To Reduce Fatal Motorcycle Crashes, First Understand How They Happen

The U.S. DOT’s National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and the Volpe Center worked together to better understand the motorcycle crash problem, a critical first step toward improving the safety of motorcycle operators and other road users.

Volpe’s team evaluated five years of motorcycle crash data. They identified over 507,000 motorcycle crashes—including 23,245 fatal crashes.

These crashes were classified using complex criteria to generate 36 possible pre-crash scenarios.

Volpe experts identified 11 motorcycle pre-crash scenarios that account for 70 percent of motorcycle crashes and 81 percent of fatal motorcycle crashes.

By identifying predominant pre-crash scenarios, researchers, technology developers, and vehicle manufacturers can focus on mitigation efforts and innovative technology applications to reduce fatal motorcycle crashes.