

Texas Motorcycle Safety Coalition Meeting Minutes



September 4, 2025, 10:00 am - noon

Texas A&M Transportation Institute (TTI) Headquarters RM 1140 & Teams

[Welcome & Agenda](#) (Part 1: mm 00:00:40)

The meeting was opened by Maurice Maness, who welcomed everyone and expressed appreciation to participants joining both in person and virtually from across Texas. Attendees were encouraged to introduce themselves and to speak up as needed. The meeting agenda was outlined.

[Safety Minute: Speed related motorcycle crashes](#) (Part 1: mm 00:07:30)

Cathy Brooks noted recent concerns about speeding and stunt behavior among motorcyclists that had led to multiple fatalities, most of them single-vehicle, speed-related crashes. She shared the data trend showing steady increases in speed-related motorcycle crashes since 2020. Although counts continued to rise through 2024, preliminary 2025 data suggested a possible decline.

She also emphasized that more than 58% of these crashes involved motorcyclists alone, reflecting riders operating beyond their skill or condition level. Injury severity data also increased. The importance of safe choices, like lowering speed for additional response time and avoiding overreactions, was highlighted.

[Task Force Update](#) (Part 1: mm 00:10:40)

Municipal Courts

The task force focused on unlicensed riders. Crash statistics were compiled, and information was developed in partnership with the Texas Municipal Courts Education Center (TMCEC). An educational piece was created and provided to municipal courts across the state.

The information included guidance on unlicensed riders and outlined what judges could do if a rider was cited for not having a motorcycle license. Judges were educated on this issue because, unlike with driver education cases, no guidance was previously available on what qualified as a motorcycle safety course under the law. The new educational piece clarified these

requirements. A second piece was developed as a handout for riders in court, explaining how to obtain a license along with social media graphics for wider communication.

Law Enforcement

Law enforcement was consulted as a focus group. Officers stated they did not want to distribute handouts during traffic stops, since it could cause conflict if judges later. The information was sent directly to municipal courts, with handouts available digitally or physically.

A pilot test was proposed with full coordination among officers, schools, judges, and courts. In this model, tickets would be issued, deferred disposition granted, classes delivered, and follow-up interviews conducted, which was seen as a possible future initiative.

The information was also shared with law enforcement through the STEP Program, led by Larry Krantz. It was also sent to the Texas Prosecutors Association. The task force suggested placing the handout in dealerships and other public locations. The material would also be added to the Look. Learn. Live. resources page for public access.

Social Media Graphics

Social media graphics were created and posted through Look. Learn. Live. channels. The materials were scheduled to continue on a periodic cycle. One of the posts that had received particularly strong feedback when it was released was highlighted.

Legislative Update

SB 296 and HB 4904, and HB 3642 are effective as of September 1st.

- Court dismissal property protections for school owners were passed, providing liability coverage for motorcycle safety training schools. This addressed significant pushback from property owners over the past year, particularly in Galveston County. This measure required three legislative sessions to be passed.
- Memorial Markers for motorcycle crash fatalities had previously been represented by a red cross. Under new legislation, the department was tasked with developing additional options for marker designs. The markers were to remain for one year, after which the original sponsor could reclaim the plaque. A fee was required for installation.
- A personal testimony was shared by one participant who lost a brother in a motorcycle crash three years ago. With guidance from Maurice, the necessary documents were submitted to TxDOT, and the family was able to attend both the installation and removal of the memorial marker.
- It was also noted that new eligibility requirements were included in the legislation. Markers could not be requested if the motorcyclist had been impaired at the time of the crash.

Guest Speaker: Christopher Gray, Statewide Traffic Incident Management Coordinator, TxDOT (Part 1: mm 00:21:01)

Christopher Gray, Traffic Safety Division, Texas Department of Transportation, introduced himself as one of two statewide Traffic Incident Management (TIM) Coordinators. His background was with the Austin Police Department for 24 years before retiring. After planning extensive motorcycle trips, he later accepted his current role to teach best practices to first responders.

