

News For Thought

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Pakistani Police Exempt Female Passengers From Wearing Helmets

Reacting to public protests over a traffic regulation in which it was made mandatory for motorcycle riders as well as pillion (passengers) to wear a helmet, including women, police in Karachi have announced exempting female pillion riders from wearing a helmet.

Inspector General (IG) Sindh Police, Ghulam Haider Jamali announced here on June 10 that the decision was made after the repeated appeals of citizens. In an earlier statement, the police said in case of riding pillion without helmets, both will be fined, regardless of whether the pillion is male or female.

The people took the decision with a violent reaction when it was made mandatory for women as well to wear a helmet as a passenger, and some citizens also contacted the court in this regard to exempt women from this sanction. But before the court could take any action, IG Police keeping in view a number of complaints, appeals and violent reaction by the public, immediately announced to withdraw its decision, so now following the announcement women are exempted from the restriction to wear a helmet as a pillion rider.

Survey Reveals Riders' Pet Peeves

In an online survey of motorcyclists conducted in June by Erie Insurance, nationwide respondents were asked to share their top five pet peeves about both other motorcycle riders and car drivers:

Top Five Complaints About Fellow Riders: #1: Riding Recklessly (ie: speeding, weaving through traffic, doing wheelies) - 56%; #2: Passing on the Shoulder - 41%; #3: Lane Splitting - 36%; #4: Wearing shorts, sandals, tank tops, etc - 35%; #5: Riders who don't wear helmets - 28%.

Top Five Complaints About Vehicle Drivers: #1: Drivers who don't check their blind spots before changing lanes - 55%; #2: Texting while driving - 53%; #3: Reckless Driving (i.e., speeding, weaving in and out of traffic) - 50%; #4: Drivers who tailgate - 43%; #5: Not signaling when turning or changing lanes - 42%.

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HB3944: Amends the Illinois Vehicle Code to provide that a motorcycle may be equipped with auxiliary accent lights, including standard bulb running lights and light emitting diode pods and strips. Provides that the auxiliary accent lights shall not be red or white or oscillating, rotating, or flashing lights. Defines "auxiliary accent light".

- (a) A motorcycle may be equipped with any number of auxiliary accent lights, including standard bulb running lights and light emitting diode pods and strips of various colors.
- (b) The auxiliary accent lights allowed under subsection (a) of this Section shall not be red or white or oscillating, rotating, or flashing lights.
- (c) For the purposes of this Section, "auxiliary accent light" means any lighted lamp or illuminating device placed upon a motorcycle, other than head lamps, spot lamps, auxiliary driving lamps, signal lamps, or hazard warning lamps.

"Accent lighting are the small colored lights tucked in on the underside of motorcycle gas tanks and frames," explains ABATE of Illinois on their website (www.ABATE-IL.org), which supports the measure. "We are looking at legalizing them to be operating while the bike is in motion. They do not interfere with operator eyesight and will actually help in the reduction of bikers being 'T-Boned' at night with the extra lighting which will reduce Fatalities and Deaths. The bill increases visibility of motorcycles, especially at night."

Unlike automobiles and light trucks which are required to have side marker lights or wrap around headlights / tail lights which are visible from the side, motorcycle lights are often only visible from the front and rear and do not have the same illumination as automobiles. NHTSA published a report on the effectiveness of side marker lights on motor vehicles, concluding that side marker lights are a cost effective safety device which reduce the number of nighttime angular collisions that occur in the United States.

A similar bill was recently signed into law in Texas, and Maryland, North Carolina, Pennsylvania and West Virginia have all passed similar legislation, while Missouri and Virginia are currently in the process of legalizing such lighting.

Hawaii To Eliminate Ethanol In Gasoline

Legislation to repeal the requirement that gasoline offered for sale in Hawaii contain a percentage of ethanol was signed into law by Governor David Ige, and the new law becomes effective December 31, 2015.

The law recognizes that the requirement of blending ethanol into gasoline does not produce any economic benefit for the state and the import of ethanol creates an economic burden for state residents. Ethanol increases water formation, which can then corrode metals and dissolve plastics and rubber, especially over a period of time when the vehicle is not used. Current high-performance specialty parts along with pre-model-year '01 cars and parts may be most susceptible to corrosion, and no motorcycles or ATVs are approved for higher blended fuels. The lifespan of vehicles and equipment can be dramatically reduced with the wrong fuel, and owners could be confronted with breakdowns.

More than a dozen states have ethanol mandates, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures, but only Hawaii and Florida have passed such a repeal. Florida ended its mandate in 2013, the same year the Environmental Protection Agency proposed reducing the amount of ethanol in fuel, acknowledging that a federal push wasn't working as well as expected.

There have been no changes to federal law on the issue since the EPA report, but Pennsylvania Republican Senator Pat Toomey and California Democratic Senator Dianne Feinstein have introduced a bill seeking to repeal the corn ethanol mandate in the federal Renewable Fuel Standard.

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California Requires Motorcyclists To Remove Helmet For Traffic Stops
Known as the "Identity Confirmation Act," Assembly Bill 346 will require a motorist to give law enforcement an unobstructed view of their face during a traffic stop, said California Assemblymember Scott Wilk (R-Santa Clarita), author of

the measure which primarily targets motorcycle riders. The Facial ID bill was inspired by a Simi Valley, CA police officer who told the assemblyman about having cases thrown out of court because he couldn't positively identify someone, Wilk told the Simi Valley Acorn, specifically relating the case of a motorcyclist who refused to remove their helmet.

Wilk admitted to the paper that motorists are compliant 99% of the time, and currently if a driver refuses to show their face during a traffic stop, police can arrest them for resisting or delaying an officer, and can result in going to jail until they can go before a judge.

"From an 'identification' legal view, all citizens are required to prove their identity when asked by law enforcement," said Chuck Pedersen, State Legislative Director for ABATE of California. "From a helmet ticket defense, an officer cannot ask for you to remove your helmet for the purpose of inspection. I don't see a need for this additional legislation."

Nonetheless, AB 346 passed near-unanimously through the State Assembly, was approved by the Senate, and is now headed to Governor Jerry Brown's desk.

Illinois Light It Up

A bill in Illinois to legalize accent lighting on motorcycles passed unanimously through the legislative process and on June 18 was sent to the Governor.

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