



Posted by: Philip Sause, Maryland Motorcycle Safety Program

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Portable Oxygen Tanks

Dear Colleagues,

We recently had a customer, a 21 year old man, in a BRC at one of our training centers that needed to be on O² and carried a small portable tank. This individual carried the tank in a backpack not designed for that purpose. The tank was of the same style as used by scuba divers with the valve/regulator at the top of the tank.

One of the course Instructors, who is a RN and familiar with this kind of apparatus did not let the customer use it while riding. The concern being should the rider have even a minor crash that the tank could be compromised creating a very dangerous situation. Without O² the customer was not able to turn the motorcycle around in E2 (the 270 turnaround) without being out of breath and subsequently was counseled out. He is not happy and has asked if there is a law and hinting at a possible ADA violation.

Have any of you experienced a similar situation and how did you handle it?

ALASKA

Hi Philip

I have not run into that but I can tell you that I would not let anyone on the range who might compromise the safety of my remaining students.

-Craig "Blue" Breshears

MISSOURI

Hi Phil,

I don't have much expertise in ADA matters but I *think* the Reasonable Accommodation rules require a documented disability. My question would be whether the need for supplemental oxygen meets that definition?

We had this issue come up last year in MO, and we concluded the odds of a personal oxygen tank exploding on impact with the ground are extremely low. The only real threat would be be if the regulator valve busted off making the cylinder a missile. That was the rationale we used in our case.

Regarding counseling the guy out for not being able to execute the turnaround without getting winded,

if that was the student's only weakness I think the instructor was too heavy handed. Every instructor has had classes where students had trouble with those turnarounds. Students with short inseams, very heavy or very slight students, physically weak students, the slope of a range...there are quite a few reasons a student could have an issue with the turnarounds. Nearly 100% of the instructors I've ever seen will either be patient or actually give the student a push from the back of the bike to assist. I'll bet anybody on this list a steak dinner that it happens at all of our ranges at one time or another. I guarantee it.

In teaching or observing hundreds of classes this is the first time I've ever heard of a student getting the boot because they weren't executing the turnaround to the instructor's satisfaction. If they were doing everything else right I would've let them stay since that's the last time they ever need to do that for the rest of the class.

But I'm sure if your instructor wants my opinion they'll ask for it. :)

-Michael Davis