

INQUIRY INTO VULNERABLE ROAD USERS

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Increased or mandatory fitment of ABS braking systems to motorcycles would significantly reduce rider injuries and fatalities. This is backed by empirical research and the cost of ABS systems for motorcycles has fallen dramatically in recent years.

Recent research released by the American Institute of Insurers indicates a 37% lower fatality rate amongst those riders of motorcycles fitted with ABS models, compared to riders of the same bikes without ABS. The link to the research is here: <http://www.iihs.org/news/rss/pr033110.html>

This accords with my 30 years riding experience, here and overseas. Many motorcycle accidents occur because of a rider panicking and snatching the front brake, often in a corner or in marginal grip situations. This will have the effect of locking the front wheel easily, almost invariably resulting in a crash, or in a corner, the bike sitting up and going straight on, either off the road or into oncoming traffic.

These accidents may often not be attributed to panic braking, but to excess speed. Generally, modern bikes are capable of cornering far faster than the experience or bravery of the rider will allow. ABS significantly reduces the risks that arise from a sudden rather than progressive application of the front brake.

In urban situations I have seen the same thing. Riders are caught out by a traffic situation and react by grabbing the front brake. The result is a lockup and loss of steering control, followed by a crash. ABS will prevent this.

The cost of ABS on a recently purchased Suzuki was an additional \$500 on a \$11,000 bike. This is affordable. Mandating ABS on new bikes above a certain size has the capacity to make a significant difference to the road toll as its prevalence spreads through the motorbike vehicle fleet.