

Motorcycle Manual Table of Contents:

[MOTORCYCLE LICENSES, OWNERSHIP, SPECIAL RULES](#) | [PREPARING TO RIDE](#) | [RIDE WITHIN YOUR ABILITIES](#) |
[BEING IN SHAPE TO RIDE](#) | [EARNING YOUR LICENSE](#) | [MOTORCYCLE SAFETY PROGRAM](#) | [DMV Home](#)

Motorcycle Licenses, Ownership, Special Rules

LICENSES

To operate a motorcycle in New York State, you must have a motorcycle operator's license (Class M) or a motorcycle junior operator's license (Class MJ). You may drive a motorcycle in New York if you are a resident of another state or country and have a valid motorcycle license from there. If you are less than 18 years old, you must obey the license restrictions for both the out-of-state jurisdiction **and** New York State.

The instructions to apply for a driver license, including a motorcycle license, are provided in Chapter One of the NYS Driver's Manual. You should study that manual in addition to this one, even if you already have a license. Your motorcycle license written test will be based on information from both manuals. The Driver's Manual also contains the junior operator and learner permit restrictions, information on license suspension and revocation and vehicle registration, title and insurance.

In addition to the information in the Driver's Manual, motorcycle operators must be aware that:

- When a motorcycle learner is practicing, the supervising driver must hold a valid motorcycle license, be at least 21 years old and remain within 1/4 mile of the learner at all times. Additional restrictions apply to junior learners. The supervising driver need not ride on the learner's motorcycle, but no other supervising driver may be a passenger. The learner and supervising driver should remain within sight of one another at all times and discuss the learner's performance after practice. We recommend at least 30 hours of practice, with at least 10 in moderate to heavy traffic.
- Your road test will include left and right circles and figure-eights on public streets. In addition to normal driving maneuvers, you must be able to accomplish these while being alert for other traffic.

If you take the test on a three-wheeler, your motorcycle license will be restricted to driving three-wheelers.

- You must provide road test transportation for the license examiner in a properly registered, and inspected car or truck, and a driver at least 18 years old who is licensed to drive both this vehicle and the motorcycle you will drive during the test.
- If you already have a driver license, your current class and motorcycle class will both be listed on one license document (for example, Class DM).
- If you already have another class of driver license and a motorcycle operator's learner permit, the DMV will waive your motorcycle road test if you complete the Motorcycle Safety Foundation's Basic Rider Course (BRC). To qualify for the waiver, the course must be given by a provider who is certified by the Motorcycle Safety Foundation (MSF) and approved under the New York State Motorcycle Safety Program. For information about the nearest course, visit www.nysmsp.org or call MSF at 1-800-446-9227 or 1-518-384-0045.

REGISTRATION, INSPECTION, INSURANCE

Unlike most other motor vehicles, motorcycles are registered for one year rather than two, and all motorcycle registrations expire on April 30.

Motorcycles must be inspected at least once every 12 months at a station licensed by the DMV to perform motorcycle safety inspections. The station will display a yellow and black sign reading "Official NYS

Motorcycle Inspection Station." Dealerships must inspect motorcycles prior to delivery. If purchased in a private sale, you will be given 10 days from the date of registration to have the motorcycle inspected.

Unlike other motor vehicles, liability insurance may be terminated on a motorcycle without first turning the plate in at a DMV office. This makes it easier to put the motorcycle back on the road after winter storage. However, under no circumstances may a motorcycle be operated on public highways without liability coverage in effect. This also applies to motorcycles registered out-of-state.

SPECIAL RULES AND REQUIRED EQUIPMENT

All motorcycle operators and passengers must wear approved motorcycle helmets as defined by USDOT federal motor vehicle safety standards (FMVSS 218). To improve the motorcyclist's visibility, we recommend that helmets have at least four square inches of reflective material on both sides.

All motorcycle operators must wear approved eye protection even if the motorcycle is equipped with a windshield. Any windshield must also be of an approved type. Prescription or made-to-order safety glasses may be used if the user can present written certification that they meet DMV standards. The eye protection must be manufactured in conformity with the regulations established by the American National Standard Institute (ANSI – Z87.1). However, the DMV recommends approved goggles or a face-shield for full protection.

The headlight and taillight of the motorcycle must be on at all times when operating on the road.

Motorcyclists have the right to the use of a full lane and may ride no more than two abreast in a single lane. You may not ride abreast of another vehicle in the same lane, between lanes or between traffic and parked cars. Motorcyclists are subject to all applicable rules of the road, including signaling all turns and lane changes and passing only when and where permitted for other vehicles.

A MOTORCYCLE MUST HAVE ALL OF THE FOLLOWING EQUIPMENT IN GOOD WORKING ORDER:

- Approved lights, including headlight, taillight, stop lamp and license plate lamp, at least one red reflector on the rear and directional signals if the motorcycle was originally equipped with directionals or is a 1985 or newer model.
- Brakes, on 1971 and newer motorcycles brakes are required on both wheels.
- A horn or other warning device.
- At least one rearview mirror mounted on a handle bar, although mirrors on both handlebars are strongly recommended.
- A suitable muffler, "cutouts" or mufflers with removable baffles are prohibited.
- Suitable handlebars that place the operator's hands no higher than the operator's shoulders when seated in the riding position.
- A seat for the operator and a passenger seat in the rear if a passenger is carried (no more than one passenger is permitted).

NOTE: The remainder of this manual is based on the model Motorcycle Operator Manual developed by the Motorcycle Safety Foundation (MSF). The material is copyrighted by MSF and is used with permission.

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