



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SAFE MOTORCYCLING TAKES EXTRA PREPARATION, CAUTION

V Corps Safety Office release

HEIDELBERG, Germany – On a sunny summer day in Europe, a long ride under sunny skies is a tempting way to relax and watch the world roll by. It's also the prime season to take motorcycles out of winter hibernation to enjoy some open-air traveling.

The bad news is that motorcycles up the ante on the hazards of the road, which means riders must put even more effort into the skills and requirements necessary to ride safely.

RIDING LEGALLY

Anyone who currently owns a motorcycle or is planning to purchase one must be properly licensed to legally ride in Europe. V Corps members in Germany must have obtained a Stateside motorcycle license in the U.S. To ride in Germany, riders must also obtain a temporary license by:

- **Attending a four-hour Army in Europe motorcycle orientation course.**
- **Passing a 30-question written motorcycle test.**
- **Passing an Army in Europe motorcycle-proficiency course (hands-on driving).**

Another important requirement is to attend a Motorcycle Safety Foundation course within 60 days of obtaining a temporary license. A permanent license will not be issued until this two-day course is completed. Experienced riders (riders with at least 12 months or 3,000 miles of riding experience who have attended an MSF course within the last three years) may attend



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Riders attending the Motorcycle Safety Foundation Experienced Riders Course look and wait for instruction from rider-coaches to start a speed and braking exercise.

a one-day course. Commanders may extend a temporary license an additional 60 days if courses are full.

Anyone who currently has a U.S. Forces motorcycle license must provide proof of a valid MSF course card that is not more than three years old in order to keep their license upon renewal. To see an example of the 26th Area Support Group course description and application, [click here](#). Riders can contact their ASGs for their area's course schedules and forms.

Riders should also consult Army in Europe Regulation 190-1 (Registering and Operating Privately Owned Motor Vehicles in Germany)

There is another way riders may obtain valid motorcycle licenses in Germany – by attending a German *fahrschule* (driving school) for motorcycles and obtaining a German motorcycle license. But this is quite costly and riders still must complete the MSF course, not to mention that German licenses are not valid for riding in the U.S.

RIDING SAFELY

Equally as important before tackling the streets is for riders to make sure they know how to stay safe while enjoying Europe on two wheels.

Equipment

Riders must wear required personal protective equipment:

- A helmet properly fastened under the chin
- Shatterproof eye protection
- Full-fingered gloves
- High-visibility garments
- Leather boots or over-the-ankle shoes
- Long-sleeved shirt or jacket
- Trousers

Safety on the road

Among all motor vehicles, motorcycles are the most vulnerable on the road. Because motorcycles do not have seat belts, riders can be thrown off in a crash, resulting in serious injury or even death. A motorcyclist's chances for survival will be increased if he follows the safety tips below when riding:

WATCH THE "NO-ZONES": Never stay in a truck's blind spot or "no-zone." Trucks have large no-zones on both sides, at the front and behind the truck. Truck drivers cannot see riders in these blind spots, which increases the possibility of a crash. The front blind spot is particularly dangerous if riders need to stop quickly. Because of their light weight and braking system, motorcycles can stop much faster than trucks. As a result, riders need to take special precautions to avoid crashes before they happen.

ALWAYS WEAR A HELMET: A helmet is a must, as they might be a rider's only protection in a serious crash. But riders should beware of helmets that do not meet

U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) standards or the approved host-nation equivalent. Check for the DOT label inside the helmet.

DRIVE TO SURVIVE: Motorcycle riders should use extra caution and drive defensively. Motorcycles are small vehicles that unfortunately provide the rider with virtually no protection in a crash. Other drivers may not see motorcycle riders, so riders must be aware of everything on the road. They should watch the signals and brake lights of other vehicles, especially trucks. They must be prepared for the possibility that signals or lights don't work. Riders must adhere to the laws of the road, never riding between lanes in traffic or sharing a lane with another vehicle. They must also be extra careful to avoid instigating aggressive driving in other motorists.



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Daron Hoffman (left) checks the brake light on his motorcycle with some help from Chris Hare during a Motorcycle Safety Foundation's Experienced Riders Course.

CHECK BIKE AND RIDER: Riders should conduct a safety inspection of their motorcycles before each ride, and wear protective clothing on every ride.

RIDE AT SAFE SPEEDS: Of all vehicles, motorcycles accelerate the fastest, while trucks and buses are the slowest. Riders must carefully watch their speed around trucks, especially in bad weather or at night.

