

News For Thought



Ohio Modifies Handlebar Height Law

Ohio has modified its handlebar height law using language amended into S.B. 114 to change the limit from 15 inches above the lowest point of the saddle to no higher than shoulder height of the operator when seated in the operator's seat or saddle.

The bill also changes the definition of a motorcycle by creating a "cab-enclosed motorcycle" classification for two- or three-wheeled vehicles having an occupant compartment top that is either permanent or removable. The bill was signed into law by Governor John Kasich on December 19, 2012 and changes take effect March 19, 2013.

California Officials Unveil Lane-Sharing Rules

About 87% of California motorcycle riders reportedly slide between cars on crowded roadways - while only half of car drivers know it's legal and 7% admit they've tried to block them - which is why the California Highway Patrol is now providing guidance to safely maneuver the white lines.

California is the only state in the country where so-called "lane-splitting" or "lane-sharing" isn't illegal, but state authorities have never, until now, told motorcyclists how to weave between traffic safely.

The new rules, which the CHP posted on their website after consulting with other state agencies and motorcycle-rider groups as part of the California Motorcyclist Safety Program which trains new riders in the state, apply to city streets, highways and freeways across the Golden State.

"Basically, what we're most interested in is the speeds," said Sgt. Mark Pope, statewide motorcycle safety coordinator for the CHP. "You should lane-split no faster than 10 mph over the speed of traffic around you, and we recommend riders not split at all if the traffic is faster than 30 mph."

CHP officers have always had the legal authority to ticket motorcyclists who were driving dangerously fast, Pope said, but the new rules are designed to provide specifics. The new written guidelines, which carry no legal weight, can be found at <http://bit.ly/XxIRJb>

Japanese Motorcycle

Exports To U.S Flatten Following Dramatic Rise

Japanese manufacturers in 2012 exported 166,601 motorcycles to the United States, an increase of 1% compared to 2011, following a dramatic 87% increase in 2011 after the OEMs exported only 88,074 motorcycles to the country in 2010.

These figures come courtesy of the searchable database of the Japan Automobile Manufacturers Association. They pertain to the Big Four: Honda, Kawasaki, Suzuki and Yamaha.

JAMA reports that exports worldwide in 2012 decreased 5% to 479,163 after last year's upturn.

Used Bike Market Experiences Upturn

Used motorcycle sales have heated up, sparking optimism at dealerships where trade-ins have become more valuable.

As the economy has improved, even if it's been marginal, more people have decided to go ahead and buy a motorcycle. And if they can't afford a new bike, it could be a used one.

Used motorcycle prices have recovered meaningfully since 2008, rising to a level that supports a healthy demand for new bikes as well, according to a recent survey from Robert W. Baird & Co.

Used Harley prices were up 7% from a year ago and remain well above the low points found in the recession, said Baird analyst Craig Kennison who analyzed motorcycle sales data from the National Automobile Dealers Association. "If the demand for used motorcycles picks up, it usually suggests the demand for new bikes will go up as well," Kennison said.

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Australian Top Cop Vows To Ban Bikies From Pubs

Declaring that outlaw bikies "...are not the type of people who should be running licensed premises," Chief Commissioner Ken Lay has vowed to ban bikers from pubs and clubs across Victoria. "The legislation is designed to ensure that doesn't occur," he told the Herald Sun newspaper of his plan to move "bikies" out of venue ownership, operation and security.

Earlier this year, police swooped on bikies in a series of raids and seized 120 guns after ruling them not fit people to have the weapons under the Firearms Act.

Meanwhile, police are telling licensees not to allow patched-up bikies entry, so some Melbourne strip clubs, bars and nightclubs are refusing entry based on a "dress code standard," and some have even banned motorcycles from parking outside.

Inspector Paul Ross, of licensing enforcement, said police "advised" licensees "it's probably better if they don't allow outlaw motorcycle gang members inside ... wearing colors."

One operator, who is enforcing the ban, said police asked him and others to sign an agreement that the dress code standard relating to bikies was upheld.

Europe Set To Mandate ABS For Motorcycles

A Europe-wide proposal to mandate anti-lock braking systems (ABS) for motorcycles bigger than 125cc manufactured from 2016 onwards was overwhelmingly approved by the European Parliament by a vote of 643-16.

Although the measure is still working its way through the EU legislative process and must still be adopted by individual member nations of the European Union, it is expected to be adopted soon.

A European Union Commission presented the ABS requirement for new framework regulation for motorcycles, and calculates that the proposal would reduce the number of fatal motorcycle accidents by more than 5,000 over a 10-year period.

Although the first anti-lock braking system was installed on a motorcycle in 1988, only 16% of all newly manufactured motorcycles in Europe were equipped with ABS, and by comparison car manufacturers have made ABS standard equipment since 2004 which has contributed to an estimated 49% overall decline in fatal car accidents in the EU. Experts regard anti-lock braking as a huge boost to safety, pointing to a Swedish highway study that showed that 38% of all motorcycle accidents involve personal injury and 48% of all serious and fatal accidents could have been prevented with ABS.

In the U.S., the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration has considered requiring ABS on new motorcycles sold in America, and will likely take up the issue in the near future.

Woman Fired Over Husband Being In A Motorcycle Club

Her husband's membership in a motorcycle club has cost the job of a human resources technician with the city of Kingman in northwest Arizona, according to a Phoenix lawyer who is representing the woman in her bid for reinstatement.

The city served 11-year employee Melissa Summerson a notice of intent the day after Christmas and terminated her employment Dec. 28, attorney David Kresin told the Las Vegas Review-Journal. "She was terminated for the stated reason of her husband's membership in a family motorcycle club - the Desert Roadriders," he said, adding that the dismissal violates her constitutional right to freedom of association. "There's no allegation that Ms. Summerson personally did anything wrong in her job or engaged in any conduct personally that violated any of the city's rules, and we believe there's no cause for termination as she's been an outstanding employee with a great record for her entire employment."



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