

Motorcycle Insurance – Part One

Motorcyclists make up a small fraction of the vehicles that occupy our roadways and, due to weather conditions and changes of seasons, the number of cycles in operation changes drastically throughout the year. While motorcycles operators and their driving considerations are quite different than persons operating other, larger, enclosed vehicles; there is one, major similarity.....the need for insurance protection. Most states have financial responsibility laws requiring you to carry proof that you are able to pay for any damage or injury you may cause while driving. Auto insurance is the way that most people comply with these laws. Typically, drivers are required to carry liability insurance at some minimal limit that varies by state. Liability coverages include the following:

Bodily Injury Liability - This covers injury that you may cause to other persons. The key is that it involves you being held financially responsible for injuries to other persons because of your driving, your ownership or other use of your vehicle. This coverage does not apply to any injuries you may suffer.

Property-Damage Liability - This handles damage that you may cause to another person's property. Again, the coverage only responds when you are financially responsible for such damage and it has to be related to your driving, use or ownership of a vehicle.

Uninsured Motorist Coverage – This coverage typically pays for injury you suffer from an accident caused by an uninsured driver. "Uninsured" usually refers to a person who has no insurance; a person who can't be located ("hit and run drivers"); a person who has insurance but their insurance company is insolvent; and other situations (defined by individual state laws). Important: Payment under this coverage is controlled by the limits mandated by a state's financial responsibility or specific uninsured motorists law that often dictates what limit or limits must be sold. In some states, you may have an option to reject the coverage. Typically, the rejection must be in writing.

Underinsured Motorist Coverage – This coverage typically pays for injury you suffer from an accident caused by an inadequately insured driver. "Underinsured" usually refers to a person who has insurance; but at an amount that is insufficient to cover all costs of the loss the or she has caused.

Remember that this is merely an introduction to complex policy coverages. Be sure to contact your agent for detailed insurance information. This is the first part of our discussion of typical motorcycle insurance coverages. Please also see *Motorcycle Coverage – Part Two*.

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