

Motorbike Helmets – Buyers Guide

Whether you are buying your first motorbike or scooter or reliving the good old days and getting back on a bike again, you will be looking for a new helmet and protective clothing.

A motorbike helmet is the only piece of motorcycle clothing kit that there is a legal requirement to wear whilst riding a motorbike.



So, what helmet do you buy?



What you should also be asking yourself is: -

- Is the helmet genuine or fake?
- Will it protect me from head injuries if I have an accident?
- What is my budget?
- Where will I buy it from, online or retail premises?
- Do I buy a new or second-hand helmet?

You may have spent a lot of money on the purchase of your bike and getting it on the road, which could mean looking at ways of getting a cheaper helmet and protective clothing. The internet is full of websites and social media opportunities, to pick up cheap or second-hand motorcycle helmets.

A helmet is the most important part of your kit so getting it right is invaluable. A brain injury is permanent – a genuine helmet is designed and tested to minimise the risk of head injury.

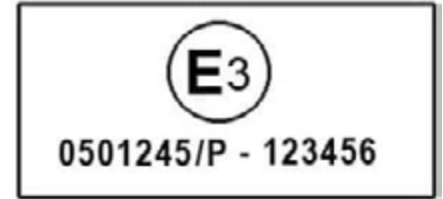
There are many counterfeit and poor-quality cheap helmets available online, these can give a rider a false sense of protection and will reduce the level of protection from head injuries. Fakes can also be difficult to identify.

Buyers Beware

Following the Buyers guide below will help you do all you can to check the helmet you buy is genuine and meets the required standards of safety.

Buyers Guide – what to look for

- Make sure your new helmet is genuine and compliant by being labelled UN ECE 22.5 or 22.6 or BS 6658:1985 and carries the BSI Kitemark
- Does it have a label with an E + number in a circle? This shows the helmet has been certified to the UN ECE standard. The number represents the country that certified it



- Online Checks: -
 - Check where the seller is based – if not in the UK will you be able to get a refund for a fake or damaged helmet if the seller is based overseas?
 - How do they want payment?
 - If you find a branded helmet on an unknown website at a far lower cost than the manufacturers, then this should trigger alarm bells – do some more research into the seller and any negative reviews.
 - Check the returns and delivery policy to make sure of your consumer rights
- For more advice go to [NCW leaflet_ENGLISH \(2\).pdf \(citizensadvice.org.uk\)](#)

- Physical Checks: -
Examine the helmet, labelling and packaging for the following: -

- Check the chin strap for a white stitched label displaying an E + a number, and a serial number or the BSI Kitemark & BS 6658:1985
- Stickers that haven't been applied properly
- Not in its original box
- Lack of booklets/labels and tags
- Poor quality paintwork
- Scratches on visor/helmet
- The weight of the helmet



Remember: **Try before you buy** where you can – a helmet that doesn't fit is not going to offer the best protection from brain injuries – [follow this fitting guide to make sure you get the helmet with the best fit](#)

SHARP is the Safety Helmet Assessment and Rating Programme. You can use the [SHARP rating system](#) to help you make an informed choice on choosing **the right motorcycle crash helmet**.



Myth Busters

Myth: Any helmet is better than no helmet!

- **Fact:** a fake or low-quality helmet can give a rider a false sense of protection and reduces the level of protection of head injury

Myth: Helmets being sold on well-known online websites must be ok and safe to be sold?

- **Fact:** Not everything sold online is genuine and compliant to relevant product safety standards and regulations

Fake helmets will not protect you - see these links including a video of a counterfeit helmet being tested:

[Fake crash helmet article](#)

[itv news article](#)

And finally,.....if it seems too good to be true, it probably is!

Disadvantages of a used helmet

There are quite a few downsides to buying a used motorcycle helmet, the most important ones are: -

- Age – Helmets do have an expiration date dependent upon the material it is made from.
- Material wear and tear – reducing impact absorption.
- Helmets are deemed as disposable products – they are designed for one incident of impact. A helmet should not be used again after an accident or impact from a fall. Dispose of any helmet after impact.
- Helmets don't always show evidence of impact or if the inner or outer shells have been damaged. A damaged helmet will not provide the same level of impact absorption from a second impact from an accident or fall.
- You will not know the history of a second-hand helmet and what it has gone through.
- Internal linings will have shaped to the first owners head, it will therefore not fit or reshape to your head properly, reducing level of protection.



Motorcycle Clothing – Buyers Guide

There is no law that requires you to wear protective clothing whilst riding your motorcycle, but compliant protective gear is strongly recommended

- it could save your life and prevent serious injury!



Is your motorbike clothing going to protect you if you have an impact with and slide along the road surface?

Did you know that all motorcycle clothing, gloves, footwear and impact protection components are classed as PPE?

Whether your gear is for track day racing, riding to work or for leisure rides, all of your motorcycle clothing that contains or can accommodate impact protectors (so everything apart from simple waterproofs) needs to comply with the relevant safety Regulations, have gone through the specified testing regime and be labelled correctly.

Motorcycle clothing in its entirety (so not just the impact protectors), is now covered by the Personal Protective Equipment Regulations (otherwise known as PPE) and must be marked with a conformity safety mark (CE, new UKCA or UKNI marks), ratings for the level of protection and user information and warnings.

The Regulations require protective clothing to undergo safety assessment and independent testing to ensure the product is compliant to the safety requirements and will provide

suitable and sufficient protection against the risks they are intended to safeguard against, such as a fall from the bike and against injury from impact or abrasion.

