

## HELMETS: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

As your 2018 Safety Officer, I thought I would say a few words about motorcycle helmets.

Contrary to popular opinion, Arizona does have a "Helmet Law". I won't go into the law's details here but I recommend you to to the Law Tigers' web site and click on the "Helmet Law" icon to brush up on the existing details of the law. Law or no law, a safe rider will always wear helmet, no matter how short the riding distance.

Many riders figure a helmet is a helmet, what else is there to know. Turns out there is more to consider when buying a helmet than if you look cool in it. A safe rider will consider whether or not the helmet has been certified safe or not and what that certification means. There are three different certifications for motorcycle helmets at this time. There are three organizations that certify a helmet and each uses a different set of standards for certification. These three organizations are:

1. The US Department of Transportation ("DOT");
2. Snell (a private organization; and
3. Economic Commission for Europe ("ECE").

The D.O.T. certification is the most popular in the USA and many countries in Asia and the Middle East. The certification is done by the respective manufacturers and certification is voluntary. Certification standards vary by manufacturer. Many manufacturers only certify/test their helmets using the basic standards prescribed by the D.O.T.. Many of the popular helmet brands are only D.O.T. certified.

Snell, is a private non-profit testing organization founded by the Snell Memorial Foundation. Snell encompasses the D.O.T. standards plus additional stress tests to the helmet, visor, and chin strap. Most professional motorcycle racers use Snell certified helmets and E.C.E. certified helmets. Snell certifications standards are reviewed and revised every five years. The latest standards for Snell helmets is 2015.

The E.C.E. is the strictest certification a the present time. This certification is throughout Europe and is mandatory. This certification uses all of the standards of the D.O.T. and Snell. Manufacturers are required to test no less than 50 helmets from each manufactured batch. The samples are randomly selected and the base helmet, visor, chin strap, and internal materials are tested and certified to meet E.C.E. standards. The standards are much more rigorous than D.O.T. and Snell. They are reviewed and if necessary, revised every five years. The current standard is the "Standard 22.05" of 2015.

It's obvious that the E.C.E. certified helmet is the better tested helmet on the market today. However, there's no reason economically not to buy a D.O.T. or Snell certified helmet. For recreational motorcycle riders these helmets work rather well.

Besides considering the safety rating of your helmet, your helmet should fit snug, not tight or loose around your head. If your helmet choice comes with a visor, wear it! Flying debris can cause serious injury to face, eyes, etc.. We've all had our experiences with this.

It is highly recommended that a rider change the helmet every 5 years. The glue, resins, and other materials lose their effectiveness over this period time. In some parts of the world, (Asia and the Middle East) it's recommended a change be made every 3 years due to the weather in these parts of the world. Special attention should be paid to the internal material of the helmet to prevent "G-Force", (movement of the brain inside the head upon impact).

It is hoped that knowing the three different certifications and organizations that perform/issue them will be useful to you the next time you decide to buy a new helmet. Also the suggestions as to the timing of a change in helmet the reasons for this will be useful.

Next month we will briefly look at the somewhat controversial topic of "Breaking In A New Motorcycle".

Ride Safe and Enjoy!!  
SamClark, Safety Officer