

## **A Minute For Safety - Head to Toe (or TCLOCS for your gear)**

We are all probably pretty good at doing TCLOCS for our motorcycles. When was the last time we inspected our riding gear? If we want the gear to work for safety, we should inspect that periodically as well. This is a good time of year to inspect. I tried to come up with a good acronym, but nothing fits so let's just think "Head to Toe".

### **Helmet**

Check the born on date inside your helmet. There has never been a study done on how long helmets last and there can be a multitude of factors that affect helmet life. If helmet parts have not been compromised, manufacturers rate their life at 3, 4 or 5 years. A good rule is to think about replacing your helmet every 5 years (up to 8 years if you include shelf life before you got it.) Technology changes, helmets get lighter and more comfortable, and what the heck - treat yourself.

Outer shell- some cosmetic damage is probably ok, but there should be no cracks or other damage which could compromise the integrity. A lot of us like to put stickers on our helmets, but it may be hard to see any potential damage to the shell underneath.

EPS Foam- this is what softens the blow when your head hits something. A lot of people think if you drop your helmet, it must be replaced. The EPS foam is designed to protect whatever is in it during an impact, by crushing. Engineers with several helmet manufacturers have said they believe *if a helmet falls, and there is nothing inside it, like your head, or any other heavy object, there is probably no crush involved with the EPS.* However setting your helmet on your motorcycle mirror over and over may wear a dent or groove in the EPS. There is also some evidence that gasoline fumes may have an effect on the EPS, so storing your helmet in the garage for long periods may not be the best environment.

Liner – Periodically take your liner out and wash and air dry it. You may want to replace it if it gets too funky or causes your helmet to fit loose.

Chin strap –inspect for any wear which might compromise its ability to keep your helmet in place. If you replace the double D rings with a quick release, make sure the release is DOT certified.

### **Eye protection**

Whether a part of your helmet or separate goggles or riding glasses, make sure impact resistant eye protection is free from scratches and other damage that may distort your view.

If you wear prescription eyewear, make sure you stay up to date.

### **Leather / textile**

We all have that favorite jacket that is broken in and feels and looks just right. If we want it do to its job of protecting us, inspect it to make sure the seams are still intact. Sunlight /UV rays are hard on thread. You don't want it failing when you need it most.

If it has armor in the pockets, those probably should be replaced every few years depending on their composition.

Keep leather and textile gear clean according to manufacturers recommendations.

Be aware that reflective pieces on various pieces of equipment degrade over time.

### **Gloves**

Same as jackets, inspect seams and for wear. Gloves will show the most wear on the palms. The gloves I wear in a hot environment where I sweat just don't last very long.

### **Boots**

Boots have the longest life. Unless your foot size changes (they do as we get older) they will last a very long time if cared for. Make sure the soles still have tread to keep you from slipping when putting a foot down. Good boots can be resoled. (opt for oil/slip resistant soles if it's an option). Use proper leather cleaner /conditioner to keep the leather pliable.

If your boot closes with Velcro, make sure it holds.