

Motorcycle Action Group



MAG Position Statements

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Position Statements of the Motorcycle Action Group (MAG UK)

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At the end of this document are the Mission and Policy Statements of the Federation of European Motorcyclists Association (FEMA). MAG UK is an active member organization of FEMA.

MAG Position - Airbags

When the motorcycle industry carried out its research into the draft leg protector design, it was shown that there was a substantial increase in the number and severity of head injuries caused by the devices. The Transport Research Laboratory's response was the engineering 'fix' of airbags.

When fitted to a car, usually within the steering wheel or dashboard, the airbag inflates when the vehicle is involved in an impact to restrain the motion of the driver's head. When fitted to a motorcycle, the airbag is designed to restrict the movement of the rider's head and upper body to prevent the injuries caused by the poor leg protector design.

At the present time the British Government believe that air bags and leg protectors are sensible, although there are no plans to make the airbags a legal requirement, but to develop an industry standard that manufacturers may adopt to provide 'protection' to those riders who wish it.

There are drawbacks to the design of airbags. The device needs to back on to a solid surface to prevent the airbag moving away from the rider or from deforming outwards and reducing the effectiveness of the airbag. This means that there must be a full fairing to aid in the rigidity and effectiveness of the invention. Tank bags would also be impossible to use as they would cover the airbag. There would also need to be a different design of airbag for each model of motorcycle, and the costs would be passed onto the customer.

John Wall of the TRL has stated that he would not be happy with the fitting of airbags to motorcycles until such time as a suitable inertia switch is designed that will not be set off by either potholes or sleeping policemen.

MAG is opposed to the compulsory implementation of the leg protector and airbag either as an individual item or a combination. There is an increasing tendency for the passing of legislation that discriminates against the victims of other people's incompetence. MAG supports the training of all road users to the high standard expected of motorcyclists, and the education and enforcement of drivers to the dangers of their actions in respect to riders.

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MAG Position - Alcohol

The current level of blood-alcohol is 80 microgrammes per millilitre of blood. Guidelines from the Health Education Authority say that some people will reach this limit after drinking three units of alcohol, i.e. 1 1/2 pints of average strength beer ('average strength' being taken as 3-4% of alcohol by volume). This does not mean that it is safe to drink 1 1/2 pints and then ride home as bodyweight, sex, drinking patterns, and food intake all have effects on the speed that alcohol is absorbed into the blood stream.

Alcohol is a depressant. This means that it slows the reaction times and skills of a person who has had a drink. It takes the average person 1 hour to clear 1 unit of alcohol from their system. This means that after a 5 pint drinking session, it will be at least 10 hours before the average person is completely sober.

The risks involved in drinking and riding are severe. 15,000 people are killed or injured every year in drink related accidents, and 20% of those are motorcycle riders. 100 000 drivers and riders lost their licence in 1991, and the current ban is 12 months, minimum. You would then have to sit an extended test to regain your licence, and the cost of insurance will at least treble for up to 15 years after prosecution. You will also get a criminal record [see table below].

You do not need to be over the limit of blood alcohol to be prosecuted. Even if you pass the breath test, if the police can prove you are unfit to drive. The penalties for driving while unfit are the same as driving while over the limit.

The figures given above are approximate, and you should remember the only safe limit is not to drink.

Penalties for drink-drive offences.

Prison (Max)	Disqualification (Min)	Fine
Causing death by careless driving whilst under the influence of drink or drugs.		
10 years	2 years	N/A
Driving/attempting to drive whilst above the legal limit OR while unfit through drink OR refusing to give a specimen of breath for test.		
6 Months	12 Months	£5,000
In charge of a vehicle whilst above the legal limit or unfit through drink.		
3 Months	Variable	£2,500

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MAG Position - Anti-Tampering

The origins of this idea may be traced to France where young riders of mopeds have been tuning their engines to provide performance substantially in excess of that appropriate to the frames and brakes of this class of machine. In consequence the French authorities proposed a set of construction criteria by means of which it was hoped all efforts at tuning these vehicles would be obstructed, for all practical purposes.

MAG has no argument with this initiative since by definition mopeds are vehicles with specified performance limits, in recognition of which they are accessible to riders at a younger age than that which must be reached before access to larger motorcycles is permitted.

What concerns us is the attempt by the European Commission who have taken the French plan as a model for European harmonisation and extended it to cover all classes of motorcycle.

The details of the anti-tampering proposals are extremely complex and detailed. What the architects of this legislation have done, is explore all the methods by which owners endeavour to boost the power of their machines, and then contrived engineering obstacles to such modifications. For example the thickness of head gaskets which can influence compression ratios, have been specified, while shear bolts (which have heads which snap off at a certain torque rating), have been prescribed for critical locations. Gear ratios which can determine top speed or acceleration characteristics have been specified through identifying sprocket and pulley diameters. Furthermore the interchangeability of parts within a model range has been threatened by prohibiting the manufacturers from utilising such flexibility of production. The kind of 'problem' which is anticipated stems from an owner with, for example, a 750cc motorcycle fitting a cylinder head from a 900cc to his engine. Under the most severe application of type approval, such a modification would be outlawed if it offered more than a 10% increment to power.

Many owners make modifications to maximise specific areas of potential which their machine possess. For example a touring rider may wish to raise the gearing for optimum fuel economy a legitimate modification which would not be allowed if the Commission's worst plans were realised.

It should be stressed that not only would such a modification by an owner be prohibited but the manufacturer would be forbidden to produce a model range which accommodated such possibilities. ie 900cc cylinder heads must only fit 900cc engines. Manufacturers such as the re-born Triumph company here in the UK employ the modular design concept which depends upon such flexibility as a means of minimising production costs. If Type Approval were to be introduced for all categories of motorcycle then it is anticipated that the Triumph company would have to reduce its model range, as to retain the present choice would not be financially realistic.

In short, we have a bizarre situation in which politicians are trying to design motorcycles, with little or no concept of the industrial havoc they are wreaking by so doing, in order to address a largely imaginary problem, the proportions of which they have conspicuously failed to identify

Motorcycles offer an economic and practical mobility option for millions by which traffic congestion and pollution can be significantly reduced. At a time when governments should be promoting motorcycle use for these reasons, it is ironic that the European Commission should be doing everything within its power to obstruct manufacturers and discourage owners.

