

FLOUTING RULES

Helmet is for safety, not style

Helmets come in all shapes and sizes but the safest bet for two-wheeler riders are those that completely cover the head. Despite this, most of them sacrifice safety for looks and wear short, stylish helmets that only cover the scalp, exposing most of the face.

The cops do treat non-usage of helmets and wearing short, construction helmets under the defective helmet category. But they make no effort to educate people on the importance of using the right kind of helmet.

Metrolife speaks to the traffic police and people in general, to understand why people don't bother to wear the right kind of helmet.

The traffic police say that they hope to start a campaign to educate people on the importance of wearing proper helmets.

The cases registered for wearing defective helmets have been increasing at a steady pace. Statistics available with the traffic police prove that the police aren't doing enough to instill a sense of fear among the people in this regard.

The year 2008 saw 1,99,862 such cases which rose to 2,30,769 in 2009. In 2010, there were 2,57,072 cases, 2011 showed no improvement with 3,20,456 and in 2012 (up to the end of August) the number of cases stands at 5,61,392 — the highest so far.

Additional commissioner of police (traffic), M A Saleem, points out, "We have been booking cases. But there are people who don't seem to care and continue to wear the short helmets that go against the rule."

NIMHANS engages itself in



CARELESS Some people prefer using short helmets which is against the rule. DH PHOTO BY JANARDHAN B K

studies related to injuries from non-usage of helmets and has concluded that nearly 60 to 70 per cent of two-wheeler riders, who are killed or injured in a crash, suffer injury to the brain. G Gururaj, professor and head, department of epidemiology, WHO Collaborating Centre for Injury Prevention and Safety Promotion, NIMHANS, points out that construction helmets have become very popular with two-wheeler riders.

"The maximum number of



Deepak S



Himanshu

accidents are in Jalahalli, Koramangala, Old Madras Road, Mysore Road and Outer Ring Road. The importance of wearing the right kind of helmet needs to be enforced among the people. These short helmets don't provide any protection to the head. On the contrary, they cause a lot of damage in case of an injury," he explains. Gururaj adds that the cops must register cases and discourage people from wearing these short helmets.



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GURURAJ

Raj Chandrashekar of Raj Accessories, on J C Road, observes that a lot of people come asking for the shorter

helmets. "There are a lot of people who ask for the smaller helmets. They are cheaper and easy to wear. We stock them because there is a demand for them, even though we are aware that it doesn't conform to the prescribed standards," says Raj.

Worse is the fact that several riders give their helmets a miss when they're on short trips.

Himanshu, an IT professional, confesses, "It is important to wear a helmet, but I do so only when I travel a long distance. I never wear one for short distances. It's uncomfortable."

Deepak S, with Remidio Innovative Solutions Pvt Ltd, is an advocate for helmet usage. "You must wear a helmet all the time. I use one whenever I step out, even to a nearby shop. It's a safety gear that must be taken seriously," Deepak sums up.

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