

Right To Ride

Riders - Bikers - Motorcyclists - Scooterists - Full Control

www.writetoride.co.uk

Cheaper Road Tax For Motorbikes – Why Not?

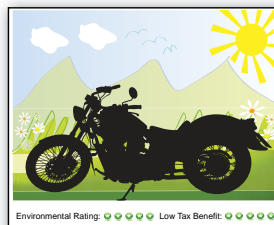
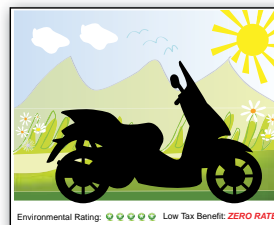
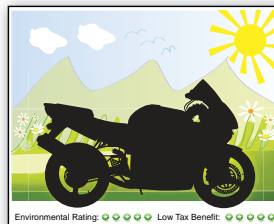
Motorcyclists could be paying less VED (Vehicle Excise Duty) – Road Tax – if the same CO2 emissions based VED scheme was introduced for motorcycles that is already in place for cars - and from April 2010, for new car purchases.

But they won't unless the motorcycle manufacturers supply CO2 emission information. Unlike car manufacturers who have reported CO2 emission figures for years as part of the European type approval system, motorcycle manufacturers do not state these figures.

Apart from a few model specific exceptions it's impossible to get hold of this information.

Without these figures, a motorcycle CO2 based VED emission scheme cannot be implemented, motorcyclists will not have a first year reduction on their road tax for new machines and any further potential savings on road tax will not be passed on to motorcyclists.

Write To Ride's, Elaine Hardy said, "This might turn into another Pandora's box of technical regulations. But if we have the information for a cheaper motorcycle emissions based road tax scheme and if politicians do not fall into the temptation to maintain or increase current tax rates for motorcycles to retain government revenues, then this injustice could be turned into an even greater incentive for people to get on motorcycles and scooters."



What About Ye

Well here we are, the second issue of our newsletter at Write To Ride.

A lot has been happening since the first issue in April.

For my sins I have been made chair of a new motorcycle initiative - Ride It Right on the Antrim Coast Road, we moved house, giving little time to get and about. But we are now the owners of a GPZ 1100 with sidecar attached, an experience to drive and completely different than the solo handling of the 1200 Adventure.

We have been busy making contacts with authorities and politicians which have led to planned meetings to discuss motorcycling in Northern Ireland.

Thanks to all that filled in the Near Miss Survey which is due to be published in October, after our recent "Focus Group" meeting.

We want to get out and about, if your club or association wants us to come along and discuss what we are doing, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

Trevor - Elaine - Write To Ride

Full article: www.writetoride.co.uk/motorcycle_news_cheaper_road_t.html

info@writetoride.co.uk

Ride It Right

We are supporting Ride It Right, a new motorcycle initiative whose main objective is to improve motorcycle safety, initially regarding the Antrim Coast Road.

It is a fact that the majority of riders treat the coast road and other vehicle users with respect.

There is a minority of riders whose attitude is to use the coast road as a weekend race track.

Getting out for a ride is about fun and freedom, however the Coast Road is a public road.

The Road - The Rider - The Bike
The Route - Hazards
Control - Skill
Ride It Right ✓
Get It Right
Northern Ireland
www.rideitright.org

www.rideitright.org In Association with: Moyle DPP - Moyle PSNI - NI Fire and Rescue Service - Red Cross - NI Ambulance Service - Quay Vipers MCC - Ancestors MCC - Road Policing Unit - Write to Ride - Roads Service

Issue - Fix A Road

As motorcyclists we know that we are more susceptible to defective road surfaces, it's not rocket science, poor road design and maintenance can contribute to motorcycle crashes, injuries, and fatalities.

Report A Road Fault

You can report a road fault to the Roads Services through their website.

Three of the Roads Service key objectives have a direct effect on motorcycles: Maintain the road infrastructure to keep it safe, effective and reliable. - Improve the road network. - Manage the road network to promote its safe and efficient operation.

We say: That road design and maintenance personnel must be educated about conditions posing hazards to motorcyclists.



Fill in as many of the details as possible on the form to help Roads Services to accurately locate the problem.

Report damaged manhole covers - debris on the road - mud on road - pothole in road - traffic signal not working and more.

Roads Service Online - Report A Road Fault

https://applications.roadsni.gov.uk/RDS_ReportFault/ReportFault.aspx

Out And About Out And About

You can use the Write To Ride - "Hazard Fault Report Form" when you are out and about as an aide memoire if you come across a hazard or fault on the road that you consider is a danger to motorcyclists.

