



Texas Motorcycle Safety Coalition Meeting Minutes July 26, 2018

Texas A&M Transportation Institute

Gibb Gilchrist Building, Room 102

10:00 am - 3:00 pm

Highlights

- Opening Remarks/ Welcome New Members
- TxDOT Update
- Motorcycle Outreach
- 2018 Motorcycle Campaign Update
- Moving Forward with Motorcycle Safety: Licensing vs. Training
- DPS Motorcycle Program Updates and Discussion
- Open Discussion & Adjourn

Opening Remarks and New Member Introduction.

Chris Beireis opened the meeting at 10:08 a.m. and invited attendees to introduce themselves to the group.

TxDOT Update

Jude Schexnyder announced that the TxDOT grants for FY2019 have been officially announced, including the Motorcycle Safety Outreach grant that helps to sponsor the TMSC. The grant is aimed in part at trying to impact the 25%-30% of crashes that are the fault of other drivers; but it also focuses on some of the ways that riders can influence their own safety.

Motorcycle Outreach

Michael Manser commented on updates to the Look Learn Live website and social media, including the new videos on gear use and updates to the rider videos on the interactive map. The rider videos have been filmed on roads that have been identified as popular riding routes and also are high-crash locations, and include tips for navigating those roadways safely. Some clips from these videos are starting to be shared on Look Learn Live's social media. Visitors to the website can input comments on the routes as well. TTI has had to increase security on the site due to the large number of spam/bot requests, so if you have submitted a comment or route suggestion recently that hasn't been posted yet,

please notify us. More routes will be filmed next year; Mike asked for suggestions for routes that should be included on the mapping website. Suggestions were received for:

- Highway 71 close to Serene Hills
- Roadways linking the Painted Churches of South Texas (tourist area)
- County Road 4 in the Hill Country
- Newman's Castle area, Old Highway 36
- Piney Woods in the northeast
- Big Bend and Coastal Bend area
- Highway 16 Kerrville/Bandera
- Junction area
- Farm to Market Road 1725
- Roadways with high speed limits (80-85 mph)
- Areas with heavy construction

The 2019 Motorcycle Safety Forum planning committee will start meeting via conference call shortly to plan the structure, topics, and speakers for next year's Forum. If you have signed up for the Forum Planning Committee, you will start receiving emails soon; if you want to join the committee, please let Cody Stewart know at c-stewart@tti.tamu.edu. If you have ideas that you would like to submit to the committee, please notify Cody, Mike Manser, Laura Higgins, Christie Havemann, or any other TTI staff person associated with the TMSC; or send us an email on LookLearnLive.org.

Chris Beireis asked if there might be a way to tie the Forum into MotoGP weekend; a possible problem with this would be the higher hotel room rates associated with that event. Another suggestion was April, to precede Motorcycle Safety Month in May. However, normally the COC&I has their annual meeting in April, which could be a conflict. Cody mentioned that March was the most popular month selected by attendees on the 2018 Forum evaluation form. Early February was suggested as a possibility since it is a slower time for the motorcycle instructors. Mike Manser said that we will look for possible dates at conference centers in February and early March.

Mike displayed a list of the events that the outreach campaign has attended this year. The events are a mix of rider-centric events and general-public events, and provide an opportunity for face-to-face contact with a variety of people to promote motorcycle safety messages. Mike asked for suggestions of other events to consider for FY19. Suggestions included:

- OTT Rally in Nacogdoches
- 4th of July at Ft. Hood
- Revival Hand-built Motorcycle Show
- Gun shows
- Cyberfish has lists of upcoming events
- Tyler Rose Festival

Mike invited any Coalition members who would like to volunteer to help at events to contact LookLearnLive.org. TTI staff always welcome additional help at these events!

2018 Motorcycle Campaign Update

Destiny Dreher from Sherry Matthews Advocacy Marketing provided an update on the paid media campaign “Look Twice for Motorcycles.” The campaign’s objective is to reduce the number of crashes between motorcycles and other motor vehicles by raising awareness of motorcycles among motorists. The paid media campaign staff have attended events this year in El Paso, San Antonio, Corpus Christi, Austin, Temple, Houston, Dallas-Fort Worth, and Midland. Event booth attractions include a virtual-reality game that allows people to be in the “driver’s seat” for three scenarios (changing lanes, turning left, intersections) where looking twice for motorcycles is crucial.

This year’s outreach materials have included bumper stickers, pump toppers, travel card games, paper eyeglasses, notepads, and selfie signs. Additional materials, especially useful for clubs and other partners, include posters, banners, and spinning wheel games for events. Social media this year has included reaction polls for posts and three new videos. Statistics on the people reached through this year’s paid media campaign include the following:

- 25,000 exhibit interactions at events
- 50,600 exposed to messages at events
- 441 individual news stories – 13.5 million impressions broadcast, online and print
- Social/digital – 8.7 million impressions, 1.5 million video views
- TV PSAs – 11 million people reached in May/June

The campaign materials and resources can be accessed at www.LookTwiceTexas.com, or by contacting your local TxDOT Traffic Safety Specialist.

Moving Forward with Motorcycle Safety: Licensing vs. Training

Cody Stewart reviewed the question of licensing vs training as a focus area for improving motorcycle safety. Paige Ericson-Graber of TTI is leading an upcoming Traffic Safety Grant project titled “Not Licensed to Ride” which will examine ways to increase the percentage of licensed riders in Texas. The percentage of riders involved in fatal crashes in Texas who were unlicensed at the time of the crash has risen from 37% to 47% over the last four years. The project will seek input from riders in Texas about what influences their decision to obtain or not obtain a motorcycle license.

