

BMMC Rider Training

This is a Special Report from BMMC Rider Training.

The following information is paraphrased from a recently published article.

This past couple of weeks have been particularly deadly for a few motorcycle riders in the Phoenix area. The article makes some very good points using salient and eye opening statistics.

“The three deaths last week were particularly sad because it appeared that they could have been easily avoided by using some good judgment. One of the riders, a 31 year old man on a sport bike was doing over 115 miles per hour down Loop 101, missed the curve and went into the cable barrier in the median. The speedometer on the motorcycle was stuck at 112 mph. This could have been avoided. But for a brief moment, there was bad judgment. The other two men were both killed when they collided with each other. It was reported in the news that they were drag racing, with alcohol involved. One had a three year old daughter and the other was married with three kids. This, too, could have been avoided, but for a brief moment, there was bad judgment.

No one is invincible, especially on a motorcycle. Here are a couple of statistics that are particularly alarming.

1. 66% of all motorcycle accidents are rider error (most of those involve curves and running off of the road).
2. 50% of all fatal accidents have alcohol involved.

In memory of these three riders it is hoped that everyone would use these deaths as a wake up call to ride within their own abilities, go around those curves at a speed that they can handle, to think about family and kids before pushing a motorcycle to the limits, and pause a minute before becoming involved in an instance of bad judgment.

Motorcycle registrations have soared in Arizona over the last five years to 125,000, up from 77,000 in 2001. So not only do we need to educate the automobile drivers to take that extra second to see that the oncoming lane is clear, new riders need to be educated in how to ride a motorcycle effectively in all situations. It is a scary proposition when you have a guy or girl that hasn't ridden for twenty years, or at all, walks into a dealership, buys a bike and is riding the next day with no motorcycle endorsement and no training.

There is something wrong with this picture, especially when you look at this staggering statistic that says that more than 92% of all motorcycle accidents involve untrained riders.

Another statistic says that 50% of the motorcycle accident-involved riders had less than five months' riding experience or less than 500 miles on the motorcycle. These riders getting into accidents showed significant collision avoidance problems, such as over braking of the rear wheel and under braking of the front. The ability to counter-steer and swerve was essentially absent. These are all things that basic and advanced rider training courses teach you.

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If you have no motorcycle endorsement on your driver's license, you are not alone. A Lieutenant from the Peoria Police Department said that approximately 20% of the motorcycle riders stopped for traffic violations do not have a valid motorcycle license. He said that if you are stopped without the "M" on your drivers license, there is a fine of \$100. But worse than that, you will be required to leave your bike parked where it is, have a licensed rider come ride it home or trailer it home. For City liability reasons, you will not be allowed to ride the bike.

Here are some more interesting statistics:

Five crash types account for 86% of fatal motorcycle crashes:

1. Motorcycle runs-off-road 41%
2. Motorcycle or other vehicle runs traffic control 18%
3. Head-on collision 11%
4. Car turns in front of cycle 8%
5. Motorcycle goes down in roadway 7%

The typical motorcycle accident allows the motorcyclist less than two seconds to complete all collision avoidance action.

1. Almost two thirds of the fatalities were associated with speeding as an operator contributing factor in the crash.
2. One third of the fatally injured operators did not have a proper license.
3. Braking and steering maneuvers contribute for almost 25 percent of the fatalities.
4. Almost 60 percent of motorcyclist fatalities occur at night.
5. 50% of the fatalities are related to negotiating a curve prior to the crash.
6. Almost 50% of the fatal accidents show alcohol involvement
7. Injury severity increases with speed, alcohol involvement and motorcycle size.
8. In single vehicle crashes, 52 percent are alcohol related compared with 28 percent of multi-vehicle crashes.
9. The use of the safety helmet is the single-most critical factor in the prevention or reduction of head injuries.
10. Severe brain injury was found to be 600% higher for non-helmeted riders based on an Oregon Study."

The reason we are bringing this to your attention is that it really pains us when we hear a news report of a downed rider. We want to encourage you to continue to brush up on your riding skills, keep them sharp and keep you safe. We can't control the actions of others, but we can help ourselves by staying alert, practicing your "scan and plan", and using good judgment in your daily riding.

Please Ride Safe