

'Be mindful of clothing while riding motorcycles'

► Loose garment such as *telekung* could pose safety hazard when entangled in wheels, leading to fatal crashes: Social activist

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PETALING JAYA: With Muslims now attending Tarawih prayers regularly at mosques and *surau* during Ramadan, there are growing concerns about the safety of loose-fitting prayer attire, especially *telekung* (worn by Muslim women during prayers), which can get caught in motorcycle wheels and lead to crashes.

Alliance for a Safe Community chairman Tan Sri Lee Lam Thye said wearing loose clothing while riding a motorcycle, especially as a pillion rider, poses a serious safety risk.

He warned that garments such as *telekung* or long skirts can easily be caught by the wind and entangled in motorcycle wheels, posing a serious risk of fatal accidents.

"Public awareness on this issue remains low, so there is a need for more intensive educational efforts to inform motorcyclists about the risks associated with their choice of attire," he said.

In 2023, a 64-year-old man lost control of

his motorcycle and crashed after his wife's prayer clothes got stuck in the rear wheel as they were heading for *Maghrib* prayers. He later succumbed to his injuries.

Lee said such an unexpected incident should serve as a reminder that road safety extends beyond just obeying traffic laws; it also includes being mindful of attire while riding motorcycles.

"Many only recognise the dangers after an accident occurs, but by then, it is too late.

"Crashes involving loose garments, such as *telekung*, long skirts or scarves, can be prevented with greater awareness and precautionary measures."

Lee said awareness efforts must be intensified through collaborative initiatives involving the government, road safety organisations, and the public.

He stressed that all road users must take preventive measures, as safety is a shared responsibility that requires proactive action to prevent crashes.

"Continuous road safety education programmes to promote safer riding and driving habits are important.

"Ensuring safety on the road is an ongoing effort that must involve all parties to reduce risks and effectively save lives," he said.

Universiti Putra Malaysia Road Safety Research Centre head Assoc Prof Dr Law Teik Hua said many Malaysians understand the importance of wearing helmets and reflective jackets, but concerns about loose clothing are often overlooked.

"To prevent accidents caused by loose clothing, motorcyclists and passengers

should take several precautions, including opting for well-fitted apparel that does not dangle or flow, as loose garments can easily get caught in the motorcycle's moving parts."

Law said motorcycle crashes caused by loose garments can result in severe injuries, especially when they become entangled in a bike's moving parts; they can trigger sudden and violent crashes.

"Such incidents can lead to traumatic brain injuries, even if a helmet is worn, as well as broken bones, internal organ damage, and severe abrasions from being dragged or thrown off the motorcycle."

Law said Malaysia's road safety recommendations emphasise wearing helmets, using reflective gear, and following traffic laws; however, there are no specific regulations addressing the dangers of loose clothing for motorcyclists and passengers.

He added that the gap highlights the need for more comprehensive safety measures that consider all potential hazards, including attire-related risks.

"Stricter laws and increased awareness campaigns are necessary. Public education efforts could include social media, television, and radio campaigns highlighting the dangers of loose garments while riding.

"Posting safety reminders at mosques, prayer halls, and public spaces can also encourage worshippers to secure their clothing before getting on a motorcycle. With proper education and policy measures, we can significantly reduce accidents caused by loose clothing and improve road safety for all motorcyclists," he said.



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