

# News For Thought



## Safety Cheif Says Helmets & Rider Training Should Be Provided

It's time to make helmets and training standard equipment for motorcyclists, U.S. Secretary of Transportation Mary E. Peters said during remarks to the Motorcycle Industry Council in Indianapolis on February 19th. Peters called on motorcycle manufacturers to provide free or heavily discounted DOT-certified helmets or rider safety training with the purchase of every new motorcycle sold in the United States.

"Helmets and proper training are just as important as brakes or headlights when it comes to the well-being of motorcyclists," Secretary Peters said. "We shouldn't be letting any customer take a bike out of the store without a helmet as part of the package. Safety shouldn't have to be an option when purchasing a motorcycle."

Secretary Peters also said the Department of Transportation was "attacking" the challenge of motorcycle safety on several fronts. Last September, the Department awarded over \$6 million in safety grants to states to support motorcycle safety. In addition, the Federal Highway Administration has established a Motorcycle Advisory Council to focus on making roads safer for motorcyclists and will continue work begun by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration on a Motorcycle Crash Causation Study to identify why motorcycle crashes occur and find ways to reduce the fatality and injury rates. [www.ON-A-BIKE.com](http://www.ON-A-BIKE.com)

## Motorcycle Study Being Conducted

The Motorcycle Safety Foundation has launched a milestone 3-year study to determine the effectiveness of periodic involvement in a series of motorcycle rider education and training courses.

"The Longitudinal Study to Improve Crash Avoidance Skills" will study the crash-avoidance skills of motorcyclists who have taken a series of rider training courses, beginning with the MSF Basic RiderCourse, which is the learn-to-ride course, and graduates will be offered, via random sampling, three additional training opportunities at periodic intervals throughout the study.

"The MSF's rider education and training system used in this study is built upon the principle of safety training renewal," said Dean Thompson, MSF director of communications. "We believe a rider's decision-making and crash-avoidance skills can benefit from being refreshed over time. It is important for riders to regularly refresh their knowledge, skills and risk management strategies. We're strong advocates of lifelong learning."

Rider knowledge, skills, attitudes and experiences will be evaluated and measured over time. The University of North Carolina Highway Safety Research Center will provide an independent evaluation of research that will for the first time take a comprehensive, field-based look at the benefits of ongoing participation in a rider education and training system, and its subsequent effect on crash avoidance skills and real-world outcomes. [www.ON-A-BIKE.com](http://www.ON-A-BIKE.com)

## Saudis Ban Bikes

Earlier this year, Saudi Arabian officials increased security in the holy cities of Makkah and Madinah for the annual Hajj by banning motorcycles. In an article titled "Reckless Bikers Risk Losing Rides", the Orlando Sentinel reported that Saudi officials impounded 350 motorbikes during heightened security operations, telling Arabnews.com that the motorcycle ban was a response to problems related to hit-and-run accidents as well as thefts where criminals used motorcycles to navigate crowds and escape quickly. Motorcycles have also been banned because riders in past years have used them as unsafe, unlicensed, one-passenger taxis. Transportation services are in high demand during the Hajj, causing a problem with taxis and buses. Noise and pollution caused by motorcycles and scooters was also cited as a concern. [www.ON-A-BIKE.com](http://www.ON-A-BIKE.com)

## African Country Bans Women on Bikes

The Nigerian state of Kano has banned women from riding commercial motorcycles, according to the official News Agency of Nigeria (NAN), which warned that women who ride risk being arrested.

"The sharia police, otherwise known as Hisbah committee, have concluded arrangements to commence enforcement of some aspects of the state's sharia law as passed by the state House of Assembly," the NAN said. The law bans women from riding commercial motorcycles, commonly known as Okada in Nigeria, and also bars Muslim Okada operators from carrying women on their motorcycles.

Other aspects of the sharia law that would be implemented include the ban on alcohol consumption, hard drugs and prostitution, the commander said. Kano, one of 12 states in Nigeria's predominantly Muslim north that adopted the strict Islamic law in 2000, is the first to introduce segregated public transport. [www.ON-A-BIKE.com](http://www.ON-A-BIKE.com)

## Motorcycle Awareness- Coming to a Street Near You

Several cities in Massachusetts are working to keep motorcycle drivers safe on the roads in their communities.

Last year, the Massachusetts Motorcycle Association (MMA) requested a grant from the Auto Insurer's Bureau to help fund the erection of motorcycle awareness signs, and Plymouth Rock Assurance Corporation awarded a \$15,000 grant to the MMA to purchase and install 500 2-by-8-foot signs, which read "Check twice - Save a life, MOTORCYCLES ARE EVERYWHERE!!!!"

Representatives of MMA are seeking permission to install at least one sign per community. Over a hundred communities are participating.

According to Wendell Davis, MMA District II Coordinator, Massachusetts is on the cutting edge of motorcycle safety programs. "This sign will help not just motorcyclists, but pedestrians, bicyclists, etc., by making people more aware overall," he said. Davis added that Massachusetts is unique in promoting such an active awareness program and that "Massachusetts is one of the few states where (motorcycle) registrations have gone up and deaths have gone down." [www.ON-A-BIKE.com](http://www.ON-A-BIKE.com)

*I thought this was interesting.*

## DOT approved helmets

Hey, Everybody,

My daughter in college is writing a paper on lid laws and was surprised to realize that the DOT doesn't approve helmets, just as nobody does due to the liability it may cause. She needs to find something that states that DOT DOES NOT approve helmets. I have e-mailed the DOT, but if anyone has any links to anything else, please send it to me. I need links or articles with the author and where it came from, so she can reference her source. Don't know if any of you remember, but a few years she had a similar request on here. Her paper at the time was very good and even published in the high school paper. Thanks for your time. Michael in Goose Creek, SC

## How does a helmet get added to NHTSA's approved helmet list?

DOT or NHTSA does not "approve" motorcycle helmets, thus, there is no list of "approved" helmets. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) has the statutory authority to issue Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards (FMVSS) applicable to motor vehicles and items of motor vehicle equipment, including motorcycle helmets. The law establishes a self-certification process in which the motorcycle helmet manufacturers certify that their products are in compliance with FMVSS No. 218, which establishes minimum performance requirements that the products must meet. NHTSA enforces the standard by randomly selecting and purchasing motorcycle helmets from the marketplace and testing to the requirements of the standard at independent test labs.

[www.nhtsa.dot.gov/cars/rules/import/FAQ%20Site/pages/page3.html#Q9](http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/cars/rules/import/FAQ%20Site/pages/page3.html#Q9)

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