

# SELECTING THE RIGHT MOTORCYCLE

Motorcycles vary in **size, shape and capabilities**. While many factors influence a purchase decision, selecting one that exceeds your experience level could have serious consequences.

Many new motorcyclists choose to ride because of family or friends who ride. The same family and friends often influence the type of motorcycle a new rider purchases. Many do not buy a cruiser if they plan to ride with sport bike riders and vice versa.

## How do you know if you are making the right choice?

When shopping for a motorcycle, take the time to research different bikes. First, ask yourself what type of riding you plan to do. The answer to this question will narrow your search to a specific class of motorcycle: a sport bike, cruiser, touring or dual sport.

Next, visit a motorcycle dealership. Whether you're looking for a new or used motorcycle, dealerships offer the opportunity to look at each motorcycle class at one location.

Begin by sitting on different motorcycles. *Are your feet flat on the ground? Is the suspension adjustable? Can you reach the clutch and brake lever, and are they adjustable? Can you handle the weight of the motorcycle? What about body position — do you feel comfortable?* The answers to these questions can narrow your search to a specific brand and model.

Engine size also requires consideration. Sport bikes vary from 600 cubic centimeters (cc) to 1300 cc, depending on the brand and model. Cruisers and touring models usually start at 1200 cc. *How much power do you need? Are you planning to get into racing? If not, do you really need a race-ready GSXR 1000 to ride around town or commute?* Race-ready motorcycles may seem cool; however, the temptation to maximize the bike's capabilities has caused trouble for some riders.

Does your skill level match the motorcycle you are considering? Have you taken any training courses? These are both serious considerations. Start with a smaller motorcycle and look to upgrade as your skill level and riding interests grow.

## DO YOUR RESEARCH!

Have you considered what insurance will cost? Call your insurance company and ask for quotes on the models you are considering. You may want to call several companies and compare quotes.

Finally, consider the type of personal protective equipment (PPE) you will need to buy, as the cost varies. Dual sport riders tend to buy jackets, pants, boots and helmets to protect them both on- and off-road. Sport bike riders tend to buy leathers that protect them while on a track.

Finding and buying the right motorcycle takes time and should not be a rash decision. Many individuals purchase motorcycles without taking the time to do the research and end up with regret.

Like buying a car, purchasing a motorcycle is very exciting, but do the research. Making the correct choice leads to a better riding experience.

## RIDE SAFE

**If you would like additional information or would like to improve you unit's motorcycle safety program, contact your installation safety office.**