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MAG Position - Bikesafe 2000

Police and DETR Road Accident figures advise that the UK has recently suffered a disturbing rise in the numbers of accidents involving motorcyclists. To address this problem many Police areas have devised initiatives, which endeavour to reverse this alarming trend. The best known example of this type of 'Community Policing' is North Yorkshire's BIKESAFE 2000, which MAG wholeheartedly supports, and which is proving to reduce the numbers of motorcyclists killed and seriously injured.

The salient points that emerge from the initiative are as follows.

- (a) Set up a regular forum of interested parties, e.g. Institute of Advanced Motorists / MAG / BMF / retailers / Police Motorcycle Officers / Training Agencies / Road Safety Officers.
- (b) Manufacturers / Retailers to offer discounted track days for riders to establish their capability limits on newly acquired machines.
- (c) Road Safety Videos of 'TT' style dangerous roads made available to bike clubs / MAG groups and advertised via posters at biker pubs and cafes, etc.
- (d) Maps of popular racetrack roads, showing blackspots and giving statistical information of causes of accidents etc. Display maps at biker meeting places, both local to the road shown on the map and elsewhere.
- (e) Interested parties to offer regular rider assessment days, possibly with dealer / other sponsored prizes as inducements.
- (f) Ensure re-laid road surfaces after roadwork / repairs are the same as previous known quality.
- (g) Evaluate and rationalise road furniture, ensure moderate bends are not chevroned more than bad bends, etc.
- (h) Road signs of racing circuit type, showing degree and full direction of bends, not just standard highway signs.
- (i) Encourage media to adopt a more responsible reporting, a change of emphasis from 'get out and have a go' to 'know you / your bikes parameters and get there safely'.

As a general summary, we feel it is most productive if the Police take a more pragmatic and less heavy-handed view and instead of saying 'you must not speed along these roads' instead said 'use speed safely'.

MAG is able to contribute a positive, informed and important input into this initiative. Please ensure BIKESAFE is started in your own area by contacting the local Police Traffic Department. If you have already done this, please inform Motorcycle Action Group so our records may be updated.

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MAG Position – MAG UK - A Brief Overview

The Motorcycle Action Group, (MAG), is a voluntary organisation, drawing membership from across the whole spectrum of motorcycling.

Whatever you ride MAG has something for you!

MAG was born out of protest against legislation, introduced in 1973, making it compulsory to wear a crash helmet.

Since then MAG has evolved from a single issue group to a highly respected political lobbying and campaigns group which is central to all aspects of policy and legislation affecting motorcycling.

MAG operates at the European, National, Regional and Local levels. MAG can, and does make a difference.

We are respected for our responsible contributions which are informed, objective and which enrich the political debate.

Throughout this evolution MAG has remained faithful to its core principles of freedom of choice and self - determination.

Motorcycling is about freedom of expression.

Above all it is about camaraderie and friendship.

In a world of increasing regulation and conformity motorcycling represents one of the last bastions of individuality and diversity.

This freedom of expression and individuality is not a 'given'; it has to be protected and fought for.

This is why every part of MAG must be focussed on promoting motorcycling and to represent, protect and defend the interests of riders.

To put it simply; The Motorcycle Action Group's mission is to;

Defend and Fight for Riders' Rights

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MAG Position - Bull Bars

MAG UK is opposed to the fitment of bull-bars to vehicles. However, we have not actively campaigned against them for the following reasons:

* MAG UK is reluctant to call for the banning of equipment that is not conclusively proven to exacerbate injuries in the event of a collision. Following this course of action may lead to similar calls or measures being made against motorcycles and their accessories.

* Bull-bars have already received much bad press; many of the arguments are emotive from accident victims, bereaved relatives of accident victims or from politicians and safety groups eager to be seen to be doing something. The general public and vehicle manufacturers are already known to be aware of and dealing with this issue.

* Being involved with a campaign not based on scientific evidence is likely to undermine MAG's credibility.

* The fitment of bull-bars is likely to be banned or seriously curtailed by forthcoming EU legislation without any intervention by MAG UK.

* There are so many other safety issues to be dealt with, such as diesel spillages, poor road surfaces, accident prosecution policy and rider training that campaigning against bull-bars would detract from this work.

* MAG UK considers that it is more important to prevent accidents from happening in the first instance rather than assuming that they are going to happen and to mitigate their effects by 'softening' vehicle fronts. The emphasis should be on prosecuting the perpetrators of accidents, rather than campaigning against specific equipment or accessories.

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MAG Position - Bus Lanes

In the early 90s the Motorcycle Action Group and other motorcycle organisations mooted the idea of motorcycle access to bus lanes in the County of Avon. The idea was approved as part of the strategy of the Avon Motorcycle Forum and gained the support of local councillors and highway engineers.

This led, in June 95, to the introduction of a six-month experimental scheme in Bristol. The scheme was granted permanent status at the end of the experimental period, during which, no accidents or adverse road safety effects had been observed. There are no current plans to review the scheme.

Concerns have been raised about further plans for motorcycle access to urban bus lanes. MAG contends that these concerns can be resolved by dialogue between interested groups. MAG is concerned that arguments against motorcycles in bus lanes appear to be based more on poorly informed conservative reactions than on any firm evidence. Indeed, articles that have appeared on the issue from some quarters are often badly researched and contain an alarmist element that is entirely unacceptable in the context of rational debate.

Support and opposition to bikes in bus lanes generally comes from three main sources:

- Highways officers (engineers or road safety staff) working for the local authority.
- Local police force traffic management officers.
- Other bus-lane users or would-be users (cyclists, pedestrians, taxi or bus companies).

However, MAG has found that any or all of them can be very supportive, either from the start or after dialogue. This is because concerns about motorcycle use can be addressed, simply by the interested parties entering into discussions with an open mind.

Some of the objections that have been raised are outlined below.

The Department of Transport won't allow it. The Department of Transport guidance referred to was issued some years ago. Although it does advise motorcycles should not normally be among those vehicles permitted, it also says that local authorities are able to allow any type of vehicle. This point was confirmed by John Bowis the Minister for Road Safety in the last government. In a letter to Sir David Knox MP, dated 6th November 1996 he said: 'Local authorities already have the power in law to introduce bus lanes, and allow them to be used in addition by other types of traffic. They must use their judgement of local circumstances as to what is appropriate in a given situation.'

The Government Advisory Group for Motorcycling, a group chaired by David Jamieson, Under Secretary of State for Transport, is currently researching motorcycle use of bus lanes and has called for local authorities to develop trial schemes for monitoring this.

There's no suitable road sign in the official traffic signs manual. The Department of Transport gave its backing to the original experiment in Bristol and approved a revised version of the standard road signs used to advise which vehicles may use a bus lane.

