, when a vehicle abruptly turned left onto road in front of the rider. The rider swerved left to avoid the vehicle but collided with its front section. The rider was ejected, went over the hood and landed on the pavement but quickly got up. Base police were called and the rider did not seek immediate medical treatment, choosing to visit the ER later that evening. The medical exam found no fractures, only a sprained right ankle. The rider did not miss any work and returned to work the next day.

Nov. 6, 6:45 a.m., 26-year-old E-5

Location: San Diego, California

Remarks: Rider was exiting the highway onto an expressway ramp on their motorcycle and took the turn too quickly. Before braking enough to slow down, the rider struck the concrete divider on the outside of the

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Acronyms

ARC: Advanced Rider Course

BRC: Basic Rider Course

DUI: driving under the influence

ER: emergency room

FHP: Florida Highway Patrol

LLD: light & limited duty

NR: No data or not reported

OOD: officer of the day

PPE: personal protective equipment

SIQ: sick in quarters

SVM: service member

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ramp. The impact caused the rider to flip over the divider and continue flipping down the embankment on the other side, resulting in a broken back. A bystander called 911 and the rider was transported to an ER around 7:15 a.m. Injuries included a broken vertebra, a deep gash on the right thigh requiring staples and minor road rash on the knee.

Nov. 6, 3 p.m., 28-year-old E-5

Location: Norfolk, Virginia

Remarks: Rider was traveling westbound on a highway, following a white car at about four car lengths, going approximately 55 mph. The white car suddenly applied the brakes and swerved to avoid a black car in front of it. The rider applied the brakes to their motorcycle but did not have enough space to stop before colliding with the black car. The rider swerved to avoid a direct impact, striking the rear driver's side of the black car. The rider jumped off the bike and rolled approximately 15 feet before stopping as the black car came to a halt in traffic. The rider was able to stand up, walk to the motorcycle, turn it off and wait for emergency services.

Nov. 7, 4:48 p.m., 31-year-old E-6

Location: Key West, Florida

Remarks: Rider was traveling northbound on a local highway when they decelerated to access an off ramp. The rider lost control due to target fixation, veered off the ramp and laid the motorcycle down, partially pinning their foot. The rider was ambulatory at the scene. Police and FHP responded, with FHP taking over the investigation. No alcohol was involved and no injuries or property damage were reported, other than to the rider's motorcycle. The rider was later diagnosed with a fractured toe and discharged the same night.

Nov. 8, 8 a.m., 33-year-old E-5

Location: Virginia Beach, Virginia

Remarks: Rider was traveling 35-40 mph when their rear tire hydroplaned while merging into the middle lane. The rider attempted to correct but oversteered, eventually bailing off the bike and sliding for 10 feet. The bike flipped and skidded another 30-40 feet. The rider got up, walked to the bike and moved it to a nearby parking lot. No emergency services were called. The bike was towed and the rider was

picked up by their spouse and taken to the hospital.

Nov. 9, 1:50 p.m., age and rate NR

Location: City NR, North Carolina

Remarks: While riding a motorcycle, the rider collided with a motor vehicle, resulting in multiple injuries. The rider was hospitalized.

Nov. 9, 5 p.m., 24-year-old E-5

Location: Barrett Junction, California

Remarks: Rider had been riding for two hours on a gravel road when they took a turn too fast, causing the motorcycle to slide out from underneath them. The bike was damaged and the rider sustained road rash on their arms and buttocks. They went to a nearby hospital Nov. 12 for wound care and received 72 hours SIQ.

Nov. 10, 9:15 a.m., 22-year-old E-4

Location: Waipahu, Hawaii

Remarks: While running errands on his motorcycle, a rider approached an intersection on the freeway. A mail truck, passing on the rider's side while in the middle lane, moved in front of the rider, leading to a collision. The rider has no recollection of the incident and woke up in the hospital. Injuries included bruised ribs, scraped arms and a concussion. The rider was later released from hospital and returned to work in full duty status.

Nov. 11, 12:35 a.m., age NR E-3

Location: La Jolla, California

Remarks: Rider sustained neck and back fractures in a motorcycle mishap. The individual was treated at hospital and was last reported in critical condition.

Nov. 11, 12:30 p.m., 20-year-old E-4

Location: San Diego, California

Remarks: Rider was coming off an off-ramp marked for 45 mph and entered a large roundabout. Feeling that 45 mph was too fast for comfort, rider applied the back brake, causing the bike to slide out from underneath the rider while maneuvering a turn. The bike laid down and rider slid into a 4x4 post holding the guardrail, impacting the ribs. An Army medic, a few vehicles behind, stopped to provide first aid and called 911. Rider was transported by ambulance to a trauma center, where injuries were treated, including a collapsed lung, lacerated liver and broken ribs. There was no loss of consciousness and rider remained in the hospital for further care.

Nov. 11, 6 p.m., age NR E-5

Location: Honolulu, Hawaii

Remarks: Rider left the ship to head to the barracks. While turning onto a hill leading to the barracks, the back tire of the moped spun out, causing the bike to fall on the rider's leg. The rider called for assistance and was taken to a medical clinic for X-rays and further evaluation.

