

The Six NMI Talking Points

Recommendations for the USA States that will lower the Licensed Motorcycle Driver Fatality Counts

The motorcycling participation rate directly and causally accounts for the increase or decrease in motorcycle crash fatality counts. When the number of persons participating in motorcycling goes up, the fatality count goes up. When the number of persons participating in motorcycling goes down, the fatality count goes down. National Motorcycle Institute recommends the following actions to lower motorcycle crash fatality counts:

1. Promote Awareness of Motorcycle Danger

Riding upon a motorcycle on public roadways is dangerous. The danger to motorcyclists and the danger of motorcycling to society are not well known, leading people to take up motorcycling naively, and state governments to inadvertently promote motorcycling through rider training. The correct statistics, as described in recommendation 2 below, should be disclosed to news media outlets and to all those involved in motorcycle safety (danger) programs at both federal and state levels. Specifically, state motorcycle training administrators, site managers, instructors, and the general public should be made aware that the danger of driving a motorcycle is difficult to comprehend, especially when compared to driving a car.

One of the reasons for failure to comprehend the relative danger of motorcycling is that the numbers of other vehicles on the road are so much greater than the number of motorcycles. We encourage you to test this statement by counting the vehicles you see in the traffic stream. This is more difficult than it sounds because there are so many of them! Currently there are over 150 other vehicles for every single (1) motorcycle.

2. Be Transparent with Motorcycle Driver Fatality Rates

Post and disseminate to the general public the annual current and target Motorcycle Crash and Motorcycle Driver Fatality Rates, and the relative danger of motorcycling to drivers, passengers, and to society. (Note: Motorcycle occupants are called motorcyclists.) Motorcycle Driver Danger in the USA for 2015 was 23.9 Motorcycle Driver Fatalities per 100 Million VMT. Motorcycle Societal Danger in the USA for 2015 was 15.7 Motorcycle Crash Fatalities per Million Population. Currently motorcyclist are killed **over 25 times more often** than passenger vehicle occupants, per vehicle. Since passenger vehicles carry more passengers, this means it is over 35 times more likely to die on a motorcycle than in a car, per person. Motorcycles accounted for about 0.66% of VMT and 14.1% of crash fatalities. The rate of Motorcycle Crash Fatalities per Million Population can be reduced from the current 15.7 to below the previous 8 Motorcycle Crash Fatalities per Million Population.

Governments widely promoting just points 1 and 2 will significantly lower Motorcycle Societal Danger from the current 15.7 Fatalities pr Million Population. This has to do with participation.

3. Avoid State Encouragement of Drivers to Use Motorcycles for Recreation on Public Roads

All Drivers, including those driving motorcycles, must focus on operating their vehicles legally and responsibly while using public roadways. Respect and consideration for other roadway users should be emphasized in state sponsored licensing programs. We acknowledge and share concern that this point may negatively impact some state's motorcycle tourism programs. The state should specifically be limited to encouraging motorcycling for no purpose other than transportation, which aligns with current similar restrictions regarding other vehicles. Private companies, if they choose to, can take the lead in promoting motorcycle tourism and recreation. (State programs should deglamorize motorcycling, private schools may glamorize and romanticize motorcycling.)

In particular, the Department of Transportation should adopt the policy that drivers should operate their motorcycle "At Suggested Speed Limit All The Time." This should also include guidelines for acceleration as well.

4. Advocate for Better Engineered Roadways and Vehicles

Promote and fund better engineering, of roadways, vehicles, and smart devices, that are known to reduce crashes.

5. State and Publicly Sponsored Programs can and should Differ from Private Schools and Training

State programs should cultivate and promote an "Opt-Out" attitude for students. The students in the state sponsored public schools are learning how to manage the dangers of driving motorcycles on public roadways with the goal of driving legally and responsibly . A successful student (not to be confused with an unsuccessful student) who has made an informed choice to Opt-Out of driving motorcycles on public roadways cannot contribute to the motorcycle driver fatality rate. We acknowledge that it is difficult for private schools to take the lead with the "Opt-Out" option. Not only may private schools reject the "Opt-Out" approach to reducing fatalities, they may, if they wish, take the lead on encouraging people to drive motorcycles on public roadways. Private schools may also want to offer "advanced" and performance training.

6. Acknowledge that People Respond to Incentives, whether or not the Incentives Result in Negative or Positive Fatality Results

There are financial and non-financial incentives. State subsidies and reimbursements should apply to every student, including the students who "Opt-Out." SEPARATE the license/endorsement testing incentive from the training. Incorporate an "Opt-Out" attitude into the entire publicly funded state motorcycle training system to help limit motorcycling to that part of the

population that are serious motorcyclists who are willing to put the time, money, and effort into understanding and managing the danger.

MORE ON SEPARATING the license/endorsement testing incentive from the training: Testing motorcycle driver applicants for motorcycle endorsements should be conducted only by motorcycle subject experts employed by, or under contract to, the state agency for testing. These testers should not have any incentives or conflicts of interest with motorcycle training or motorcycle industry organizations. The testers should be motorcycle subject matter experts so that when they fail an applicant, the applicant who failed cannot complain that the tester “didn’t understand motorcycles.”

Optional, if you have time, please read on:

The principles involved in being a good driver on public roadways do not change with different types of motor vehicles. For this reason, motorcycle drivers should also be taught the principles found in the state’s approved driver’s education curriculum and driver’s manual. Drivers of motorcycles should be held to the same responsibilities and courtesies to other roadway users as any other driver.

And last, but not least, allow Scientific Method to guide your program. "The Statement must be measurable and disprovable, the explanation difficult to manipulate, and reporting of results be completed in a truthful manner." This will help you guard against confirmation bias and “truthy” statements (those statements we wish to be true, but are not factual).