Motorcycles are dangerous; we don't want to encourage them. The common assumption is that because motorcycle users, pedestrians and cyclists are vulnerable, they - and not the vehicles that hit them - are dangerous. The perversity of this argument is that most motorcycle user casualties arise from collisions with other vehicles, usually cars, in built-up areas, where the motorcycle has right-of way and is travelling below the

speed limit. Allowing motorcycles to travel independently of these other vehicles would help to reduce potential conflicts.

Pedestrians would be put in danger. Allowing motorcycles to travel outside the main traffic stream would make them more visible to people crossing the road. This is more likely to improve pedestrian safety.

Cyclists would be put in danger. Pedal cycles and motorcycles are both narrow and manoeuvrable; their riders share a common understanding of the need to give each other room. Added to this, being overtaken by a motorcycle is less hazardous than is the case with buses, taxis, etc.

Bus schedules will be disrupted. Given the manoeuvrability and space efficiency of motorcycles, adverse effects should not be experienced, indeed motorcycles in bus lanes are not adding to congestion elsewhere on bus routes.

Enforcement will be more difficult. Seeing motorcycles in bus lanes does not encourage drivers of other vehicle types, eg: cars and goods vehicles to invade the bus lanes. Road signs used to designate bus lanes clearly identify which vehicles are permitted. Motorcycles break speed limits, allowing them to use bus lanes would encourage this. A lot has been made about the problems of speeding motorcyclists, with some commentators painting a picture of out of control motorcyclists creating urban chaos. The reality is somewhat different. Motorcyclists are all too often on the receiving end of the results of bad driving (Over 60 % of urban motorcycle accidents are caused by other road users). Because of this, motorcyclists have a keen sense of self-preservation. This is supported by novice motorcycle training that is of a higher standard than that of most other road users. Riders are aware that a rogue car or erratically ridden cycle could pull into their path at any time and, in the main, ride defensively and at a sensible speed.

The speed of commuter traffic tends to be self-regulating, with the speed of all bus lane users further regulated by the speed of the buses that use them. Department of Transport figures show that motorcycles are more likely to comply with urban speed limits than cars. 1995 figures show that the average speed of motorcycles in urban areas was 30 mph, whereas the average for cars was 33 mph. 48% of motorcycles complied with 30 mph limits as opposed to 28 % of cars. This does not mean that motorcyclists can avoid their responsibilities on the overall speeding issue, but given that a massive 72 percent of cars are driven over the 30 mph limit, worries about speeding motorcyclists should be put in context with the overall picture before alarmist's views are propagated. Problems with speeding motorists of all classes should be solved by a combination of education and more effective enforcement measures.

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MAG Position - Conspicuity

Along with proposals for compulsory daytime lights are suggestions that all riders should be made to wear garments that are day-glo and reflective. Indeed, one of the first drafts for the Europe wide clothing standards was that 25% of the rider's body had to be covered in day-glo.

MAG is against this shifting of the blame for accidents onto the rider. The report Characteristics of Urban Motorcycle Accidents [Institute of Motorcycling, 1989] showed that 62% of accidents involving motorcycles were directly attributable to the actions of other road users, and a significant number of these accidents were due to the car driver turning across the path of the motorcycle or pulling out of a side road into the path of the rider.

There is anecdotal evidence that in the period when most daylight accidents happen, the early morning, the use of lights breaks up the silhouette of the motorcycle and reduces the frontal area visible to other road users, especially against a bright sky. Day-glo clothing has a similar but less striking effect.

Evidence from a wide range of sources shows that human beings adapt to changes in their environment. Unfortunately this means that the initial impact of many safety measures can be lost over a period of time. MAG believes that the relatively small improvement in rider safety available from conspicuity aids is liable to decline if other road users become used to seeing them. Furthermore, the proportion of accidents that may be avoided is far outweighed by the proportion of accidents caused by other road users to look out for bikes.

MAG is calling for the proper education of all road users to ensure they are aware of each others vulnerabilities and the on the spot testing of eyesight for all vehicle users who are involved in an accident The excuse of "Sorry mate, didn't see you" isn't good enough

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MAG Position - Daytime Lights

Daytime Headlights for Motorcycles

There has been considerable interest in recent years concerning daytime headlight requirements for motorcycles. It has been suggested that this measure may have considerable road safety benefits for motorcycle riders in the UK. However, MAG remains unconvinced of the benefits of compulsory daytime running lights (DRLs), or compulsory headlight use.

Summary of Main Arguments Against DRLs for Motorcycles.

- * They can be annoying to other road users. When DRL-equipped motorcycles are behind a motorist, they can turn the rear-view mirror into a constant distraction. When a motorcycle is behind a motorist on an uneven or hilly they go from annoying to extremely annoying and distracting. This problem is less apparent in darkness as most cars are fitted with day/night setting on the rear view mirror. This cannot be used during the day.
- * It would be more difficult for other motorists to see motorcycle indicators from the front if DRLs were implemented. There are already a disproportionate number of motorcycle accidents caused by other road users turning into the path of a motorcycle. DRLs would only compound this situation.
- * DRLs only increase the visibility of the headlight itself. The motorcycle becomes less visible. This reduces the ability of the human eye to judge distance. A motorcycle with DRLs may appear to be further away than it really is
- * Motorcycle DRLs would increase road safety risks for other vulnerable modes such as cyclists. Other road users would expect to see lights on two wheelers. This would increase risk for cyclists as a motorist expecting to see a two wheeler with a light may ignore a cycle who does not have DRLs.
- * Motorcycle DRLs could generate a sense of self-confidence in the motorcycle user. This form of 'risk compensation' could have adverse road safety effects.
- * The common excuse that is given by a car driver after he or she has caused a motorcycle accident, is sorry mate I didn't see you. This adds weight to the calls for conspicuity aids such as DRLs. It must however be pointed out that these accidents 'causers' are hardly likely to admit that they were not paying attention to the road or that they didn't look for the motorcycle before pulling into its path. Compulsory DRLs will not solve this problem.

The European Transport Safety Council argued in February 1997 that mandatory DRLs for motorcycle should be implemented across the European Union. They claimed that nearly all the studies, the exceptions being those with methodological shortcomings, show that the use of motorcycle DRLs is even more important than DRLs for cars. A number of studies are quoted.

However, it can be shown that the vast majority of those studies that are quoted in favour of DRLs can themselves be shown to either have methodological shortcomings, or that other factors were in play that were not considered when the effectiveness of DRLs are evaluated. The studies quoted have been brought into question after closer analysis (Prower 1997). Contrary to ETSC assertions, the case for compulsory DRLs is far from proven.

