

*What are some of the daily problems motorcyclists face on the roads? How aware are we of motorcyclists and the laws associated with them? How can you contribute to improving awareness and road safety for motorcyclists?*

### Motorcycles versus Road Hazards

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Fear. Relaxation. Adrenaline. While the wind flows through the driver, these elements are more than enough to make any motorcyclist beam with adrenaline. But on a road shared with drivers from behind the handlebars of bikes to the thick wheels of high occupancy vehicles, these two-wheeled drivers must be regarded sensitively for the standard driver to ensure both they and the motorcyclists they encounter are safe. Sitting on two versus the four wheels of a standard car isn't the only innate disadvantage motorcyclists face on our roads-- external factors such as road hazards also pose a significant threat. Four wheeled vehicles, shielded from weather conditions and provided with an assurance of balance over road hazards, have a much easier time driving in these conditions than motorcyclists. In order to reach a mutual understanding on our roads, we must consider the laws that call action to mending road hazards in a timely manner, especially to protect the motorcyclists that face an elevated chance of disaster.

Formed by frozen water expansion under the asphalt, potholes create gashes of earth that pose a threat to any tire-- often puncturing, bending, or cracking the wheel they come in contact with. A pothole usually poses a mere inconvenience to the four-wheel driver. In a motorcycle, however, where balance is key to a smooth ride, drivers are often taken completely off guard by potholes-- forcing their front wheel to jolt and reorienting their handlebars off course. In an open-air ride, a driver who falls off their motorcycle not only risks being hurled into unsuspecting traffic, but into coarse and unforgiving asphalt. In a country where we lost a reported 4,985 lives to motorcycle crashes in 2018, we must consider the sensitivity of motorcyclists' balance when municipalities neglect road hazards (III). It could mean the difference between a smooth ride and their last.

Though a federally consolidated law protecting motorcyclists from road hazards such as potholes is not recognized, states have the power to declare how to police the property on which potholes form. In Wyoming, for instance, cities have the power to fine private property owners who fail to fix potholes in their parking lots. If they refuse, the city can present either a \$750 fine or fill it themselves, a law consistent with many other US states (Wheeler). The system to resolve potholes is case-to-case, and arguably inconsistent for the danger they pose-- especially to motorcyclists. Though vehicle owners of all makes and models often complain about potholes, few who are unaffected by the damage these hazards cause speak out against their local property owners to fix the damage.

How, then, do we become safer drivers when sharing the road with motorcycles? By holding private property owners and local municipalities accountable for road hazards as if everyone was a motorist-- threatened by these hazards the moment they are formed in our roads. To advocate for these individuals, we can make a small change by making a small effort.

Works Cited

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