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Motorcycle and Bicycle Helmet Laws by State

MOTORCYCLE HELMETS

In 1967, the federal government required states to enact universal motorcycle helmet laws to qualify for certain highway safety funds. By 1975, all but three had complied. In 1976, Congress revoked federal authority to assess penalties for noncompliance, and states began to weaken helmet laws to apply only to young or novice riders.

Currently, about half the states require helmets for all motorcyclists. Most other states require helmets for certain riders, and a few have no helmet law.

- 47 states and the District of Columbia have a helmet law for motorcyclists.
 - 19 states and the District of Columbia have a universal helmet law, requiring helmets for all riders.
 - The remaining 28 states require helmets for specific riders.
- Illinois, Iowa and New Hampshire do not have a motorcycle helmet law.

BICYCLE HELMETS

Fewer states have enacted bicycle helmet laws. However, many localities require helmet use for some or all bicyclists.

- 21 states and the District of Columbia have a helmet law for bicyclists below a certain age, generally about 16.
- 29 states have no bicycle helmet law.

State	Motorcyclists			Bicyclists
	Universal Helmet Law (Enacted)	Partial Law	Universal Helmet Law (Repealed)	
Alabama	1967			<16
Alaska		<18 or instructional permit; all passengers	1976	
Arizona		<18	1976	
Arkansas		<21	1997	
California	1992			<18
Colorado		<18; all passengers <18	1977	
Connecticut		<18	1976	<16
Delaware		<19	1978	<18
D.C.	1970			<16
Florida		<21 or those with <\$10,000 in medical coverage for motorcycle-related injuries	2000	<16
Georgia	1969			<16
Hawaii		<18	1977	<16
Idaho		<18	1978	
Illinois			1970	
Indiana		<18	1977	
Iowa			1976	
Kansas		<18	1976	

<u>Kentucky</u>		<21 or licensed <1 yr.; no medical insurance	1998	
<u>Louisiana</u>	2004			<12
<u>Maine</u>		Licensed <1 yr.; all passengers <18	1977	<16 (\$25 fine for 2nd or subsequent violation)
<u>Maryland</u>	1992			<16
<u>Massachusetts</u>	1967			≥ 1 and <17 (<1 prohibited)
<u>Michigan</u>		<21 or no additional insurance (riders and passengers)	2012	
<u>Minnesota</u>		<18 or instructional permit	1977	
<u>Mississippi</u>	1974			
<u>Missouri</u>	1967			
<u>Montana</u>		<18	1977	
<u>Nebraska</u>	1989			
<u>Nevada</u>	1972			
<u>New Hampshire</u>				<16
<u>New Jersey</u>	1968			<17
<u>New Mexico</u>		<18	1977	<18
<u>New York</u>	1967			≥ 1 and <14 (<1 prohibited)
<u>North Carolina</u>	1968			<16
<u>North Dakota</u>		<18; all passengers if operator is <18	1977	
<u>Ohio</u>		<18 or licensed <1 yr.; all passengers if operator required to wear helmet	1978	
<u>Oklahoma</u>		<18	1976	
<u>Oregon</u>	1988			<16
<u>Pennsylvania</u>		<21 or licensed <2 yrs. except those who complete a PnnDOT- or Motorcycle Safety Foundation-approved safety course	2003	<12
<u>Rhode Island</u>		<21 or licensed <1 yr.; all passengers	1976	<16
<u>South Carolina</u>		<21	1980	
<u>South Dakota</u>		<18	1977	
<u>Tennessee</u>	1967			<16
<u>Texas</u>		<21; those who have not completed safety course or have no medical insurance (secondarily enforced)	1997	
<u>Utah</u>		<18	1977	
<u>Vermont</u>	1968			

Virginia	1970			
Washington	1990			
West Virginia	1971			<15
Wisconsin		<18 or instructional permit	1978	
Wyoming		<18	1983	

NOTE: the sources for this document do not compile any additional data on helmet laws other than what is presented here. For more information, consult the appropriate [State Highway Safety Office](#).

Source: [Governors Highway Safety Association](#)

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