The European Parliament recently refused to adopt the ETSC proposal and instead decided that there should be a closer analysis of the claims made in research studies. This is ongoing.

Urban Accidents. Three studies (Whitaker TRL 1980, Oullet 1990 USA, Olson et al 1980 USA) found that the majority of motorcycle accidents occur on or near junctions, when another driver infringes the right of way of a motorcycle rider while only a short distance away from him or her.

Unless the driver has eyesight below the minimum standard allowed for driving, he or she can perfectly well see a motorcycle and rider who are 100yds away from him or her. DRLs will not solve the problems that are caused to motorcyclists by drivers who simply fail to look for motorcycles. The majority of urban motorcycle accidents are not related to visibility issues, but issues of basic car driver standards.

SWOV (quoted in support of DRLs by ETSC and PACTS) The SWOV 1997 report 'Effectiveness of Daytime Motorcycle Headlights in the European Union' (Bijleveld) purports to be a comprehensive study of the of the

effect of motorcycle daytime lights upon motorcycle accidents in the European Union. However closer analysis (Prower 1998) shows that apart from a brief review of examples from other countries, it is essentially just a study of the effect upon motorcycle accidents of the hard-wired motorcycle daytime lights law that Austria passed in 1982. Bijleveld assumes that his Austrian example can be exported as an example for other European countries. Confining attention, to the Austrian study, it achieves no proof that the Austrian law reduced motorcycle accidents. Prower found that Bijleveld's data-modelling exercise findings were exaggerated to an implausible degree and provide no hard evidence that motorcycle daytime lights, whether in Austria, or anywhere else in the European Union, have reduced motorcycle accidents. Further details are available from MAG on request.

Australian Motorcycle DRL Laws Australia repealed its Federal DRL laws in 1996 after the Federal Office of Road Safety (FORS) found no statistically significant evidence of a reduction in motorcycle crashes associated with the 'lights on' requirement.

The 'Ride Bright' Experience. In 1976, a 'Ride Bright' awareness campaign in London, that encouraged the use of DRLs resulted in an increase in motorcycle accidents. (Lalani & Holden).

Incontrovertible Evidence? Those who support compulsory motorcycle DRLs often argue that the evidence in favour is incontrovertible. However a closer analysis of the available studies show defects of methodology. In short, the available evidence and studies do not support compulsory DRLs once subjected to close scrutiny.

Conclusions.

This has only been a brief look at motorcycle DRL evidence. However, from this initial analysis, MAG can conclude that:

1. The available evidence does not inconclusively support compulsory motorcycle DRLs.
2. Additional studies with the aim of manipulating methodology simply to get the desired pro DRL result required by those who support such a measure is both undesirable and unnecessary. The same applies to proposals for experimental regulations.
3. DRLs will not help reduce single vehicle motorcycle accidents.
4. DRLs will not help reduce the numbers of motorcycle accidents at junctions. (Most urban motorcycle accidents occur at junctions). It is utterly scandalous that certain 'safety' interests are diverting attention from the real causes of the majority of motorcycle accidents (bad car driving and single vehicle motorcycle accidents) and, instead, are playing with motorcycle road safety by actively promoting unproven and dubious secondary safety measures, such as DRLs, as a 'quick fix' measure.
5. Motorcycle DRLs may represent a threat to cyclist safety.

Recommendations.

1. Proposals from road safety interests for compulsory motorcycle daytime driving lights in the European Union are without foundation and should be dropped.
2. Proposals for an experimental period of compulsory DRLs in the UK should be dropped.
3. There should be a closer scrutiny of car driver training standards, with a view to improving motorcycle awareness and perception among car drivers.
4. Programmes such as 'Bikesafe 2000' need to be extended to combat the recent increases in rural single vehicle motorcycle accidents (where DRLs would have absolutely no effect).
5. Issues of motorcycle safety (among other motorcycle related issues) should be discussed a part of the full Government Motorcycle Advisory Group.

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MAG Position - Diesel Spillage

Legislation is already in place to prevent diesel spillage.

The UK Construction and Use Regulations were amended so that from 10th December 1990 it is a specific offence to spill Diesel 'failure to maintain a diesel tank in good condition will be an offence'. According to the Dtp at the time.

The offence of 'using a vehicle in a dangerous condition' carries a penalty for which in the case of goods vehicles and buses includes an endorsement of 3 penalty points. It would be for the police and the courts to decide whether such an offence might apply to a case where a motorist had spilt diesel on the road.

The Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986 currently require that fuel tanks must be constructed and maintained in such a manner that neither liquid nor vapour can escape from them. Anyone failing to comply with these Regulations may be liable to a maximum fine of £2,500.

The recent European Fuel Tank Directive (70/221/EEC) requires fuel caps to be securely attached to the tank. This should reduce the risk of spillage further.

Data on the presence of oil or diesel on the road surface at the site of a road accident has been collected as a separate category within road accident statistics since the beginning of 1999. It was introduced following a review of the collection of national road accident statistics. No information is collected nationally on the contributory factors to accidents.

On lorries, caps must be fitted with seals which must be in serviceable condition e.g. not perished or split. The same applies to breather pipes. Problems arise when tanks are overfilled and breath through the cap, when the cap is missing or unserviceable and when temporary fuel caps are used causing a spillage as soon as the vehicle takes the first bend. This applies to all vehicles although maintenance schedules on larger long distance vehicles should include a six weekly inspection. This is a legal requirement and if flouted could result in the operator losing his Operators licence which basically means his vehicles aren't allowed to move until he successfully re-applies through the courts. A loss of Operators licence usually results after a "raid" by the Vehicle Inspectorate during which they check tacho records, maintenance records and inspect the vehicles and maintenance facilities.

Smaller vehicles don't require an O licence or 6 weekly inspections but it is still the operator and driver's responsibility to keep that vehicle in a roadworthy condition. The legislation is the same for both classes of vehicle but an operator could run a fleet of transits all year without looking at them carrying out remedial maintenance only after an MOT failure. This happens and the driver at least is breaking the law if he takes the vehicle out on the road in a dangerous condition. This is a strong case for stricter enforcement by the police who now have the power to impound a vehicle that they consider unroadworthy. The ministry can't be everywhere and it seems that the only time you see a vehicle with a prohibition is as a result of a ministry check and not individual police action. This leads MAG to believe that vehicle roadworthiness checks and especially those leaking diesel are not too high on the list of police priorities.

