



SMSA Spotlight Magazine

Fall 2018

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New ad campaign reminds motorcyclists to ride sober



ONE IN THREE SINGLE-VEHICLE MOTORCYCLIST FATALITIES INVOLVE DRINKING

By: Michigan Office of Highway Safety Planning
www.michigan.gov/ohsp

Summer is Michigan’s busiest season for motorcyclists as there are more than 250,000 registered motorcycles in the state. It’s also the most dangerous, as 65 percent of motorcycle crash fatalities occur between June and September. One in three single-vehicle motorcyclist fatalities in the state involve alcohol. During the busy season, the Michigan Office of Highway Safety Planning (OHSP) released an advertising campaign aimed at reminding motorcyclists to “Ride Sober.”

During the week of June 18th, a new television ad filmed at the Elmwood Cemetery in Detroit aired on cable channels throughout the state. During the month of July, highway billboards with the “Ride Sober” slogan were displayed in counties with the highest number of motorcycle crashes and fatalities (Wayne, Oakland, Macomb, Kent, Genesee and Kalamazoo counties).

“Summer is a wonderful time to ride your motorcycle in our great state,” said OHSP Director Michael L. Prince.



“It’s great to ride with friends, to ride with family, or to ride by yourself. But you should always ride sober.”

The TV commercial titled “Fallen Brothers,” showed the impact of drinking and riding.

“It’s a very powerful message,” said Prince. “The images of these motorcyclists following a hearse in this beautiful cemetery really demonstrates the dangers of drinking and riding.”



According to the Michigan State Police Criminal Justice Information Center, 140 people were killed in motorcycle crashes in Michigan during 2017. That’s down three from 143 in 2016, but still well above the 2008-2014 average number of 120 fatalities.

“We’re hoping these campaigns and increased awareness will significantly reduce the number of alcohol-involved motorcycle deaths, and motorcycle deaths in general,” said Prince.

You can view the television ad by [clicking here](#).

Follow the OHSP on Facebook – facebook.com/miohsp and on Twitter - @miohsp.

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SMSA Listserv

Please take advantage of the SMSA Listserv hosted by Oregon State University. The SMSA Listserv is an easy and efficient way to contact your fellow SMSA members with questions relating to Motorcycle Safety and Rider Education. To sign up, visit the SMSA website Members Only section and choose the tab for Listserv. Summaries from past postings are also listed under the Listserv tab.

Range Safety Items Sometimes Overlooked

By: Stacey “Ax” Axmaker
www.BeCrashFree.com

When we are out on the range teaching a class, there is a lot to pay attention to. Traffic outside of the range (including cars, bicycles, pedestrians, dogs, etc.), each of up to 12 students and their motorcycles, our fellow instructor, the weather, surface conditions, knowing what exercise we are doing, reversals and staging, and of course, evaluating and coaching our riders.

Here are three additional items that I have seen sometimes missed, and until they were pointed out to me, I missed them as well.

#1: Going Toes Up

No, it’s not the result of a bad crash; it has to do with shifting. When students first learn to shift it is not only a new skill; for many, a standard transmission is a new concept. Perhaps for this reason, shifting can take up a large amount of a student’s cognitive resources and as a result, sometimes they leave their left foot under the shifter after getting 2nd gear. This can be a hazard in left turns (especially with higher speeds and bikes with limited ground clearance). Dragging a toe can really startle some students (possibly leading to a crash) and can even end up pulling their foot off the bike (also possibly leading to a crash).

I have seen 2 approaches that have worked well to help address this. One is a reminder to them in motion – something like “Frank, pull your left toe back from the shifter, please.” The other is to talk to them when they are stopped (or pull them out of the exercise for a few seconds so they are stopped) and tell them to move their left foot back to the normal riding position after upshifting.



