

News For Thought



S.C. Bill Aims To Require Child Safety Seats and Belts On Motorcycles

A bill that would require babies and small children to be secured to a motorcycle with seat belts is under consideration by South Carolina lawmakers.

S.C. state Rep. Joseph Daning (R-Berkely Co.) filed legislation (H. 3040) that would require a standard, rear-facing child safety seat to be used for motorcycle passengers from birth up to 1 year of age, and for a belt-positioning booster seat with both lap and shoulder belts for children younger than 7 and weighing 40-80 pounds. "We take care of our children in cars, but they're so unprotected on the back of motorcycles" said Daning, who added that the bill was prompted by constituents who feared an ex-spouse would ride their children on a motorcycle.

Rep. Bill Taylor called Daning's proposal "government overreach" and said motorcyclists are a safety-conscious community, but child-safety advocates support Daning's efforts. Only a handful of states impose a minimum age for riders, and South Carolina is not one of them according to the Children's Trust of South Carolina, pointing out that 25 children required emergency medical attention due to motorcycle injuries in the state from 2007 through 2009.

ABATE of SC state coordinator, Ralph Bell, emphasized that there have been no fatalities of passengers under 7, and said changing the law would hinder charity events. Dennis Welborn, the state legislative coordinator for ABATE told the Morris News Service that "Its passage would cause much more harm than good," and in particular, mounting a child safety seat on a motorcycle would change its center of gravity, making it unwieldy, affecting its handling and braking abilities.

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Vehicle Data privacy Concerns Voiced In Montana

A Montana House panel recently heard a bill to give vehicle owners more control over the large stores of information now accumulated by newer cars and trucks, and motorcycles. House Bill 78, sponsored by Rep. Ryan

Lynch (D-Butte), would give vehicle owners more control of that data by codifying provisions stating that only owners, lessees and authorized representatives can gain access to recorded data in the event of a crash.

Insurance companies already make use of telemetrics -- the many pieces of data that reflect driving habits -- but insurance lobbyists say they're willing to sit down with supporters and hammer out a bill that's agreeable to everyone.

This is just one of several privacy bills the Montana Legislature will consider this session and, if enacted, the law would become the nation's strongest driver-privacy act.

Weird News: Youtube Video Leads To Stuntrider Arrest

A cop couldn't corral dozens of reckless riders who took over a California highway, performing dangerous stunts and taunting the officer, but the marauders left an obvious trail on social media.

One stunter, armed with cameras mounted on the front of his motorcycle and helmet, filmed what turned out to be incriminating evidence that later led to his arrest.

The video, posted to YouTube and garnering over 1.5 million views, shows several brazen bikers popping high speed wheelies and buzzing a California Highway Patrolman, who is also on a motorcycle and attempting to pull over one or more riders before giving up due to safety concerns. As the officer backs off, bikers are seen exuberantly pumping their fists in the air in a short-lived victory celebration.

Three weeks later, following an internet trail including personal information posted in social forums, police busted the 32-year old stunt rider who recorded -- and shared -- video of the wild ride and arrested him at his house in Brentwood on felony accessory and obstruction charges, as well as a marijuana grow operation in his home.

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Tennessee Bans Rigs From Dragon

A mountainous stretch of U.S. Route 129 (SR 115) from Tennessee to North Carolina famously known as "The Dragon" boasts 318 curves in 11.19 miles and is a beacon for drivers and riders alike, but semis are no longer welcome! Due to a "critical number of traffic accidents involving large trucks," the state of Tennessee is following the lead of neighboring North Carolina in banning big rigs from US 129, on sections of highway known as Deals Gap or The Tail of the Dragon.

For years, navigation systems have pointed truckers to the Dragon as a shortcut across Blount County. That ends with the new year, and signs will be posted mid-January prohibiting commercial vehicles (longer than 30 feet).

After conducting a safety review, according to the Tennessee DOT there were a total of 204 crashes from 2010 to 2012 in Blount County -- six of those resulted in fatalities. Only one of those fatal accidents involved a tractor trailer, but many of the other incidents with semis have blocked the narrow highway for hours and prevented travel for all motorists.

Weird News: New Zealand Couple Fined \$40K For Riding Without Helmet

A couple in New Zealand have been fined \$20,000 each following multiple instances of riding a quad bike without a helmet. According to the New Zealand Herald, Phillip Andrew Jones and Maria Anna Carlson, share-milkers from Marlborough, had been seen riding their All-Terrain Vehicle without helmets multiple times dating back to 2012.

The pair were both fined under the Health and Safety in Employment Act; Jones was charged with failing to take all practicable steps to ensure no other person was harmed at work while riding a quad bike, and Carlson with failing to take all practicable steps to ensure her own safety by wearing a helmet, and the safety of others by not carrying her children on a quad bike.

"Quad bikes pose a serious risk on farms, and on average five people were killed and 850 were injured every year," said WorkSafe spokesman Francois Barton, adding that Carlson was twice witnessed riding her quad bike without a helmet after a prohibition notice had been issued and the second time she had two young children with her on the bike.

Carlson admitted that despite owning helmets she didn't wear one because "it becomes just a little bit of a hassle."

New Army Rules Ban Basketball Shoes and Club Colors

U.S. Military installations worldwide require military members and employees to utilize a variety of safety equipment to ride motorcycles on base that is not required by laws outside their boundaries, but some new Army rules in Hawaii sound way off base.

On Nov. 1, Military Police and leaders at all levels began enforcement of U.S. Army-Hawaii Policy Letter 11 on Motorcycle Safety, consisting of four major changes to the pre-existing policy, including changes to required safety equipment and prohibited equipment.

"When operating a motorcycle on USARHAW installations, riders must wear a DOT approved helmet, protective eyewear, abrasion-resistant gloves, long pants (excluding PT pants), long sleeves, and leather/canvass boots or sturdy over-the-ankle shoes," and such regs are typical of most military bases, but their new policy "prohibits riders from wearing high-top basketball shoes while riding."

Additionally, the new policy specifies the use of reflective gear at all times, and riders must wear either a fluorescent (brightly colored) and reflective vest, jacket or upper outer garment, or they must wear a motorcycle specific jacket with padding/armor.

But what's most concerning is "Prohibited Equipment" that is NOT allowed to be worn: "Riders on-post are not authorized to wear any garment that displays an affiliation with a motorcycle club or other group that offers or solicits membership."

The new policy applies to all motorcycle operators on USARHAW installations. In addition, the policy applies to all 25th Infantry Division Soldiers, both on and off-post.

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