



**Ministry Of Works & Transport**

To provide Reliable, Safe works, Transport  
Infrastructure & Services

# Certified Motorcycle Helmet User Guide

Wearing a **CERTIFIED** helmet  
correctly on **EVERY** ride!



### FOREWORD

Motorcycle transport plays an essential role in Uganda's mobility and economy, yet riders and passengers remain among the most affected by road crashes. Proper and consistent use of a standard crash helmet is one of the most effective ways to reduce deaths and serious injuries. It is therefore vital that every motorcyclist understands what a safe helmet is, how to choose one, and how to wear it correctly.

The 'Certified Motorcycle Helmet User Guide' has been developed to provide clear, practical and easy to read information that supports safer riding practices across the country. I am grateful to the Global Road Safety Partnership and Safe Way Right Way for the support in the development of this guide, which reflects both international best practice and the realities of Uganda's transport environment.

I encourage all riders, passengers, training institutions, and enforcement agencies to use this guide. By embracing safer behaviours and promoting a culture of protection, we can significantly reduce the human and economic cost of motorcycle crashes and move closer to achieving the road safety target.



Gen. Edward Katumba Wamala  
Minister of Works and Transport

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# WHAT IS A CERTIFIED HELMET?

A **certified helmet** is one that has been scientifically designed and tested to ensure your maximum protection in a crash

The tests carried on a certified helmet include coverage requirements, Impact test, retention system, field of vision and stability.

## How does a Certified Helmet protect you?<sup>1</sup>

### Outer Shell:

Provides a hard, smooth surface that distribute the impact forces and prevents direct contact with your head

### Energy absorbing liner:

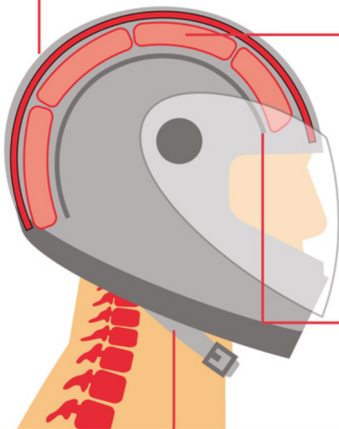
Protects your head by compressing and crushing to absorb the energy from an impact.

### Padding:

Improves comfort and fit of the helmet on your head

### Retention system:

Ensures the helmet remains securely fastened to your head during impact, preventing it from coming off





## WHY MUST A RIDER AND A PASSENGER WEAR A CERTIFIED HELMET?

- Both a rider and a passenger must not only wear certified helmets, but must also ensure it is properly fastened at all times, as they are at risk of serious injury and death in the event of a crash



- Your head is fragile!

Head injuries cause the highest number of fatalities compared to other body parts.



Helmets also offer **protection** against facial injuries, with studies showing a

# 65%

reduction in upper and mid-face injuries<sup>2</sup>.

## DID YOU KNOW?

A Motorcycle/ boda boda should **only carry 2 adults** –1 Rider and 1 passenger, however

- Children below the age of **12** must be accompanied by an adult



- **Certified helmets** reduce the risk of death by 37%<sup>3</sup> **37%**

- **Certified helmets** also reduce the risk of brain injury in the event of a crash by: **65% – 88%**<sup>4</sup>

# WHAT IS THE SAFEST HELMET FOR YOU?

## Full face helmet

Provides the highest level of protection; Often feature a visor for eye protection

*Best For you!*



## Modular (flip-up) helmet

Combines the protection of full-face helmets with the convenience of an open-face option. The chin bar can be flipped up for easier communication and ventilation

*Better than Open face helmet*



## Open face helmet/ Half shell

Offer greater ventilation and visibility, making them popular for urban or classic riding.

it does not fully protect the face or chin, so riders may need to supplement with extra eye and chin protection.



# HOW DO YOU IDENTIFY A CERTIFIED HELMET?



**A Certified helmet  
must have  
a certification mark!**



Common certification marks include:



## DID YOU KNOW?

**Wearing fake/uncertified helmets increases the risk of serious head injuries and death in a crash**

- Uncertified helmets are made using sub-standard materials and lack the protective features necessary to protect your head in the event of a crash.