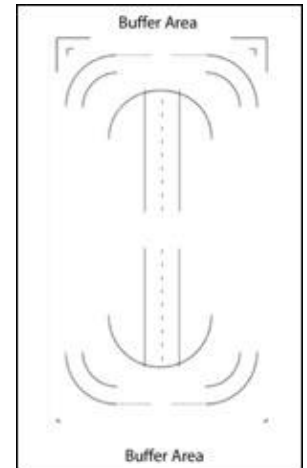
#2: Using up the Buffer Zone

In all the programs I’ve worked in, the ranges are designed with a “buffer area” around them; sometimes called the “run-out” area. I’m sure your experience is the same in this regard. My understanding has always been that the 20’ or 30’ or 40’ buffer area is so that

students have some space between the range and obstacles in the event they run wide or off the range (some kind of mistake or emergency). This space provides room for the student to recover and/or time for the instructor to call out some coaching (“clutch,” “look at me,” etc.), to blow a whistle, or in some other way intervene.

In Western culture, we like to line up for things in a straight line. Not sure why, but we do. When a rider finishes a run and is going to get back in line, they are “targeting” the end of that line (a reasonable thing to do).

Now, if the end of the line is curved and remains on or at the edge of the range, they have the buffer area available if something happens and they need it. If, however, the end of the line is straight and has gone into or all the way through the buffer area (which can easily happen as students swing wide to make the line straight – particularly on the short end of the range), they do not have that buffer area. In these cases, if there is an emergency or mistake, the student may find themselves facing a fixed object up close and personal.



I have seen this addressed effectively with simple and polite requests for the students to keep their bikes on the range as they line up and as they ride around the perimeter (showing them the paint markings that delineate the range edge can also help). The reality is that students forget, and/or their attention is on other things, and/or they get into a mode of just following the rider in front of them. In any case, these simple and polite requests may need to be repeated many times throughout the course of a class to keep the buffer area available. It’s the same as we do when reminding students about their eye protection or ensuring their helmets are strapped – we do it as many times as needed (ideally with a smile, a “please,” and a “thank you”).

#3: Flip it...Flip it Good

The modular helmet was a great development in riding gear, and I wear my modular helmet more than any other. For years, I wore it while riding demos (in basic, experienced, and track-based classes) with the chin bar up. I no longer do so. Here is why.

Reason #1 – The helmet professionals say so. The vast majority of modular helmets are designed to be worn

in the down and latched position. Here are a few statements taken directly from the manufacturers and one from Dave Thom of Collision and Injury Dynamics, Inc.

From the HJC RPHA 90 Owner's Manual, p. 10: "Warning! Attention! Lower and lock before you leave: Never ride with the chin bar in the raised position."

From the Schuberth C4 Owner's Manual, p. 57 and 76 and E1 Owner's Manual, p. 64 and 88: "Caution: Never ride with the chin bar raised."

From the Scorpion EXO-GT3000 Owner's Manual, p. 7: "Warning! Be sure that chin bar is closed securely! Do not operate motorcycle with chin bar in open position!"

From the Shoei Neotec Owner's Manual, p.6: "Warning, do not operate your motorcycle with the face cover open."

From David R. Thom, MS, Partner / Senior Consultant, Collision and Injury Dynamics, Inc.:

"Personally, I'm a big modular fan, I wear modulares more often than any other type of helmet, both on and off-road. Given that we wear helmets to protect our heads when we crash, it does seem silly to intentionally defeat a part of their effectiveness by wearing a modular open. An argument to allow that would be that 'if an open face or even a half-helmet is acceptable, why not let students with modular helmets ride with them open?'



My counter to that is that the open chin bar (and face shield) creates a potential hazard of leverage that is not present on lesser coverage helmets (open face or half-helmets).

(NOTE: Shark makes a nifty design...where the chin bar flips over the face shield and fits tightly against the back of the shell and Shark says it's no problem to wear open. It's very different than conventional modulares.)

Most modulares, including mine, say don't ride with it open. The simple answer is that if the helmet company says you shouldn't ride with it open, I'd agree with them."

