We'll get right to the point. In FY 2025, 30 Sailors and 15 Marines died riding motorcycles, and 350+ more were injured—the worst year since 2008, when the services first instituted mandatory training. Every life lost impacts readiness.

For many, riding a motorcycle is a symbol of freedom and adventure, blending the joy of a journey with the thrill of the open road. With the right training and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), it can be a fulfilling and a relatively safe ride, but it can quickly turn into a tragic experience under the wrong conditions (*or risky behavior*). The stats show us that our E-5 and below Sailors and Marines are most at risk, with key factors such as speeding, loss of control and insufficient training were found to be causal in many of these incidents. Every loss from a motorcycle crash hurts the strength of our entire naval enterprise. Below are a few examples from FY25, as you read them, remember why it's important to assess your risks and make smart decisions on the road.

- <u>PPE Alone Will Not Save You</u>. Wearing proper PPE is essential when riding a motorcycle, *but* PPE alone can't guarantee you'll survive a crash. One tragic example involved a Marine (E-3) who had been celebrating at a house party with friends and left around 8:30 p.m. to meet his significant other. The party had alcohol available, but the Marine made the responsible choice not to drink. Before leaving, he put on full PPE, properly preparing to ride. Unfortunately, less than 10 minutes later, he collided with the rear of a vehicle at a high rate of speed. The impact threw him from his motorcycle and when first responders arrived, he was pronounced dead at the scene. —*This Marine started with several smart decisions like avoiding alcohol and wearing full PPE. But one crucial mistake, riding at a high speed, turned what could have been a safe ride into a tragedy. Speed dramatically increases your risk of serious injury or death, no matter how prepared or experienced you are or what PPE you're wearing. Riding safely means consistently making safe choices during every part of your ride. Watch your speed. Your life depends on it.*

- <u>Training is Critical—AND Mandatory</u>. Motorcycle safety courses are required for all active-duty riders and for good reasons. In this case, a young Sailor (E-4) was riding without a motorcycle endorsement and without having completed the Basic Rider Course (BRC). While out for a midday ride, another vehicle slowly turned into an intersection without yielding to oncoming traffic. The car turned into the Sailor's path causing him to crash into the side of the vehicle, resulting in severe injuries. Emergency services took the Sailor to the hospital where he later succumbed to his injuries. —*The driver of the vehicle was found at fault in this incident, but the outcome might've been different if the Sailor completed the BRC. These courses teach important skills to help riders anticipate hazards, respond effectively and reduce their risk overall. An untrained rider can find themselves in situations they're not equipped to handle. OPNAV M-5100.23 says all military personnel who operate a motorcycle on or off base must complete an approved motorcycle safety course and obtain a valid motorcycle operator license or endorsement before riding. Get trained before you ride. It can save you.*

- <u>Slow Down, It's the Law.</u> It's important for riders to learn their state's riding laws, especially when you get to a new duty station, but there's one rule that never changes: **Obey the speed limit.** A Marine (E-2) was traveling on a major interstate at more than 120 mph when he approached a trailer being towed by another vehicle. Failing to maneuver around the vehicle or to reduce his speed, he collided with the trailer and died at the scene. Sadly, this was not the first time the Marine had been warned to follow the rules of the road. He entered the military with a motorcycle endorsement but didn't report his rider status to his command, he had a history of speeding and he was counseled by base traffic safety on multiple occasions. —*Speed limits aren't there to be a hassle; they're there to protect everyone on the road, including you. Ignoring the limits*

