



Fashionable Scooter Safety

One woman has seen the need to make scooters safer through training.

([PRWEB](#)) June 26, 2004 -- Scooters are the hip new mode of transportation in American. Since 2000, more than 60 Vespa dealerships have opened nationwide, many of them in big cities such as San Francisco, Seattle, Denver, Memphis, Boston, and New York -- where two have opened in just the last year. And with deals with Starbucks and Coach, Vespa scooters are selling at levels like never before. However, no matter how hip, cool, or chic they might be, safety concerns are growing as quickly as sales.

The surge in scooter injuries, which has gone hand-in-hand with their surge in popularity, has been as sharp. According to the Consumer Product Safety Commission, in 2000 there were an estimated 4,390 hospital emergency room treated injuries associated with motorized scooters. This represents more than a 200-percent increase over the 1999 estimate of 1,330 injuries..

Like motorcycles, scooters have a reputation for being dangerous. But most of these injuries can be prevented through education. A study undertaken by the Traffic Safety Center at USC found that training substantially reduced accidents and their injuries. This study showed that the vast majority of riders involved in accidents did not know the basics behind accident avoidance. Of all accidents, 92% occurred with riders who were self-taught or learned from family or friends.

Which is why Diane Howells started classes specifically to teach owners of motor scooters how to avoid accidents, and what to do when something goes wrong. As the owner of the Motorcycle Safety School, and someone responsible for having trained more than 8,000 students since she opened her school in 1999, she should know.

"Scooters are great for New York City. They add a European flair, and make it much more accessible for everyone. However, with all the large trucks and cars on the roads, just a little training can save a lot of lives and injuries."

Diane and her Motorcycle Safety School train students to ride safely in a fun environment. "We don't want to take the fun out of owning a scooter. We just want to make it safer for them to ride one." Says Diane, "It is important people enjoy themselves. Fun is the main reason anyone buys a scooter. And making sure they have fun in the classes is the best way to get them to remember what to do when they're out on the road."

Diane has been riding since 1994 and received her instructional license while in Vermont. She directed a documentary Motorcycle Diaries, which has aired on the Oxygen Network and was part of the 2002 Guggenheim Museum's Art of the Motorcycle exhibit. She now holds classes at three locations including Brooklyn, NY; Ulster County, NY, and New Jersey, and continues to generate the attention of such media and news outlets as The New York Times, NY Post, ABC Eyewitness News, WB News and many more.

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