

# Uniform Guidelines *for* State Highway Safety Programs



November 2006

## Highway Safety Program Guideline No. 3

# Motorcycle Safety

Each State, in cooperation with its political subdivisions and tribal governments and other parties as appropriate, should develop and implement a comprehensive highway safety program, reflective of State demographics, to achieve a significant reduction in traffic crashes, fatalities, and injuries on public roads. The highway safety program should include a comprehensive motorcycle safety program that aims to reduce motorcycle crashes and related deaths and injuries. Each comprehensive State motorcycle safety program should address the use of helmets (meeting Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard 218) and other protective gear, proper licensing, impaired riding, rider training, conspicuity, and motorist awareness. This guideline describes the components that a State motorcycle safety program should include and the criteria that the program components should meet.

## I. PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

Each State should have centralized program planning, implementation and coordination to identify the nature and extent of its motorcycle safety problems, to establish goals and objectives for the State's motorcycle safety program and to implement projects to reach the goals and objectives. State motorcycle safety plans should:

- Designate a lead agency for motorcycle safety;
- Develop funding sources;
- Collect and analyze data on motorcycle crashes, injuries, and fatalities;
- Identify and prioritize the State's motorcycle safety problem areas;
- Encourage collaboration among agencies and organizations responsible for, or impacted by, motorcycle safety issues;
- Develop programs (with specific projects) to address problems;
- Coordinate motorcycle safety projects with those for the general motoring public;
- Integrate motorcycle safety into State strategic highway safety plans and other related highway safety activities including impaired driving, occupant protection, speed management, and driver licensing programs; and
- Routinely evaluate motorcycle safety programs and services.

## **II. MOTORCYCLE PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT**

Each State is encouraged to have and enforce a mandatory all-rider motorcycle helmet use law. In addition, each State should encourage motorcycle operators and passengers to use the following protective equipment through an aggressive communication campaign:

- Motorcycle helmets that meet the Federal helmet standard;
- Proper clothing, including gloves, boots, long pants, and a durable long-sleeved jacket; and
- Eye and face protection.

Additionally, each passenger should have a seat and footrest.

## **III. MOTORCYCLE OPERATOR LICENSING**

States should require every person who operates a motorcycle on public roadways to pass an examination designed especially for motorcycle operation and to hold a license endorsement specifically authorizing motorcycle operation. Each State should have a motorcycle licensing system that requires:

- Motorcycle operator's manual that contains essential safe riding information;
- Motorcycle license examination, including knowledge and skill tests, and State licensing medical criteria;
- License examiner training specific to testing of motorcyclists;
- Motorcycle license endorsement;
- Cross-referencing of motorcycle registrations with motorcycle licenses to identify motorcycle owners who may not have the proper endorsement;
- Motorcycle license renewal requirements;
- Learner's permits issued for a period of 90 days and the establishment of limits on the number and frequency of learner's permits issued per applicant to encourage each motorcyclist to get full endorsement; and
- Penalties for violation of motorcycle licensing requirements.

## **IV. MOTORCYCLE RIDER EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

Safe motorcycle operation requires specialized training by qualified instructors. Each State should establish a State Motorcycle Rider Education Program that has:

- A source of program funding;
- A State organization to administer the program;
- A mandate to use the State-approved curriculum;
- Reasonable availability of rider education courses for all interested residents of legal riding age and varying levels of riding experience;

- A documented policy for instructor training and certification;
- Incentives for successful course completion such as licensing test exemption;
- A plan to address the backlog of training, if applicable;
- State guidelines for conduct and quality control of the program; and
- A program evaluation plan.

## **V. MOTORCYCLE OPERATION UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF ALCOHOL OR OTHER DRUGS**

Each State should ensure that programs addressing impaired driving include an impaired motorcyclist component. The following programs should be used to reach impaired motorcyclists:

- Community traffic safety and other injury control programs, including outreach to motorcyclist clubs and organizations;
- Youth anti-impaired driving programs and campaigns;
- High visibility law enforcement programs and communications campaigns;
- Judge and prosecutor training programs;
- Anti-impaired-driving organizations' programs;
- College and school programs;
- Workplace safety programs;
- Event-based programs such as motorcycle rallies, shows, etc.; and
- Server training programs.

