

# Do I need a license to drive a scooter in Asia?

On: [Apr 04 2018](#)



Do you need to get a license if you are going to hire a motorcycle on your travels? Short answer is 'Yes. Definitely.' Destinations like Bali, Thailand and Vietnam are all too regular haunts of the Singapore expat set. How many times have you traveled to these places without travel insurance and how many times have you hired a motorbike – presumably legally – to get around with or without Singapore travel insurance? Don't have any? [Get some](#) here.

Last weekend there was an incident in Koh Samui where an [Australian man had an accident on his motorcycle](#) which has left him in a critical condition in a hospital on the island. His travel insurance will not cover the damages as he was not in possession of a license that allowed him to drive a scooter in Thailand. The hospital fees are \$20,000 a day that his family have to pay until he is well enough to be repatriated back to Perth. This could be months.

Let's revisit the simple 'Do's' and 'Don'ts' of motorcycle hire while travelling so that this does not happen to another family.

**DO** get travel insurance! Always! We travel all of the time as expats in Singapore. [Get in touch](#) to get an annual policy for as little as \$350 annually per person and then you are totally covered for 12 months. Can't afford it? Get a single trip plan. But if you are travelling more than four times in a year, then an annual policy works out to be as cost effective as buying multiple single trip policies each time you travel.

If forgoing insurance is coming down to the cost, then you probably can't afford the \$180,000 + hospital bill if you have an accident.

**DO** get an international drivers license in your home country if you are thinking about hiring a motorcycle.

**DO** check the driving laws of the country that you are visiting. If you do not abide by them and something goes wrong, you will be at fault and liable for that. In many South East Asian countries, you will often be allowed to rent a bike without the correct permits to do so. Some vendors will tell you the wrong information just to close the sale if they think that you don't have the correct permits to ride. If you are in an accident, you are at fault and subject to pay any damages rendered. Blaming the operator who rented the bike to you will not cut it. It's up to you to check the rules and cooperate with them. Harsh but true. [Call us](#) if you have any questions.

**DO** always wear a helmet. ALWAYS. Whether the law stipulates it or not. This is a no brainer.

**DON'T** drive under the influence. As tempting as it may be to jump on your scooter after necking a few mojitos at Sisterfields, you will be breaking the law and any insurance that you have will be invalidated. Swat up on the road rules and obey them. Final.

If you need a permit, make sure that you have it. If you have an accident without the correct paperwork, you will be subject to cover all expenses.

**DON'T** think that just because you have a global medical plan, that you will be covered if your travel insurance doesn't have your back. The same rules apply for medical insurance; you must be operating within the law when you sustained your injuries otherwise no dice. It will fall to you to take care of the damages if you have had an accident as a result of illegal activity. Riding a scooter without the correct permits constitutes illegal activity. If you have any questions about your cover, [give us a shout](#) and we will help you out.

We understand that it is not sexy or spontaneous and Vespas look way cooler than a Bluebird taxi for your wicked #wonderlust shot. But wouldn't you rather that than your family having to rustle up hundreds of thousands of dollars to cover your medical bills while you are in a coma in a hospital in Bali/Thailand/Sri Lanka somewhere? No? Same here.

[Give us a holler](#) today to make sure that you are covered for your adventures and make sure that you read up on road rules and [click here to download](#) a PDF of this article if you have found this useful!