

WBW Product Guide

Category Page - Example

Motorcycle Helmet Buyer's Guide: Updated November 2017

Helmets are a simple thing: they protect your head from the elements and, as will happen from time to time, asphalt too. They're a *seemingly* simple thing, because like all things touched by the exponential march of progress, there's much more to a good helmet than what meets the eye.

In our first-ever *motorcycle helmet buyers guide*, we sat down and asked ourselves: what makes a good helmet *great*, and what are the most important things to look for when shopping for a new helmet?

Answering those questions and providing a list of - *gasp* - recommendations took plenty of research, referencing, and collaboration. We connected with major brands, motorcycle experts and, of course, our comprehensive library of motorcycle helmet reviews.

What's Here:

- Where to Buy
- Motorcycle Helmet 101
- What to Consider When Buying
 - Price
 - Fit & Comfort
 - Safety
 - Type
- Our Recommendations for 2018

We're hesitant to call anything "the best", because so many factors that influence what would make a helmet "the best" vary from person to person. Fit and comfort is subjective and hard to objectively quantify. Still, we're confident that our recommendations are solid. If you find it listed in our guide here, then it means that it's of sufficient quality that we're happy to stand behind it.

So, without further ado, here it is: The Motorcycle Buyers Guide, November 2017 Edition.

Shopping Now? We Recommend:

RevZilla

webBikeWorld has worked closely with RevZilla over the years to provide our testers with products to review. In addition to being a great site to shop from, they're also a great partner to work with.

- [Free shipping on orders over \\$40](#)
- [30-day no-nonsense return policy](#)
- Excellent selection of all major brands
- Awesome pricing, easily some of the best around

Amazon

- Free shipping (with Amazon Prime)
- 30-day return policy
- Excellent selection
- Competitive pricing
- Friend of WBW!

Don't Forget!

Our team is constantly reviewing new helmets, ensuring that our extensive review database is current and representative of what's available on the market. [See our latest motorcycle helmet reviews.](#)

Motorcycle Helmet 101: The Essentials

The first thing to buy when you're planning on riding a motorcycle for the first time is your helmet. At least, that's what you do if you're smart.

A helmet will do more than protect your noggin (though a good helmet will do a good job of that). It will also protect you from wind, rain, snow, road debris, and noise pollution; prevent you from getting ear aches; heck, modern helmets can even stream music and GPS navigation.

At their most basic, a helmet is essential three components: a hard outer layer (called the shell), a soft inner layer (usually made of expanded polystyrene or polypropylene), and some kind of mechanism to keep the whole thing strapped to your head.

Most modern helmets made today provide superior protection compared to helmets from 10+ years ago. Many advancements have occurred in recent years that have made helmets lighter, safer, and more feature rich. Advanced materials, such as **carbon fiber**, **improved optics** in the

face shields, and **new safety mechanisms** (such as MIPS, *multidirectional impact protection system*) that take full advantage of computer-assisted design.

Learn more about motorcycle helmets:

- [Types](#)
- [DOT/ECE/SNELL](#)
- [Safety](#)
- [Helmet Care & Maintenance](#)

Buyer's Guide: What to Look for When Shopping Helmets

We recommend that all riders, whether you are just starting out or have been riding for years, place safety at the top of their list when looking at new helmets. Of course, there's a lot of other important elements to consider, too: fit, comfort, price, and the type of helmet are almost important.

We're operating on the assumption that you're relatively new to motorcycles and riding gear; more advanced riders looking for information on the best gear should check out our [recommendations for each helmet type](#).

Price

While price *shouldn't* be the primary factor that dictates your helmet purchase, it's rare that we are afforded the luxury of shopping unrestricted by budget.

The price of a helmet is influenced by several things, such as the materials used, technology integrated, certifications, and brand. There are some other intangibles as well; Arai helmets, for example, are all handmade and their slight premium over comparable helmets reflects that.

If you're just getting into riding, spending \$300 on a helmet is completely appropriate. \$300 gets you a great helmet at a price that shouldn't cause anxiety if you accidentally drop it.

Where the sticker can really climb is when you get into helmets designed for racing or other specialized applications. A racing helmet made of carbon fiber, while being much lighter than a traditional helmet, will have a price tag to match the exotic materials used.

A good rule of thumb to follow is to spend enough to protect your head, but not so much that you need to pull back from other gear. [We're advocates for riding ATGATT.](#)

Safety

The first and foremost purpose of your helmet is to protect your head in the event of an accident. If there is one area that you should *not* compromise on, it's safety. You want a quality helmet that will provide you the protection you need.

