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NEW YORK STATE HIGHWAY SAFETY STRATEGIC PLAN FFY 2011

Full document

PDF 90 pages:

<http://www.nysgtsc.state.ny.us/HSSP/2011HSSP.pdf>

Motorcycle related ONLY.

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MOTORCYCLE SAFETY OVERVIEW

Over the past decade, the popularity of motorcycles as a mode of transportation, as well as a form of recreation, has seen consistent growth. Since 2000, the number of drivers with motorcycle licenses has increased by 25%, reaching over 653,500 in 2009. During this same time period, the number of registered motorcycles has also been on a consistent upward trend with the number increasing 67% to over 336,000.

Fatal motorcycle crashes have been on a general upward trend over the past decade consistent with the increase in motorcycle licenses and registrations. In 2009, however, the number dropped to 152, the lowest number since 2004.

A major component of New York's comprehensive approach to address and improve motorcycle safety in the state is the Motorcycle Safety Program (MSP) administered by the NYS Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV). In existence since 1996, the MSP provides instruction and field training to improve the riding skills of motorcyclists.

In June 2009, the Motorcycle Safety Foundation (MSF) was awarded a contract to deliver the MSP. While the number of course completions did not grow in 2009 due to the transition to a new contractor, the MSF program is fully operational in 2010 and is being delivered at an expanded number of sites. It is anticipated that 16,000-18,000 motorcyclists will complete the training program in 2010.

During the past year, the Motorcycle Safety Program Technical Assessment Advisory Group was created to respond to the New York State motorcycle safety program technical assessment performed by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) in 2008. The technical assessment included a comprehensive overview of the Motorcycle Safety Program as it existed in 2008. It provided recommendations to strengthen areas relating to program management, personal protective gear, operator licensing, rider education and training, operating under the influence of alcohol and drugs, legislation and regulations, law enforcement, highway engineering and rider conspicuity and motorist awareness programs. While many of the recommendations have already been addressed, there is a need to monitor progress, evaluate efforts and address remaining issues. The

Core Group's agenda is to review the recent changes in the MSP, prioritize the remaining technical assessment recommendations and discuss any additional motorcycle safety issues. The Core Group will continue to meet periodically during FFY 2011.

In March 2010, DMV and GTSC hosted a meeting with motorcycle trainers and educators, rider groups and law enforcement to obtain input on the most critical issues affecting motorcycle safety and possible recommendations regarding the priorities that should be established for the state's MSP. The group's input will be applied to DMV's motorcycle safety agenda and GTSC's strategic initiatives. The meeting was also intended to encourage positive relationships among the groups represented.

A new law enforcement training initiative was also undertaken in the past year. The New York State Police and the Law Enforcement Liaisons from the NYS Association of Chiefs of Police and the NYS Sheriffs' Association with assistance from DMV's MSP presented regional motorcycle safety training programs for law enforcement officers. More than 250 law enforcement officers and motorcycle safety advocates attended these programs which were held at eight locations around the state. The hands-on instruction provided officers, especially those assigned to patrol duties, with the knowledge and skills to educate motorcyclists and the public on motorcycle safety and to enhance enforcement efforts in New York State.

Motorcycle safety awareness was promoted through a number of channels and at a number of events. The NYSDOT has agreed to increase the use of the "Watch for Motorcycles" slogan on the agency's variable message signs (VMS) and to station the signs on high crash corridors. In addition, 4,000 magnetic signs with the "Watch for Motorcycles" message have been produced for posting on the back of trucks. The signs are being distributed through the NYS Motor Truck Association and other channels. Through the State Police, "Be Smart. Share the Road" kits have been distributed to 92 school resource officers. Bumper stickers, kickstand pads and key chains with motorcycle safety messages are being produced for distribution at public outreach events later in the year.

The MSP also assisted DMV's Office for the Older Driver in developing a video and other informational materials promoting rider training for older motorcyclists using the theme "Learning is For Life."

In the coming year, the GTSC will continue to coordinate, support and administer enforcement initiatives and education and awareness programs that are key components of New York's comprehensive motorcycle safety program. These initiatives augment the MSP and enhance New York's efforts to reduce motorcycle crashes, fatalities and injuries.

REVIEW OF DATA

One of the core outcome measures for tracking the performance of New York's motorcycle safety program is motorcyclist fatalities. Based on FARS data, the number of motorcyclists killed in crashes spiked to 194 in 2006 from 150 in 2004 and 162 in 2005. The decrease in fatalities to 168 in 2007 was followed by another increase to 184 in 2008.

This measure cannot be updated at this time due to the delay in the availability of 2009 FARS data.

Additional analyses based on data from New York's AIS were also conducted. The number of fatal crashes involving motorcycles fluctuated over the five-year period, 2005-2009, from a high of 190 in 2006 to a low of 152 in 2009.

In addition to the drop in the number of fatal motorcycle crashes in 2009, these crashes accounted for a smaller proportion of the total fatal crashes in the state; 14% of the fatal crashes in 2009 involved motorcycles compared to 16% in 2008.

The number of motorcycle crashes involving personal injuries also fluctuated between 2005 and 2007. Since 2007, the number of personal injury crashes involving motorcycles and the number of motorcyclists injured in crashes have been on downward trends. In all five years, 2005-2009, motorcycles were involved in 3% of the personal injury crashes.