There are various levels of protection offered and the labels can be quite confusing. Remember, motorcycle clothing design involves separating the garment into 3 zones (areas of the garment which offer various levels of protection from identified risks: highest risk of impact and abrasion, such as shoulders, hips and knees, intermediate risk of abrasion and lowest risk of abrasion, such as the front of the body and back of the knees) and into classes of protection. You will see anything from Class AAA to B.

There are some simple checks you can carry out when you are next buying your new gear. By following our buyers guide below you can take steps to ensure it is suitable for your needs and meets the legal safety testing requirements.

There are many counterfeit and poor-quality, cheap motorcycle clothing products available online, which can give a rider a false sense of protection and will reduce the actual level of protection provided (if any at all). Fakes can also be difficult to identify.

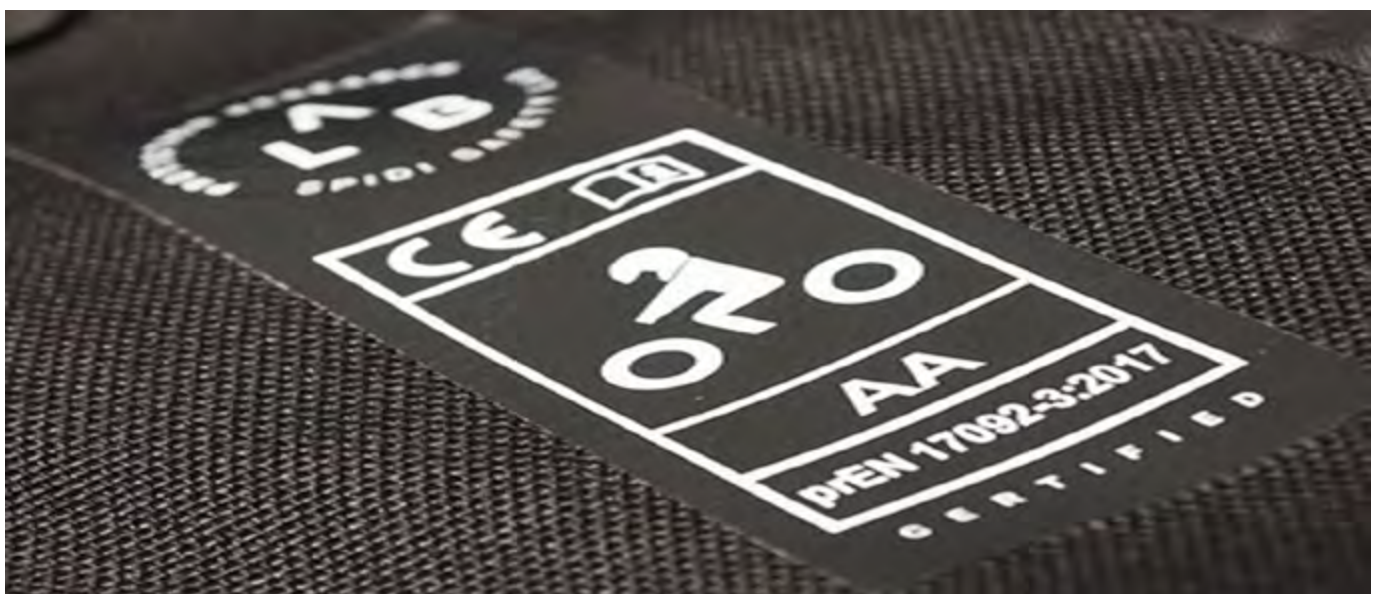
Buyers Beware

Follow this Buyers guide to arm yourself with the knowledge of what you buy is suitable and will offer the level of protection required

No protective garment can offer complete protection against all injuries!

Buyers Guide – what to look for

- Clothing, gloves and boots all need to have been independently tested to the applicable safety standards
- The standard numbers you should see include:
 - Jackets, trousers, one-piece suits and two-piece suits should be certified and labelled to the safety Standard BS EN 17092, it may even be labelled as prEN 17092 or FprEN 17092, which were earlier draft versions of the standard, but which are almost identical to the final published version where the main tests are concerned
 - Boots to EN13634
 - Gloves to EN13594
- Motorcycle gear should be marked and labelled with specific information including the rating level which will tell you the level of protection it will provide and its intended use
- Labelling Checks:
 - the product should contain an attached label with the motorcyclist symbol and the i-booklet sign indicating the purchaser to read the Instructions for Use.



- Examine the labels and product for: -
- the standard number and year
 - the rating level (AAA, AA, A, B etc.)
 - the conformity mark CE, UKCA or UKNI
 - Impact protectors should be marked up individually or on the label
 - Manufacturers Name and Address
 - Importers Name and Address
- If any of the above information or pictograms are missing, then start asking more questions
 - Instructions for use: clothing should be provided with attached Instructions for Use and should include information and warnings such as: -
 - The intended and appropriate use
 - Advice on using the PPE clothing in combination with others such as helmets, boots, gloves and hi-visibility accessories
 - A warning: “No PPE or combination of PPE can offer full protection against injury”
 - Where impact protectors are removable a warning not to wear without protectors
 - All PPE must be supplied with a Declaration of Conformity (confirming the product meets the PPE legal requirements) or a web address where this can be obtained
 - If you find branded gear on an unknown website at a far lower cost than the manufacturers, then this should trigger alarm bells – do some more research into the seller and any published negative reviews

And finally,....if it seems too good to be true, it probably is!

Further reading and information can be found:-

[bennetts.co.uk/bikesocial/news-and-views/features/product/safest-motorcycle-gear-ce-ratings](https://www.bennetts.co.uk/bikesocial/news-and-views/features/product/safest-motorcycle-gear-ce-ratings)

