

From our Rider Education Department

Full Face Fit and Usage

By James R. Davis

There are lots of reasons to use a full face helmet, but you won't unless the one you choose fits properly. Believe me when I tell you that no two brands of helmets will fit quite the same, despite being marked with the same sizes. (It is maybe more important to note that no two heads are shaped the same despite being able to wear similarly sized helmets.) That should tell you that expecting to wear a helmet gifted to you or that happened to come with a bike you buy is a long shot, at best. Oh, you may find it 'wearable' for a few hundred miles, but if you take a serious trip on your bike and that helmet was not selected for proper fit, you can plan on not being comfortable for long or a desire to end that trip long before you had planned to.

There are three issues involved in proper fit:

- 1- Snuggness - Your helmet must not be able to twist or 'lift' because of the wind.
- 2- Forehead - Your helmet must not leave a red mark/indentation on your forehead.
- 3- Ear holes - Your helmet must not be able to fold or even press constantly on your ears.

Proper snuggness of a NEW helmet is found when the liner presses firmly (but not tight or uncomfortably) against your cheeks. There should be no gap between cheeks and liner on a new helmet. After a few weeks the liner will form fit (because of compression) to the point that you will not notice any tightness against your cheeks, though the liner will remain in gentle contact with both.

Once the snuggness issue is dealt with you can deal with forehead fit. Invariably you will notice an area of redness on a part of your forehead after wearing a new full face helmet for several minutes. You can cure that with the use of a large spoon. Use the back side of that spoon and compress the Styrofoam in the part of the helmet causing the marks. You will not have to remove the helmet liner to do this. After you assure that the cheeks and forehead are fit properly you need to assure that your ears are not contacted in any way while wearing the helmet. Whether you have had earphones installed or not it is imperative that your ears are free from contact. To cure any problems you will have to pull away the liner and use a knife and cut away part of the Styrofoam around the ear wells within the helmet. A little too much is FAR preferable than not enough! (After an hour of wearing a helmet that binds your ears in any way you will be in simply awful pain - Honest! Trust me!)

Now that your helmet is properly fitted consider buying and using a skull cap with it. Two reasons:

- 1- You can wash the skull cap but you cannot wash the helmet liner
- 2- You can soak the skull cap in water before putting it on and it will keep you nice and cool on very hot days

By the way, you might want to fold the ear flaps up so that they do not touch your ears when you put your helmet on.
Honest! Trust me! [grin]
