2018

UNLICENSED MOTORCYCLISTS IN TEXAS

THE PROBLEM IN TEXAS

In 2018, there were 398 motorcycle operator fatalities in Texas. Of these, 184 motorcycle operators did not have a motorcycle endorsement or license, known as a Class M, at the time of the crash.

Unlicensed riders accounted for 46% of motorcycle operator fatalities in Texas in 2018. Unlicensed motorcyclists are overrepresented when compared to unlicensed drivers in Texas. In 2018, there were 1,861 driver fatalities in Texas. Of these, 233 did not have a valid driver’s license at the time of the crash, which accounted for 13% of driver fatalities that year.¹

UNLICENSED OPERATOR FATALITIES

DRIVERS 13% vs MOTORCYCLISTS 46%

IN 2018, IN TEXAS

398 motorcycle operator fatalities

Almost 1 in 2 motorcycle operators killed did not have a Class M at the time of the crash.

WHO TOOK THE SURVEY?

There were 736 riders who completed the survey, representing 110 counties.

WHAT PROGRAMS TARGET UNLICENSED RIDERS IN TEXAS?

In 2019, the Texas A&M Transportation Institute (TTI) surveyed motorcyclists in Texas to investigate reasons motorcyclists don’t get their Class M. The survey was part of a larger project funded by the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT). The project’s primary purpose was to promote rider knowledge, skill, and safety by encouraging riders to complete motorcycle safety training.

11% of surveyed riders were unlicensed. As compared to licensed riders, unlicensed riders were more likely to:

- Be 40-49 years old, or
- Be Hispanic, or
- Have ridden fewer miles in the past 12 months, or
- Have less riding experience, or
- Have stopped riding for 1 year or more.

WHAT ABOUT UNLICENSED RIDERS IN TEXAS?

In 2018, in Texas

46% of motorcycle operator fatalities were unlicensed riders

52% of riders rode for commuting & recreational purposes

34% rode 1,000 – 4,999 miles in the last 12 months

60% have been riding 15 years+

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¹ Source: Texas Department of Transportation, Texas A&M Transportation Institute.
$250
MAX COST for the Class M introductory course

**WHAT WOULD INFLUENCE UNLICENSED MOTORCYCLISTS TO GET THEIR CLASS M?**

Financial assistance was cited as the most common influencing factor. While some training schools and dealerships offer promotional discounts or waived fees on classes, they are not widespread or consistent.

**HOW DO RIDERS GET A CLASS M?**

Per TRC 521.148, riders must present evidence of a Texas Department of Public Safety (TxDPS)-certified motorcycle operator training course when applying for a Class M. The following courses can be completed to meet this requirement:

- Motorcycle Safety Foundation Basic and Intermediate Rider Courses
- Total Control Beginner and Intermediate Riding Clinics

After completing one of these courses, riders will receive a completion certificate, known as MSB-8. The MSB-8 is valid for 2 years, and must be presented when applying for a Class M.

Numerous training schools across Texas offer these courses. To find the nearest TxDPS-certified course to you, visit https://www.dps.texas.gov/msb/map/.

The transfer of the State’s motorcycle operator training program from TxDPS to the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation (TDLR) will take effect September 1, 2020. Updates regarding the program transfer can be found on the Look Learn Live website https://www.looklearnlive.org.

**CONTACT INFORMATION**

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**WERE UNLICENSED MOTORCYCLISTS AWARE OF THE INTERMEDIATE MOTORCYCLE SAFETY COURSE?**

Of riders surveyed, 37% were unaware of the intermediate rider courses. This is an important finding because completion of the intermediate courses can lead to the Class M. When considering only unlicensed riders, the percentage who were unaware of intermediate rider courses rose to 60%.

**WHAT CAN TEXAS DO TO ENCOURAGE MOTORCYCLISTS TO COMPLETE TRAINING?**

Across all riders surveyed, education was the most common factor that would influence riders to get a Class M. Education included developing a marketing campaign to educate riders on how to get a Class M and to remind riders of the motorcycle licensing requirement.