At a minimum, your helmet must pass local regulations. In North America, that's the DOT - *Department of Transportation*. In the EU, it's ECE - *Economic Commission for Europe*. Helmets that have DOT/ECE approval are safe and road legal. However, if you want to ensure your helmet provides maximum protection, you will also want to look for SNELL certification.

SNELL is a non-profit, independent organization that is more thorough and rigorous in their testing. Helmets that receive SNELL certification have proven themselves to be safe; however, SNELL certification often adds somewhat to the price of a helmet.

See also: the [differences between DOT, ECE, and SNELL](#).

Fit & Comfort

How a helmet fits is critical. A helmet that fits well not only provides maximum protection for its wearer, but also allows for a more enjoyable ride. You'll be amazed at how long you can hit the back roads with a great-fitting helmet.

Several things influence fit:

- Size - If you're unsure of how to determine your size, [go here](#).
- Materials - Foam comes in many different densities, as do most materials used in a helmet/helmet-liner.
- Your head - Let's face it: we don't all have the same head shape. Some helmets work better with certain shapes.
- Customization - Many helmets come with pads/inserts/removable sections that can greatly alter how a helmet fits.
- Weight - Riders should place more emphasis on the weight of their helmet. The lighter the helmet, the less energy it transfers upon impact. Plus, a lightweight helmet is much more enjoyable and comfortable to wear for long periods.

See also: [helmet size chart](#)

Type

Helmets come in many shapes and sizes, categorized by their defining style or use. The most common types of helmets are:

-
- Full face - This type of helmet provides the most protection. As its name implies, it covers most (if not all) of your face. The visor protects your eyes while improving comfort (it protects against wind, etc.).
 - Open face - This type of helmet does not have a chin guard, leaving the face exposed. However, it still protects the top, back, and sides of the head.
 - Modular - A combination between an open and full face helmet, a modular helmet allows you remove or flip up the lower section
 - Off-road / motocross - These helmets typically feature sun visors, extra chin protection, and additional venting. However, many also come without a visor.
 - Half - Offering the least protection compared to other helmet types, a half helmet covers the top portion of the head and leaves the rest exposed.
 - Dual-sport - Also called *adventure helmets*, dual-sport helmets can be worn on or off-road. Most feature integrated visors; like off-road, most do not have face shields.

Each type of helmet has its strengths and weakness. Where, how, and when you ride all play a factor in determining which is ideally suited for you.

Our Recommendations for Each Helmet Type

In [September we checked out AIMExpo](#), where major helmet brands - like Arai and Shoei - were showing off their latest and greatest. We also connected with Sena, who were excited about getting the Momentum INC shipped and in riders hands (just in time for the holidays).

There are a lot of great options on the market as we head into 2018. We've sorted through what's out there, referenced our testing notes, and put together our recommendations for each category. [See our helmet FAQ](#) to learn more about our perspective and how we evaluate helmets.

Full Face

Offering the maximum in both protection and comfort, a full face helmet is our go-to recommendation because it ticks all the boxes for safety, comfort, style, and price. On our list include great helmets by Arai, Bell, HJC, and more.

- **Recommended:** [Our Top-10 Full Face Helmet Picks for This Year](#)

Modular

A modular helmet eliminates many of the accessibility barriers that a full face helmet imposes. Namely, it's easy to talk, eat, drink, etc. without having to take off the helmet- the same can't be said for full face!

Check out our team's picks for our favorite modulars for late 2017/early 2018.

- **Recommended:** [Our Top-10 Modular Helmet Picks for This Year](#)

Dual Sport

We've gotten our hands on a lot of dual sport helmets lately, and we can definitely appreciate their appeal. A good dual sport helmet provides excellent on and off-road protection. If you intend on doing a lot of highway riding, we recommend either getting a modular helmet with an optimized visor, or getting one without any visor at all.

- **Recommended:** [Our Top-10 Dual-Sport Helmet Picks for This Year](#)

Open Face

While an open face helmet is down on safety compared to a full face model, there's nothing that can really replace the feel of the open road on your face. Open face helmets offer tremendous visual freedom, reduced weight, and comfort while still providing appropriate protection for the top, back, and sides of your head.

- **Recommended:** [Our Top-10 Open Face Helmet Picks for This Year](#)

Half

Typically the most lightweight option available for helmets, a good half helmet will provide sufficient protection while riding while offering styling that can't quite be matched by other helmet types.

- **Recommended:** [Our Top-10 Half Face Helmet Picks for This Year](#)

Dirt/Off Road/Motocross

The game changes a bit when you get off-road (and so do the helmets). When you hit the dirt, you *want* a helmet without a face shield, and the built-in sun visor makes a big difference in visibility. Our top recommendations for off-road helmets factor in safety, weight, function, and style. Check 'em out!

- **Recommended:** [Our Top-10 Off Road Helmet Picks for This Year](#)