

News For Thought



Indonesia Institutes New Anti- Motorcycle Laws

New motorcycle lanes went into effect in Jakarta in January. Motorcyclists are now supposed to use the "slow" left lanes on city streets and police began getting tough on riders by issuing more than a thousand traffic tickets the first day to bikers not riding in the designated lanes. Trials are held on the spot and take about 5 minutes.

The head of traffic at the Jakarta Police, Sr. Comr. Djoko Susilo, said he hoped the rule would increase order in the streets and reduce the number of traffic accidents. The left-lane rule is not the only new requirement for motorcyclists. They are also being told to keep their headlights on during the day, so that other vehicles can see them more easily.

The city is also considering banning them from entering main thoroughfares during peak hours, recommending that motorcyclists park their bikes and make use of the city's bus way instead.

Of 7.23 million vehicles in Jakarta, 64.1 percent, or 4.64 million, are motorcycles. The Jakarta Transportation Board has estimated that more than three million motorbikes are on the city's roads every day, compared to 2.5 million cars. Out of the 4,206 road accidents reported last year, 3,826 involved motorcyclists.

But the government believes emissions tests may be the best way to curb motorcycle growth, so the Jakarta administration has been called upon to enforce stricter emissions testing for motorcycles to control the increasing number of motorbikes, up 15% from the previous year. The State Ministry for the Environment said motorbikes that fail to meet emissions standards could be banned from the city's streets. 60% of the motorcycles tested in spot checks did not meet emissions standards set in 1993, so the ministry predicts that even more would fail the newer, tougher emission standard issued in 2006. www.ON-A-BIKE.com

Virginia Riders Beside Themselves

Virginia is only one of two states that specifically prohibit two motorcycles to ride two abreast in a traffic lane, but riders there are hoping to change that.

HB 1808 has passed out of Transportation Committee and bikers are urging their Delegates to support the bill when it comes up for a vote. They argue, among other things, that two motorcycles abreast in a traffic lane aids in making the motorcycles more visible to other traffic, and that in larger groups of motorcycles, riding two abreast keeps the overall length of the group shorter, and discourages other vehicles from dangerously cutting into the group - an issue motorcyclists riding in groups often face. www.ON-A-BIKE.com

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when they ride motorcycles and bicycles.

The research study, published in the journal Injury Sciences, found that over four weeks the television characters buckled up only 62 percent of the time. The TV characters used motorcycle helmets only 47 percent of the time and bicycle helmets nine percent of the time. Research shows most Americans are much safer — buckling seat belts 80 percent of the time, using motorcycle helmets 60 percent of the time bicycle helmets 40 percent of the time.

"Since Americans watch more than four hours of TV per day, how safety behaviors are depicted on television can have tremendous influence on public perception of seat-belt and helmet use," said Gerald McGwin, Ph.D., associate director for research at the Center for Injury Sciences and one of the study authors. Researchers also studied 21,670 television commercials that McGwin says present a safer depiction, with seat-belt use by 86 percent of individuals, motorcycle helmet use 100 percent and bike helmet use 84 percent. www.ON-A-BIKE.com

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TV Doesn't Reflect Reality

Most people drive safer than television characters, according to a University of Alabama at Birmingham study. The UAB study of 79 prime time TV shows revealed that actors often don't buckle up before they drive and sometimes don't wear helmets

Weird News: Drunken Doughnuts

A Pontiac, MI motorcyclist gets sued, then sent to prison, for his actions that took place outside a bar earlier this year as he was "doing doughnuts" in the parking lot when he struck and injured a woman who was standing outside the saloon.

Now he'll be riding a prison van to Stateville Correctional Center, where he was sentenced to one year after pleading guilty to failure to report an accident with injury. He was also ordered to pay restitution, and faces a lawsuit from the injured woman who is seeking \$50,000 each from the rider, the owner of the motorcycle and the saloon owner. www.ON-A-BIKE.com

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Oh Deer!

According to transportation officials, nearly 200 people are killed nationwide each year in crashes involving wildlife, mostly deer. The collisions cost drivers almost \$1.5 billion each year in property damage, deaths and injuries.

The Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) says they are trying to cut those numbers down. Flash lights and motion sensors are just a few of many solutions transportation experts are considering, and CDOT has put up a number of wildlife escape ramps on US 550 that allow wildlife to cross the road without getting stuck in traffic. CDOT says animals are getting more used to the ramps, even teaching their young how to use them.

On US 40, CDOT also installed a series of unusual looking reflectors to create flashes of light at 54 angles, horizontally and vertically, when a vehicle's light hits them. According to CDOT, the reflected light bounces back and forth across the road, deterring deer and other wildlife from crossing. Drivers cannot see the light because of the way it's reflected.

CDOT also hopes to install a motion detector system on US 160, that when triggered by a deer or other animal will cause a large light to go on to let an oncoming driver see there's an animal on or near the road. The light may also startle the animal and keep it off of the road.

Meanwhile, an eight state research group met in Minnesota to brainstorm ideas for keeping wildlife off the road, and their leading proposal involves placing canisters of real or synthetic wolf and coyote urine near the roadways, hoping the scent of predators will cause the animals to flee. www.ON-A-BIKE.com

Jesse James Fined by CARB

California air regulators have issued \$271,250 in total fines against Jesse James of West Coast Choppers, the co-producer and host of "Monster Garage" and "Motorcycle Mania," saying that 50 of his custom-built choppers ran afoul of California's clean-air rules.

California Air Resources Board officials said their inspectors found that the monster bikes sold between 1998 and 2005 did not have state certified emissions equipment on their exhaust and fuel systems, resulting in these bikes spewing hydrocarbons at up to 10 times the state limits.

The market for custom-built motorcycles has taken off in recent years, and prominent bike builders have achieved celebrity status, but progressively stricter new emissions regulations from the EPA are already impacting the motorcycle industry. www.ON-A-BIKE.com

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Quotable Quote

"We, too, born to freedom, and believing in freedom, are willing to fight to maintain freedom. We, and all others who believe as deeply as we do, would rather die on our feet than live on our knees." Franklin Delano Roosevelt (1882 - 1945), 32nd President of the United States