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By

Bikers against Rope Barriers. (B.A.R.B.)

The A2 Carriageway serves as the main South west corridor for European and native motorcyclists, who annually travel to Europe's biggest motorcycle road racing sporting events situated on our North West Coast, one week of May every year. This event caters for a minimum 100,000 attendance and is promoted as a part of Tourism.

Qualified engineers and advisors have in the last few years made many choices based on different variables, selecting routes, materials and safety recommendations on behalf of all road users to make this A2 carriageway as safe as possible. Department of Rural Development (Roads Divisions) in its wisdom has made a decision to fit a new type of 'Vehicle restraint barrier' which moves away from the traditional 'older' ARMCO type barrier, to a Newer Wire rope Safety barrier (nicknamed the Cheesecutter by motorcyclists for obvious reasons), on the carriageway Central Median, situated between City of Derry Airport roundabout and Maydown Roundabout.

It quickly emerged with local members of the motorcycle fraternity for their views on the DRD choice to this type of barrier. It was unanimously agreed by all concerned that a wrong and lethal decision has now been made by Roads Service supposedly on our behalf, resulting in a 100% rejection by bikers, against this type of Vehicle restraint chosen for this stretch of road.

After looking at the criteria needed for this A2 infrastructure upgrade as a layperson, we will quote some practical advice picked up from the Department of Transport on Local Road safety Strategies that we think should have been followed:

The Road Traffic Act 1988 placed a duty on local highway authorities to prepare and carry out a programme of measures designed to promote road safety. This includes studying the occurrence of collisions, taking preventative measures and **reducing the possibility of casualties on new roads** (i.e. collision investigation, prevention and safety audit). A local road safety strategy should be a vital part of the evidence that a local authority is discharging this duty.

An 'independent' Road Safety Audit which covered the 4 main stages was also made during the road build.

Department of Transport document states:

Road safety audit

This is a system, arising from a statutory duty, which contributes to reducing the likelihood of collisions on new or altered roads. It is a check undertaken independently of design teams. Schemes are not necessarily safe merely because they comply with design standards; and safety audits consistently result in changes to projects that, had they not been made, would have reproduced features that have been associated with casualties elsewhere.

This safety audit was lead by an Audit Team Leader (min 4 years road safety or accident investigation experience) and a undisclosed number of Audit Team Members (min 2 years of road safety or accident investigation experience) who looked at the completed stretch of this road with safety in mind, and after reviewing all the facts subsequently approved it safe for public use for all road users.

Either by a mistake or design, this decision has resulted in exposing a fundamental safety flaw, It is our view as lay people that instead of decreasing a greater daily risk to us motorcyclists, it has multiplied the daily risk who have to use this stretch of road in the future, This is compared to other types of safety barrier choices that were available to the engineers at the time.

Until the DRD gives out a better understanding to the public on this stretch of road,we will have to believe the following points below.

- No Motorcyclist's views were consulted at any point of the road build. Resulting in a failure of duty of care described in the Road Traffic Act 1988 (above).
- Wire rope safety barrier decision chosen on cost factor only.
- Lay people confused as to why different types of road barrier used on this stretch of road instead of one type throughout.

- Imbalance of Road Safety Auditors and road engineers, with little or no experience of how the balance of risks shifts on two wheels as opposed to four or more.
- EN1317 quoted as type of safety standard to the public by the DRD as a smoke screen.

Fact: EN1317 discriminates any official crash testing of Motorcycles into road barriers.

EN1317 Testing

Levels of performance are detailed in EN1317 part 2: it defines several test types for safety barriers with different angles and speeds of impact. Vehicles are driven into a barrier and deceleration are measured. Impact speeds vary from 65 to 110km/h and impact angles range from 8° to 20°. Five homologation tests concern cars or light vehicles, whilst 6 tests concern trucks.

As such BARB have now started its own independent counter investigation, as we can now not depend on the 'experts' to act on the Motorcyclists behalf when making important fundamental safety decisions about our personal safety.

This is especially important as the proposed A5, and other future upgrades will be a carbon copy design as this new A2 carriageway stretch.

For further information BARB can be contacted on
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And also via the Facebook page **Bikers against rope barriers A2**