on a bike, especially blowing down the road at 100+ mph, will get you or someone else killed. Driving the speed limit (or at least close to it) gives you time to assess potential hazards and respond effectively to those hazards. No amount of experience or confidence can fix unsafe behavior. Follow the rules - stay alive.
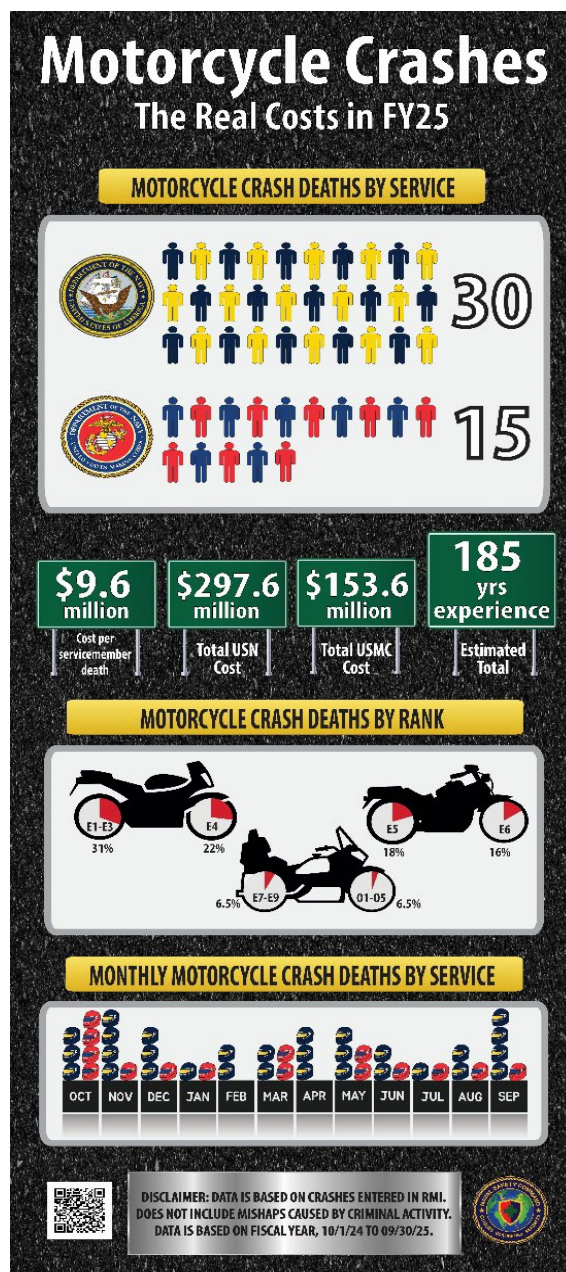
- Pursuit is Not the Plan. A Sailor (E-4) was speeding on the interstate. When he was spotted by the police, instead of pulling over and accepting the ticket, he tried to evade. He was observed traveling at speeds of 140 mph and above while trying to run. After exiting onto local roads and running multiple red lights, the Sailor lost control of the motorcycle, crashing head-on into a concrete barrier. Emergency responders tried to save him, but the rider was pronounced dead at the scene*. —When a rider crashes due to criminal behavior, it isn't a "reportable mishap" for safety purposes anymore (it's a different category), but the tragedy and the impact are still just as bad. Engaging in criminal behavior is never an option. Avoiding a traffic ticket, or even losing your license, isn't worth dying for. Breaking the speed limit has consequences. Ride responsibly. Follow the rules.*

Please visit our [Motorcycle Safety](#) page for additional resources. Click graphic link for downloadable full-size version.

Key Takeaways

Decisions you make while out riding don't just affect you – they affect everyone on the road. Remember that your behavior—every choice—matters, from the type of gear you wear to the speed you ride at. Protect yourself and others but make smart decisions every time you ride.

1. **SLOW DOWN.** This is an important part of driving any vehicle, but especially for motorcycle riders. Pay attention to posted speeds and stay within the limits. Riding at proper speed gives you more time to spot problems and react to avoid them, keeping everyone safe on the road.

2. **All the gear, all the time.** Make sure you're wearing proper PPE before beginning any ride. Full PPE and smart behavior can make all the difference in preventing a serious injury or even save your life in a crash.

3. **Get trained. And stay current.** All active-duty members must complete approved motorcycle safety courses and have a motorcycle operating license before riding. Keeping your training up to date protects both you and others on the road.

Motorcycle Crashes
The Real Costs in FY25

MOTORCYCLE CRASH DEATHS BY SERVICE

30

15

$9.6 million	$297.6 million	$153.6 million	185 yrs experience
Cost per servicemember death	Total USN Cost	Total USMC Cost	Estimated Total

MOTORCYCLE CRASH DEATHS BY RANK

E1-E3 31% | E4 22% | E5 18% | E6 16% | E7-E9 6.5% | O1-O5 6.5%

MONTHLY MOTORCYCLE CRASH DEATHS BY SERVICE

OCT NOV DEC JAN FEB MAR APR MAY JUN JUL AUG SEP

DISCLAIMER: DATA IS BASED ON CRASHES ENTERED IN RMI. DOES NOT INCLUDE MISHAPS CAUSED BY CRIMINAL ACTIVITY. DATA IS BASED ON FISCAL YEAR, 10/1/24 TO 09/30/25.

And remember, "Let's be careful out there."