



The State Motorcycle Safety Association (SMSA)
(Formally known as the National Association of State Motorcycle Safety Administrators)
Position Statements

State Motorcycle Safety Association

SMSA Position Statement #: 15-01

Effective Date: April 26, 2016

Revised: September 14, 2022

15-01 Personal Protective Gear

The State Motorcycle Safety Association's (SMSA) position is that all motorcyclists and passengers should use the following motorcyclist-specific personal protective equipment to reduce injury and/or the possibility of death:

- Head, face, and eye protection
 - Properly fitted motorcycle helmet meeting, at a minimum, the Federal Department of Transportation (DOT) FMVSS 218 helmet standard, full face helmet with integrated face shield is preferred.
 - Face shield or motorcyclist specific eyewear meeting the VESC-8 standard and/or ANSI/ISEA Z87.1-220.
- Properly fitted motorcyclist-specific clothing, armored preferred, to include:
 - Full-fingered gloves;
 - Over the ankle boots;
 - Long-pants; and
 - Long-sleeved jacket.
- The use of high-visibility/retro-reflective materials is preferred.

State Motorcycle Safety Association

SMSA Position Statement #: 15-02

Effective Date: April 26, 2016

Revised: September 14, 2022

15-02 Model National Standards for Rider Training

The State Motorcycle Safety Association's (SMSA) position is that the NHTSA Model National Standards for Entry-Level Rider Training shall serve as the minimum standard for rider education and training programs. It is also the position of SMSA that each state should utilize a quality control process to ensure they meet the National Standards on a continued basis. Rider education and training programs should be evaluated on an ongoing and routine basis.

The State Motorcycle Safety Association (SMSA) supports the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) Model National Standards for Entry Level Motorcycle Rider Training.

The standards include:

- Model National Standards for Entry-Level Motorcycle Rider Training – the Model Standards establish baseline content that all entry-level riders should be taught in motorcycle rider training classes held in the United States, and
- Model National Administrative Standards for Motorcycle Rider Training Programs – the Administrative Standards establish a minimum acceptable level of operation for motorcycle rider training programs.

Note: The NHTSA Standards are applicable to two-wheel motorcycle rider entry-level training only.

State Motorcycle Safety Association
SMSA Position Statement #: 17-03
Effective Date: September 27, 2017

Revised: September 14, 2022

17-03 Instructor Rules of Professional Conduct

The State Motorcycle Safety Association's (SMSA) position is that each State establish or approve comprehensive professional rules of conduct for rider education and training instructors.

State Motorcycle Safety Association
SMSA Position Statement #: 17-04
Effective Date: September 27, 2017

Revised: September 14, 2022

17-04 State Funding

The State Motorcycle Safety Association's (SMSA) position is that any fees assigned for state motorcycle/motorcyclist safety purposes (e.g., fines) should be used solely for and made available in full to the state motorcyclist safety program.

State Motorcycle Safety Association
SMSA Position Statement #: 17-05
Effective Date: September 27, 2017

Revised: September 14, 2022

17- 05 State Programs

The State Motorcycle Safety Association (SMSA) recognizes that state motorcyclist safety and rider education programs are directed by the state and state programs have sole discretion in the administration and funding of state motorcyclist safety and training initiatives.

State Motorcycle Safety Association
SMSA Position Statement #: 17-06
Effective Date: September 27, 2017

Revised: September 14, 2022

17- 06 Autocycles

The State Motorcycle Safety Association's (SMSA) position is that autocycles, defined as any motor vehicle with three wheels in contact with the roadway at any one time, has an occupant compartment, is equipped with a steering wheel, safety belts, and rollbar or roll hoops, are not to be confused with motorcycles based on their distinctly different design, operation, and handling characteristics. Any motor vehicle with three or fewer wheels without a straddle seat or handlebars should not be defined as a motorcycle.

While autocycles often come with vehicle identification numbers (VINs) and manufacturers certificates of origin (MCOs) that are similar to that of a motorcycle, they should be defined in statute as a separate vehicle type. Operators should be required to meet requirements (e.g., knowledge and skills tests) specific for the State's vehicle classification for the licensing of autocycles.

State Motorcycle Safety Association
SMSA Position Statement #: 17-07
Effective Date: September 27, 2017

Revised: September 14, 2022

17-07 Novelty Helmets

The State Motorcycle Safety Association's (SMSA) position is that all motorcyclists should be informed on the lack of protection novelty helmets provide versus motorcycle helmets that, at a minimum, meet the DOT FMVSS 218 standard (see SMSA Position Statement #: 15-01 Personal Protective Gear).

