

2021 Texas Motorcycle Safety Forum Meeting Minutes

Date: May 1, 2021

Time: 8:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. (CDT)

Location: eShow/BigMarker

Minutes

The 2021 Texas Motorcycle Safety Forum was held on Saturday, May 1, 2021 virtually, using the eShow/BigMarker conferencing platform. The Forum began at 8:30 a.m.; 164 people registered for the event. All sessions were recorded and are available to playback. Links are embedded in the session titles on the Agenda Tab.

Welcome

Michael Manser, Senior Research Scientist at the Texas A&M Transportation Institute (TTI), opened the Forum, welcomed attendees and shared how to interact in the virtual environment. Terry Pence, Director of the Behavioral Traffic Safety Section at the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), spoke about the Texas Highway Safety Plan and the #EndTheStreakTX campaign and the goal set by the Texas Transportation Commission and TxDOT to reduce the number of crash-related deaths in Texas to zero by 2050, halfway by 2035. Terry is retiring this year after over 39 years of experience in traffic safety at TxDOT. We thank him for all his work and wish him the best!

Breakout 1A: How Motorcyclists are Helped at the National Level

Michelle Atwell, Chief, Safety Countermeasures Division, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), United States Department of Transportation, shared the crash and fatality data that drives collaborative efforts with regional, state, and local levels to save lives. Data and outreach resources were provided to the public by NHTSA, along with a handout that included the website links. Yusuf Mohamedshah, Research Highway Safety Specialist, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), discussed a study that examined some causes of crashes to help determine the countermeasure(s) that could be developed to help reduce crashes and save lives. These included roadway signs and surface conditions.

Breakout 1B: Rider Behaviors that Increase Risk

Eva Shipp, Ph.D., Research Scientist and Manager, Crash Analytics Team, Center for Transportation Safety (CTS), TTI, focused on the top three rider behaviors that increase risk on Texas roadways, including speeding, impairment, and distraction.

Mac McCall, Research Associate, Virginia Tech Transportation Institute, Motorcycle Research Group, reviewed the 100 Naturalistic Study and what was learned from the 25% of riders who accounted for 75% of crashes and near-crashes in the study.

Breakout 2A: Increasing Rider Training and Licensing

Marcie Perez, Associate Transportation Researcher, CTS, TTI, explained the outreach program in Texas that identified potential motorcycle owners that are not licensed to ride. They were encouraged to receive training and get licensed. Study incentives were offered to participants who registered to take a course. Sarah Langlois Buzzell, State Program Manager, Wisconsin Motorcycle Safety Program, Wisconsin Department of Transportation, shared collaborative outreach efforts to encourage rider education, licensing, and safe riding behaviors.

Breakout 2B: How You Can Help Reduce Rider Crashes Through Effective Communication

Jack Wenzel, Communications and Marketing Coordinator, TTI and Charlie Dunn, Sr. Digital Strategist, Sherry Matthews Group, provided the path for attendees to become social media superstars. They explained what social media is and how everyone can be their own advocate in sharing messages to increase rider safety.

Breakout 3A: How to Educate Motorists About Rider Safety

Nina Jo Saint, Ph.D., Education Director, Safeway Driving; Michael "Ford" Strawn, Manager, Outreach, Audits and Policy, Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation (TDLR); Shanisty Villanueva, Team Lead, Education & Examination Division, TDLR; and Lora Dame "Mini Me", Gypsy Motorcycle Club (MC), Texas Council of Clubs & Independents (TCOC&I) Region 1 Chairman, provided different perspectives on how motorists are educated about motorcycle awareness and sharing the road. Starting with the history of how motorcycle awareness was first required in formal driver education to the 2020 move of TDLR overseeing both driver and motorcycle education programs, the presenters discussed opening the door to closer collaboration of the two programs. Lora also shared how TCOC&I members educate and advocate for motorcycle safety and awareness.

Breakout 3B: How Can Clubs and Groups Improve Rider Safety

Tony Lasher, Gold Wing Road Riders Association (GWRRA), Assistant Director of Motorist Awareness Program (MAP); Virgil Booker, GWRRA, Assistant Director of MAP; Chris Milligan "Gas Cap", Bikers Against Child Abuse (BACA), Highland Lakes

VP; and Chris Ward "Clutch", Grim Guardians MC, TCOC&I Region 1, shared education and outreach programs within their respective clubs. Examples included successful rider safety programs and real-world techniques for improving the safety of riders in groups and clubs. The session concluded with a questions and answers panel discussion.

Awards and Closing Comments

Michael Manser wrapped up the day. He announced the first annual Texas Motorcycle Safety awards recipients, Shelley "Redd" Holmes as the Safety Champion and Jude Schexnyder as the Difference Maker. He then thanked all those who helped make the forum possible, including the attendees, organizers, presenters, and sponsors.