A meeting attendee commented that cross-referencing between motorcycle registrations and Class M endorsements in another state (followed by contacting motorcycle owners who were unlicensed) led to an increase in the number of licensed riders in that state. Cody Stewart explained that in Texas, we cannot get license information en masse from the DMV. Jude raised the notion of tying licenses to motorcycle insurance, but recognized that that decision is up to the individual insurance agencies. Another attendee pointed out that many older riders do not have licenses because the requirement for a motorcycle license was instituted after they had already been riding for a long time.

Another suggestion was to examine crash data to see if there is a regional/locational component to percentages of unlicensed riders in Texas. Jude commented that the research indicates that unlicensed

riders are overrepresented in crashes due to lower skill sets (on average) and higher risk-taking tendencies among riders who are unlicensed.

Mike asked the group if the licensing and/or the training question would be of interest to the group as a TMSC initiative. If the Coalition can narrow down a particular focus that would be of interest to the group to tackle as an initiative, we can start working on it at the next meeting. There was general consensus among the group that a focus on getting riders trained will also reduce the number of unlicensed riders.

Mike Manser and Jude Schexnyder led a discussion of how to build a road map toward improving the numbers of licensed riders in Texas, which includes the question “what will “sell” training to motorcycle riders?”

Ideas and comments included:

- Would there be a chance of getting insurance companies to offer reduced insurance rates to riders who have completed the training course? (Someone commented that some insurance companies do offer that rate reduction.)
- Jude recalled the solution that helmet-use advocates found to raise helmet use in the absence of a helmet law. The approach was “educate, don’t legislate” and the result has been a 60%+ rate of helmet use among riders in Texas. Changing the culture may be the key to changing how riders view the value of training.
- Could fines for traffic citations for unlicensed riders include funds to support training?
- Jude commented that perhaps a portion of annual motorcycle registration fees could also go to training in the future. That was the case for a short time years ago, with an additional \$5 charged for motorcycle registrations that went into the state motorcycle training fund, and it might be a good time to approach that question again. However, there could be pushback from the motorcycle community if they’re being charged more than car owners for registrations.
- Incorporating more human-factors concepts and considerations into driver training to better address hazard perception, awareness of motorcycles, etc. could be helpful to everyone on the road. Currently, there is not much in the driver curriculum addressing watching for motorcycles or other vulnerable road users. Educating riders, drivers, kids who are future road users, parents etc. is important, and contributes to a culture in which training is the norm.
- What about designating a month of the year that is “motorcycle training” awareness month?

Mike suggested starting with a list of the people who should be involved in a training initiative, and identifying steps toward implementing solutions. He, John Young, and Jude Schexnyder will start putting together a set of key questions to discuss with the Coalition. Cindy Kovar suggested putting some of these questions out to the whole Coalition as an online survey to get more participation.

DPS Motorcycle Program Updates and Discussion: Sunset Review Committee Recommendations

John Young reviewed statistics about motorcycling licensing and training in Texas. Currently there are 377,000 registered motorcycles but over 1 million licensed riders in Texas. So, the large percentage of fatal crashes that involve unlicensed riders is interesting. Is the imbalance of licenses to motorcycle registrations happening because people are taking training and getting a license that don't ultimately decide to ride? Are motorcycle license holders ceasing to ride? Are there riders not registering motorcycles? As a comparison, there are 24 million registered vehicles in Texas and 20 million licensed drivers.

A one-day licensing curriculum is being developed, and a one-day Trike course is about to be field-tested. The Sunset Commission will vote in August to either move forward with the proposed legislative changes to the motorcycle training program, or not. One of the questions under consideration is whether the Motorcycle Safety Program will become responsible for regulating motorcycle training. One potential outcome of the Sunset review may be for the Motorcycle Safety Program to move out of DPS to another agency. There are several legislative representatives involved with the process; contact your state representative if you have a question or concern, or want to give your opinion about what the program should look like in the future.

Questions from meeting attendees to John included the following:

- If the training program moves out of DPS, what happens to the training motorcycles that are currently in use?
 - *Answer:* We are asking that notice is given that current motorcycles will not be replaced at the end of their five-year life cycle. If the money from the training fund goes to funding grants, then sponsors might be able to apply for grants to buy training motorcycles, but no one knows yet how that might be structured.
- In your opinion, what could be the role of an advisory committee?
 - *Answer:* An advisory committee might be able to help to set guidelines for professional improvement programs, disciplinary actions, etc.
- Is there anything written in the legislation about the motorcycle safety fund that ties it to DPS?
 - *Answer:* No, but the legislature has to appropriate the money in the fund to whoever is seeking the appropriations. Entities who can currently seek withdrawals include DPS and TxDOT.

Open Discussion

An attendee suggested that the motorcycle route map on the website be promoted to travelers on other, general-audience websites such as Texas tourism sites, TxDOT's general website, or other places that may be seen by audiences who would not be familiar with Look Learn Live.

The suggestion was seconded by another attendee, who commented that Texas could do a much better job of promoting motorcycle tourism, and mentioned the Arkansas Tourism's "Motorcycling in Arkansas" website as an example of a great motorcycle tourism outreach program. The interactive map could be provided to Texas Tourism information centers. Other suggestions included:

- Share the link on the Ride Texas Facebook page
- Provide information about the Coalition and Look Learn Live to riders who have just gotten their motorcycle endorsement.
- Put a link to the interactive map on the Texas Parks and Wildlife website
- Place a link to the Look Twice Texas campaign on the DPS website's page for motorist safety awareness.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 2:39 p.m.