



State of Illinois  
Bruce Rauner, Governor



Illinois Department of Transportation  
Randall S. Blankenhorn, Secretary

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## Gear Up – Ride Smart

*Motorcycle season shifts to top gear, riders urged to take steps to ensure safe travel*

**SPRINGFIELD** — With spring cruising in and motorcycle season shifting into top gear, the Illinois Department of Transportation and Illinois State Police remind motorcyclists to “*Gear Up–Ride Smart*” to ensure their safety before taking the first ride of the season. The annual campaign urges riders to take precautionary measures before getting back on their bikes by conducting pre-ride safety inspections of their equipment and refreshing their skills with a motorcycle training class offered by IDOT.

“Motorcycles are only on the road for part of the year, yet account for almost 14 percent of all traffic fatalities,” said Illinois Transportation Secretary Randy Blankenhorn. “By choosing the proper safety equipment, performing routine safety checks and brushing up on their skills, riders can make 2017 safer for motorcycles.”

Proper protective gear is essential to safe riding. Motorcyclists are encouraged to wear the right safety equipment and accessories, including high-visibility (Hi-Viz) clothing, eye protection, gloves, jackets, pants, boots and a U.S. DOT-approved helmet, at all times. Drinking alcohol and riding is to be avoided at all costs.

Illinois is one of two states that offer free motorcycle training classes to licensed residents. Since the Cycle Rider Safety Training Program began in 1976, more than 400,000 riders have learned the basics of motorcycle riding or taken advantage of the opportunity to learn more about motorcycle safety.

The program is available throughout the state for all skill and experience levels. Classes teach riders how to safely operate a motorcycle and sharpen their knowledge and riding skills. The program is funded by Illinois motorcyclists through a portion of their license and registration fees. For more information, visit [StartSeeingMotorcycles.org](http://StartSeeingMotorcycles.org).

“Riding a motorcycle is a perishable skill, even for the most experienced riders,” said ISP Director Leo P. Schmitz. “We strongly encourage all riders to attend a motorcycle safety course and take the necessary precautions to ensure they are visible to other motorists by wearing DOT-approved helmets and protective body wear, such as boots and gloves. Remember, alcohol and motorcycle riding do not mix. So, *Gear Up–Ride Smart*, and stay safe.”