

## How to Choose a Motorcycle Training School

Learning to ride a motorcycle can be a nerve racking experience. If you have never ridden a bike before you will be taking on a whole new set of challenges. Given this, your choice of training school could be critical to how you progress and how easy you find it to become a fully qualified motorcyclist.

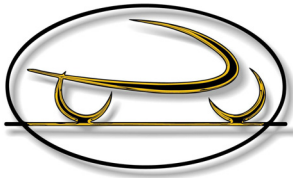
It is important that you feel comfortable with your choice of training school. You will need to get on with your instructor and have trust in him or her. You will also need to be confident that the machines that you are given to ride are safe and road worthy, and that you will be taught in a comfortable environment.

If you have friends who ride, ask them where they learned to ride and if they have any recommendations. Word of mouth is about the best way of getting the information that you need to make the right decision. So, talk to friends, family and colleagues and see what you can find out.

MCITA members comply with all of our Standards, and so choosing one of them will help you to have peace of mind – but there is no substitute for asking questions and even visiting training sites to see for yourself.

## So what should you ask, and what answers should you be getting from a training school?

- When you contact the training school for the first time, take a note of how they deal with you at the **first point of contact**. Are they professional and informative? Do they want to know as much about you as you want to know about them?
- They should want to find out from you **what you wish to achieve** from your riding. Are you looking for a bike for fun or as a transport solution? Do you have any previous experience? All of these questions will help them to establish the best possible course type for you. If they do not ask you some questions then you might wonder how much they really care about providing the best and most appropriate course for you.
- Ask them about how many people they train and what their **pass rate** is. A good pass rate and good local feedback is a real plus point in their favour.
- Ask **about their CBT courses**. Find out how long the course is likely to last. This is a bit of a trick question, but the answer could be very revealing. A CBT does not have a defined length. It depends on how you progress, not how the instructor wants to progress. If you need 2 days then that is how long it will take. Ask them how long their road ride is – it should be a MINIMUM of 2 hours. Finally, check how they charge for the CBT. Many schools charge for one day and then make sure you get through in one. Some will charge one price and carry the cost if you come back for a second day (they may charge for bike hire). Some will charge for the extra day.
- You should ask them about their training,



**where it takes place and what their facilities are.** Do they have access to their own classroom? Do they have a CBT site which is remote from their offices? Do they have toilet facilities? You may find that they do not have their own facilities, but they may use a warm, cosy, quiet café for debriefing and breaks from training.

- **Check out their bikes.** Ask them what they use, how old their fleet is and how often is it serviced. If they have nothing to hide they will happily tell you all of this information.
- Make sure that you **know what you get for your money**, and what is included and what is not. You may have heard about trainees having to pay for their own fuel, or being charged extra 'insurance waivers' when they arrive for their training. This can happen, so make sure you know what you will be expected to pay on top of the prices quoted. The best deals are those which offer an 'all inclusive' price.
- Some training schools will provide some **clothing**. Most will keep a number of safety helmets for student use. If you visit the school, ask to have a look at these. You can then decide whether to get one of your own before you attend your first days training. You may also find that they will have some waterproofs in case it rains during your course.
- Finally, if you have the chance, **meet the instructor** who will actually be training you. You are going to spend a long time with this person. They will be asking you to do things that you may find difficult – or your fellow course members may find difficult. This can be stressful on both sides. The nature of the relationship between you and your instructor

can be a major factor in your success or failure. If you can get a feel for how you might get on with the instructor it can help your confidence right from the start.

## Conclusion

The most important person on any training course is you. If you are not happy with your training, your equipment or your instructor you will find it much harder to pass. The more information that you can gather before you start your course, the better. If you can, get out to the training school and see where they operate and what they look like. If this is not possible you can still learn a lot over the phone.

Remember – your course will not be cheap. It is a big investment and most people would not spend the sort of money involved here without doing some research. If you make the right choice you will certainly find that learning to ride a motorcycle is an exciting challenge and you will enjoy every minute of it.

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