



RISK CATEGORY ZONING

The design of garments and how they are tested have both been influenced by the experience of several decades, whereby manufacturers designed their garments to provide most protection to areas which generally hit the ground hardest, most often and for the longest period (for example, the shoulders, elbows, seat, hips and knees) and a lower level of protection to those areas which ordinarily seldom, if ever, come into contact with the road, or do so only for relatively brief periods (for example, the armpits, the front of the chest and abdomen, the insides of the thighs and the back of the knees). Research into the distribution of damage to motorcycle clothing, which was peer reviewed by the American Society for Testing and Materials, formed the basis of the four zones specified in EN 13595-1:2002:

Zone 1: Areas at high risk of impact and abrasion

Zone 2: Areas at high risk of abrasion

Zone 3: Areas at moderate risk of abrasion

Zone 4: Areas at lowest risk of abrasion

Zones 1 and 2 are combined: the limb joint impact protectors defining the coverage of Zone 1, with Zone 2 extending beyond this, recognising that, whilst a rider might land on the point of their elbow, when they slide along the road surface it is generally a much larger area of the lower arm of their clothing, extending down towards the wrist, which sustains heavy abrasion damage.

The proposed content of prEN 17092 sees the Zone 1 area retained, but Zone 2 is combined with Zone 3 at the latter's much lower test requirements. This means that, in the scenario described in the previous paragraph, the rider would be wearing a jacket which would only feature materials capable of dealing with a moderate risk of abrasion in places where the current standard deems them to be at high risk of abrasion.

This change to the zoning layout is a further indication that, in combination with changes to the abrasion test, the new standard in its current draft form might represent a significant reduction in safety available to motorcyclists. Establishing lower performance classes and commensurate requirements is acceptable, but only if the higher performance criteria are retained.