State Motorcycle Safety Association
SMSA Position Statement #: 18-08
Effective Date: November 20, 2018

Revised: September 14, 2022

18-08 Lane Splitting/Filtering

The State Motorcycle Safety Association's (SMSA) position is more research on Lane Splitting and Lane Filtering is required to make a fully informed decision on the practices and the impact on safety.

Lane splitting refers to the practice in which motorcyclists ride between lanes of moving traffic. Lane filtering refers to the practice of moving to the front of stopped traffic.

State Motorcycle Safety Association
SMSA Position Statement #: 20-09
Effective Date: January 24, 2020

Revised: September 14, 2022

20-09 Rider Education and Training Requirements

The State Motorcycle Safety Association's (SMSA) position is that rider education and training provide a foundation for all riders regardless of licensure status. Therefore, all current and potential motorcycle riders should be strongly encouraged to participate in rider education and training course(s).

The completion of additional and ongoing (life-long) education and training is highly recommended.

State Motorcycle Safety Association
SMSA Position Statement #: 20-10
Effective Date: January 24, 2020

Revised: September 14, 2022

20-10 NHTSA's Highway Safety Program Guideline No. 3 Motorcycle Safety

The State Motorcycle Safety Association (SMSA) supports the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's (NHTSA's) Uniform Guidelines for State Highway Safety Programs – Highway Safety Program Guideline No. 3 Motorcycle Safety.

The SMSA advocates for all State programs to utilize Guideline No. 3 Motorcycle Safety to guide their comprehensive motorcyclist safety programming.

State Motorcycle Safety Association
SMSA Position Statement #: 20-11
Effective Date: January 24, 2020

Revised: September 14, 2022

20-11 National Highway Traffic Safety Administration Funding

The State Motorcycle Safety Association's (SMSA) position is that the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) is an invaluable partner in the arena of motorcyclist safety, and values its leadership, guidance, and support.

It is important to remain focused on motorcyclist safety while exploring new strategies with a goal of zero fatalities. The SMSA continues to support NHTSA and its efforts to administer funding for comprehensive motorcyclist safety programming.

State Motorcycle Safety Association
SMSA Position Statement #: 20-12
Effective Date: January 24, 2020

Revised: September 14, 2022

20-12 The Safe System Approach / Zero Traffic Fatalities

The State Motorcycle Safety Association's (SMSA) position is that motorcyclists and stakeholders must be included in safety initiatives to eliminate serious injuries and fatalities of all roadway users.

As state programs embrace The Safe System Approach with the goal of zero serious injuries and traffic fatalities, it is important that motorcycles and motorcyclists are taken into consideration in the development and evaluation of all possible solutions.

State Motorcycle Safety Association
SMSA Position Statement #: 21-13
Effective Date: September 18, 2021

Revised: September 14, 2022

21-13 Motorcycle Rider Training Reciprocity

The State Motorcycle Safety Association's (SMSA) position is that U.S jurisdictions should honor the completion of an entry-level rider education and training course provided by other states, U.S. territories, or the military for a motorcycle permit/license/endorsement.

As states recognize the exchange of a driver's license from another state, rider training and testing should also be recognized.

State Motorcycle Safety Association
SMSA Position Statement #: 21-14
Effective Date: September 18, 2021

Revised: September 14, 2022

21-14 Rider Training and Licensure for All Street Legal Powered Cycles

The State Motorcycle Safety Association's (SMSA) position is that operators of any street legal powered cycle should receive formal rider training and meet state licensing requirements to operate on public roadways.

Powered cycles include any street legal two or three-wheel vehicle operated on public roadways, such as two-wheel cycles, three-wheel cycles (excluding autocycles), scooters and mopeds (excluding bicycles), no matter the powertrain type (e.g., electric).

State Motorcycle Safety Association
SMSA Position Statement #: 23-15
Effective Date: September 13, 2023

Revised: N/A

Buy-America Act

The State Motorcycle Safety Association's (SMSA) position is that State Motorcycle Safety Programs should seek to comply with the Buy America Act (BAA) when using federal funding resources. However, the SMSA recognizes that due to the unique needs of motorcycle safety programs, there are situations where products in compliance with BAA are not available, adequate, or the best for the safety program situations.

The SMSA encourages State Motorcycle Safety Programs to work closely and collaboratively with their State Highway Safety Office(s) (SHSO) to request BAA waivers to obtain appropriate equipment for motorcycle safety and training programs to be successful.

