

News For Thought



Cities Muffle Motorcycle Noise

Many state legislatures and city councils are making lots of noise about motorcycles, with new ordinances popping up across the country to silence loud exhausts. "Loud Pipes Save Lives" has been a biker mantra for years, but politicians spurred by citizen complaints have discovered new ways to muffle unwanted exhaust tones.

The Albuquerque City Council voted 6-3 earlier this month to approve an ordinance making revving of motorcycle engines downtown a vehicle nuisance. Amending Section 7-10-3 ROA 1994, The Vehicle Nuisance Ordinance now reads: "It shall be unlawful for any person to engage in exhibition driving in the Downtown Quiet Zone by operating a vehicle in a manner that willfully creates excessive engine noise because of revving the engine to magnify the engine noise."

Bikers blasting through East Greenwich, Rhode Island may want to steer clear of town if their exhaust systems aren't the proper match for their bikes. The Town Council unanimously passed an emergency ordinance in late July allowing the police to pull over and levy fines on bikers if the noise-rating data stamped into the chrome of their exhaust doesn't match the label on the bike frame. Modified exhaust systems are outlawed.

The ordinance, now in effect, provides for fines \$500 for the first offense, and jumps to \$700 the second time and \$1,000 for the third and each subsequent violation. Buddy Cardoso, president of the Rhode Island Motorcycle Association, who said his group supports courteous riding, inquired that if the labels have to match, "What do you do, throw away the motorcycle if the exhaust wears out?" Owners of other vehicles are allowed to use after-market exhaust systems, and it is unfair to single out bikers, he said.

In West Virginia, the Charleston City Council let it be known loud and clear that nuisance noise will not be tolerated, and unanimously passed an ordinance on August 17 to crack down on loud music, barking dogs and revving of car and motorcycle engines in residential areas, with fines up to \$250.

In an attempt to silence community concerns regarding excessive motorcycle exhaust sound, the Boston City Council fast-tracked enactment of Docket 0658 on June 3, 2009. The new ordinance mandates that all on-highway motorcycles built after December 31, 1982 must have either OEM (original equipment manufacturer) or aftermarket exhaust systems that comply with the US EPA labeling provision in the Code of Federal Regulations. Violations will result in a \$300 fine.

Earlier this year in California a bill was held over that would have required periodic emissions testing for 2000-and-newer on-road motorcycles in an effort to make aftermarket exhaust systems illegal if they do not comply with EPA labeling.

Meanwhile, the Motorcycle Industry Council has teamed with the Society of Automotive Engineers International (SAE) to produce a stationary roadside sound test

standard that can be used to determine whether a street-bike exhaust system emits excessive sound. "The new SAE standard provides a much-needed alternative to outright bans, restrictions and sound test standards that vary state to state and city to city, frustrating riders, exhaust system manufacturers, and municipal governments alike," said MIC President Tim Buche. www.ON-A-BIKE.com



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Multi-Faceted Motorcycle Bill Enacted in Texas

Senate Bill 1967, authored by Texas State Senator John Carona (R-Dallas) and sponsored by Representative Norma "Da'Lady" Chavez (D-El Paso), introduces many motorcycle-related changes in the Lone Star State.

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Included in the bill are 1) funding by Texas Department of Transportation for a public awareness campaign to promote motorcyclist safety and the concept of sharing the road with motorcyclists; 2) changes to the definition of a motorcycle to include certain enclosed three-wheeled passenger vehicles; 3) changes to the licensing requirements for enclosed three-wheeled passenger vehicles; 4) a requirement for all applicants for a motorcycle license or endorsement on a regular or commercial driver's license to provide proof of successful completion of a basic motorcycle operator training course; 5) penalties for failure to yield the right-of-way violations resulting in bodily injury range from \$500 to \$2,000 while those resulting in serious bodily injury range from \$1,000 to \$4,000; 6) a prohibition against stopping or detaining a motorcycle operator or passenger solely to determine whether the person has successfully completed a motorcycle operator training and safety course or is covered by a health insurance plan; 7) a requirement for the Department of Transportation to develop a standard of proof of health insurance coverage for adult motorcycle operators and passengers; and 8) a requirement that all driver education courses or driving safety courses include information on motorcycle awareness, dangers of failure to yield the right-of-way to motorcyclists, and the need to share the road with motorcyclists.

Governor Rick Perry signed the bill into law on June 19; it becomes effective September 1, 2009.

"We made history, Warriors," exclaimed Sputnik, State Chairman of the Texas Motorcycle Rights Association (TMRA-II) and Chairman of the National Coalition of Motorcyclists Legislative Task Force (NCOM-LTF). "We owe Da'Lady and her entire staff a huge debt of gratitude for all the work they did for riders this session." www.ON-A-BIKE.com

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Weird News: Turkey Goes Wild Over Bikers

Freddy the turkey, the famous and notorious foul who trotted around town much to the delight of Easton, Massachusetts residents, met his demise this month after becoming a menace to motorcyclists.

The wild turkey wandered out of the woods and became a common sight and mascot in the Five Corners area, where he ruled the roost and was often seen gobbling up bargains at the local stores and strutting across busy streets like he was on parade.

But the gadabout gobbler went from docile dollar-store shopper to motorcycle menace over the past few months, prompting police to put him down. "Things had really gotten nasty," said Police Chief Allen R. Krajcik. "We were thankful there had been no accidents yet. It was only a matter of time before something happened."

Police began receiving calls and e-mails from motorcyclists asking whether police were waiting for an accident before taking action. "One motorcyclist told police that

the bird flew at his face with his feet forward to attack him," the chief told the local newspaper. To escape, the driver drove through a red light, narrowly avoiding an accident. Similar attacks had been reported in increasing numbers, and like other repeat offenders Freddy was racking up a long record of dangerous activity, victimizing mostly motorcyclists.

Meanwhile, police stood by their actions, saying they initially intended to capture the turkey and relocate it to a less populated environment. But the state Division of Fisheries and Wildlife advised against it, saying the turkey could introduce diseases to its new habitat, and advised euthanizing it, according to Chief Krajcik. www.ON-A-BIKE.com

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