

Helmet Safety

In the September issue of Wing World, Nick Hoppner wrote an article on full face helmets called "Full Coverage". This is a topic that's been on my mind for a while since Darlene and I wear the $\frac{3}{4}$ style helmet. His article got me thinking about it even more. As I ride down the road I see in front of me all the things that could hit my face in the event of an accident. Windshield, Butler Cup, GPS, dash board etc., and that's before I would ever leave the bike. I wanted to write this to all of you to make sure it's something you would at least consider. As Nick writes, part of the reason we may feel comfortable with our open face helmets is because we are protected from the elements with our windshields, but that's provided we are never in an accident.

35% of all crashes showed major impact on the chin-bar area. This means that if you ride with an open-face helmet, you are accepting only 65% of the protection that could be available to your head.

If you ride with a *shorty* or half helmet, you are accepting only 39% of the protection you could obtain. You are literally throwing away 61% of the protection you would have had had you chosen a full-face helmet.

And, of course, if you ride wearing a "novelty" helmet or no helmet at all then you have **none** of the protection you could have chosen.

There are many brands of full face helmets available. The flip front style have become quite popular as well. Although not yet SNELL rated, they do meet DOT requirements. An e-mail sent to the SNELL Foundation asking why there aren't any "flip-up" style helmets certified got this reply;

"We've been prepared to test and certify flip-up helmets to Snell standards but, so far, there have been no takers. When one comes in, we'll look for all the protective performance we demand of standard full face helmets plus the added requirement that the helmet not "flip up" inadvertently during testing. I like the convenience of drinking a cup of coffee with a hat on but I don't want to give up any protective performance to get it.

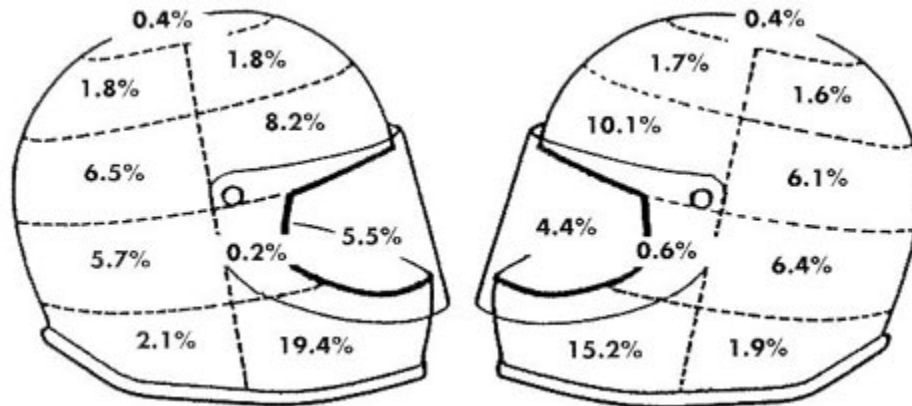
I cannot say why there are no Snell certified flip-up models as yet. It may be just that these configurations sell so well, manufacturers don't need Snell to market them. There does appear to be a lot of interest in a Snell certified flip-up though so, shortly after we certify our first, I'll expect the stampede to start. When that will be is anyone's guess. When it does happen, I'll do my best to let everyone know.

Thanks for your interest.

Ed Becker"

I think that I've seen and read enough for me to make the decision to upgrade to a full face style helmet. I hope by reading this, you may give some thought as to your protection. The below picture is of Dave Swishers helmet after an accident. Makes you wonder what his face would of looked like after wearing a $\frac{3}{4}$ style helmet, or less.

Take a look at the graphics on the following pages.



The diagrams above show the impact areas on crash-involved motorcycle helmets. (Source: Dietmar Otte, Medizinische Hochschule Hannover, Abteilung Verkehrsunfallforschung, Germany.)