In addition to the Shark helmet referred to above, LS2 and Roof also make helmets that are DOT/ECE 22.05 rated and designed to be worn in both the closed (Integral) and open (Jet) configurations. Interestingly, in the owner's manual for the Roof DESMO helmet, it states on page 6 that "for your security, ROOF recommends that a DESMO helmet be worn in the Integral position. So, at least one manufacturer of a modular helmet which is "approved" for use in the open configuration by DOT/ECE recommends that it be worn closed.

While there certainly are some modular helmets that are designed to be worn either in the open or closed position while riding, it can be challenging in the field (on the range) to make those distinctions accurately.

Reason #2 – We are leading by example whenever we are teaching. Of course, every rider is free to wear their modular helmet in the up position (there is no law against it, that I am aware of) and many times, I have made the choice to keep it open for part of my ride. I know many other professional riders have made similar choices (even if just keeping it up for the first few minutes of a ride). As professionals, we are making that decision based on information and knowledge of the risks.

All those times I rode demos with my chin bar up, I believe that I was inadvertently teaching all those students that this is how the helmet is supposed to be worn. I never discussed the dynamics of modular helmets, the manufacturers recommendations, or the risks that a chin bar sticking up can present in a crash. I can't change what I did in the past, but I can (and do) make sure that all my present and future students see a different demo.

The point of all this information on modulares is simply my way of encouraging instructors, schools, programs, and states to decide for themselves what (if any) policy they want to put in place for how their students and instructors wear - and demonstrate the use of - modular helmets.

When I was made aware and educated about these issues, I believe it improved the work I do. It is my hope that you found some value for your work in this article.

Thanks folks! Keep serving the riders and future riders of America and Be Crash Free!

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The Future of Motorcycle Safety and Rider Training

By: Brett Robinson, Executive Director, SMSA
brobinson@smsa.org



Over the last three decades motorcycle safety and rider training have not progressed at the rate they should to reduce motorcyclist crashes, injuries and fatalities. While valuable safety countermeasures, most state programs have focused exclusively on basic rider training and motorist awareness programs to reduce motorcyclist crashes. Unfortunately, there is little evidence that supports the success of these strategies. Over this period, states have also experienced reductions and restrictions in state and federal funding for motorcycle safety programs.

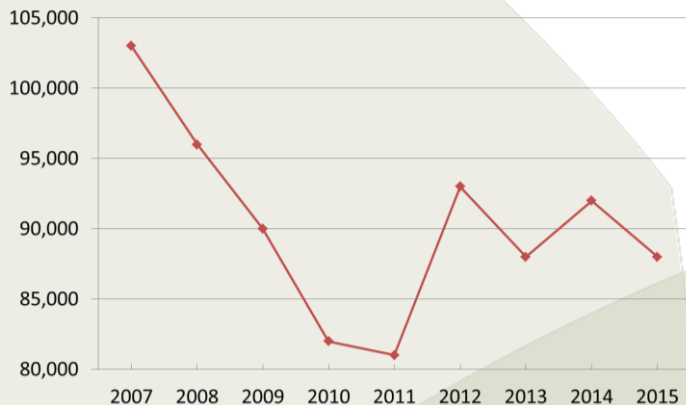
Recent evidence suggests that the Military has experienced a reduction in motorcyclist fatalities that may be attributed to intermediate and advanced courses taken on one's own motorcycle. California has also indicated a decrease in fatalities and injuries from 2016 to 2017, which also may be attributed to training.

Significant changes have occurred in other traffic safety areas including:

- Driving under the influence,
- Occupant restraint use,
- Commercial motor vehicle safety, and
- Graduated Driver Licensing (GDL).

Motorcyclist crashes, injuries and fatalities have continued to increase in recent years. In 2007, 103,000 motorcyclists were injured. Injuries have fluctuated between 88,000 to 93,000 since 2012 with a low in 2011 of 81,000. There are indications of increases in 2016 and 2017.

