

News For Thought

European Study Yields Insight Into Motorcycle Accidents

European researchers discovered some interesting facts about the common causes of motorcycle accidents. The Motorcycle Accidents In Depth Study (MAIDS) was based on 921 motorcycle accidents, which included 103 fatalities, across France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and Spain. While some of the findings were expected, others were unanticipated. Not surprisingly, the study indicates that the motorcyclists most often collided with passenger vehicles. Surprisingly or not, 70% of passenger vehicle drivers involved in accidents with motorcycles failed to perceive the motorcyclist. And while 73.1% of riders attempted some form of collision avoidance, 32% nonetheless experienced some form of loss of control during the maneuver. While all this may seem disheartening to riders, there are steps that can be taken to maximize safety; other findings from the study indicate: Over half of the accidents occurred at intersections - Although 90% of those involved in crashes were wearing helmets, 9% of helmeted riders lost their helmets in crashes due to improper fit, fastening or damage - Younger riders -- those between 18 and 25 years of age -- crashed at a higher percentage and riders aged 41 to 55 crashed less frequently - Riders wearing dark clothes were more likely to crash than others - Modified conventional street motorcycles were over-represented in crashes in the study, but engine size did not appear to be a factor - Unlicensed bikers were more likely to crash than properly licensed bikers - Weather was deemed to be a factor in only 7.5% of accidents. www.ON-A-BIKE.com

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"Kids Just ant To Ride" Companion Bill Introduced In U.S. Senate

U.S. Sen. Amy Klobuchar (D-MN) has introduced an amendment to exempt youth motorcycles and ATVs from the "lead law" that will effectively ban the sale of these machines. Senate Amendment 264 would exempt youth off highway vehicles from the overly-restrictive lead-content provisions of the Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act (CPSIA) of 2008, which has decimated the youth motorsports industry and will ban their sale at the end of the year unless the CPSIA language is changed.

Meant to protect our children from imported toys with lead-based paint, the CPSIA prohibits the making, importing, distributing or selling of any product intended for children 12 and under that

contains more than a specified amount of lead in any accessible part. The unintended consequences were that, because some parts such as brakes and battery components contain lead, dealerships were barred from selling motorcycles and ATVs intended for young riders, as well as replacement parts.

The Klobuchar amendment is similar to H.R. 412, the Kids Just Want to Ride Act introduced in the House by Rep. Denny Rehberg (R-MT), and would amend S. 493, the Small Business Innovation Research Reauthorization Act.

You can contact your Congressional representatives through the U.S. Capitol Switchboard at (202) 224-3121 to urge their support. www.ON-A-BIKE.com

Weird News: Honda Working On Motorcycle Seatbelts

Yes, you read it right...Honda is working on a system of seatbelts for motorcycles. Seems crazy, but it appears to be a serious project judging from the patents Honda has filed for the system, and images posted on BikersPost.com.

According to the website, the belt arrangement is designed for larger touring bikes like the Gold Wing where the rider won't be moving around much in the seat, and the belt can work with the airbag to more effectively reduce injuries.

However, Honda apparently has recognized that in a lot of accidents it's better to be away from the bike rather than attached to it, so their new seatbelt system also has elements of ejector seat: When the computer senses that the bike is irretrievably tipping over it releases the entire seat, with the rider still attached, and inflates an airbag backrest. "The idea is that having ejected you slide down the road in a sitting position, with the seat betwixt your hide and the asphalt. Sort of extreme tobogganing."

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Of course, nobody envisioned airbags on a motorcycle either, before Honda's R&D team put one on their Gold Wing as a factory option. www.ON-A-BIKE.com



Congress Acts to Reinforce Ban on NHTSA Lobbying

May is Motorcycle Awareness Month across the country, and Congressional lawmakers are introducing a resolution on May 2 to continue current restrictions on NHTSA that prevent the federal transportation agency from lobbying state and local governments to enact helmet laws.

The lobbying ban was originally amended into the Transportation Equity Act in 1998, but U.S. Rep. Jim Sensenbrenner (R-WI) and his House colleagues want to reinforce the prohibitions on NHTSA lobbying and focus the agency's efforts on crash prevention and rider education.

According to the resolution, the U.S. House of Representatives "supports efforts to retain the ban on the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's ability to lobby state legislators using federal tax dollars, encourages continued growth in the motorcyclist community, and encourages owners and riders to be responsible road users."

The resolution, similar to a version Sensenbrenner introduced last session, goes on to say that the House "recognizes the importance of motorcycle crash prevention as the primary source of motorcycle safety (and) encourages NHTSA to focus on motorcycle crash prevention and rider education as the most significant priorities in motorcycle safety." www.ON-A-BIKE.com

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