Motorcycle Helmets, Visors and Goggles – General Advice

Statement
This document provides general guidance and advice on the legislative requirements in Great Britain relating to motorcycle helmets, visors and goggles.


Every effort has been made to ensure that it is factually correct but recipients should check with the producers of this document if they are unsure about the validity of a particular regulation after the date of publication or if they have reason to believe any part is not correct or is now out of date.

General Requirements
Buying a helmet - What to look for
When buying a helmet, look for one that complies with one of the following standards:

a) British Standard 6658:1985 (it will be marked with a British Standard ‘kitemark’); or
b) UNECE Regulation 22.05 (it will be marked with a UN ‘E’ mark and the first two digits of the approval number will be ‘05’ – example below).

A helmet that is fitted with a non-protective face cover should be marked to indicate the unsuitability of the lower face cover to offer any protection against impacts to the chin. This should be by way of a marking on the lower face cover with the words "Does not protect chin from impacts" and / or the approved symbol (example below).

Helmets may also be sold if they comply with any standard accepted by an EEA\(^1\) State which offers a level of protection which is equivalent to (i.e. the same as, or better than) British Standard 6658:1985 and are marked with a certification mark which is equivalent to the British Standard ‘kitemark’. However, at the time of writing, we are not aware of any such standard or certification mark.

For the avoidance of doubt, we do not consider UNECE Regulation 22.04 to be equivalent to the British Standard because it does not contain a chin-guard test for full face helmets or a test for rotation-inducing forces caused by projections and surface friction.

Wearing a helmet
If you are driving or riding on a 2-wheeled motorcycle on a road you must wear a helmet.

Passengers in a side-car don’t have to wear a helmet and neither does a Sikh who is wearing a turban. Also, no helmet is needed if someone is pushing the motorcycle on foot.

\(^1\) An EEA State is a member of the European Economic Area, which includes the 15 members of the EC.
Helmet standards
You must wear a helmet which has been approved to one of the British Standards listed below, or to UNECE Regulation 22.05.

**British Standard No**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Approval</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2001:1956</td>
<td>may be worn only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1869:1960</td>
<td>may be worn only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2495:1960</td>
<td>may be worn only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001:1972</td>
<td>may be worn only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5361:1976</td>
<td>may be worn only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2495:1977</td>
<td>may be worn only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6658:1985</td>
<td>may be sold and worn</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Alternatively, you can wear other types of helmet which could reasonably be expected to give a similar, or greater, level of protection in an accident as British Standard 6658:1985 or UNECE Regulation 22.05.

**SHARP**
The Safety Helmet Assessment and Ratings Programme (SHARP) is a consumer information scheme that uses a 1 to 5 star rating scale to indicate the level of protection a helmet can provide.

Details of the helmet ratings can be found at: [http://sharp.direct.gov.uk](http://sharp.direct.gov.uk) together with other useful information to help you make the correct helmet choice.

**Visors and Goggles**
When buying a visor, look for products that comply with one of the following:

Grade X in British Standard BS 4110:1979, GradesXA, YA or ZA in British Standard BS 4110:1979 as amended by AMD 3388, AMD 4060 and AMD 4360 (It will be marked with the number of the standard, have the grade and the British Standard Kitemark).

In the case of Visors also look for approval to UNECE Regulation 22.05 (it will be marked with a UN 'E' mark and the first two digits of the approval number will be '05' – example below).

![0573621/P](image)

Visors may also be sold if they comply with any standard accepted by an EEA State which offers a level of protection which is equivalent to (i.e. the same as, or better than) British Standard BS 4110:1979 and are marked with a certification mark which is equivalent to the British Standard 'kitemark'. However, at the time of writing, we are not aware of any such standard or certification mark.

In the case of goggles also look for approval to Council Directive 89/686/EEC as amended by 93/68/EEC and 96/58/EEC (see explanatory note). (They will be marked with a 'CE' mark).

Eye protectors first used before 1st of April 1989 and fitted with lenses designed to correct a sight defect, transmit 50% or more of visible light and do not fly into fragments if fractured may also be used.

If you use a visor or goggles they must be approved to one of the appropriate standards above. Those visors marked "Daytime Use Only" or having the symbol with the same meaning (example below) should only be used in daytime.

![Sun symbol](image)

Visors that transmit less than 50% of visible light do not fully comply with any of the standards above and can not legally be used on the road.

Consolidated versions of National regulations can be found in Sweet and Maxwell’s Encyclopaedia of Road Traffic Law and Practice (Construction and Use) which should be available at most main reference libraries.

Copies of National regulations can also be purchased from TSO Orders/Post Cash Department, PO Box 29, Norwich, NR3 1GN; telephone: 0870 600 5522; fax: 0870 600 5533; email: customer.services@tso.co.uk; website: http://www.tso.co.uk/

UNECE Regulation 22 may be downloaded free of charge from the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe; website: http://www.unece.org/

Further information
If you require any further information regarding the content of this information sheet, please contact the DfT at the address below:

International Vehicle Standards
Department for Transport
Zone 1/34, Great Minster House
33 Horseferry Road, London, SW1P 4DR

Telephone: 020 7944 2091
Fax: 020 7944 2196
Email: ivs.enquiries@dft.gsi.gov.uk

NOTE: The information in this document is a summary of the Department’s understanding of what the law requires. However, ultimately the interpretation of the law is a matter for the courts based on individual facts of any particular case. You are therefore advised to consult the relevant legislation and, if necessary, seek independent advice.