



The National Association of State Motorcycle Safety Administrators Policy Positions

SMSA Position Statement #: 15-01

Effective Date: April 26, 2016

Revised: Reformatted 8/11/2017

15-01 Personal Protective Gear

To reduce injury and/or the possibility of death, the National Association of State Motorcycle Safety Administrators (SMSA) believes all motorcycle operators and passengers should use the following personal protective equipment:

- Properly fitted motorcycle helmet that at a minimum meets the Federal Department of Transportation (DOT) helmet standard (full or three-quarter face helmet preferred).
 - Face protection (i.e. full-face visor or full-face helmet).
 - Properly fitted motorcycle specific clothing (armored preferred) to include:
 - Full-fingered gloves;
 - Over the ankle boots;
 - Long-pants; and
 - Long-sleeved jacket.
 - Eye protection that at a minimum meets the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) eye protection standards
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SMSA Position Statement #: 15-02

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15-02 Model National Standards for Rider Training

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

SMSA believes the NHTSA Model National Standards for Entry-Level Rider Training shall serve as the benchmark for state-based rider education and training programs. SMSA further believes each state should utilize a quality control process to ensure they meet the National Standards on a continuous basis. State-based rider education and training programs should be evaluated on an ongoing and routine basis.

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 entry-level training only.

SMSA Position Statement #: 17-03**Effective Date:** September 27, 2017**Revised:** N/A

17-03 Instructor Rules of Professional Conduct

To ensure that educational courses are conducted in a positive, efficient and professional manner, the National Association of State Motorcycle Safety Administrators (SMSA) believes all Instructors and Instructor Trainers shall:

- Be able to make sound, informed and objective decisions;
- Be able to act in good faith and in the best interest of students;
- Strive to maintain a positive training environment for students;
- Conduct oneself in a professional manner that includes: an appropriate appearance, use of appropriate language, positive verbal and written messages, and positive interaction with others that is free from intimidation or threat;
- Conduct entry-level rider courses in a manner that meets the Model National Standards for Entry-Level Motorcycle Rider Training and Model National Administrative Standards for Motorcycle Rider Training Programs – the model standards establish the baseline for motorcycle knowledge and operation, respectively, for entry-level riders;
- Conduct advanced-level rider programs in accordance with state-level criteria;
- Understand the value of and support motorcycle safety education;
- Be dedicated to the ongoing participation and completion of instructor and/or Instructor Trainer Professional Development activities;
- Maintain a valid motor vehicle license with proper motorcycle endorsement;
- Currently operate a motorcycle on a frequent and routine basis;
- Maintain a good riding and driving record;
- Demonstrate safe riding habits and wear protective gear when riding;
- Ride and drive free of alcohol, and other drugs that cause impairment;
- Avoid conflicts of interest between their position as an Instructor and/or Instructor Trainer and industry and/or motorcycle affiliated organizations, or personal life.

SMSA Position Statement #: 17-04**Effective Date:** September 27, 2017**Revised:** N/A

17-04 State Funding

The National Association of State Motorcycle Safety Administrators (SMSA) believes funds collected through state motorcycle/motorcyclist fees shall be used solely for and made available in full to the state motorcycle safety and rider education programs.

SMSA Position Statement #: 17-05**Effective Date:** September 27, 2017**Revised:** N/A

17- 05 State Programs

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

17- 06 Autocycles

It is the position of the SMSA 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 less wheels not equipped with a straddle seat or handle bars 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, and their operators should be exempt from the requirements to obtain a motorcycle learner's permit or motorcycle endorsement.

17-07 Novelty Helmets

Numerous tests have shown that certified helmets – those meeting federal safety standards – save hundreds of lives every year, and reduce the risk of fatal motorcycle crashes by more than one third. Helmets are widely considered the best tool available to reduce the severity of head injuries and the frequency of fatalities.