The second core outcome measure used in monitoring motorcycle safety is the number of motorcyclists who died and were not wearing a helmet. Based on FARS data, between 2004 and 2008 the number of unhelmeted motorcyclist fatalities nearly doubled (from 20 to 36). Although the numbers are small, these unhelmeted motorcyclists represented 13% to 20% of all motorcyclist fatalities over this time period. This measure cannot be updated at this time due to the delay in the availability of 2009 FARS data.

PERFORMANCE GOALS AND MEASURES

Performance Goals

- 👑 To decrease motorcyclist fatalities 8 percent from the 2006-2008 calendar year average of 182 to 167 by December 31, 2011
- 👑 To decrease unhelmeted motorcyclist fatalities 10 percent from the 2006-2008 calendar base year average of 29 to 26 by December 31, 2011
- 👑 To decrease the number of injured motorcyclists 5 percent from the 4,497 in 2009 to 4,272 by December 31, 2011

Performance Measures

- 👑 Number of motorcyclist fatalities
- 👑 Number of unhelmeted motorcyclist fatalities
- 👑 Number of injured motorcyclists

Activity Measures

- 👑 Number of MSP course completions
- 👑 Number of new training sites
- 👑 Number of motorcycle enforcement initiatives implemented
- 👑 Number of motorcycle safety educational and public awareness efforts conducted

STRATEGIES

Educational Programs and Public Awareness

Motorcycle Rider Training Program

New motorcyclists will continue to be encouraged to complete a motorcycle safety education course and to become licensed operators. The MSP will continue to foster the statewide availability of rider education programs and to increase the number of sites providing training based on criteria established by the MSF. A portion of the motorcycle license and registration fees is set aside to fund this initiative. The public will be informed of the benefits, availability and location of motorcycle rider education courses throughout the state. Experienced Rider Course (ERC) programs will continue to be offered as well. The provision of courses designed for specific categories of motorcycle operators, such as the MSF Advanced Rider–Sport Bike Techniques course, will continue to be explored. Where opportunities exist, New York will attempt to expand the network of providers to reach new geographic areas and supplement the availability in high demand locations.

Motorcyclist Intervention and Education

The nature and operation of motorcycles make them more susceptible to crashes than other types of vehicles when the operator uses alcohol. The operator is also more likely to suffer serious injury or death in a crash than are drivers of other types of vehicles. Educational materials that bring this increased risk to the attention of motorcyclists are needed and new channels for their distribution should continue to be developed.

Public Awareness of Motorcycle Safety

Public information and education activities that stress the proper use of approved safety equipment, especially helmets, are important for improving motorcycle safety. Efforts to increase awareness and educate the general driving population about motorcycle safety issues will continue. These efforts include New York's participation in the national initiative recognizing June as Motorcycle Safety Awareness month; the use of variable message signs promoting motorcycle safety; and public awareness campaigns and PI&E materials designed to heighten the awareness of the motoring public regarding the need to share the road safely with motorcycles.

Partners

The GTSC will work with its partners, including the NYS Department of Motor Vehicles, the NYS Traffic Safety Boards Association, the New York State Police and the NYS Association of Chiefs of Police, to promote local rider safety education opportunities within their respective communities.

Program Quality

Maintaining the quality of the instructor cadre in terms of skills, knowledge and motivation is a challenge in every program. To maintain a high quality program, New York will use a variety of outreach modes to improve the availability of training for providers and instructors and to aid in the retention of qualified instructors.

Enforcement

Motorcycle Enforcement Checkpoints

Motorcycle safety checkpoints will be deployed in strategic locations to check for license and registration violations, non-compliant helmets, faulty or illegal equipment and other violations. Variable message signs and other methods including aerial enforcement may be used to ensure mandatory compliance with the checkpoint. The checkpoints may also be used in conjunction with PI&E and research initiatives.

Officer Training and Local Enforcement

Police officer training on motorcycle enforcement issues and techniques will be conducted. The training will focus on safety violations such as unapproved helmets, equipment violations such as tires and lighting, and altered motorcycles, especially those with loud exhaust systems. Trained officers will be deployed to enforce these laws and issue tickets to violators.

Motorcycle Enforcement Training

The New York State Police and the Law Enforcement Liaison from the NYS Association of Chiefs of Police will again partner in presenting the Practical Guidelines for Motorcycle Enforcement training program. This innovative and specialized training curriculum was designed to present practical and comprehensive information on motorcycle safety and motorcycle laws. The hands-on instruction provides officers, especially those assigned to patrol duties, with the knowledge and skills to educate motorcyclists and the public on motorcycle safety and to also enhance the enforcement of motorcycle laws in New York State. In addition to law enforcement, instructors from the MSF and other traffic safety partners will benefit from this training. The training program is supported by the GTSC and the MSP.

Research and Evaluation

Evaluation of Motorcycle Safety Program Initiatives

Because of the increase in motorcycle crashes and fatalities in recent years, motorcycle safety continues to be a top priority of New York's highway safety program. As New York expands its efforts to address this issue through enforcement, public awareness and rider education programs, studies to evaluate the impact on motorcycle crashes, fatalities and injuries may be undertaken.

Scope and Nature of Motorcycle Safety Issues

The development of an effective program to address motorcycle safety issues requires a clear understanding of the scope of the problem, the nature of the crashes that occur and the characteristics of the motorcycle operators and passengers involved in those crashes. Additional research is needed to examine issues related to motorcycle safety through analyses of DMV's crash, license, ticket and vehicle registration files. Specific topics requiring more in-depth research include the extent to which motorcycle operators are

arrested for impaired driving offenses, the specific makes and models of motorcycles involved in crashes and licensing issues related to motorcycle operators.