The six weekly inspections are a good idea in theory but there are operators who either ignore it or have the inspections carried out but never get round to getting the defects found rectified, therefore enforcement is the answer. The culprits tend to be short distance hauliers dashing around the same town making 30-40 deliveries a day. Long distance hauliers know that it doesn't make economic sense to cut corners.

There is a loophole in so much as a serviceable tank could spill diesel if overfilled but the driver would be breaking the law whether he refueled it or not. Once he takes that vehicle on the road it is his responsibility and if he is spilling diesel he is committing an offence.

It is common practice to fit additional or larger tanks to vehicles when the operator asks for it but this is usually carried out on the pre delivery inspection or first service and the work has to be to manufacturers specification. If an extra tank is fitted in such a way as to make it unsafe or prone to leaks it should be picked up on a 6 weekly inspection, failing that on the MOT test or on roadside checks.

The police can't be everywhere but if the first bend outside a bus station is a permanent diesel slick it shouldn't take too much detective work to catch the culprits in the act.

Hard evidence is required to secure any conviction, your task is to go out and find it!

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MAG Position - Crash Helmets

The compulsory requirement for motorcyclists to wear helmets was introduced in 1973 when an estimated 88% of bikers were wearing helmets voluntarily. By forcing the remaining 12% of riders to wear helmets at all times it was anticipated that a saving of some 300 lives per year would be made. That expectation was never realised, a fact which the DETR dismiss, claiming that savings are unquantifiable since other factors have masked what they think is the true picture.

MAG's anti-compulsion stance rests on three principle foundations:

1. The law was unnecessary since voluntary usage was almost completely universal.
2. To force people to take precautions for their own safety when the neglect to do so poses no threat to others is incompatible with the spirit of a free society.
3. It is hypocritical for a government to victimise bikers in this way when others whose indulgences indisputably represent a huge public burden are permitted free choice. The ability of the government to force helmet compulsion on bikers, when smokers and the obese, for example, are permitted unlimited license to indulge their injurious behaviour, owes everything to political feasibility and nothing to justice.

The supporters of this legislation refuse to recognise the limitation of helmets to save life and the negative aspects of helmet use which can increase the chances of accidents occurring and even aggravate the injuries under certain circumstances.

Many bikers declare their enthusiasm for helmets on the grounds that they FEEL safer in one. Feeling safe is the most dangerous sensation any road user can experience. MAG is convinced that risk compensation is a real phenomenon, illustrated by less careful behaviour on the part of those who feel secure, e.g. the Swedish insurance companies identified a high incidence of skidding accidents involving cars fitted with ABS (anti lock brakes). The DETR's refusal to acknowledge the existence of risk compensation reflects the artificial perception of the world they recognise.

Peripheral vision and hearing are adversely affected by helmets while the extra weight they burden the neck with can cause spinal fracture even if the head does not strike anything. The ACU (sport governing body) banned the use of full face helmets for those below the age of 18 on the grounds that below this age the neck has not developed its full strength.

While MAG recognise that there are many situations in which helmets can limit injury we insist that the flip-side of the coin is not respected by those who sustain this legislation. After years of campaigning by American bikers the US Government has finally decided to abandon its Federal legislation in this area and leave the decision to individual states, many of whom have repealed or reformed existing laws. On average 'free' states enjoy better safety records than those with helmet laws.

While MAG is opposed to compulsion per se we recognise the political impropriety associated with total repeal which inhibits many MPs from supporting us. MAG would welcome a reform of helmet compulsion to permit free choice to qualified riders or those over a certain age. The helmet law as it stands is a disgraceful and unsustainable anomaly in a supposedly free society.

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MAG Position - Integration

The Contribution That Motorcycles Can Make to Transport Plans

The motorcycle remains a largely misunderstood mode of transport, for far too long shrouded in clouds of misconception about both the nature of the machines themselves and the nature of the people who ride them. The reality is that motorcycles have long since evolved beyond the noisy, smelly and dirty transport of yesterday. Modern motorcycles are clean, quiet, well designed and come in a variety of different styles.

Technological developments by all manufacturers mean modern motorcycles are among the most fuel efficient vehicles on the road today which, along with their space saving capabilities and massively improved safety record, means they provide a credible alternative to four wheeled personal powered transport.

Figures released by the Motorcycle Industry Association show that sales in the UK have tripled during the last five years with moped sales, in particular, increasing tenfold. Commuters seeking an alternative to spending valuable time stuck in traffic jams have realised the benefits of motorcycle use and are now switching to this transport mode in large numbers. Many are people who rode motorcycles in their youth and have now returned to two wheels having realised the futility of continuing to commute by car.

The encouragement of cycling, walking and public transport is essential, but transport planners must understand that if the aims of the RTRA are to be realised, they must recognise that the majority of people will be unwilling to give up personal powered transport without greater investment in the public transport infrastructure. The only personal transport option currently being promoted is the bicycle, but only the most committed cyclist would be willing to cycle more than 3-5 miles to work on a daily basis, especially when most businesses make inadequate provision for cyclists in the work place.

The majority of vehicle users want to ensure they are able to preserve their freedom of movement and continue to be able to have the transport flexibility that many of them need, including the provision to carry a reasonable amount of personal cargo. The only alternative personal transport which offers such complete door-to-door flexibility is the motorcycle.

Motorcycles provide a convenient, economical and environmentally friendly form of personal powered transport, providing the ideal 'half way house' between the present traffic chaos and the transportation vision of the future.

Time Saving.

A motorcycle takes approximately 16 - 46% less time to cover the same trip through traffic congestion as a car. Even on longer trips a motorcycle can provide significant time savings for commuters. A medium capacity motorcycle is capable of undertaking long distance commuting, maintaining traffic speeds on main roads and motorways while being less affected by traffic congestion at peak times. Given that stretches of main road and motorway have either reached or are fast approaching gridlock during peak commuter periods, an increase in motorcycle use can assist in reducing traffic levels without having to resort to environmentally damaging road building/improvement schemes. Motorcycles can in most cases easily extricate themselves from congested areas and in the event of breakdown they can be easily moved out of the traffic flow, further reducing incidents of congestion.

Clean and User friendly.

Modern commuter motorcycles are reliable, well engineered, clean and user friendly. Many models also provide a high degree of weather protection. Advances in clothing technology means that protective clothing is now available that is both easy to wear and offers a high degree of protection against the elements and the possibility of injury.

Fewer Emissions.