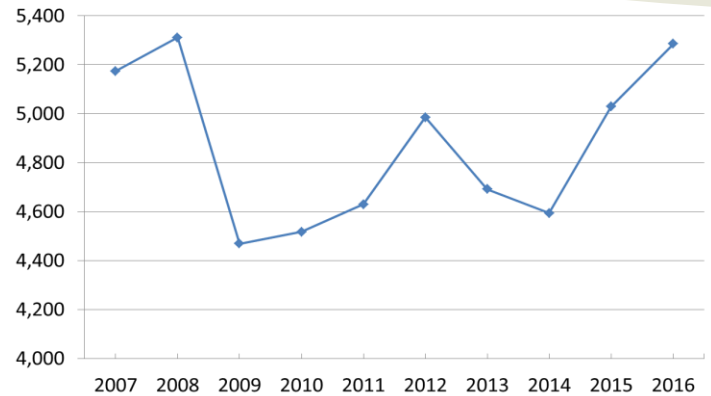
Motorcyclist Injuries 2007-2015



Source: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

In 2016, 5,286 motorcyclists were killed, a 5% increase from 2015 and the highest number of fatalities since 2008. Motorcyclists continue to be 28 times more likely to be killed in a crash than passenger car occupants.

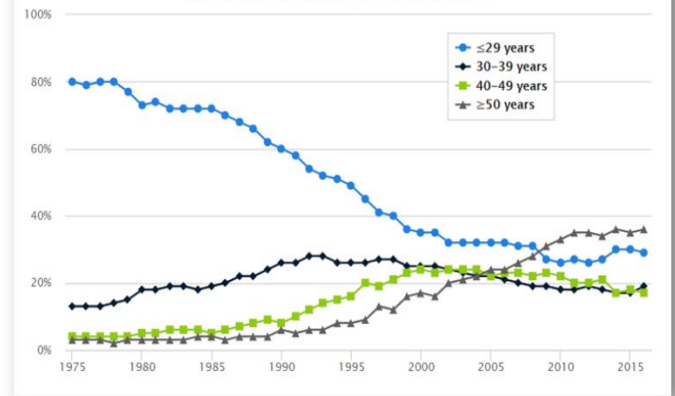
Motorcyclists Killed 2007-2016



Source: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

The proportion of fatally injured motorcyclists who were 50 and older went from 3% in 1982 to 36% in 2016. Twenty-nine percent of fatally injured motorcyclists in 2016 were younger than 30, compared with 80% in 1975.

Percentage of motorcyclist deaths by age, 1975-2016



The typical motorcycle owner has jumped from age 38 in the 1990's to age 45 in 2014.

Women continue to take up riding, making up 14% of owners in 2014, compared with 6% in 1990.

The primary contributing factors for motorcycle operator error are speeding and alcohol while common types of multi-vehicle crashes involve vehicles turning left.

Source: Insurance Institute for Highway Safety

Motorcycle Safety

The goal of achieving truly comprehensive state motorcycle safety programs has not yet been achieved. To effectively reduce crashes, we need:

- Comprehensive programming.
- More and better data to identify the critical issues.
- Innovative initiatives that are data driven.
- Initiatives that are measured and evaluated on their effectiveness for crash reduction.

We, as motorcycle safety professionals, can't keep doing the same thing and expect different results.

We need to develop innovative approaches that are effective and measurable which produce results.

There is no crystal ball for defining the future of motorcycle safety and rider training. We need to think outside of the box to develop new and innovative programs.

