

News For Thought



You Can Help Motorcycle Safety Study

Virginia Tech Transportation Institute (VTTI) is working in conjunction with the Motorcycle Safety Foundation to conduct a long term, comprehensive Naturalistic Motorcyclist Study of everyday riding in a wide variety of environments and conditions -- and they need participants.

If selected, you will answer questions about your age, training and riding experience to determine where you fit in the study. To gather information, several small cameras, radar, GPS and a recording unit will be attached to your motorcycle for one year. Once the equipment is attached, your job is to ignore it and ride like you normally would. The data is encrypted as it is collected and kept confidential.

They have selected a number of motorcycles representing a cross section of riders and types of riding: beginners, sport bikes, cruisers and touring, and designed their equipment and mounting system to work with several specific models, and participants must live in or near the targeted study areas that cover different terrain and traffic patterns; Blacksburg, Virginia, Orlando, Florida and Irvine, California. For more details, contact VTTI at www.motorcycle.vtti.vt.edu. www.ON-A-BIKE.com

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Green Mountain Senators Learn Gang Designation Includes Vets

Members of the Vietnam Veterans Motorcycle Club may be surprised to find themselves on a list of "security threat groups" recently offered by the Department of Corrections to the Vermont Senate Judiciary Committee in Montpelier, VT.

According to information offered to the committee, a definition from the Department of Justice says a gang designation is appropriate for a group three or more people with a common identifying sign, symbol or name who, individually or collectively, engage in criminal activity which creates an atmosphere of fear and intimidation.

Senator Alice Nitka (D-Windsor) wasn't so sure that the aging vets of the motorcycle club back in Windsor are a menace to society and warrant being "lumped in" with street gangs like "the Bloods and the Crips," reported vtdigger.org.

If all it takes for a "gang" to make the list is for a few members of a group to commit a crime, Senator Jeanette White (D-Windham) asked, "...will the Boys and Girls Club be next?" www.ON-A-BIKE.com

Feeling The Wind In Your Ear

Today's phones can deliver the sound of a heartbeat, but soon you'll actually feel the throbbing.



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Chad Steine & Josh Hanson
Everybody needs a little Heine.

At the International Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas, Artificial Muscle Inc. demonstrated how it can make mobile devices shake and rattle with great realism, employing a technology that uses plastics that function like muscles, allowing you to feel the rumble of a Harley or the reverberation of a shotgun blast.

The company showed off an iPhone it had modified by placing one of its Vivitouch "motors" inside that shook a modified X-box controller to allow the user to feel what it's like to hold a beating heart. In another instance, it let the user experience the signature rumble of a Harley-Davidson motorcycle starting up. www.ON-A-BIKE.com

Choppers Face Euro-sion of Rights

They're long and lean, and Europe is looking to ban them. Custom motorcycles are coming under fire across the pond, according to Motorcycles.about.com. Along with proposals to limit motorcycle emissions, force anti-lock brake systems on all bikes, and prohibit engine tuning for increased power; European Parliament is considering a ban on extended forks. The issue will be voted on in April and the limits on modifications could take effect by 2014; ABS rulings and stricter emissions could be enforced by 2016.

"The proposed EU Regulation on Type Approval and Market Surveillance of two and three-wheeled vehicles passed its first reading, Committee stage, on 5th December even though an impact assessment on many elements of the proposal was ongoing," writes MAG-UK (Motorcycle Action Group), "and the Delegated Acts appear to have moved well outside the scope of the Commission's original proposal." www.ON-A-BIKE.com

Virginia May Legalize Two-Abreast Riding

The Virginia General Assembly is considering the repeal of a 40-plus year-old law that makes it against the law for two motorcyclists to ride side-by-side in the same lane. Virginia and Vermont are the only two states in the U.S. with such a law on the books, while 48 other states either don't ban the practice or have specific laws allowing it. There's no indication those states have more crashes or problems related to two-abreast riding, according to the Virginia Coalition of Motorcyclists.

The proposal, sponsored by 26th District Delegate Tony Wilt and 18th District Delegate Michael Webert, sailed through the transportation committee and, overwhelmingly, through the House.

The law is an old one, possibly sparked by the menacing image of motorcycle gangs of the 60s. But since the law was passed over four decades ago, motorcycle registrations have shot up and charitable motorcyclists now ride in large groups for fund-raisers or to raise awareness, when riding two-deep is common.

Two-thirds of multi-vehicle motorcycle crashes are caused by people in cars who don't see the riders. Two abreast may enhance visibility. And since motorcycles generally have one headlight, riding together can help illuminate dark roads. www.ON-A-BIKE.com

World-First Study on Cause of Serious Motorcycle Accidents

A world-first study will examine the cause of serious motorbike crashes. Motorcyclists will be part of a \$1.3 million Australian study aimed at slashing the number of motorcycle accidents. The groundbreaking inquiry will compare the experiences of riders injured in crashes at specific sites with riders who have travelled through the same site safely.

Transport Minister Terry Mulder described the new research as one of the most comprehensive motorbike studies attempted globally. "By comparing the two groups, we hope to learn not only what went wrong for those involved in crashes, but also what went right for those who negotiated a particular crash site safely," Mulder said.

More than 1100 riders - half of whom have survived crashes - will be recruited over the next 18 months. The research is being funded by the State Government and headed by the Monash University Accident Research Centre (MUARC). Experts, five of whom are motorcyclists themselves, will analyze factors such as speed, experience and the physical environment in accidents.

Experienced and active riders have contributed to the questionnaire design to ensure relevance and improve study outcomes. Results are expected towards the end of 2013. www.ON-A-BIKE.com

QUOTABLE QUOTE: "The ultimate result of shielding men from the effects of folly is to fill the world with fools."

~ Herbert Spencer, English Philosopher (1820-1903)

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