

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 46%



MOTORCYCLISTS

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.

WHAT ABOUT UNLICENSED RIDERS IN TEXAS?

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.

IN 2018,
IN TEXAS

46%
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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.

84%
male



16%
female

30%

of riders
were between
50-59 years old

(most common age range)

80%
were
Caucasian



16%
were
Hispanic

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+

WHY DON'T UNLICENSED RIDERS GET A CLASS M?

\$250
MAX COST
for the Class M
introductory
course



Costs were cited as the **most common reason unlicensed riders don't get a Class M.**

Course costs vary, but the maximum cost for the introductory course is \$250.

Up until September 2009, it was possible to obtain a Class M in Texas without completing a motorcycle safety course. At that time, rider knowledge and skills tests were still administered, but there was no formal training course. In an effort to standardize rider knowledge and skill level, formal motorcycle training became a requirement in Texas 10 years ago.

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%.

37% were unaware of the 1-day, intermediate rider courses
OF RIDERS SURVEYED

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.



FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

most common influencer

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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.

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>.



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Texas Department of Transportation



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