Please email a copy of this form info@writetoride.co.uk so that we can build a picture of the hazards motorcyclists face.

Send us your photo of the hazard or fault for our "Road Hazard Rogues Gallery" - Even better a before and after picture.

Remember: If stopping to look or take pictures of a hazard or fault please park in a safe and secure manner - Do not put yourself in any danger - Do not stop or hinder the normal flow of traffic.

Download "Hazard Fault Report Form"

www.writetoride.co.uk/writetoridehazardreportform.doc

Worst Of All! - Tarding The Road Up With Stone Chip Dressing!

The common practice of laying a surface dressing consisting of stone chippings spread over tar on the road, which is then bedded in by traffic is not acceptable for motorcyclists.

This practice is no doubt, risk assessed and warning signs are present (mostly inadequate and lacking in advance warning), however there is no doubt that this practice is a serious hazard for motorcycles, even at the posted recommended speed limit of 20mph.

When confronted with a stretch of road that has received this dressing, motorcyclists will inherently slow down because of the risk involved, the same cannot be said for other vehicles.

The risk of crashing is compounded by: braking or altering position to avoid deep gravel on the road surface. There is risk of injury to riders and damage to the motorcycle from stone chippings thrown up by other vehicles. Excess stone chippings are not removed by Roads Service or the contractor.

Halfway Solution: Stone chippings should be properly rolled in. The excess stone chippings are removed promptly. Enforcement of other vehicle drivers.

The Solution: The practice should be stopped and roads that require resurfacing, are resurfaced correctly. This is probably not achievable as it is common practice, it is probably cost effective and it only affects a minority of road users, in this case vulnerable motorcyclists, though not forgetting cyclists.

However to use an old adage, if the jobs worth doing, it's worth doing right!

Tell Us About It

We want to hear your opinions on this practice email us and send any pictures to info@writetoride.co.uk

Full article: www.writetoride.co.uk/issue_-_fix_a_road.html

Right To Ride - Helmets Off!

Following on from our successful petrol station campaign we are further raising the issue regarding removing helmets in petrol stations.

Why?

Common Practice - the universal practice of walking into a bank: would you walk into a bank and not expect to be asked to take your helmet off?

In fact would you be given the opportunity to be asked? Or would the alarms start sounding with the arrival of a posse of armed police?

Is this discrimination against motorcyclists? - Why should a petrol station be any different?

A petrol station may have cash and products that can be stolen in store, apart from the actual petrol. Operators need to protect their staff (often young staff) and livelihood.

There appears to be an ad hoc policy for petrol stations by "security advisors" that motorcyclists must remove helmets, either before filling up on the forecourt or before they enter the petrol station shop or even to prepay during normal operating hours before pumps are operated.

Signs are sometimes displayed on petrol pumps, sometimes on the door of the shop, but these signs are not generic, they usually only mention motorcyclists/bikers and not all head coverings that can hide a person's face.

More often than not, motorcyclists are advised through tannoy systems on the forecourt, for all to hear, that they must remove their helmets before being served, or arm waving gesticulations by cashiers from the till inside the petrol station shop or approached physically on the forecourt.

Are We The Common Threat?

The issue is the head covering and the potential for that person to automatically be seen as a threat.

The common threat is not the motorcyclist, it is the inability to identify people covering their heads - but that can include woolly (or not) hats, caps, hooded tops, possibly scarves, shawls and even wigs (because these can change your appearance) - and so on - that is the bottom line.

There are side issues about removing helmets - people who wear glasses, especially during colder weather and/or when it's raining, or changes of temperature and putting helmets back on with all the problems of misting.

Also is there a distinction between full faced or open faced helmets and whether the visor is up or down?

This leads to cases of highly frustrated motorcyclists who will turn away their custom and advise family, friends and other motorcyclists to take their custom elsewhere.

What We are Doing

We are contacting petrol station operators/associations.

We need your input and opinion.

What To Do?

Don't take it out on the employee at the petrol station. Ask to see the boss to find out if they have a written policy.

Write letters to the owners of the forecourts to find out what their policy is regarding the removal of helmets or any other head cover?

Send us your story of helmet removal requests.