Nov. 12, 5:30 p.m., 39-year-old E-7

Location: San Diego, California

Remarks: Rider lost control while riding his motorcycle, resulting in a collision with a parked vehicle. The motorcycle and the parked vehicle sustained damage, but no injuries were reported.



REQUIRED MOTORCYCLE TRAINING

REFERENCE: OPNAVINST 5100.23H

LEVEL 3 - REFRESHER COURSE
Must Be Completed Every 5 Years

LEVEL 2 - ADVANCED RIDER COURSE
Within 60 Days or Up to 1 Year from Completion of BRC

LEVEL 1 - BASIC RIDER COURSE
Before You Ride

**ONLY 4 DAYS OF TRAINING
CAN SAVE LIVES**

Nov. 13, 12 a.m., age and rank NR

Location: Virginia Beach, Virginia

Remarks: Rider was driving to visit a friend when they swerved into an adjacent lane to avoid a car, resulting in a crash. The rider sustained a concussion and missed two days of class.

Nov. 13, 12 p.m., 20-year-old E-4

Location: Fort Meade, Maryland

Remarks: Rider was riding their scooter to work on a campus road in front of a fitness center when they were struck from behind by an unknown driver in a mid-2000s Toyota Corolla. The police report is still pending. The rider initially reported mild pain in the left shoulder, right knee and right hand. Afterward, they visited a medical center, where personnel confirmed they were fine and prescribed Ibuprofen and rest. The police determined the rider was not at fault and confirmed he was wearing proper PPE.

Nov. 13, 2:30 p.m., 20-year-old E-3

Location: San Diego, California

Remarks: Rider was en route to work on a highway when they began lane splitting at 45 miles per hour. While lane splitting, a vehicle in front of them stopped between lanes without using turn signals. The rider applied the brakes but was unable to stop in time, striking the back passenger side of the vehicle. This caused the rider to lose control of the motorcycle, hitting the ground and rolling over onto the freeway. The rider was taken to the hospital but sustained no injuries.

Nov. 14, 6:20 a.m., 22-year-old E-4

Location: San Diego, California

Remarks: Rider departed home on their motorcycle. Noticing traffic buildup while using the freeway, the rider applied the brakes but lost traction on the slick road, caused by earlier rain. The rider fell, sliding several feet before releasing the motorcycle. After checking for injuries and finding none, the rider moved the motorcycle to the roadside with civilian assistance. Police arrived shortly after and the rider was transported to a nearby hospital. They were diagnosed with a sprain to the right wrist and left ankle, receiving two days of sick leave and four days of LLD.

Nov. 15, 7:20 p.m., 24-year-old E-4

Location: Sneads Ferry, North Carolina

Remarks: Rider was leaving base when they were blindsided by a deer. Another Marine passing by called the OOD regarding the rider's condition. The rider was then transported to hospital.

Nov. 17, 5:45 p.m., 25-year-old E-5

Location: San Diego, California

Remarks: Rider was riding his motorcycle on a highway in eastbound traffic. The rider was struck from behind by a vehicle and subsequently hit the vehicle in front of them. Medical assistance was rendered by emergency medical services and the rider was transported to a nearby hospital, where they were treated in the emergency department. The rider was in stable condition and underwent leg surgery.

Nov. 22, 9:20 p.m., 21-year-old E-4

Location: San Diego, California

Remarks: A pedestrian was struck and injured at a local intersection. According to the San Diego Police Department, a 35-year-old man was crossing the east crosswalk, walking south against a red light, when he was hit by an eastbound Suzuki 1500 motorcycle. The pedestrian suffered multiple injuries, including a fractured femur and a lacerated liver and was taken to the hospital. The SVM rider sustained multiple abrasions. Police reported DUI was not a factor in the incident.

Nov. 25, 4:24 p.m., 42-year-old E-6

Location: Key West, Florida

Remarks: Rider sustained an open fracture to the left foot after a motorcycle mishap in which the bike fell onto the foot. Emergency services transported the rider to a medical center and they were later flown to another hospital for further treatment. The motorcycle involved was a sportbike. The rider was wearing PPE, including helmet, eye protection, boots, gloves and protective clothing. The rider did not hold a valid motorcycle license or permit but had completed a BRC in 2020.

Nov. 29, 1:15 p.m., 25-year-old E-5

Location: Jacksonville, Florida

Remarks: Rider was operating a motorcycle and lost control, striking another vehicle. The rider was wearing the necessary PPE including head, eye, foot and clothing protection. The rider holds a valid motorcycle license or permit and has completed a motorcycle safety course. There were no indications of alcohol or drug use. The rider was admitted to a local hospital, where surgery was planned.

Nov. 30, 3:30 p.m., 24-year-old E-5

Location: Los Angeles, California

Remarks: Rider reported being involved in a motorcycle crash resulting in serious injuries requiring surgery. The rider is now in stable condition. The motorcycle involved was a Kawasaki Ninja 650cc. The rider was wearing full PPE, including a helmet, eye protection, boots and gloves; jacket use is unknown. The rider's license status is unknown but they completed BRC in June, 2025.



ENABLING WARFIGHTING READINESS
375 A Street, Norfolk, VA 23511-4399
navalsafetycommand.navy.mil



USN AND USMC MOTORCYCLE CRASHES FY 2026 TO DATE