## HOW DO YOU TELL COUNTERFEIT HELMETS?

Counterfeit helmets are replicas of certified helmets but made of sub-standard materials.

- They do not have any standard certification
- They lack any proper labeling or markings
- They have poor-quality retention system components and minimal thickness energy absorbing liner.
- They are usually cheaper than certified helmets



## DID YOU KNOW?

- Fastening of the helmet strap is extremely necessary!
- Buying a certified helmet ensures maximum comfort and safety.
- A properly adjusted helmet fits securely over a hijab without compromising safety.
- **Sub-standard** helmets have an extremely poor quality retention system that will likely not keep the helmet on the head during a crash exposing your head to injury.





## DID YOU KNOW?



**Not wearing a certified helmet while riding results in a **Fine of 40,000 UGX!****<sup>5</sup>

The police can differentiate a certified helmet and a sub-standard helmet! Ensure your helmet is always properly fastened to avoid any fines

## AS A POLICE OFFICER, How do you enforce the law before issuing a penalty?

### Officer's checklist<sup>6,7</sup>

- ☒ **Helmet Presence:** Ensure that both rider and passenger are actually wearing a certified helmet.
- ☒ **Proper Fit and Positioning:** Helmet should sit level on the head, not tilted back or forward.
- ☒ **Stability:** Hold the helmet and gently shake the rider's head— helmet should remain snug and not shift significantly
- ☒ **Chin Strap Fastened:** Verify that the chin strap is secured and adjusted snugly under the chin—not loose or dangling.
- ☒ **Certified Helmet:** Look for a recognized safety standard label, confirming the helmet meets mandatory safety requirements.
- ☒ **In Good Condition:** Free of cracks or severe damage. Liner/Straps: Intact and not excessively worn. Visor/Eye-port: Clear, functional, and not obstructing vision
- ☒ **Behavioural Awareness:** Be alert to any signs of impaired vision or communication by rider which might indicate use of an unsafe helmet.
- ☒ **Presence of other risks:** Check for drink driving and speed above the prescribed limits. Drivers should maintain a zero-blood alcohol concentration (BAC) limit when carrying child passengers, and a max. speed limit should be reduced to 10 or 15 km/hr on paths with mixed use (e.g., pedestrians and bicycles at the same time).
- ☒ **Child passengers:** Children should always ride behind, and never in front of the rider
- ☒ **Headlights:** Drivers should always travel with headlights on.

# WHAT DOES THE LAW SAY ON HELMET USE?

Both riders and passengers **must** wear a certified helmet.<sup>8</sup>



The certified helmet must be properly fastened.<sup>9</sup>



Riding a motor cycle without wearing a certified helmet leads to a fine equivalent to 40,000 UGX.<sup>10</sup>

The helmet worn shall comply with the standard issued by Uganda National Bureau of Standards: US 774<sup>11</sup>





# HOW DO YOU CHOOSE THE RIGHT HELMET ?

## Part 1 - Size

### **Step 1: Measure your head circumference**

Wrap a tape measure just above your eyebrows.

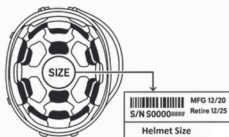


Refer to helmet size chart (attached on page 14)

| SIZE CHART |          |          |          |
|------------|----------|----------|----------|
| S          | M        | L        | XL       |
| 53-54 cm   | 55-56 cm | 57-58 cm | 59-60 cm |



Confirm helmet size and certification



### **Step 2: Try on multiple helmets**



### **Step 3: Wear the helmet for an extended period:**

This helps identify any potential pressure points or discomfort



# HOW DO YOU CHOOSE THE RIGHT HELMET ?

## Part 2 - Fit

### Snug fit

The helmet should feel snug but not uncomfortably tight. It should fit uniformly around your head with a slight, even pressure.



### Movement

Try to move the helmet from side to side and up and down. A properly fitted helmet should stay in place.