State Motorcycle Safety Association
SMSA Position Statement #: 23-16
Effective Date: September 13, 2023

Revised: N/A

Advanced Driver Assistance Systems (ADAS) / Crash Avoidance Technology Recognition of Motorcyclists

The State Motorcycle Safety Association's (SMSA) position is that Advanced Driver Assistance Systems (ADAS) or similar crash avoidance technologies be evaluated on their ability to safely detect and react to motorcyclists before being deployed for consumer purchase and use on public roads.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) and the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) must take steps to develop minimum performance standards for such systems and require all new vehicles equipped with these systems meet those standards before being made available to the public.

State Motorcycle Safety Association
SMSA Position Statement #: 23-17
Effective Date: September 13, 2023

Revised: N/A

Alcohol and Drug Impairment

The State Motorcycle Safety Association's (SMSA) position is that States should develop, fund, implement, and maintain methods to detect, enforce, and sanction impaired roadway users to reduce the substantial crash proportion of the total motorcycle rider crashes. High visibility enforcement coupled with post-conviction interventions should include, but not be limited to, vehicle ignition interlocks, treatment, education, and sanctions on operator's license. State Impaired Driving Task Forces should include member(s) of the motorcyclist safety community.

State Motorcycle Safety Association
SMSA Position Statement #: 23-18
Effective Date: September 13, 2023

Revised: N/A

Graduated Licensing System (GLS)

The State Motorcycle Safety Association's (SMSA) position is that GLS has significant potential for reducing motorcyclist crashes, injuries, and fatalities. As States explore implementation of a GLS, they should consider the strengths, challenges, and available research. States should include the motorcyclist community in exploring the implementation of GLS.

A GLS works by limiting novice rider's permissions (permits) and gradually expanding or increasing permissions as the rider progresses through the phases of the system. In this way, riding experience is obtained initially in conditions of low risk, with more challenging conditions only encountered once the rider has reached a demonstrated and specified level of experience and judgement.

State Motorcycle Safety Association
SMSA Position Statement #: 23-19
Effective Date: September 13, 2023

Revised: N/A

Tiered Motorcycle Licensing (TML)

The State Motorcycle Safety Association's (SMSA) position is that tiered motorcycle licensing has potential for reducing motorcyclist crashes, injuries, and fatalities. As States explore implementation of TML, they should consider the strengths, challenges, and available research. States should include the motorcyclist community in exploring the implementation of TML.

Tiered licensing limits the power or power to weight ratio in steps as riders gain experience.

State Motorcycle Safety Association
SMSA Position Statement #: 23-20
Effective Date: September 13, 2023

Revised: N/A

Motorcycle Operator and Passenger Helmet Use

The State Motorcycle Safety Association's (SMSA) position is that States should develop and advocate for initiatives to promote US DOT compliant helmet use for all motorcycle operators and passengers.

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's (NHTSA) Countermeasures That Work (2020), implementation of all-rider helmet use has been shown to be the most effective initiative to decrease crash fatalities.

State Motorcycle Safety Association
SMSA Position Statement #: 24-21
Effective Date: September 11, 2024

Revised: N/A

Designated State Motorcyclist Safety Group

The State Motorcycle Safety Association's (SMSA) position is that it is critical States create, through official action, an advisory group comprised of partners and stakeholders in the motorcyclist safety community. The group should include a diverse array of motorcycling backgrounds and interests.

See: SMSA's Guidelines for Establishing State Motorcycle Safety Coalitions

State Motorcycle Safety Association
SMSA Position Statement #: 24-22
Effective Date: September 11, 2024

Revised: N/A

Antilock Braking Systems (ABS) on Motorcycles

The State Motorcycle Safety Association's (SMSA) position is that motorcyclists should be educated on the effectiveness of motorcycles with ABS. Motorcycle ABS has proven effective at reducing fatal and non-fatal motorcyclist crashes, and new on-road motorcycles should have ABS. SMSA supports the advancement and adoption of ABS systems like cornering ABS and motorcycle stability control.

State Motorcycle Safety Association
SMSA Position Statement #: 24-23
Effective Date: September 11, 2024

Revised: N/A

Redundancy in Countermeasures

The State Motorcycle Safety Association's (SMSA) position is that the use of multiple crash avoidance and mitigation measures improves motorcyclist safety. No single countermeasure prevents every crash, injury, or fatality. Repetition and variance in countermeasures maximize motorcyclist safety.