A report of the Motor Vehicle Emissions Group of the European Commission states that Motorcycles have a share of 14.6% of all powered vehicles in the EU. However, they produce less than 3.8% of the CO, less than 1.1% of the CO₂ and less than 3.8% of the NO_x of the total output of air-pollution. Motorcycles are more fuel-efficient than cars, whilst even high performance sports bikes have comparable fuel consumption. Emissions are further reduced because motorcycles are not forced to remain stationary, with an idling engine, in congested traffic. Continuing developments in motorcycle engine technology and fuel efficiency are likely to improve motorcycle fuel consumption further still.

Less Damage to the Roads

Increased use of cars and public transport will require costly investment in infrastructure. Motorcycles cause a fraction of the damage to roads compared to other motorised transport, and thus are responsible for only a tiny percentage of the maintenance costs. Increased motorcycle use would require few changes to the current roads infrastructure. Land given over to car parking space can be used more efficiently and there will be less need for road widening as motorcycles take up a fraction of the space that a car needs.

Space Saving.

Motorcycles occupy far less space on the road and three or more motorcycles can be parked in a single car parking space. A Vienna City Council investigation in 1985 found that every day 1.5 million km are driven just to find parking places for cars, and that in 1992 in one day 180,000 litres of fuel are used in this way in the same city. Similarly a Viennese University found that Austrian congestion costs 6.75 billion ECU per year.

Economical.

Motorcycles play an essential role as the most practical means of personal transportation for those who cannot afford a car. eg: for the young. Mopeds and other small commuter machines can return up 100 or more miles per gallon. Motorcycles consume between 55% and 81% less fuel than cars on the same journey and they require far less use of resources to manufacture (1/7th). Once a motorcycle has reached the end of its useful life many components are recycled and reused on other machines.

Improving Safety.

The causes of motorcycle user casualties must be better understood. Motorcycle accident rates are comparable with pedal cycles and are improving faster than for any other mode of transport. (a reduction of over 65% compared to 1985 rates - DoT) They also present less of a threat to most other road users than other powered transport. The major cause of all road accidents (over 60%,) is bad car driving. (Booth, IMC 1989). Increases in use will not lead to more accidents. Between 1993 and 1996, motorcycle traffic increased by nearly 2% and accidents fell by just over 8%.

The Missing Element in Alternative Transport Strategies.

Many people -- especially those who live in rural areas -- will always require personal powered Transport. Motorcycles are ideally placed to be part of an integrated transport strategy, providing an ideal transport solution for many who live too far from work to cycle in a reasonable time frame and who have little or no access to the current, poorly funded, public transport arrangements. They provide the viable alternative that many will need if they are to make the successful transition away from motor car use. There are very good reasons why motorcycles should be included in an integrated urban transport policy - and no compelling reasons why they should not. Urban planners and environmentalists must give them serious consideration in their future thinking.

Transport Planning and Policy & the RTRA.

The practice of ignoring the contribution that motorcycles can make to overall transport problems should cease. Positive references to motorcycles should be made in all relevant road transport documents from local town plans through to the EU's Common Transport Policy. This should also include DETR advice and guidance from professional bodies. Positive references should be made in the finalised RTRA Guidance for local authorities.

Roads Infrastructure.

Motorcycles by their very nature cause less damage to the roads infrastructure. A relative increase in the proportion of motorcycles on the road would contribute to reduced maintenance costs. Motorcycles and cycles are particularly vulnerable to damaged roads. Potholes and ruts caused by heavy traffic can upset handling and lead to accidents. Gravel, diesel spillage and other debris also represent severe hazards. More efficient measures should be introduced for dealing with the problems outlined. If road surfaces were improved, drivers of all classes would be able to give more of their attention to other hazards.

Fiscal Measures.

The advantages of motorcycle use present a clear case for exemption from charges for using road space. This argument is further supported once the need to reduce car use is considered. Drivers will need incentives to switch to other vehicle modes. Once road-pricing schemes have been established concessions for motorcycle use will provide such encouragement. Local authorities should be encouraged to waive parking charges for motorcycles as a further incentive to encourage commuter motorcycling. At the same time, a levy in the form of an urban 'parking tax' should focus on car drivers and the moneys raised used to fund road infrastructure repairs.

Motorcycles in Bus Lanes.

Taxi and bus lanes should be immediately opened to use by motorcycles. This is already allowed in Sweden Barcelona, Rome, Bristol, Bath, Hull, Colchester and Reading in the UK. The Bristol scheme was introduced in 1995. It contributed to improved freedom of movement for motorcyclists and was not found to be detrimental to motorcycle safety.

Advanced Stop Lines.

The introduction of cyclists Advanced Stop Lines (ASL) in recent years, gives cycle users an important safety advantage at traffic light controlled junctions, allowing them to position themselves ahead of cars. This provision should be extended to include motorcycle users as well. The viability of this proposal has been demonstrated in Japan, Netherlands, Belgium and France. The road safety benefits apply equally to cycles and motorcycles. Claims that motorcycles sharing ASLs with cycles while stationary would endanger cyclists are unfounded.

Motorcycle Parking.

The number of secure motorcycle parking spaces must be dramatically increased. They already exist in forward-thinking towns and cities in the UK and abroad. In Milan and Rome special lockers allow helmets and other equipment be stored. The lack of dedicated motorcycle parking is a clear discouragement to motorcycle use. Commuters will continue to find car use the easier option. Dedicated motorcycle parking bays, making more efficient use of existing car parking space will address this problem. There should be minimum standards set for the number and design of public motorcycle parking spaces.

Access To Restricted Areas.

Local planners are restricting large parts of urban centres to only public transport, cycles and taxis. Many of these should continue to allow motorcycle access with appropriate safeguards. This would further encourage commuter motorcycling. This initiative has already been introduced elsewhere. In Rome, motorcycles are allowed to enter the historic city centre, where car traffic is limited to residents. In Barcelona, motorcycles are allowed access to the city centre, along with public transport and taxis.

Greening Businesses.

Businesses are beginning to encourage their employees to cycle to work by providing parking and changing facilities. This initiative should be extended to cover locker facilities for employees to store motorcycle helmets and protective clothing. Incentives should also be considered to encourage employers to provide secure motorcycle parking at the workplace. Where such schemes operate, interest-free loans should be granted to employees who wish to purchase motorcycles or cycles for business purposes, as is current practice in some local authorities. Employers should also be provided with incentives to encourage the use of company motorcycles instead of company cars. This would be financially advantageous to business, as decreased company vehicle running costs and more efficient transport arrangements for employees lead to increased business.

