

TIME FOR GUIDANCE ON MOTORCYCLE GEAR

It's often overlooked, but one of the most important safety aspects of motorcycling is the gear you wear. Take a look at the advanced driving book and you'll see a page of advice on gloves, jackets, trousers, helmets, visibility and boots.



Take a look at some online shops and you're spoiled for choice. One website I visited had two hundred pairs of boots alone, from budget to the latest high-tech track racing boots. It's the same with gloves. Do you get touring, summer, track, road, scooter, winter or summer gloves? Will you really notice the difference between a £160 and an £80 pair?

One thing is clear: We need the best protection that we can afford. But read the manufacturers' safety claims and you'll face an impenetrable wall of jargon and pseudo-science.

Some examples:

- Schoeller Keprotec for stretch kevlar
- Unobtanium panels, up to 2.5x more abrasion

- Knox flexiform protection
- D30 back protector.

No, I don't know what unobtanium is either.

But the real point is that swanky jargon doesn't help the motorcyclist decide what to buy, and in safety terms it's meaningless. Who knows if Unobtanium is better than Knox flexiform?

What we need is clear and easy to understand guidance. For years, the car industry has had NCAP – the star rating that is driving up safety standards for cars. It's something that manufacturers compete on. Then there's the SHARP rating for helmets. Another simple five-star scoring system.

While all helmets meet a minimum standard, SHARP estimates that 50 lives a year would be saved if motorcyclists wore the best helmet available to them.

Has the time come for a safety score on motorcycle gear? Do we want one? That's what we'll be asking you in a poll at the end of August. Please take the time to fill it in, because while I might think it's a good idea, I'd much rather speak on behalf of the membership.

Simon Best
Chief executive



Motorcycle Radio Use Update

We now have a new radio skills manual for motorcycle groups. The radio skills framework (available at www.iam.org.uk/radios, login needed) covers three competency levels:

- **Level 1** – Giving route directions
- **Level 2** – Giving commentary to an associate while you are leading
- **Level 3** – Giving guidance on the move.

You take the qualification for the level you wish to operate at. Training is a one off event run by group observers.

We have also added:

- Guidance for groups to assist in the interpretation and application of the framework
- Group Radio Usage Questionnaire, to assess the extent radios are being or planning to be used, and the demand for radio workshops at conference on 6 October.

Please take the time to review the documents on the website and complete the questionnaire by 9 August 2013.

Using radios is not compulsory, and for groups that already have their own manuals, neither is the IAM framework, but the IAM framework is the minimum standard if radios are part of an IMI Observer qualification.



Conference 2013

This year's IAM conference is fast approaching. As with last year, all events will be held over one weekend at Warwick University, commencing 5th October for car groups and 6th October for motorcycle groups. The official invitations with further details of the event have now been sent out and should soon arrive in the post. We look forward to seeing you there.

Letters to councils

Following the success of last year, we will be sending another letter out to local authorities over the coming weeks. This is a simple tool to remain in communication with local councils, remind them of our presence and of what we have done and can do with local authorities. If you'd like more information on how your local authority responded, or just more information on the initiative, please contact: laura.martin@iam.org.uk.

Advanced Driving magazine

Watch out for this month's edition of **Advanced Driving magazine**. With a special report on **Advanced Motorcycling**, five great road trips, the Goodwood skills day, off-road biking, and an interview

with Nigel Mansell, the August edition has something for everyone. It is also the edition with our annual report and accounts that gives you the opportunity to vote for this year's trustees.

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