



Fond du Lac County Health Department

City/County Government Center
160 S. Macy St, Fond du Lac, WI 54935



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

**Fond du Lac County
Health Department**

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Contact: Kim Mueller, Health Officer, kim.mueller@fdlco.wi.gov (920) 929-3085

Assistant Chief Steven J Klein, Fond du Lac Police Department, sklein@fdl.wi.gov (920) 322-3709

Nearly half of fatal and serious injury motorcycle crashes in Fond du Lac County could be prevented by wearing a helmet. Motorist reminded to share the road with motorcycles and wear a helmet when riding.

The Fond du Lac County Traffic Safety Committee reminds motorists to *Look Twice* for motorcyclists, as they can expect to see more motorcyclists on the roadways with the return of warmer weather.

Each year, 79 Wisconsinites die in motorcycle crashes according to data from 2013-2017, using a five-year average (WI Dept. Health Services). *In 2019, there has already been 1 fatal and 7 injury motorcycle crashes in Fond du Lac County. In 2018, 2 people were killed and over 29 people seriously injured in crashes involving motorcycles in Fond du Lac County.*

In fact, per vehicle mile traveled, motorcyclists are about 27 times more likely than passenger vehicle occupants to die in a motor vehicle crash, and 5 times more likely to be injured. It is essential that vehicle drivers pay complete attention on the roads: Even the smallest momentary lapse in a vehicle driver's awareness can result in the death of an unseen motorcyclist.

According to the CDC, helmets reduce the risk of death by 37% and reduce the risk of head injury by 69%. "Wearing a helmet continues to be one of the most effective ways to save a life and reduce risk of head injuries in crashes," said Kim Mueller, Fond du Lac County Health Officer.

Of fatal motorcycle crashes between 2014-2016 in Wisconsin, 78% of riders were reported to not be wearing a helmet (WI Highway Safety Plan, 2018). Some states have laws in effect that require helmet use for all motorcyclist. In Wisconsin, the law only requires that all operators and passengers under the age of 18 wear a helmet. "As we encourage everyone to wear their seatbelt while driving, we strongly recommended everyone wear a helmet while riding or operating a motorcycle," said Assistant Chief Steve Klein, Chairperson of the Fond du Lac County Traffic Safety Commission, "wearing a helmet is imperative to the safety of our riders."

Tips for Motorists

Because vehicle drivers control a much larger machine, it is imperative that they keep close watch for motorcyclists who may be riding nearby. Drivers may follow these tips to prevent a fatal crash with a motorcycle:

- Though a motorcycle is a small vehicle, its operator still has the same rights of the road as any other motorist. Allow the motorcycle the full width of a lane at all times.



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- Always use a turn signal when changing lanes or merging with traffic.
- If you see a motorcycle with a signal on, be careful: motorcycle signals are often non-canceling and the motorcyclist could have forgotten to turn it off. Always ensure that the motorcycle is turning before proceeding.
- Check all mirrors and blind spots for motorcycles before changing lanes or merging with traffic, especially at intersections.
- Always allow more follow distance—three to four seconds—when behind a motorcycle. This gives them more time to maneuver or stop in an emergency.
- Never drive distracted or impaired.

Tips for Motorcyclists

At the same time, motorcyclists must take extra precautions to guard against drivers who may not see them.

Motorcyclists may follow these tips to prevent a fatal crash with a vehicle:

- Wear a DOT-compliant helmet and other protective gear.
- Obey all traffic laws and be properly licensed.
- Use hand and turn signals at every lane change or turn.
- Wear brightly colored clothes and reflective tape to increase visibility.
- Ride in the middle of the lane where you will be more visible to drivers.
- Never ride distracted or impaired.

Remember to *Share the Road* with motorcyclists and vehicle drivers alike. For more information on motorcycle safety, visit www.nhtsa.gov/road-safety/motorcycles.

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