

MRF Position Paper on Riding Impaired

A number of years ago the MRF formed the Alcohol Awareness committee as an advisory committee to the Board of Directors. The reason for this committee and the ongoing work is due to the increasing awareness of government agencies of the issue of impaired riding. Impaired riding has been an issue for many years but in the past decade it gained prominence to the point it is a major part of any discussion where motorcycle safety is the topic. The MRF board tasked the committee to develop a program part of which will present the MRF position on impaired riding. The following position paper was presented to the Board at the September 2009 BOD meeting and with minor adjustments agreed upon and approved.

Impaired Riding Position Paper

Impaired riding is increasingly becoming a serious problem causing escalating attention in both the motorcycling community, and the various bureaucracies with oversight of motorcycling fatality statistics. As awareness of this issue increases, individuals and organizations alike must make decisions as to how they will address the concerns of riding impaired.

Impaired riding occurs in a variety of conditions, the most common and probably of most concern is alcohol. Drinking and riding is the most obvious and the most frequently pointed to as a cause of concern. However, impaired riding is also a condition that occurs under the influence of prescription drugs, illegal drugs, and over the counter drugs. As leaders in the motorcycling community we must educate and inform riders of the hazards and encourage personal responsibility.

Impaired riding is sited as the cause of Forty-one percent of the 2,182 motorcycle riders who died in single-vehicle crashes in 2007, they had BAC levels of .08 or greater, (NHTSA). Motorcyclists must face the fact that this number is the one area where the fatalities are in our direct control. If we want to bring about a reduction in the number of impaired riding fatalities each of us must watch out for ourselves and those we ride with.

The Motorcycle Riders Foundation, MRF, has taken the position that individual responsibility is the ultimate way to reduce fatalities. We encourage organizations and riding groups to do what they can to take proactive efforts promoting unimpaired riding. Through outreach campaigns of the risks associated with riding impaired; using education and awareness of the various ways one can become impaired; and promoting and increasing efforts to watch out for fellow riders, we can make a difference and perhaps save a life and at the same time reduce the fatality numbers.