

DID YOU KNOW?

USMC SAFETY & FORCE PRESERVATION



OCT 2011

MOTORCYCLE FY 2011 MISHAP RECAP

As we finished FY11, the Marine Corps has unfortunately seen a sizable increase in motorcycle fatalities. There were 17 Class A mishaps and 16 fatalities, an increase from 10 Class A mishaps and 9 fatalities in FY 2010, with excessive speed and alcohol being the contributing factors. However, in all FY 2011 motorcycle mishap fatalities, Marines wore their personal protective equipment (PPE); but this did not prevent the unnecessary deaths that occurred.

This "Did You Know" summarizes motorcycle mishaps, discusses sharing the road by both drivers and riders, lessons learned from death briefs by II MEF, the use of required PPE, off-duty motorcycle clubs, and a topic on stunting/wheelies.



FY 2011 NOTABLE MISHAPS

- SNM left a bar on a borrowed motorcycle and struck a curb while exiting one highway to enter another- **FATALITY**
- SNM struck a driveway embankment and was thrown from his motorcycle- **FATALITY**
- SNM borrowed a motorcycle and while riding at a high rate of speed, he lost control while negotiating a turn. SNM subsequently hit a tree- **FATALITY**
- SNM, while traveling at a high rate of speed, loses control of his bike and hit a power control box that resulted in decapitation- **FATALITY**
- SNM loses control of his bike while riding through a construction zone and crashed into the rear of a semi-truck- **FATALITY**

Reflecting on the above mishap summaries, anyone can imagine the tragic accident scene as viewed by police and paramedics; but what is also difficult are the reaction and lasting effects of the family members and friends that are affected by these mishaps. Speed kills.

Did you know?

Did you know that 100% of FY 2011 motorcycle fatalities were on sport bikes?

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SHARING THE ROAD

Three Marine motorcycle riders died as a direct result of privately owned vehicles failing to yield at intersections. Whether it was distracted driving that led to these accidents, drivers and riders alike must remain vigilant and share the road. The importance of defensive driving/riding cannot be stressed.

Below are some tips for a driver when sharing the road with a motorcyclist:

- Pass as you would pass a car; but don't pass too close or too fast.
- Signal your intention to turn while watching for oncoming motorcycles. This allows the motorcyclist time to anticipate traffic flow and find a safe lane position.
- Motorcycles are vehicles with the same rights and privileges as any vehicle on the roadway. Allow motorcyclists a full lane width. They need room to maneuver safely. Don't share the lane.
- Approximately one-half of all motorcycle crashes involve another motor vehicle. Nearly 40% were caused by the other vehicle turning in front of the motorcyclist. (www.nhtsa.gov)
- Motorcycles have small profiles when seen from the front or rear and can be difficult to see. Always make a visual check for motorcycles by checking mirrors and blind spots before entering or leaving a lane of traffic and at intersections.
- Allow more following distance, three or four seconds. Follow a motorcycle so the rider has enough time to maneuver or stop in an emergency. In dry conditions, motorcycles can stop more quickly than cars.



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LESSONS TO LIVE BY

Based on recent motorcycle fatalities here are some important lessons to live by for all Marines and Sailors:

- You may be an experienced rider, but when you get a new bike, you will still have a learning curve to know the capabilities and limitations of the new bike. It probably won't handle exactly the way you are used to on your old bike.
- You may be able to see, but that doesn't mean the person in the 4-wheel PMV will see you.
- Who knew what about a Marine rider and what did they do with that information?
- Fatigue, speed, and complacency kill.
- The common threads in these accidents were the rider's decision to ride a motorcycle and not apply good judgment on the road. Riders should weigh the possible consequences of deciding to ride a motorcycle with their responsibilities to their families, to their units, and to their future health.

KNOW YOUR MARINES THAT RIDE

"Effective Force Preservation Councils (FPC) could have helped". This important quote can summarize the importance of knowing your high-risk Marines- particularly the ones that ride motorcycles. In California, we lost a Marine in an accident. There were numerous factors such as excessive speed, riding late at night (fatigue), and drinking alcohol. However, this Marine had "adverse baggage" to which his Command was not privy. The high-risk indicators were present on the Marine, but were not effectively discussed in a FPC. Prior to the Marine's death, he had a motorcycle accident (total loss of his bike) that was not reported to the command. He also joined a non-sponsored, social motorcycle club in the local area. What is striking is that he had zero motorcycle training. All he had was a learner's permit and a suspended license from another state.

In summary, it takes active mentoring and engaged leadership to know your Marines and Sailors. It's been stressed many times before, yet we continue to learn the tragic lessons.

The [Motorcycle Risk Assessment System](#) is another effective tool to help identify your high risk motorcycle riders and should be used in conjunction with the FPCs.

For more information on FPCs and high-risk indicators, please visit CMC (SD)'s website at: http://www.marines.mil/unit/safety/Pages/Force_Preservation_Council.aspx

Visit <http://www.semperride.com/home.aspx> for upcoming SemperRide events, motorcycle blogs (riding in the rain, highway riding, or motorcycle etiquette, etc), PPE requirements, geared up (25% discount on your first time purchase of motorcycle equipment from the Marine Corps Exchange) and much more.

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PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

Per MCO 5100.19F, MARADMIN 364/09, and MSG 071442Z May 09, the following minimum PPE is **mandatory** for all Marines and military members assigned to Marine Corps command while riding a motorcycle (operator or passenger) on or off base and all civilians riding a motorcycle on base:

- Helmet- Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard (FMVSS) approved.
- Eye protection- American National Safety Institute (ANSI) approved and shatter resistant.
- Hand protection- Full fingered riding gloves, abrasion resistant and has padding.
- Long sleeve shirt (covers entire arm) or jacket that is abrasion resistant.
- Leg protection- Full length pants/trousers.
- Foot protection- Sturdy, above the ankle shoes or boots that provide support and traction while riding.

MOTORCYCLE CLUBS

Marine Corps Order P5354.1D W/CH 1 (Equal Opportunity Manual) section 2015.1 specifically states, "Membership and participation in organizations or clubs by Marines as private citizens may be permitted as long as such participation is not contrary to good order and discipline. Membership in such organization is not encouraged and should be considered in light of the impact on trust among fellow Marines. MARADMIN 707/08 requires all LtCol and above commands to establish a club-like organization for motorcycle riders for the purpose of identify and mentoring young and/or inexperienced riders, foster respectful riding, and improve skills through club rides and club sponsored track days or other events. Some other great law abiding clubs are the Harley Owners Group, Honda Riders Club of America, BMW Motorcycle Owners of America, and Gold Wing Road Riders Association.

Riders are **encouraged** to participate in command sponsored motorcycle mentorship clubs. In addition, SEMPER RIDE events are great venues to hone your riding skills. REMEMBER, be ever vigilant and make the right choices when riding on a motorcycle!

STUNTING/WHEELIES

More and more States are writing laws that specifically address stunting and wheelies. Even if the States does not have a law that addresses stunting or wheelies, you could be cited for reckless driving because you are endangering the local populace. If you are going to stunt or ride wheelies, we recommend that you take it to a control environment (like a track, etc.) where you are wearing all of the appropriate PPE and have considered all the risks that might be involved. We lost one Marine and had another paralyzed from stunting/wheelies this FY.



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<http://www.marines.mil/unit/safety/Pages/welcome.aspx>