### Adjust the straps

Ensure the chin strap is snug and secure, but not overly tight.



### Balaclava

Consider wearing a balaclava or other headwear. If you typically wear these items while riding, test the fit with them on.



**Do not ride  
without  
fastening your  
helmet straps!**

With the helmet buckled, you should be able to fit no more than two fingers between the chin strap and your chin



# HOW DO YOU CHOOSE THE RIGHT HELMET ?

## Part 3 - Quality

### Always buy brand new helmets

Do **NOT** buy second-hand helmets!



### Ensure the helmet has been certified to a national helmet safety standard

Look for certifications like Uganda National Bureau of Standards



### Inspect chin straps, retention systems and rivets

Ensure they are sturdy and securely attached.



### Check for thick energy absorbing liner (25mm or more)



### Consider weight of the helmet

A heavier helmet may not be as comfortable for extended rides.



### Think about the design and style

Choose a helmet that suits your riding needs and preferences.



# HOW DO YOU ENSURE MAXIMUM HELMET PROTECTION?

Wear your helmet for **every** ride, under all circumstances, weather conditions and trip lengths



Helmet should be worn low on the forehead and level



Use the fit pads as necessary so that the helmet does not move from side to side while you are riding



Buckle it up properly. Use two fingers to test.



Choose a helmet that meets national safety standards



Replace any helmet that has aged more than 5 years or been involved in a crash



# PROPER MAINTENANCE AND CARE FOR YOUR HELMET



## DID YOU KNOW?

Most helmets are designed to provide effective protection for about 3–5 years from the date of manufacture. Even if you have never used the helmet, the materials like the padding age over time and gradually lose their protective ability. As such, replace your helmet every 5 years even without any crash or visible damage.

## HELMET SIZE CHART <sup>12</sup>

| Size            | Head Circumference |                 |
|-----------------|--------------------|-----------------|
|                 | Centimeters        | Inches          |
| <b>X-Small</b>  | 53 cm – 54 cm      | 20.87" – 21.26" |
| <b>Small</b>    | 55 cm – 56 cm      | 21.65" – 22.05" |
| <b>Medium</b>   | 57 cm – 58 cm      | 22.44" – 22.83" |
| <b>Large</b>    | 59 cm – 60 cm      | 23.23" – 23.62" |
| <b>X-Large</b>  | 61 cm – 62 cm      | 24.02" – 24.41" |
| <b>2X-Large</b> | 63 cm – 64 cm      | 24.80" – 25.20" |
| <b>3X-Large</b> | 65 cm – 66 cm      | 25.60" – 25.98" |
| <b>4X-Large</b> | 67 cm – 68 cm      | 26.34" – 26.77" |
| <b>5X-Large</b> | 69 cm – 70 cm      | 27.17" – 27.56" |

**NOTE:** This is only a general guide for helmet sizing. Please refer to the manufacturer's sizing chart for proper sizing information.

# Need help?



## EMERGENCY RESPONSE NUMBERS



EMS Short Code  
912



Toll Free Number  
0800100066



Naguru Emergency Number  
+256-709-187581 / +256-761-619432 / 031-331-3600



Naguru Medical Call and Dispatch Centre  
+256-707-808367 / +256-709-187-581

## References

1. A technical guide to assist the development and implementation of a motorcycle helmet standard in low- and middle-income countries – Smith T, Inclan C, Fleiter J, Cliff D, Rahman T, Lang B, 2025<sup>1</sup>
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4. Safety of Passengers on Powered Two Wheelers – Global Road Safety Partnership (GRSP) and International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), August 2024<sup>6</sup>
5. Universal Motorcycle Helmet Use Laws – National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), Countermeasures That Work: A Highway Safety Countermeasure Guide, 10th Edition, 2026<sup>7</sup>
6. US 774; Protective helmets for motorcycle users – Specification<sup>12</sup>



## **DEVELOPED BY;**



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Road Safety Advocacy Coalition-Uganda

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## **EMERGENCY NUMBERS IN CASE OF A CRASH**



EMS Short Code  
912



Toll Free Number  
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