

# PROTECTIVE RIDING GEAR

## What to wear and why you should wear it

When I was killing time sitting in an airport, I found this rather amusing article printed in the February 1919 edition of "Motorcycle". Exactly 100 years ago!

### **The problem confronting the Lady Motor Cyclist** by (Miss) E.M. Gardener

*For myself the matter presented some difficulty; if I had ridden only to please myself I should have had no hesitation in wearing the smart free costume of the land-worker and riding triumphantly arrayed in a three quarter coat, knickers, and leggings. But I did not ride to please myself. I rode on business involving the credit and standing of other people (as so many women will, now the war is over), and I had to deal with all kinds and classes, from retired colonels to middle-aged ladies with parrots and pug dogs."*



The article goes on a bit but in the end the following bill for suggested clothing is presented:

Mackintosh GBP 3 10 0; Gloves (2 pairs) 1 3 0; Bonnet 13s 0p; Leggings 16s 6p. Total 6 pounds 2 shillings 6 pence, quite a lot of money in those days considering a 2 3/4hp motorcycle would have cost 60 pounds.

But 100 years later I would like to raise the same question for men and women riders, why should you wear appropriate motorcycle gear?

Compulsory Third Party (CTP) Personal Injury Insurance, also known as a Green Slip, is mandatory in NSW and must be purchased before you can register your vehicle. CTP covers your liability and the liability of anyone else who drives your vehicle, for injuries caused to others in a motor accident. This is included in the Historic Vehicle Scheme registration. You get a slip which confirms the cover in NSW as being with QBE.



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In practice however, when you do not wear appropriate gear, your CTP compensation might be reduced. This could leave you with high costs at a time when you might be injured and already suffering a loss of income.

*Submitted by Hans Sprangers*

## PROTECTIVE GEAR—what to look for

Compiled by the DF Editor.

While our old bikes won't do 100+ kph in first gear and we try to avoid busy traffic on our rides, we remain exposed to many traffic hazards. There is good gear available and you don't have to look like a MotoGP rider to have decent gear suitable for the riding we do.

**Motorcycle helmet.** In Australia helmets must comply with UN CE 22-05 or the old AS/NZS 1698. The labels are quite different with the European compliance label sewn to the chinstrap. EE helmets tend to be lighter, have a larger test area and a more compliant outer shell. It is critical that your helmet is the correct fit on your head, and the chin strap is fastened and properly adjusted so the helmet cannot come off in



**BLACK or TAN**  
**R 9398** Leather, fleece lined, with neck protection, as shown,  
**8/11**



a crash. You don't have to buy the most expensive helmet in the shop. The essential factor is fit, good shops will take the time to ensure this. Cost is not an indicator of better crash protection but may relate more to comfort, features, appearance and the quality of materials and the finish. Full face and flip-up helmets offer the most protection, 'shortie' helmets the least.

**Eye protection** If you prefer goggles rather than a compliant helmet visor (usually supplied with the helmet), look for goggles that comply with EN 1938:1999



**Motorcycle jacket and pants.**

**RT**  
 Chrome  
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**21/6**



Riders traditionally wear a motorcycle jacket but many injuries are actually to the legs so it's important to also wear pants that offer impact and abrasion protection. The most frequent crash impacts are on the knees, hips, elbows and shoulders. CE compliant impact protectors (inserts or wearable) offer the best protection for these high impact areas. While leather and waxed cotton are the traditional material for jackets and pants there are also now many textile garments that are abrasion resistant, lightweight and flexible and offer good ventilation on hot days and waterproofing in the rain. If a jacket or pants is labelled EN 13595 it has been tested and complies with the EU Standard for abrasion, impact, cut and burst resistance.

Many modern jackets have removeable waterproof and thermal liners for comfort and weather protection across a wide range of conditions. If you prefer jeans, choose heavy duty motorcycle types that have *Kevlar* or similar abrasion resistant material in the knees, hips and buttocks. Some also have pockets for impact protectors on the hips and knees.

**Motorcycle gloves** need to keep your hands warm, be sufficiently robust to provide protection from injuries without restricting your ability to operate the bike's controls. They must have some kind of fastening around the wrist so they stay on our hands in a crash. Gloves meeting the European Standard are marked EN 13594. Modern gloves have knuckle protectors as well as abrasion protection on the palms.



M 1884

M 1884 Good quality Black Leather Gauntlet with gusset. Cuff lined Beaver. Fleece lined. Roller strap fastening. **12/6** pair

**Motorcycle boots** Our feet are most likely part of the body to make contact with the road even in a minor low speed slow spill.

Boots that meet the European Standard are marked EN 13634. If not, it is very difficult to tell how good they are. Boots should be at least 160 mm high from the inner sole and provide impact protection for the shins, instep and ankles. They should be comfortable but not loose and reasonably waterproof. You should be able to operate the foot controls freely.

If you can just pull them on without some kind of fastening (zip / buckle / Velcro), they can be ripped off in seconds in a crash, just when you really need them.

For starting old bikes, look for a strong sole with pronounced heel so your instep securely engages the kickstarter. For push starts, look for a more 'aggressive' sole pattern so you have better grip gravel surfaces like at the roadside.

**Sustained noise** can be fatiguing for motorcyclists and prolonged noise over 90 decibels can result in permanent hearing damage. The fit and design of helmets and visors can also reduce or increase the noise produced by airflow around your head. A study found 90 db(A) wind noise in many modern helmets at 80kph. Just because you think you are already deaf, you still need to preserve your remaining hearing in order to take instructions from your wife or further develop your 'selective hearing' skills. (Seriously, deafness is no fun unless you actually want to wear hearing aids.) Properly fitted earplugs, available from most chemists and industrial supplies stores, can effectively attenuate loud noise and still enable you hear the traffic around you (and any unusual sounds coming from your bike).

Source of technical content: Motorcycle Council of NSW. [www.mccofnsw.org.au](http://www.mccofnsw.org.au)



Pictures from *Halford's Catalogue for Motorcyclists* (UK) 1939.