

News For Thought

Indonesian Capitol Limits Motorcycle Traffic

City officials in Jakarta are mulling over schemes to limit the number of motorcycles allowed in certain areas during peak hours to help unsnarl the city's acute traffic jams. The Indonesian Motorcycle Industry Association estimates there are about 35 million motorcycles in usable condition in the country, and in the capital city of 8.5 million people there are nearly one motorcycle for every person and growing by nearly a thousand new bikes every day.

This extraordinarily high number of motorcycles has exacerbated the city's already awful traffic, especially during rush hour, and plans are in place to begin banning bikes from a number of main thoroughfares in this mostly Muslim nation after the holy holiday of Ramadan, requiring riders to continue their journeys by public transportation.

Motorcycle numbers have been increasing for six years throughout the country, driven by affluence and affordable credit schemes. Today, a new motorcycle can be purchased with an initial down payment of Rp 500,000 (US\$50). www.ON-A-BIKE.com

Sound Reasoning Silences N.H. Noise Ordinance

Although North Hampton, New Hampshire voters approved a noise ordinance in May that prohibits motorcycles without an EPA sticker from being operated or even parked in town, a lawyer for the federal agency has expressed that just because the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency requires a label on all motorcycle mufflers indicating the noise the vehicle produces does not exceed 80 decibels doesn't mean a municipality has the authority to enforce that noise level.

"The Noise Control Act (NCA), which authorizes EPA to enact noise control regulations, states that 'nothing in this section precludes or denies the right of any state or political subdivision thereof to establish and enforce controls on environmental noise,'" wrote EPA Senior Assistant Regional Counsel Timothy Williamson in an Aug. 31 letter to North Hampton Town Administrator Steve Fournier. "However, neither does it grant localities any additional authority to control environmental noise beyond that available to them under state and local law."

"The ordinance basically bans motorcycles from the town if they do not have an EPA label on their exhaust system even though the motorcycles comply with the state's noise level limit of 106 decibels," said Seacoast Harley-Davidson in court papers challenging the new law.

Even the town's own legal counsel has indicated the ordinance is unenforceable, saying that the state has already determined the appropriate noise levels for motorcycles and that the town, therefore, does not have the option of creating its own more restrictive noise ordinance.

That opinion was clearly reiterated in Williamson's letter on behalf of the EPA. "Thus, neither the NCA nor the regulations in Part 205 (of the EPA code) grant municipalities the authority to enact or enforce ordinances that supersede any limitations on their authority under state law," he wrote.

Town officials decided not to fight the Harley dealer's request for a preliminary injunction against the enforcement of the noise ordinance. "The ordinance will remain unenforced until we have a hearing," Fournier said, indicating that the town's new noise ordinance will not be enforced until after the judge issues a ruling on the matter. www.ON-A-BIKE.com

Weird Nudes

An 18-year U.S. Marine Corps veteran and his female passenger were thrown from a motorcycle when they veered off the road near Camp Lejeune, North Carolina. According to newspaper reports, both sustained painful injuries due to total lack of safety gear; no helmet, no gloves, no boots...and no clothes!

The naked riders landed in a ditch, and the Marine was knocked unconscious and awoke to charges of DUI, reckless driving, driving without a license, license revoked

, expired inspection, no insurance and no helmet. His passenger walked nearly a mile for help despite a broken arm and leg, but was only ticketed for failure to wear a helmet. Apparently, riding in the buff is not a traffic offence in Onslow County as neither were charged with exhibitionism or failure to exhibit common sense. www.ON-A-BIKE.com



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Saving Time Can Cost You Money

In the current economic downturn, cash-strapped states across the U.S. are charging huge fines for speeding violations and other traffic infractions. All across America, legislators have one eye on road safety and the other on depleted coffers, and depending on where you live a speeding ticket can cost from under a hundred dollars to a couple thousand or more, reports AOL Autos.

Drivers caught speeding in the states of Georgia, Illinois, North Carolina, Nevada and New Hampshire all are liable to be fined up to \$1000, at a judge's discretion, for a first-time speeding offense, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. The severity of the financial penalty also may depend upon the number of miles above the speed limit when clocked and the number of points on a driver's

license, or if the offense occurred near a school or road works. A driver's license may also be suspended, their vehicle impounded, or they may face jail time.

Some states including Michigan, Texas and New Jersey, operate under so-called "driver responsibility" laws, which, in some cases, can result in a further fine of up to \$1000 leveled a year after the conviction. Virginia, which until 2008 had some of the strictest penalties for speeders, repealed its driver-responsibility laws last year after a public outcry. Georgia, meanwhile, has just voted to add \$200 to the fine of what it terms "superspeeders," who travel more than 10 mph over the speed limit. Other states with fines of up to \$500 -- which in many cases is then compounded with additional court fees -- include Maryland, Missouri and Oregon. www.ON-A-BIKE.com

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Massachusetts Enacts Rider Training For Junior Motorcyclists

The Massachusetts Motorcycle Association (MMA) announces that Senate Bill 2344, dubbed Ryan's Bill, an "Act relative to assuring that motorcyclists between the ages of 16 and 18 are provided with adequate education relative to the proper safety and

operation of a motorcycle." has been signed into law by Governor Deval Patrick. Recognizing the additional burden formal training may require, MMA Legislative Director Rick Gleason states, "A weekend of formal training sets the stage for a lifetime of motorcycling enjoyment and the skills acquired through training can help a rider avoid a crash."

This new law does not make training mandatory, and only affects those under 18 who wish to earn their motorcycle license. MMA Chairman Dave Condon further clarifies that passage of Ryan's Bill does not require a junior operator take a motorcycle training course. "A motorcycle permit in this state is good for two years. Therefore, a junior motorcycle operator can still ride on his/her permit beyond their 18th birthday, and take the road test offered by the Registry of Motor Vehicles." Condon further stated, "The MMA was very careful in not taking anyone's choice away or interfering with a parent's right to decide what is best for their child." Condon also pointed out that current state regulations require 40+ hours of formal training before a Junior Operator may obtain a license to operate an automobile.

Motorcycle Rider Education Program (MREP) officials analyzed ten years of information from the Massachusetts RMV and found that just over 63% of those involved in fatal motorcycle accidents have never received any formal motorcycle rider training and 22.5% of motorcycle fatalities were from riders under the age of 21.

The MMA supported the legislation in honor of 16 year old Ryan Orcutt of Brockton who died in a motorcycle accident. www.ON-A-BIKE.com

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