

Motorcycle Insurance FAQ's by Christopher Pyne, Esq.



When I purchase a motorcycle do I have to carry insurance?

Yes. You must carry liability insurance to cover others who may be injured or damaged by your negligent operation of your motorcycle. Under New Jersey law, you must carry at least \$15,000 in coverage for any one person, and \$30,000 for all persons, injured in an accident.

We recommend that you purchase additional liability coverage up to \$100,000/\$300,000. This is particularly important due to the serious injuries a passenger on your motorcycle may suffer if you have an accident.

We also recommend that you carry uninsured/underinsured motorist coverage of \$100,000/300,000. Please refer to the Uninsured/Underinsured Motorist Benefits Legal Guide for more information.

Who pays if my motorcycle is damaged?

If you purchase "collision" coverage your insurance will pay for the damage over and above your deductible. If another driver causes the damage to your bike you would have the option of presenting the claim to that drivers insurance company if he or she had insurance. Many drivers fail to carry adequate coverage so we recommend you cover yourself with collision coverage and a deductible you can afford.

What happens if my motorcycle is stolen?

You should purchase what is known as "comprehensive" coverage to cover your motorcycle for theft, fire and vandalism -- common occurrences with motorcycles.

Your insurance will pay the book value of the bicycle less a deductible or the value of the damage. Usually the deductible for fire damage is less than that for theft or vandalism.

Will my comprehensive and collision insurance cover the amounts I have spent for extras for my motorcycle, such as chrome and customization?

Probably not. Some policies provide coverage for up to \$1,000 in options. You can purchase insurance coverage for all of your options by providing your insurance company with itemized proof of the chrome and extras and paying an additional premium.

When should I report an accident to my insurance company or agent?

Immediately! You should report all accidents to your insurance company, broker or agent as soon as possible so that they are not in a position to deny any legitimate claim that you may have.

Motorcycle Insurance FAQ's (continued)

When should I contact a motorcycle accident attorney?

Immediately! The laws regarding accidents in New Jersey are increasingly complex and can be very confusing. Whenever you have been in an accident, as a driver or passenger, and have any questions, feel free to contact any of the accident attorneys at Stark & Stark - free of charge. Stark & Stark earns a fee only if money is collected on your behalf.

Who pays my medical bills if I am injured in an accident?

There is no automatic, standard medical payment provision with motorcycles as there is with private passenger automobiles.

Most motorcycle insurance policies and agents do not offer medical bill coverage. However, some companies do offer the option to purchase \$1,000.00, \$2,500.00, and \$5,000.00 for medical coverage.

If you do not have this coverage, the answer to this question depends on the particular facts of your situation.

If you are riding your own motorcycle or on a resident relative's motorcycle when you are injured you have no medical coverage from any source OTHER THAN your personal health insurance.

If you are riding on ANOTHER PERSON'S motorcycle and you also own a car with insurance then you are entitled to receive medical payments from a provision of your automobile insurance called "extended medical benefits".

If you live with a relative who has his own automobile insurance you can also get the benefit of his extended medical benefits in addition to your own. All New Jersey automobile policies provide \$1,000.00 in extended medical benefits and for an extra \$1.00 premium that is increased to \$10,000.00. Therefore, if you are injured on a friend's motorcycle, you have your own car insurance, you live with a relative who has his own car insurance, and you both have the increased coverage, you will be entitled to \$20,000.00 in medical insurance.

If you are riding your own or a resident relative's motorcycle, you will have no coverage from any source other than your own private health insurance unless you purchased medical coverage on your motorcycle.

Am I covered if I am injured by an uninsured driver?

Check your policy. You should have what is called uninsured (UM) and underinsured (UIM) coverage. You should be sure to carry the same limits for UM and UIM as your liability limits. This coverage is imperative since so many drivers fail to carry insurance or enough insurance. The greater liability limits you have will allow you to protect yourself with greater UM/UIM limits. Please refer to the Uninsured/Underinsured Motorist Benefits Legal Guide for more information.