Motorcycle Road Trip Safety Suggestions:

- Riders were advised to inspect their motorcycles before each ride, using the “T-CLOCS” acronym (Tires, Controls, Lights, Oil, Chassis, Stands). Proper maintenance, torque checks, and operational safety were emphasized.
- Personal protective equipment, including full-face helmets, jackets, gloves, jeans, boots, and rain/cold-weather gear, was emphasized. Helmets were noted as critical for both crash protection and roadway debris. Gray shared a personal crash experience, where inadequate gear resulted in significant injury.
- Riders were encouraged to leave itineraries with contacts, share travel routes, and use apps or devices like Life360 or Apple Air Tags for tracking.
- The universal distress signal of a helmet placed on the ground was explained. Protecting the scene during a breakdown or crash was highlighted with examples such as electronic road flares to alert drivers and redirect traffic.
- Essential items included a toolkit specific to the bike type, spare fuses, wireless or plug-in tire inflators, jump boxes, and tire repair kits.
- Self-aid and buddy-aid were mentioned as critical in rural areas. Trauma kits and first-aid training were recommended to address both minor and severe injuries.
- Riders were advised to wear bright clothing, use high beams during the day, and employ signaling devices like whistles or small LED lights in emergencies.
- Advances such as helmet brake lights and motorcycle blind-spot detection were noted. Gray also shared the importance of raising awareness among younger generations, referencing games like “Slug Bug,” adapted by his family to look for motorcycles.
- Gray concluded the presentation with reminders that safe riding required preparation, awareness, and protective measures, supported by both equipment and rider behavior.

Discussion: Participants asked about electronic flares, which Gray noted could be purchased online. Attendees discussed trauma kit training, referencing prior “Stop the Bleed” and accident scene management sessions. Kimberly Sailor shared a youth outreach idea, “Biker Bump,” encouraging children to fist-bump when spotting motorcycles.

Guest Speaker: Crystal O’Rear, Research Specialist, Center for Alcohol and Drug Education Studies, TTI – Unlicensed to Ride Update (Part 2: mm 00:00:28)

Crystal O’Rear introduced herself from the Center for Alcohol and Drug Education Studies at Texas A&M Transportation Institute. She was a police officer for nine years in Bryan before moving into traffic safety at TTI.

The Unlicensed Rider project was described to encourage more riders to complete motorcycle safety training and to continue promoting a culture of rider safety in Texas.

One product created as part of the grant year was a new fact sheet highlighting the importance of training. The data came from DPS and DMV from 2020 through 2024. The fact sheet was posted on LookLearnLive.org for download.

Another component was a postcard mailing campaign. The idea was adapted from a program in Michigan. Motorcycle registrations were matched with license records to identify owners without a Class M endorsement, and postcards were mailed to those addresses. Nine postcard versions were developed. TxDOT printed the postcards, and they were mailed addressed to “Resident” for privacy reasons.

Data results:

- In 2020, about 70,000 unmatched records were identified.
- In the current year, that number increased to 88,074.
- The increase reflected changes in data analysis, including geocoding and normalizing addresses such as P.O. Box variations.
- FY22 review: 37,131 recipients obtained licenses since 2020.
- FY23 reevaluation: 8% became licensed.
- FY24 reevaluation: 9.5% became licensed by the end of 2024, a 14.6% improvement over FY22.
- Top counties included Bandera County and Fort Hood. High-volume counties such as Dallas and Harris had lower percentages due to larger numbers overall.

Questions were raised about why mailings did not directly state that individuals had a motorcycle but no license. Crystal responded that due to privacy concerns, the “Resident” address format avoided exposing personal information.

The discussion continued with a focus on manufacturer-funded training. A comparison was made to the ATV industry, where manufacturers were required to provide free training. It was also noted that “free” training often resulted in poor attendance. Some manufacturers, like Yamaha and Kawasaki, offer rebates or vouchers for training. Concerns were raised about class costs in Texas, ranging from about \$250 to over \$300, where even with prepayment, about 10% of students failed to show.

Surveys were conducted with training participants. Recruitment included school emails, flyers, and social media posts. 11 applications were received, 6 were eligible, and 5 completed both pre- and post-surveys in 2025.

Survey Results:

- Past years had higher participation when incentives were larger:
- In 2021, over 100 responses with a \$150 incentive (\$50 before / \$100 after).
- In 2022, a \$40 incentive produced fewer responses.
- In 2023, \$50 total (\$20 before / \$30 after) also produced very limited participation.

The survey received consistent feedback that training was valuable, but barriers were cost and access. Negative comments came from participants who did not pass the course.