Send us a picture or example of notices/signs in petrol stations info@writetoride.co.uk

Full article: www.writetoride.co.uk/right_to_ride_-_helmets_off.html



Garage Sign



Wired Up - Northern Ireland Gets More Wire Rope Barriers Wirerope Barriers

It seems that Northern Ireland is getting wired up with the fitting of Wirerope/Cable barriers (Vehicle Restraint Systems).

We first noticed these barriers in Belfast, situated at the junction of Tesco's at Newtownbreda, however stretches of wirerope barriers have been and are now being fitted on the A1 Dual Carriageway between Belfast and Newry.

What's The Problem Then?

While we assume that Vehicle Restraint Systems fitted in Northern Ireland have passed European Standards (Committee of European Normalization (CEN - EN1317) there appears to be no specific European standard for motorcyclist protection for impacting crash barriers, either while the motorcyclist is in an upright position or sliding on impact.



According to a study by the European Union Road Federation (ERF), the Brussels Programme Centre of the International Road Federation (IRF) "Discussion Paper February 2009", the severity of the impact increases if the road restraint system (when present) is not designed for the protection of motorcyclists.

The problem is the exposed posts of any barrier system being struck by a falling rider, wirerope barriers being the most "aggressive" of systems with its exposed posts either for a sliding rider or a rider on a motorcycle impacting in an upright position at whatever angle.

The wirerope barriers being fitted in Northern Ireland by Highway Barrier Solutions

www.hbsonline.co.uk/default.aspx?CATID=1007

Car impacting Wirerope barrier Windows Media Player 1.1mb www.writetoride.co.uk/Brifen_WRSF_commercial.mpeg

View our Guardrail Album

www.writetoride.co.uk/Barrier%20Album/index.html

A study by

DEKRA (Germany) and the University of Monash (Australia) carried out in 2005 states that:

"In all simulations the motorcycle slides along the wires until it hits a post, squeezing and trapping the rider's leg against the wires as it does so. The post contact causes the motorcycle's front wheel to snag lifting the front of the motorcycle up and throwing the rider's torso and head forward."

"Because the rider's leg is trapped between the motorcycle and the wire ropes and the foot snags in the ropes, the head and torso slap into the front of the rising motorcycle. Eventually the leg becomes free as the motorcycle rotates and the rider is then catapulted over the barrier"

Therefore barrier systems that have passed European standards are fitted on the roads but are not motorcycle friendly specific.

What Should Happen!

Understandably road authorities and engineers have constraints and budgets to work within for the placement of crash barriers or vehicle restraint systems on Northern Ireland roads, but there does not appear to be any statistics that present data for motorcycles impacting these systems.

While engineering solutions may strive to protect the majority (i.e. cars), the long term impact may be far more costly due to the lack of consideration of motorcyclists and their injuries.

Motorcycle Friendly Barriers that are added to barriers in place should be considered and fitted where there is a risk to motorcyclists hitting barriers and consideration to the placement of new barriers and a review/audit of barriers already in place.

There should be a reconsideration of the use of Wirerope Barriers in Northern Ireland.

You Can Help: FEMA has launched a wide European campaign to gather evidence from riders and relatives describing injuries suffered while hitting guardrails. Get past the spelling mistakes and quirky grammar www.fema-online.eu/index.php?page=guardrails

As always on motorcycling issues we welcome your thoughts and opinions, please send them to info@writetoride.co.uk

Full article: www.writetoride.co.uk/issue_-_barriers.html

Support

As a Club, Group, Association or individual rider, you can now sign up to support "Write To Ride - Right To Ride".

No membership fees, just your commitment.

The supporters page features the Clubs/Groups/Associations details - including logo and website - please fill in the supporters form first.

We need your commitment because not only is knowledge power, but numbers from the motorcycle community give representative power.

Please download the support pdf and pass it on to your mates and fellow riders.

The following Clubs/Groups/Associations support Write To Ride:

*Ancestors MCC - Biker Dogs MC - Coyotes RC - Frozen Bones MCC - Lone Wolves Brotherhood - Lone Wolf MCC
Quay Vipers MCC - The End Of The Line MCC - Twisted Sisters*

Biker Dogs MC - Supporters

New international supporters join Write To Ride, the Biker Dogs MC, who support the right of dogs to ride motorcycles, promote the safety of all canines who ride motorcycles and speak out against the mistreatment of canines.

Biker Dogs MC - Supporters

www.bikerdogsmc.org

Support

Support Page www.writetoride.co.uk/support.html

Support Form www.writetoride.co.uk/Support_WTR_2009.pdf

Club websites at www.writetoride.co.uk/supporters.html



Supporters Events - Lone Wolves Brotherhood 62 - Charity Rock Night 14th November 2009

Ivy Bar in Newtownards, featuring "Thunderchild".

