



Texas Motorcycle Safety Coalition Meeting Minutes September 13, 2018

Texas A&M Transportation Institute

Gibb Gilchrist Building, Room 102

10:00 am - 3:00 pm

Highlights

- Opening Remarks and New Member Introduction
- TxDOT Update
- 2019 Motorcycle Safety Forum Discussion
- Moving Forward with Motorcycle Safety: Training Initiative
- DPS Motorcycle Program Updates and Discussion
- Open Discussion

Opening Remarks and New Member Introduction.

Cody Stewart opened the meeting at 10:10 a.m. and invited attendees to introduce themselves to the group.

TxDOT Update

Lisa Johnson is the temporary manager of the motorcycle-related programs sponsored by the TxDOT Traffic Safety Grant program, including the Motorcycle and Motorist Safety Outreach Program that helps to support the TMSC. Recently, a meeting of engineers and other stakeholders in Austin discussed crash mitigation strategies related to another of this year's Safety Grant projects, Reducing Risks to Motorcycles in Work Zones.

A review of recent crash statistics indicates that 52% of riders in fatal motorcycle crashes were unhelmeted, over 35% were intoxicated, and a large percentage had unregistered motorcycles. This indicates several safety issues that still need to be addressed.

In FY19, there are three Safety Grant projects addressing motorcycle safety: the statewide motorcycle/motorist outreach program, Reducing Risks to Motorcycles in Work Zones (both continuations of FY18 projects) and Unlicensed to Ride: Encouraging Riders to Obtain a Motorcycle License. TxDOT, via NHTSA safety funding, continues also to fund paid-media safety outreach to riders and motorists.

Jude suggested that Texas needs an extensive crash research/reconstruction project, similar in scope to the Hurt Report in 1981. Need a dedicated team to reconstruct motorcycle crashes, work with crash data experts to get a fuller picture of motorcycle crash risks.

Keith Rovell asked if motorcycle fatalities from 2016-2017 can be cross-referenced with the REMS data to determine how many of those riders were trained? Would have to be a manual cross-check but could be feasible on that scale.

Amber Trueblood distributed fact sheets on motorcycle crash data; these fact sheets and the longer crash analysis report will be published on LookLearnLive.org on Monday, September 17.

2019 Motorcycle Safety Forum Discussion

Cody Stewart presented a proposal to alternate future years of the Forum between Austin and other locations in Texas and between Thursdays and Saturdays, with the 2019 Forum potentially located in Kerrville. He asked for feedback on varying locations and days of the week. Comments from meeting attendees indicated that both the location and the day-of-week variation could make it possible for more people to participate. Cody also proposed that the Forum always occur during the last week of February each year (Thursday or Saturday), to maintain consistency in scheduling. The Y O Ranch in Kerrville may be a potential location; information is being gathered.

Potential speakers and topics that have been raised for upcoming Forums include:

- A national-level AMA representative
- Representatives from OEMs to talk about their safety initiatives; someone from insurance industry
- Manufacturers of motorcycle safety apparel
- Representative from the Harley Davidson Bike Fitness program (fitting riders to their specific bike through handlebar adjustments, etc.)
- Panel discussion with people who have changed the safety culture within their riding groups/circles
- Skilled Motorcycle Rider Association (based in Dallas/Fort Worth)

Comments received from the group include:

- Consider a representative from Ford Motor Company to talk about their work on autonomous vehicle sensors that recognize motorcycles; (Lisa Johnson commented that the Southwest Research Institute is also doing research on this technology)
- Jude Schexnyder commented that Mike Sayre, Federal Motorcycle Advisory Council will be attending the FY19 Forum.

Moving Forward with Motorcycle Safety: Licensing vs. Training

Cody Stewart introduced a group discussion activity to brainstorm some of the obstacles and challenges to getting riders trained and licensed in Texas.

Identified Obstacles included:

- The cost (to the rider) of training;
- The perceived value of training
- The time commitment needed to complete training
- The difference in training costs for riders vs. automobile drivers
- The availability of facilities for training
- The safety culture/social perception of training among riders.

From this list, the group selected “perceived value of training” and “availability of training facilities” to discuss in greater detail. The group discussions yielded the following:

Increase Perceived Value of Training

- Suggestions
 - Push targeted education/outreach about training and its value
 - It’s cheaper than the ticket for not having the license
 - Discount on insurance if you’re trained
 - Before/after survey when someone signs up for a class – how would you grade yourself and your riding skills? Maybe repeat survey among trained riders some time after training
 - Many people don’t know that course costs less in Texas than in most other states, particularly other southern states
 - Push results out through ABATE and other organizations
 - How do you beat the attitude that “I’m good enough without training?”
 - Logic appeal, fear appeal, ego appeal – these are different ways to structure messages
 - Talk about setting examples for kids/grandkids

Availability of Facilities

- Stakeholders are students, sponsors, landowners, instructors
- Suggestions for expanding the number of available training locations:

- Propose a bill for a Landowner Liability Act: to protect landowners from liability in the event of an injury during training activities (provided the landowners are not grossly negligent).
 - Waiver/indemnification form for participants
 - Liability insurance already carried by instructors
- Explore use of multi-use facilities owned by state of Texas on weekends for motorcycle training

DPS Motorcycle Program Updates and Discussion

Jude Schexnyder and Mike Manser (by phone) reviewed recent updates concerning the Motorcycle Program updates. Senator Watson's modifications to the Sunset Commission's recommendations are available on the Sunset Commission website. Some highlights are summarized below:

- 6.1 – Move the function of the Motorcycle Safety Bureau from DPS to TDLR. Create the Motorcycle Safety Advisory Board (MSAB) under TDLR; nine members appointed for staggered 6-year terms. Three members will represent schools and instructors; one member will represent retail motorcycle dealers, one will represent law enforcement, one will represent TTI, one will represent TEEX, and two members will represent the licensed motorcycle riding public. TDLR will license riders and MC training schools, and will take over licensing new motorcycle instructors (instructors already licensed through DPS will retain their licenses).
- 6.3 –DPS will develop a plan to dispose of its loaned motorcycles, etc. and all proceeds from sale of that property will be deposited into the dedicated GRD 501 (dedicated training fund for motorcycle training program). Before that, however, sponsors will have an opportunity to purchase any loaned motorcycles they currently are using, and any equipment that TEEX, TTI, etc. that could be used by those agencies for training purposes will be transferred to them. TDLR will have the ability to make grants (to training schools, etc.) to improve motorcycle training in Texas.
- 6.4 – regarding transferring instructor training, advocacy, education, research from DPS. Watson's suggestion is to transfer these functions to TEEX (instructor training) and TTI (advocacy/education/research).

Open Discussion

Potential agenda item for future meetings: what legislative issues (beyond the Sunset Committee) do motorcycle riders/advocates want presented at the upcoming legislative session? Suggestions received included:

- Establishing operator licenses for autocycles

- Texas Penal Code 4602 – language change clarifying carrying a weapon on a motorcycle (clarifying current language “in a motor vehicle”)
- Waiver of tolls for motorcycles on toll roads
- Lane splitting/filtering

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 3:04 p.m.