Some ideas on the future of motorcycle safety and rider training include, but are not limited to:

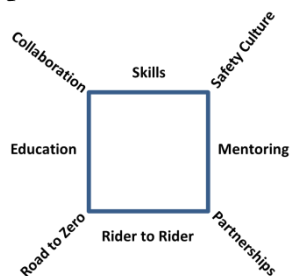
- Creating a culture of rider safety; look at successes from other countries and other safety and health countermeasures.
- Ensuring motorcyclists are a major element within "Road to Zero" discussions.
- Ensuring motorcycles are a major element within discussions related to Advanced Driver Assistance Systems (ADAS), Vehicle-to-Vehicle (V2V) technology and Vehicle-to-Infrastructure (V2I) technology.
- Establishing State and National Motorcyclist Safety Coalitions/Committees.
- Establishing partnerships and collaboration; no single organization or group can reach all riders.

We need to target:

- The tough to reach rider who does not take rider training or participate in clubs/groups (knowledge, skills and attitudes).
- The returning/mature rider (knowledge, skills & attitudes).

We need to address:

- Impaired riding (judgment & attitudes).
- Speeding (judgment & skills).
- Running wide on curves (knowledge & skills).



States need to:

- Develop realistic multi-year plans with strategies that address the issues.
- Use other funding to support motorcycle safety efforts.
- Form coalitions comprised of the right partners to create, implement and evaluate strategies and plans (SMSA's Guidelines for Establishing and Maintaining Motorcycle Safety Coalitions).
- Develop models to measure and evaluate their strategies and plans.
- Schedule a NHTSA State Motorcycle Safety Program Assessment.
- Utilize the SMSA Motorcycle Safety Self-Assessment Tool.
- Establish Comprehensive Motorcycle Safety Programming (NHTSA Guideline No 3).
- Utilize NHTSA Motorcycle Safety Programs www.trafficsafetymarketing.gov

States will need:

- Innovative approaches to reducing motorcyclist crashes, injuries and fatalities.
- Research to support motorcycle safety countermeasures.
- Initiatives driven by research.
- Grant funding that is more flexible so issues can be addressed timely.



The motorcycle safety community needs to:

- Work collaboratively to reduce motorcyclist crashes, injuries and fatalities.
- Establish PARTNERSHIPS to work on common goals to reduce crashes, injuries and fatalities.
- Think outside of the box!

Rider Training

Rider training programs need to continually improve rider training curriculum and operations.

- Improve cognitive skills development.
- Include state specific crash information.
- Use data to emphasize skill development.
- Use state specific data to facilitate discussion and develop participant awareness.
- Improve administrative and operational decisions.
- Offer additional or different courses.

Programs need to measure and evaluate rider training efforts and need to be supported by the ongoing development of rider training standards.

Other initiatives may include:

- Establishing the “Life-long-learner” concept within the motorcyclist community.
- Establishing rider mentorship programs.
- Reaching those riders who would not normally seek rider training.
- Reaching the “returning rider” (over age 45 population).
- Examining the successes of the military in rider training.
- Examining licensing “waiver” programs.
- Partnering with dealerships and manufacturers.

Rider training needs to offer:

- Intermediate and advanced training.
- Three-wheel motorcycle training.
- Online training for new riders.
- Special online training programs – short series.
- Braking and cornering clinics.
- Precision riding and riding skills practice clinics.
- Law enforcement public education (e.g., NC’s BikeSafe Program).

We need to establish rider to rider education:

- Riders teaching riders.
- Riders mentoring riders.
- Riders influencing riders.
- Life-long-learning promoted by riders.
- Creating a culture of rider safety.

Conclusions

There is no crystal ball for the future of motorcycle safety and rider training. We all must work collaboratively if we are to reduce motorcyclist crashes, injuries and fatalities.

We must change our approach to motorcycle safety and rider training. Comprehensive motorcycle safety programming is a must, and we must enhance the approach for providing rider training.

We can’t keep doing the same thing and expect difference results.

The Challenge

Think outside of the box and develop new and innovated approaches that support comprehensive motorcycle safety and rider training while working collaboratively with riders and stakeholders. Together, we can make a difference.

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For a copy of the SMSA Guidelines for submitting *Spotlight Magazine* articles, please visit www.smsa.org.

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