This year we are raising funds for Steve (Ghurka) Money.

Many of you will have met our brother Steve and all that have would agree that he was a funny, easy going, loveable big Rogue.

Unfortunately sometime after the 2008 Snakebite Rally Steve had an accident.

This was just an innocuous fall but he banged his head. Steve now requires 24/7 care and he will never be the same man again.

We his brothers are hoping to buy something for him to make his life that little bit easier, and possibly make his quality of life that little bit better.

We know that not everyone can attend our rock night but we would ask you to make a contribution to help Steve out.

We will be out and about at various rallies and rock nights up until our own and would ask you to please feel free to approach our club members if you wish to make a donation as they will all be gratefully received.

www.lwb62.com

www.writetoride.co.uk/events.html



Snapshot - Near Miss Accident Survey

During the months of May through to July 2009, a survey of 257 motorcyclists in Ireland (Northern and Southern) and Great Britain was carried out through the internet.



The purpose of the survey was to find out from motorcyclists, whether they had experienced situations in which they believed they could have crashed and/or been injured (but were able to keep control of their motorcycle) as well as the type of situations they had experienced.

Overall, 78.2% of the respondents gave details of their experience of near miss situations.

The findings of the survey have identified situations that appear to be more prevalent for motorcyclists, which are the potential for collisions between motorcycles and other vehicles, followed by problems with the conditions of roads and road infrastructure.

The survey was divided into three sections.

- The first section requested information about the rider, including age, sex, location of residence, type of licence and testing/training.
- The second section asked questions about the motorcycle: category, type and make of motorcycle, mileage, years riding and seasons.
- The third section asked the respondent whether he/she had been involved in a collision either with another vehicle or a single vehicle crash, with or without injuries as well as whether the rider had had a "near miss accident".

The "near miss" questions gave a selection of 26 potential answers divided into four categories: skidding, loss of traction, loss of control and braking or swerving. A further question asked the respondent to comment on any other "near miss" experience

Snap Shot Findings

From the findings from this survey, 75 riders indicated that their motorcycle skidded and of these 34.7% (n.26) indicated that this was due to "to slippery or loose road surface (e.g. paint or worn asphalt), loose gravel" while 28% (n.21) indicated that this was "due to oil spillage on the road"

- 53 riders replied that they had lost the grip of their motorcycle and 45.3% (n.24) of these stated that this was due to potholes or grooves in the road; in equal measure 17% (n.9) commented that their loss of grip was due to lack of focus and travelling too fast for the conditions.
- 56 riders replied that they had nearly lost control of their motorcycle and of these, 32.1% (n.18) stated that this was due to road markings or over-banding), a further 30.4% (n.17) indicated that this occurred at a curve and a further 26.8% (n.15) indicated that this occurred at a junction.

- 165 of the 201 (82.1%) riders that replied to these questions answered that they had to either swerve and/or brake because of another vehicle or pedestrian entering into their space. In fact 40.6% (n.67) answered that they had to swerve and/or brake because another vehicle had entered their path from either a side road, private driveway or opposite direction. This was followed by 15.2% (n.25) who stated that the other vehicle had changed lanes on the motorway in front of them and 13.9% (n.23) indicated that the other vehicle had crossed over into the rider's lane and was coming towards them.

Finally, the respondents were asked to describe in their own words any other near miss experience.

Of the 201 riders who replied that they had a near miss accident, 36.3% (n.73) answered this question. However, in five of the responses, the riders indicated that there was more than one cause of their near miss experiences) therefore the total of the responses are n.78. Of these, 61.5% (n.48) considered the other vehicle (mainly car) as the cause of the near miss.

The responses to this question support the replies to the previous questions, highlighting that the majority experienced a near miss due to the actions of other vehicles and due to road conditions, however 7.7% of the respondents also accepted that their own actions were the cause of the near miss.

These (actions of other road users, road conditions and own fault) are not necessarily mutually exclusive, which gives researchers and policy makers an opportunity to understand more fully what action could be taken preventatively to avoid or evade potential collisions and even crashes.

Next Step

The next step is to put together a focus group and then publish the results in a report.

