



Posted by Ax Axmaker

IDAHO STAR Program Director

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In-Course Rider Safety

Motorcycle Safety Colleagues,

I am now in the last days of my tenure as the Idaho STAR Program Director. Before vacating the office, I would like to suggest one last project for our community to take on (which I will be happy to assist with - even after I leave STAR):

In-Course Student Safety in Rider Training.

We have all kinds of state rankings/listings - traffic safety numbers/rates, alcohol rates, fatality rates, and even state rankings in crime, education, disease, etc. If I were to be asked "How is your state doing in terms of in-course safety (or in-course crash or injury rates)?" I don't know how I'd answer...I think we are doing well, but honestly, I don't have any basis for comparison (other than our own history). I suspect many other states and programs are in the same situation. I am suggesting a state listing of motorcycle rider training in-course safety stats. While the threshold for reporting a 'crash' or 'accident' is not consistent across programs, the threshold for the reporting of injuries, EMS transports, and possibly even insurance claims is much more consistent and discrete and should allow for reliable data collection. Yes, I realize there will be some challenges to work through; for example:

- * Crash reporting will vary widely; some programs report a 'crash' every time a bike falls over (even if no one was on it), and others don't report anything unless a certain threshold of damage or injury is evident.

- * Some state programs may not get all the in-course crash information from the schools in their state.

- * Information on insurance claims filed may be handled by a third party and that data may not be readily available to the program.

- * Some states/programs may choose not to share their data.

Once we have some data (say 20 or more states, schools, or programs), we can start work on identifying what factors may be correlated with lower injury rates on the range. From there, we can work towards 'best/promising practices' to help us all achieve higher levels of student safety.

I have already been in contact with the SMSA leadership about this project idea so it is on their radar. In the meantime, I encourage all of us involved in rider training and motorcycle safety to start giving this project some thought. I am confident that among us, we have the brains, the drive, and the creativity to come up with a model that will overcome the challenges, provide

useful and actionable data, and empower us to continually improve the service we provide to our customers.

Thanks folks,

MARYLAND

Ax,

I agree. In course crash reporting even inside of a particular program is inconsistent. The biggest issue I have discovered is that Instructors/RiderCoaches do not want to take the time to complete the forms properly and completely. Some of the inconsistencies I have come across:

- * Report completed a day or two after the fact. This is due to reluctance to STOP the range activities to complete a report.
- * Improper date. Maybe the I/RC is calendar challenged, but this is a primary indicator that a report was likely completed the next day.
- * Unsigned by the student involved in the crash. The only valid reason this would not happen is if the student was seriously injured and transported by ambo.
- * Description of what occurred does not include contributing factors. Ex. Rider grabbed front brake and lost control. What is not mentioned is why the rider may have done this. Got too close to the rider in front?
- * Instructor/RiderCoach completing the report includes an assessment of a possible injury yet does not act properly regarding the injury. Ex. Rider hit head hard and could have a possible concussion.

We live in a very litigious society, so detailed and accurate crash reporting is essential. Waivers and Releases may not be enough. Has anyone ever been sued for damages by a rider injured during a class?

In Maryland out threshold for reporting an Incident or Accident is:

- * If any part of the motorcycle, or rider comes in contact with the ground that is not normally supposed to be in contact with the ground, and there is no injury to the rider or damage to the motorcycle, it is an incident. Scraping a peg in a corner does not count.
- * If in addition to the above there is injury to the rider or damage to the motorcycle, it is an accident.
- * If as a result of a crash a riders head hits the road surface and you hear the "bonk" of the helmet, the student is to be transported to the hospital for evaluation for possible concussion.

In the past we have asked that the crash be diagrammed. The diagrams have been less than adequate. This year we will be asking that Instructors/RiderCoaches take pictures of the crash scene.

I am not sure of what other Programs do, but we require the crash involved student to sign the accident report form, especially if the rider cannot continue in the class.

~Phil Sause