## **VI. LEGISLATION AND REGULATIONS**

Each State should enact and enforce motorcycle-related traffic laws and regulations. As part of a comprehensive motorcycle safety program each State is encouraged to have and enforce a law that requires all riders to use motorcycle helmets compliant with the Federal helmet standard. Specific policies should be developed to encourage coordination with appropriate public and private agencies in the development of regulations and laws to promote motorcycle safety.

## **VII. LAW ENFORCEMENT**

Each State should ensure that State and community motorcycle safety programs include a law enforcement component. Each State should emphasize strongly the role played by law enforcement personnel in motorcycle safety. Essential components of that role include:

- Developing knowledge of motorcycle crash situations, investigating crashes, and maintaining a reporting system that documents crash activity and supports problem identification and evaluation activities;
- Providing communication and education support;

- Providing training to law enforcement personnel in motorcycle safety, including how to identify impaired motorcycle operators and helmets that do not meet FMVSS 218; and
- Establishing agency goals to support motorcycle safety.

## **VIII. HIGHWAY ENGINEERING**

Traffic engineering is a critical element of any crash reduction program. This is true not only for the development of programs to reduce an existing crash problem, but also to design transportation facilities that provide for the safe movement of motorcyclists and all other motor vehicles.

The needs of motorcyclists must always be considered. Therefore, each State should ensure that State and community motorcycle safety programs include a traffic engineering component that is coordinated with enforcement and educational efforts. This engineering component should improve the safety of motorcyclists through the design, construction, operation and maintenance of engineering measures. These measures may include, but should not be limited to:

- Considering motorcycle needs when selecting pavement skid factors; and
- Providing advance warning signs to alert motorcyclists to unusual or irregular roadway surfaces.

## **IX. MOTORCYCLE RIDER CONSPICUITY AND MOTORIST AWARENESS PROGRAMS**

State motorcycle safety programs, communication campaigns, and State motor vehicle operator manuals should emphasize the issues of rider conspicuity and motorist awareness of motorcycles. These programs should address:

- Daytime use of motorcycle headlights;
- Brightly colored clothing and reflective materials for motorcycle riders and motorcycle helmets with high daytime and nighttime conspicuity;
- Lane positioning of motorcycles to increase vehicle visibility;
- Reasons why motorists do not see motorcycles; and
- Ways that other motorists can increase their awareness of motorcyclists.

## **X. COMMUNICATION PROGRAM**

States should develop and implement communications strategies directed at specific high-risk populations as identified by data. Communications should highlight and support specific policy and progress underway in the States and communities and communication programs and materials should be culturally relevant, multilingual as necessary, and appropriate to the audience. States should enlist the support of a variety of media, including mass media, to improve public awareness of motorcycle crash problems and programs directed at preventing them. States should:

- Focus their communication efforts to support the overall policy and program;
- Review data to identify populations at risk; and
- Use a mix of media strategies to draw attention to the problem.

## **XI. PROGRAM EVALUATION AND DATA**

Both problem identification and continual evaluation require effective record keeping by State and local government. The State should identify the frequency and types of motorcycle crashes. After problem identification is complete, the State should identify appropriate countermeasures. The State should promote effective evaluation by:

- Supporting the analysis of police accident reports involving motorcyclists;
- Encouraging, supporting and training localities in process, impact and outcome evaluation of local programs;
- Conducting and publicizing statewide surveys of public knowledge and attitudes about motorcycle safety;
- Maintaining awareness of trends in motorcycle crashes at the national level and how trends might influence activities statewide;
- Evaluating the use of program resources and the effectiveness of existing countermeasures for the general public and high-risk population;
- Collecting and reporting accurate motorcycle vehicle miles traveled data; and
- Ensuring that evaluation results are used to identify problems, plan new programs and improve existing programs.