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MAG Position - Leg Protectors

The idea for leg protectors came from the number of accidents in which motorcycle riders suffered leg injuries. The design of the leg protectors as proposed by the Transport Research Laboratory [TRL] is only suitable for riders under 6 feet tall, and even then it is cramped for pillions. The evidence put forward by the TRL in support of leg protectors relies upon the testing carried out on a GPz 500, a Norton Commander and a Honda C 90. The results published were based on a limited number of tests, and supported the claims made by the department of transport.

The research was questioned by the motorcycle industry, who commissioned their own studies. The draft specification leg protectors were tested on one scooter and two motorcycle designs. The results showed that the leg protector design was only beneficial in 25% of accident situations and actually detrimental in 50% of accidents.

Worse still the effects of the leg protectors on head trajectory and deceleration would lead to increased severe and fatal head injuries. This is caused by the leg protectors restraining the rider and causing pivoting around the hips bringing the head into contact with the car that the motorcycle was in collision with. There was also an increased chance of pelvis fracture, which is potentially fatal. The net result of the current design is the lower leg injuries are transferred to upper leg, torso, and head injuries.

To date the testing is incomplete, and no testing for the effects on pillions has been undertaken. The defects in the basic design of the leg protector led to the need for the design of motorcycle airbags. The design of the leg protectors is also based on a faired motorcycle, where the lower part of the leg is substantially vertical. This would not suit the custom style of machine, or any other 'feet forward' layout.

There is no final design of leg protector published yet. When and if it is published it may only be a short time before leg protectors are made compulsory. There had to be a helmet standard before the compulsory wearing could be introduced.

MAG is opposed to the leg protector design as it increases injuries, and further engineering 'fixes' are being looked into to solve the problems created by the product.

MAG is calling for the real problem to be solved, and that is the 2/3rds of motorcycle accidents caused by the actions of other road users. Many millions of pounds have been spent by the TRL on leg protector research, yet these devices are still not yet at a stage of development where they can be used reliably. By way of contrast, £900 000 was allocated for leg protector research in 1994, which was more than the money allocated for the study of drink-driving habits, which cause more deaths, injuries, and general distress than lack of leg protectors will ever do.

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MAG Position - Noise

For many years politicians have stated that motorcycle noise is the subject that they receive the most letters about, despite the fact that in the last noise pollution survey did not even mention motorcycles. Unfortunately, this leads to a continuing push for even lower noise limits, although not necessarily lower noise levels.

The current limits for motorcycles are based on the cc of the machine and are as follows:-

ITEM	DATE OF FIRST ISSUE	MOPEDS	MOTORCYCLES	REFERENCE
1)	Pre 1st April 1983	No Requirement	No Requirement	
2)	1st April 1983	74dB(A) <80cc = 79dB(A)	C&U Schedule to 81	
		- 125cc = 81dB(A)	7A & directive 31st March 1991	126 -
		350cc = 84dB(A)	78/1015/EEC	351 - 500cc = 86dB(A)
		>500cc = 87dB(A)		
3)	3) 1st April 1991	75dB(A) <80 = 78dB(A)	C&U Schedule to 81	
		- 175cc = 80dB(A)	7A and directive present*	> 175cc =
		83dB(A)	87/56/EEC	

NB: These limit values will be tightened from 2003

For an idea of how loud "loud" is the following table gives some idea of the sound levels produced by various sources:-

Sound Level (dB)	Sound Source
20-30	Wilderness area
30-40	Whispering, quiet residential area [night]
40-50	Quiet residential area [day]
50-60	Normal conversation, light traffic at slow speeds
60-70	Noisy office, vacuum cleaner close to
70-80	Busy street, car at 60 mph, washing machine
80-90	Heavy truck at 40 mph, older motorcycle
90-100	Car horn, power mower close
100-110	Pneumatic drill, high-speed train, jet at 1000ft
110-120	Typical rock PA, thunderclap
120-130	Jet aircraft take off, threshold of pain

In industry hearing protection is advised above 80dB and mandatory above 90dB. It is also a rule of thumb that 85 dB can be tolerated for 8 hours, and every 3 dB rise halves the exposure time. The effects of this can be seen in the table below:-

Sound Level (dB)	Exposure Time
85	8 hours
88	4 hours
91	2 hours
94	1 hour
97	30 minutes
100	15 minutes
103	7 min 30 secs
106	3 min 45 secs
109	1 min 50 secs
112	55 seconds

The sound generated by a crash helmet when travelling at 60-70 mph is in the region of 100 -110 dB. This is mainly wind noise generated by the helmet so hearing protection is advisable at these speeds.

Noise and silencers. For motorcycles first used on or after 1 February 1996 the silencer which forms part of the original equipment exhaust system must approved and marked to Directive 78/1015 as amended by Directive 89/235. Replacement silencers must be approved and marked in accordance with the above Directives or British Standards BS AU 193:1983 or BS AU 193a: 1990, depending upon the age of the motor cycle to which they are to be fitted (if fitted to a motor cycle before 1 February 1997, the requirements in respect of noise levels and method of measurement in the Directive/BS must be met but the silencer has to be marked only with the silencer manufacturer's name and part number).

Exhausts bought "after market" for bikes must be stamped with the relevant e, E or BSI mark, and if a dealer sells a bike with a non-approved exhaust system he will be liable to prosecution by the trading standards agency. If you ride with one of these systems you are not only risking prosecution, but also giving the legislators ammunition in their fight to ban bikes.

Remember, as they say in the US - Loud Pipes Cost Rides!

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MAG Position - 'Patch Clubs' And MAG Events

The following proposal was passed by overwhelming majority of those present at the 1998 Annual Group Conference.

When organising MAG fund-raising events you may be faced with a situation whereby a patch club demands free entry to the event, with an implicit threat of violence and / or disorder should their demands not be acceded to.

The National Committee is not in the business of demanding or inciting personal heroism from any Rep member. It is one thing for us to put advice in writing and quite another to have to face 20 thugs, each weighing in at 200lbs plus, at 10pm on a Saturday night rally site, miles from the nearest police station. At the same time it is important that MAG is not perceived as a pushover. Any large-scale automatic capitulation to the unreasonable demands of these gangs will have negative knock on effects for other MAG events. If one club demands and gets free entry, free beer and free generator petrol at one MAG event then all clubs will sooner or later expect and demand the same concessions at all MAG events.