Crashes involving riders wearing novelty helmets, by contrast, account for hundreds of deaths. A National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) – funded independent study of seven different novelty helmets concluded that novelty helmets are worthless in the event of a crash. “All analyses gave a 100 percent probability of brain injuries and skull fracture,” and that “motorcycle riders who wear novelty helmets and believe ‘something is better than nothing’ have a false sense of security regarding the protection afforded.”

To reduce injury or possibility of death, the National Association of State Motorcycle Safety Administrators (SMSA) calls for a ban on the production and sale of novelty helmets to motorcyclists and encourages all riders to wear helmets that meet federal safety standards.

18-08 Lane Splitting

Lane splitting, lane sharing, filtering or white-lining, refers to the practices in which motorcyclists ride between lanes of slowly moving traffic or to the front of stopped traffic.

Some countries in Asia and Europe allow for lane-splitting. Several reports have been produced which have evaluated lane-splitting among other motorcycle safety factors and, a list of these reports is provided below.

Currently, California is the only U.S. state that allows for lane splitting. While a few studies have been conducted, such as the University of California at Berkeley report published in May 2015, additional funding and research studies are warranted to further evaluate the safety benefits and risks for U.S. states. Rapidly advancing automobile vehicle technology systems will likely become a factor (e.g., reacting to motorcycles during lane splitting activity) that should be researched as well.

Based on a lack of definitive research and motorcycle crash data analysis relating to the practice of lane splitting, the National Association of State Motorcycle Safety Administrators (SMSA) currently remains neutral on the practice of lane-splitting, and advises states to carefully examine the safety benefits and risks associated with lane splitting. Each state must carefully examine and make its own determination, based on research and local crash data analysis. What works in one geographical area of the country may not work in another.

Thorough consideration must be given to specific allowances and practices. An investment must be made to educate the general public, motorcyclists, and law enforcement on lane sharing, filtering or white-lining and a phased in approach may need to be considered.

Research Reports:

- Motorcycle Lane-Sharing, Myra Sperley and Amanda Joy Pietz, Oregon Department of Transportation Research Section, June 2010, <http://ridetowork.org/files/docs/ODOTLaneSharingStudy.pdf>
- Lane Sharing: A Global Solution For Motorcycle Safety, Steve Guderian, 2011, http://ridetowork.org/files/docs/LANE_SHARING_A_GLOBAL_SOLUTION_FOR_MOTORCYCLE_SAFETY.pdf
- Motorcycle Lane Share Study Among California Motorcyclists And Drivers 2012, The California Office of Traffic Safety The Safe Transportation Research and Education Center - University of California, Berkeley, May 2012, https://www.ots.ca.gov/Media_and_Research/Press_Room/2012/doc/2012_MC_Lane_Splitting_Survey.pdf
- Lane Sharing As A Motorcycle Rider Safety Practice; A Further Evaluation, Steve Guderian, 2012, http://ridetowork.org/files/docs/Lane-Sharing-Further-Evaluation-Final_Steve-Guderian.pdf
- Lane Splitting on California Freeways, James V. Ouellet, 2013, <http://ridetowork.org/files/docs/Lane-splitting-California-freeways-James-Oulet.pdf>
- Motorcycle Lane-Share Study Among California Motorcyclists And Drivers 2014 And Comparison To 2012 And 2013 Data, The California Office of Traffic Safety The Safe Transportation Research and Education Center - University of California, Berkeley, May 2014, <https://www.ots.ca.gov/pdf/Publications/2014MCLaneSplittingSurvey.pdf>
- Safety implications of lane-splitting among California motorcyclists involved in collisions, Thomas Rice, August 6, 2014, <https://www.ots.ca.gov/pdf/Publications/LaneSplittingReport.pdf>

- Motorcycle Lane-splitting and Safety in California, Thomas Rice, PhD, Lara Troszak, MA, Taryn Erhardt, Safe Transportation Research & Education Center University of California Berkeley, May 29, 2015, <https://www.ots.ca.gov/pdf/Publications/Motorcycle-Lane-Splitting-and-Safety-2015.pdf>
- California Assembly Bill No. 51 / AB0-51 Vehicles: motorcycles: lane splitting. (2015-2016), https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=201520160AB51