Full: article: www.writetoride.co.uk/near_miss_survey.html

On Facebook

We have created a "Fan" page for Write To Ride - Right To Ride on Facebook.

www.facebook.com/pages/Write-To-Ride-Right-To-Ride/108305471439

Write To Ride RSS Feeds Link

<http://www.writetoride.co.uk/newsfeed.xml>

If you have a news article that you wish featured contact info@writetoride.co.uk

Write To Ride - Links

If you wish to have your link placed on our links page send an email and we will review your site.

www.writetoride.co.uk/links.html

Virtual Library: www.writetoride.co.uk/virtual_library.html

DOE Motorcycle Roads Safety Survey

The Department of the Environment (DOE) has commissioned and launched a survey for motorcyclists to seek views from motorcyclists into roads safety issues.

The short survey looks at rider attitudes, experience and behaviour on the roads, the main causes and influencing factors contributing to motorcycle collisions which will help the DOE to consider *new ways* to tackle the number of motorcycling casualties in Northern Ireland.

According to the DOE, "This research will allow motorcyclists to input directly into the development of a new road safety strategy due for publication before the end of 2010."

Write To Ride has produced its own document on motorcycle safety, "Motorcycling in Northern Ireland – the Rider's Perspective", a document offering the views of motorcyclists as a point of reference for a Motorcycling Strategy in Northern Ireland and recently completed its own survey on Near Miss accidents, the results of which will be published in October.

Write to Ride's, Trevor Baird said, "This an opportunity for riders to have their say and fill in the survey and pick the questions that are *right* for them to answer. As a riders' organisation we continue to lobby the relevant authorities from the motorcycle fraternities point of view."

You can log onto the survey at www.motorcyclecasualtiesni.com to complete a short survey which looks at rider attitudes, experience and behaviour on the roads.

According to the most recent PSNI (Police Service for Northern Ireland) figures:

- The fatality data for all road users between 2004 and 2009 (April to March) highlight that overall there has been an decline of fatalities of 25.2% from 2004/05 (n.139) compared to 2008/09 (n.104) for all road users.
- In terms of reductions for different road users (pedestrians, car drivers, car passengers pedal cyclists and motorcyclists), motorcyclists have had the highest reduction: 33.3% (2004/05 n.24 compared to 2008/09 n.16)

N.B. Between 2003 and 2007 the motorcycles (including scooters and mopeds) in Northern Ireland have increased from n.26,682 to n.31,763 (an increase of n.5,081 or 16%).

- Fatalities as a proportion of motorcycles licensed remained the same in 2007 as in 2003 (0.06%). Serious injuries decreased by 0.11% and slight injuries decreased by 0.15%.

According to the most recent figures - DOE:

- The number of motorcyclists killed or seriously injured in 2007 was 153, an increase of 47% on the 1996-2000 average.
- Motorcyclists accounted for 6% of all those killed or seriously injured over the period 1996-2000. In 2007 this had risen to 13%;
- The number of motorcyclists slightly injured in 2007 was 297, an increase of 37% on the 1996-2000 average and an increase of 11% from the 2006 figure.

DOE Motorcycle Survey

Motorcycle Casualties NI

Exit this survey

1. Introduction

We are carrying out research on behalf of the DOE Road Safety Division in Northern Ireland. This questionnaire is designed to find out about your experiences of motorcycling and in particular road safety. This research will allow motorcyclists to input directly into the development of a new road safety strategy for Northern Ireland due for publication before the end of 2010.

Please answer as many questions as you can but if there is any question you so not wish to answer, please leave it blank and move onto the next one.

If you would like to supply your contact details at the end of the survey, we will enter you into a draw to win a £100 voucher towards motorcycle clothing or accessories.

Please note, however, that all information provided will be treated as COMPLETELY CONFIDENTIAL and INDIVIDUALS WILL NOT BE IDENTIFIED

Write To Ride

"Motorcycling in Northern Ireland – the Rider's Perspective", a document offering the views of motorcyclists as a point of reference for a Motorcycling Strategy in Northern Ireland.

www.writetoride.co.uk/motorcycle_safety.html

DOE Motorcycle Roads Safety Survey

<http://www.motorcyclecasualtiesni.com>

DOE Press Release

<http://www.northernireland.gov.uk/news-doe-150909-views-sought-from>

Full article: www.writetoride.co.uk/write_to_ride_-_motorcycle_new1.html

Sir Winston Churchill: "Statistics are like a drunk with a lampost: used more for support than illumination."

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Write To Ride



Right To Ride

www.writetoride.co.uk

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Riders Full Control