

# News For Thought



## Uneasy Riders: Horses Riskier than Motorcycles

Hour-per-hour in the saddle, more riders are seriously injured riding horses than motorcycles. That is the surprising revelation of a new study from researchers at the University of Calgary, Canada.

The hospital admission rate associated with horse-riding injuries is 0.49 per 1,000 hours, compared to a rate of 0.14 per 1,000 hours of motorcycle riding, according to the study published in the American Journal of Surgery.

From 1995 to 2005, there were 7,941 trauma patients at Foothills, including 151 who were severely injured while horseback riding. Seven per cent of the riders died of their injuries and 45 per cent required surgery, the study said. Almost half of all riders who were seriously injured (48 per cent) suffered head injuries, and 54 per cent suffered chest injuries. Most riders were hurt by falling or being thrown from the horse, followed by being stomped or kicked.

The reason this happens, said Rob Mulloy, an assistant professor at the University of Calgary and co-author of the study, is that "horses are independent beings with their own agenda." Not to mention that horses weigh up to 500 kilograms, move at a speed of up to 65 kilometers an hour, elevate riders up to three meters above ground and kick with a force of nearly one ton.

Dr. Mulloy, who is also a trauma surgeon, said he does not want to discourage people from riding, but hopes the study will serve as a wake-up call about the need to use protective equipment, especially helmets. "You know, cowboy hats are pretty useless," he said, adding that he takes comfort in the fact that about half of rodeo riders now wear helmets and a large number of cowboys who drive cattle out of the hills are also helmeted. [www.ON-A-BIKE.com](http://www.ON-A-BIKE.com)

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## Australian State Outlaws "Bike Gangs"

South Australia announced intentions to ban so-called "bikie gangs" such as the Hells Angels and the Bandidos in what the government said would be the world's toughest crackdown on "terrorists within our community."

South Australian Premier Mike Rann named eight motorcycle clubs he said were involved in murder, drug trafficking, prostitution, extortion and weapons smuggling. "This is an evil within our nation and we in South Australia intend to lead Australia in the fight against bikie gangs," he recently told reporters.

The Australian Crime Commission's 2006 report found there were 35 outlaw motorcycle gangs in Australia, with 3,500 members in all six states last year. Rann said the ban would involve around 200 club members, as well as associates. Outlawed bikers would be prohibited from meeting or communicating, or risk five-year jail terms. "We cannot find anywhere in the world where this level of response to bikie gangs has been taken," he said.

Police would also be empowered to dismantle club headquarters and force members to account for any unexplained wealth or income. "We are coming after them and we will hit them where it hurts by taking away their ill-gotten gains, their Harley-Davidsons and their liberty," said state Attorney-General Michael Atkinson. [www.ON-A-BIKE.com](http://www.ON-A-BIKE.com)

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## Florida bill targets "Thrill Riders"

After an eye opening ride-along with the Florida Highway Patrol and witnessing motorcyclists pop wheelies, race along over 100 mph and dangerously disregard road rules, State Rep. Carlos Lopez-Cantera filed a bill in Tallahassee that would toughen penalties on speeding, stunt driving and hiding or flipping license plates.

"They're just blatantly riding in excessive speeds, putting themselves in danger and putting other motorists in danger," Lopez-Cantera said. "It's just too much."

Law enforcement officers said they are powerless to pursue them and are frustrated as they watch their tactics, like flipping the bike's license plates so they can't be traced.

"That tag needs to be permanently attached to that motorcycle," one FHP trooper said. "The problem has gotten worse. The laws need to be changed. The penalties need to be stiffer."

Rep. Lopez-Cantera is trying to do that. "Something has to be done. They have to actually fear the law because right now they don't," he said, explaining that if his bill becomes law "They'll lose their bike. Their motorcycle license will be revoked for 10 years, and it's a mandatory arrest so they will go to jail." The bill could come up for a vote next year. [www.ON-A-BIKE.com](http://www.ON-A-BIKE.com)

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## Weird News: Blind Pedestrians Fight against "Silent" Deadly Hybrids

Can hybrids and alternative fuel vehicles be dangerous? To blind pedestrians, the answer is "Yes," because they can be silent killers.

As manufacturers look for ways to improve the fuel efficiency of their vehicles, alternatives to relying solely on gasoline engines are being

adopted for both cars and motorcycles. Companies are looking to gasoline-electric hybrids, diesel engines, all-electric vehicles and fuel cells.

But one negative impact of such vehicles is in regards to their near-silent operation in city driving. Since most hybrids turn off their gasoline engine during low-speed city driving and rely on electric motors for propulsion, the most noise that many people may hear from the vehicles are a slight electric whine and a hint of tire noise. Deemed too quiet, some electric and fuel cell motorbikes now even come equipped with an artificial audio "vroom" with adjustable volume control.

Blind pedestrians have taken this issue to heart and are going after hybrids as they feel the silent vehicles pose a serious safety threat, and the U.S. National Federation of the Blind (NFB) is putting the issue back to the forefront.

The NFB has worked with the Association of International Auto Manufacturers (AIAM) and the Society of Automotive Engineers (SAE) to look into the possibility of forcing automobiles to emit recognizable sound at all time. The AIAM is even looking into "the possibility of setting a minimum noise level standard for hybrid vehicles," according to safety director Mike Camissa.

The Department of Transportation, the Federal Highway Administration and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration have expressed little interest in the idea. 1.3 million people in the United States (out of a total population of 303,036,973 people) are legally blind. [www.ON-A-BIKE.com](http://www.ON-A-BIKE.com)

## Is your motorcycle giving you cancer?

Author Randall Dale Chipkar has published a book called "Motorcycle Cancer?" in which he speculates that radiation from motorcycle engines could be a modern day "Black Plague".

Saying that the prostate is one of the closest delicate glands invaded by the radiation along with the colon and neighboring organs, Chipkar a few years ago was going to buy his dream cycle, but he placed his extremely low frequency (ELF) electromagnetic field (EMF) Gauss meter over one of the seats of an idling bike and was shocked to see the extremely high radiation readings.

"It's a paradox that thousands of motorcycle riders participate in fundraiser rides for cancer awareness when the event itself may be causing cancer...I have met countless avid motorcycle riders diagnosed with similar forms of cancers and disorders. All of

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these riders had a type of extremely low frequency electromagnetic field radiation shooting up from their motorcycle seats...The motorcycle industry needs to further investigate this EM danger and implement protective measures to minimize rider radiation exposure. People should not have to gamble with their health

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