An example from Virginia was shared. A 15-second video campaign to promote licensing led to an increase in one-day class participation and a 25% reduction in motorcycle deaths. Free advanced classes still suffered from high no-show rates.

Updates to LookLearnLive.org were shared, and two pages were created: one under Safety describing the project, and another under Training & Licensing, with a top-level tab. Feedback was incorporated into the Licensing page. The survey project officially closed in August, and a final report was in progress.

Announcements (Part 2: mm 00:33:06)

- Outreach materials now in Spanish- All motorcycle outreach programs were translated into Spanish, including *Drink. Ride. Lose.*, *Taking the Time*, *Take the Course*, *Gear Up the Coalition*, the website information sheet, *Look Twice for Motorcycles*, and *Work Zone Riding*. The *I Ride for Tomorrow* pledge was translated and redesigned into a business card format. Schools were encouraged to give these cards to new students.
- “Biker Bump” - <https://www.looklearnlive.org/resource/biker-bump/> the social media outreach, the “Biker Bump” campaign, which was widely shared and received strong engagement.
- Thinking Transportation podcast - <https://tti.tamu.edu/podcast/episode-104-ride-smart-stay-alive-motorcycle-helmets-reduce-risks-for-injury-or-death-for-riders/>. After the May Motorcycle Safety Forum, where Hong Zhang from the Snell Foundation spoke on helmet safety, TTI Communications produced a podcast episode on helmet standards, Texas laws, and the benefits of wearing helmets. The episode is available online and linked through the coalition website.

- Next TMSO meeting – FY2026 - the current Motorcycle Safety Education Outreach and Motorist Awareness contract ends with FY2025, and FY2026 confirmation is pending. The next coalition meeting is expected during the first quarter of FY2026.
- Seeking volunteers for 2026 Task Force - The Motorcycle Safety Task Force will continue next year. New volunteers are encouraged to join. The task force will focus on outreach priorities, target audiences, and strategies to reduce motorcycle fatalities on Texas roadways.

Open Forum (Part 2: mm 00:40:45)

Raine Devries brought up concerns about social media challenges on TikTok and Instagram, pointing out how dangerous they are for motorcyclists, who are already more vulnerable on the road. She shared that a 2025 Motorcycle Safety Foundation report shows riders are 27 times more likely than drivers to be involved in a fatal distracted-driving crash.

She mentioned a video with over two million views and nearly 900,000 likes, noting that creators profit from posting these risky stunts and that many viewers cheer them on. Members talked about how these posts can be reported, but removal is hit or miss. The group compared it to impaired riding, where taking repeated risks can build a false sense of confidence until a crash happens.

The discussion on impaired riding- it was noted that the average BAC for motorcyclists in crashes is 0.15, more than double the legal limit. Members asked if there were PSAs that address drinking and riding or taking unnecessary risks. Cathy confirmed that LookLearnLive.org posts at least 20 safety messages per month across platforms, including campaigns around holidays, and encouraged participants to share and interact with those posts to increase visibility.

A question was raised about the new MSF waiver required for rider coaches. Concerns included whether this could reduce the number of instructors and limit training opportunities. Cathy explained that this waiver had been introduced recently, generating discussion across the country. She noted that webinars were being hosted by MSF and encouraged instructors to review their emails. She added that this meeting was not the right platform for a full discussion but acknowledged the concerns.

Questions were raised about the delay of the NHTSA assessment, which had now been postponed twice (three times). The reason given was scheduling, as impaired driving and other assessments were already planned. Some participants expressed frustration, pointing out that the last assessment was conducted over eleven years ago. Concerns were raised that outdated information weakens planning and funding proposals. Cathy responded that a strong coalition and task force could help carry the workload and support TxDOT and TDLR in moving the assessment forward.

Gregory Todd announced that the Tri-County Toy Run will take place on December 7, starting at Lil-Tex in Copperas Cove. Information is available on Facebook and the event website.

Cathy Brooks closed the meeting by thanking participants, encouraging them to continue sending topics, joining task force meetings, and sharing safety resources.

Adjourn (Part 2: mm 01:03:08)

If you have any topic ideas, please drop them to Cathy (c-brooks@tti.tamu.edu) Come join us for Task Force meetings. Thank you to our guest speaker and everyone who joined us today. We are delighted to see so many new people today. Next time bring a new friend.

Ride safe and have a great rest of your week!