

# Texas Strategic Action Plan for Motorcycles Supplement

## Countermeasure Expansion for Communicating Rider Responsibility



June 22, 2017

College Station, Texas





## Overview

The 2016 – 2021 Texas Strategic Action plan for motorcycles identifies actions that can be implemented to increase motorcycle safety across Texas. The plan articulates a diverse range of strategies that were informed by nine months of research. The plan provides guidance for key stakeholder agencies such as the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), the Texas Department of Public Safety –Motorcycle/ATV Safety Unit (DPS-MSU), the Texas Motorcycle Safety Coalition (TMSC), law enforcement officers, local agencies, and motorcycle riding clubs and groups, as well as motorcycle dealerships. The five-year plan presents fourteen high-priority countermeasures, which were identified through focus groups and survey collection and analysis. The countermeasures serve the SAP’s ultimate goal “to focus limited funding and resources on areas with the greatest opportunity to reduce motorcycle fatalities, injuries, and crashes in Texas.” Each countermeasure is an implementable action that may be specific to one specific stakeholder agency or entity, several stakeholders, or all motorcycle safety stakeholders.

During the TMSC meeting held on June 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2017 in College Station, TX, TMSC members and other attendees participated in a working session activity that further explored one of the fourteen SAP countermeasures. The goal of the working session was to identify and recommend specific activities that can be implemented to advance the countermeasure and to identify key stakeholders. Coalition members and attendees were divided into groups to work on expanding the countermeasure of “communicate rider responsibility (i.e. not speeding, appropriate following distance, lane placement).”



## Part I - Identification of Specific Activities

Part I of the working session consisted of breaking up into six different groups and identifying two or more ways the “communicate rider responsibility” countermeasure could be implemented. Coalition members and attendees were not asked to develop specific details, but only to propose general ideas to implement the aforementioned countermeasure. Each breakout group presented their ideas. Every TMSC member and attendee used a piece of paper to vote for their top three ideas that were presented, according to which ideas they felt were the strongest and best way to implement the countermeasure. The most favored six ideas that were identified through voting were:

1. Insurance companies adopt requirement of having an endorsement for coverage.
2. Public campaign focused on situational awareness aimed at younger riders.
3. Mandate continued education for license renewal.
4. Incentivize safe riding.
5. Develop an interactive virtual reality.
6. Encourage clubs to push for advanced training.

## Part II – Expansion of Specific Activities into Action

Part II of the working session involved coalition members and attendees dividing into six groups that correspond with the top six activities identified in the previous task. Members of each of the six groups expanded the specific activities into detailed action plans that involved identifying lead organizations and steps to implementation. After thirty minutes, members of the working session groups reconvened. A representative from each group presented their ideas in depth and fielded questions from meeting attendees and Coalition members.



## Action Plans

### 1. Insurance companies adopt requirement of having an endorsement for coverage.

The Texas Insurance Board can adopt a requirement of having a Class M endorsement in order to obtain motorcycle insurance coverage. The Insurance Board could potentially lobby the Texas Legislature to pass policy in the transportation code that mandates a rider must show proof of a Class M endorsement upon obtaining annual registration for their motorcycle. This method works on the idea that there are three ways to change behavior in transportation – through enforcement, engineering, and education. Barriers to implementation include that stakeholder groups, such as dealers, some riders, and others may not be in favor of passing this legislation.

### 2. Public campaign focused on situational awareness aimed at younger riders.

The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) could create a new public information and public awareness campaign aimed at younger riders that focuses on situational awareness. This campaign could utilize celebrity volunteers, GoPro footage, and sport bikes that would resonate with younger riders. The videos will highlight the dangers of urban riding, and how riders can stay safe by staying situationally aware (i.e. staying out of a vehicle's blind spots). Crash data can be utilized to recreate risky scenarios. Videos can be uploaded to YouTube and shared across social media platforms. Dealerships can be reached out to for sponsorship opportunities. Since this campaign is tailored to younger riders, similar campaigns can be developed for the older rider demographic, who need the same information.



### **3. Mandate continued education for license renewal.**

Mandating continued education for license renewal can be facilitated by the driver/rider alternating between in-classroom continued education and closed-course skills testing every other renewal period. In this strategy, all motor vehicles would be required to have continued education hours to renew their driver's license. Motorcyclists with a Class M and Class C could choose between a passenger vehicle education course, or a motorcycle education course. This ensures that motorcycles will not be unfairly profiled. For this to be implemented there needs to be a legislative mandate. The Texas Department of Public Safety or a third party could administer the classes. Developing and administrating the courses would be the most challenging aspect of this strategy.

### **4. Develop an interactive virtual reality.**

TxDOT could develop an interactive virtual reality application for riders based on common crash scenarios, which would be informed by crash data and statistics. In the virtual reality, users chose how to handle certain situations (i.e. a 90 degree turn with a recommended speed of 15 mph) while riding a motorcycle. The outcome, should the rider chose a faulty, dangerous, or improper riding technique or move, will be graphic and potentially in 3D. Should the rider chose the proper riding techniques, they are rewarded by continuing throughout their scenic ride through switchbacks, exciting curves, and The focal point of the virtual reality could be tailored to certain crash causation actors, such as multi-vehicle collisions, speed, and impaired riding. Users will develop critical thinking behavior and risk management analysis skills through making the correct choices, or making the wrong ones and being shown the correct evasive maneuver or riding strategy.



### 5. Incentivize safe riding.

Safe riding can be incentivized by dealerships, who can offer discounts or special financing offers with proof of a Class M endorsement, or proof of other safety training such as a CPR and first aid class, or an advanced rider course. TxDOT could partner with major sporting teams across the state to offer game tickets and freebies in a safety contest. The contest would be held via social media, with participants entering into the competition by using a predetermined hashtag that accompanies photographs of them practicing safe riding.

### 6. Encourage clubs to push for advanced training.

Motorcycle riding clubs, organizations, and groups can be empowered by the Texas Motorcycle Safety Coalition, TxDOT, and other stakeholders to pursue advanced training courses for their members. The focal point of this strategy is that it helps ensure safety amongst group rides, big or small, and contributes to overall safety in the lives of club, organization, and group members and riders. Adoption of a zero tolerance of alcohol consumption can be encouraged, with the Watch UR BAC program visiting clubs and groups with their impaired riding simulator. Training videos can be provided to organizations. Clubs and groups can incentivize obtaining advanced riding courses by reducing membership fees for those who have completed an advanced course, or by making it mandatory.

## Concluding Remarks

The goal of this working session was to produce diverse, but meaningful dialogue on how the next step to achieving the particular countermeasure can be facilitated and pursued. A wide range of ideas were represented throughout the groups, and not every member agreed of the effectiveness of each of these six strategies. However, even amidst the conflicting opinions, six different approaches to implementing the countermeasure of “communicate rider responsibility (i.e. not speeding, appropriate following distance, lane placement)” were developed and discussed at length.