

Pillion moped and motorcycle passengers represent a fairly small number of casualties but their injuries are likely to be severe.

A survey of riders asked about the protective gear normally worn by them and their pillion passengers—the results showed that pillions and riders were likely to have similar protection to the upper body in terms of jackets and helmets, but pillions were less likely to have motorcycle boots, gloves, protective trousers or any sort of body armour.

As occasional passengers it is perhaps not surprising that pillions are often less likely to have adequate protection, but it is a serious safety problem.

What can you do?

- Insist on adequate protective clothing for your pillion;
- Be aware of the different handling characteristics of your bike when carrying a pillion;
- Review your own riding attitudes and skills.

What difference does a pillion make?

- Lower ground clearance—especially when cornering;
- Changed braking— affects both feel and performance;
- Different suspension and steering movements;
- Potential lack of 'smoothness' when gear changing, braking and cornering.

Suspension and tyre pressures need adjustment to compensate for the additional weight and to return the ride height.

Pillions may crowd the rider on some motorcycles. This can be awkward under heavy braking and in slow speed manoeuvring. On a short wheelbase machine, the weight shift to the rear can result in some steering instability under certain circumstances.

Instructions for your pillion passenger...

- Align your body with that of the rider;
- Grip the grab-rail, or hold the rider at the waist and grip with your knees when braking;
- Pick a shoulder to look over and don't change shoulder or wriggle about when cornering or braking, although this may be fine to do at other times;
- Stay quite still as the motorcycle is coming to a stop, to aid the rider's ability to maintain the balance of the machine;
- Keep your feet on the foot pegs at all times.

CONT... overleaf



RoadSafety

Instructions for riders...

- Prepare your motorcycle correctly;
- Know how to adjust it—suspension, tyres and headlights;
- Know your cold tyre pressures;
- Take care of your pillion—they have to trust you, don't let them down.

This information is based on that compiled from experienced riders and their experiences.

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