Where MAG National events are concerned (The Glowing Lamb, The Anglesey Show, Storming the Castle, Builth, etc.) there will be absolutely no concessions of any kind save for any granting of block booking discounts on the same terms as other non-MAG affiliated clubs. Yorkshire MAG long since decided to apply the same policy to the Farmyard Party. These decisions are final and non-negotiable.

Where local events are concerned, how you handle it is ultimately up to you but we hope these notes will help.

Pre Event

1) If you receive a polite and civilised approach from a Patch Club wishing to attend your event, treat them like any other club. If they are not MAG affiliated (most are not) then offer them the same ticket price as you are offering to other non-MAG affiliated clubs. If they are affiliated then likewise, offer them affiliated club pre-booking terms. Assuming that they pay for their tickets and behave well on site, report these facts back to MAG Central. Many members see a patch club on site and wrongly make the automatic assumption that we have let them on for free. To allow such wrong impressions to go uncorrected is unfair to clubs who do the honourable thing by paying the going rate. It also creates ill-will between MAG and those members of the paying public who wrongly make the assumption.

2) If you receive an aggressive approach pre-event then you must report it to Central Office. What constitutes an 'aggressive approach' is really a subjective judgement but basically it means any approach which indicates that the club will not pay the going rate for entry, or which contains any element of express or implied threat to persons or property. The National Officers will discuss the situation with you and will render all possible assistance. MAG National Officers will deal directly with the clubs concerned, police and politicians on your behalf if that is your wish.

3) Do not offer free entry, beer, food or other services to any club in a mistaken attempt to ingratiate yourself with them. Likewise, do not offer special privileges of any kind such as roped off camping areas. Such behaviour encourages disrespect of MAG and you personally. Nobody must be misled into thinking that we will automatically treat thugs like royalty.

During The Event

1) If a Patch Club turns up and demands free entry then your options are:

- a) Let them in immediately and do nothing about it;
- b) Let them in immediately and call the police;
- c) Refuse entry, giving in only if a clear threat is made, and then call

the police. Do not attempt any forcible resistance. Use the police. That is what our taxes pay for!

2) Assuming an aggressive club is on site which causes you concern, you should take the following measures to ensure that any crimes are subsequently punished:

- a) Note down vehicle numbers. If the club in question uses hire vans, note down the name of the hire firm.
- b) Note down names and descriptions of the individuals involved in any incidents. Also note the time of the incident. If possible take discreet photographs or video tapes.
- c) Obtain personal details (name, address and telephone number) of any victim of theft, damage or violence caused by the club members. d) Pass all details to the police at the earliest opportunity with copies to MAG Central.

What Can The National Committee Do?

- 1) Lobby for urgent political and police action against troublesome gangs, even to the extent of having them declared to be "illegal organisations" like the IRA et al..
- 2) Object to licensing applications when these clubs seek to run their own money making events, on the grounds that by disrupting the events of legitimate competitors they are, in effect, running a protection racket and indulging in unfair and illegal anti-competitive practices.
- 3) Give them constant bad publicity, encouraging bikers to boycott their events.
- 4) Seek court injunctions against those involved.

MAG is not seeking conflict with anyone but MAG will not be victimised either. The MAG National Committee will therefore take all action within its power to defend MAG members' interests. MAG will treat all motorcyclists equally and does not recognise any club as being in any way superior or deserving of special treatment.

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MAG Position - Power Limits

MAG is totally opposed to the principle of limiting the power of road-going motorcycles. The European Commission made strenuous efforts to introduce a 100 bhp limit against the wishes of both motorcycle manufacturers and the motorcyclists of Europe and could do so again.

MAG recognises that most motorcycle accidents occur at low speeds (70% below 30mph) with 75% of accidents occurring in built up areas (ROSPA accident fact sheet 1/90 1988). At such speeds and in such an environment only a fraction of a motorcycle's power can be developed; high power being developed much further up the rev range. In short the exponents of a power limit have completely missed the point and embraced the red herring of absolute power as a scapegoat.

In reality, in 65% of accidents involving motorcycles the other involved vehicle is primarily at fault. It is a prime example of blatant discrimination that politicians are singling out motorcyclists for power limits when motorists are not being threatened with a similar limit on their cars. MAG believe this unequal treatment owes everything to the political power of the motoring lobby and nothing to a genuine and objective pursuit of road safety.

MAG recognises that inexperienced riders are over represented in accident statistics. Since the majority of inexperienced riders are young, the inference is that young riders represent a greater risk than older ones. While the relationship between youth and high accident involvement would seem to be established, the more pertinent factor is inexperience, that factor that being masked in many statistical presentations by its coincidence with youth. The economics of motorcycle ownership and insurance rates naturally prevent the vast majority of young riders from acquiring high-powered motorcycles.

There is a real danger when analysing raw data of mistaking one factor for another and placing the blame on undeserving victims. For example, the probability of high-risk takers owning high-powered vehicles could cloud the issue when accident records are superficially interpreted. It seems probable that in the event of a ban on bikes producing over 100bhp, aficionados of those machines would simply buy the next most powerful machines available thus transferring their poor accident rates to a lower category. What MAG fear is a gradual ratcheting downwards of maximum power as legislators pursue their red Herring whilst failing to recognise the legitimate common factor.

The natural extension of the 'logic' that might emerge could result in the eventual prohibition of motorcycles on the grounds that they are associated with more injury accidents than cars. Such a conclusion would ignore the fact that most of those accidents are the fault of the other party anyway. MAG considers it grossly unfair and simplistic to heap blame upon a class of vehicle for accident causation, when in fairness the analysts should examine the characteristics of the other involved but commonly un-injured party to see if a quite different and more just identification of blame exists.

The key to safety lies with education, largely through training and the promotion of awareness by all road users, not through draconian legislation that robs the public of fine and exhilarating machines.

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MAG Position - Road Pricing and Tolls

MAG is opposed to the introduction of tolls onto the existing road infrastructure. The view of the National Committee is that they are inefficient and will not assist the congestion encountered in urban areas, and will create "rat runs" through densely populated residential streets, which will require expensive traffic calming measures to slow traffic and reduce accidents. Couriers and road hauliers are particularly concerned about any system of charging for road use.

The definition of a highway is "a route which all persons, rich or poor, can use to pass and repass as often and wherever they wish without let, hindrance or charge" should remain, and that these rights should not be eroded where existing roads are concerned.

Where new roads, tunnels or bridges are built, MAG accepts there may be a reasonable case for a charge for use to be made [i.e. to pay for the construction of the route] on the proviso that there is sufficient public consultation and acceptance. MAG is not prepared to see the existing or alternative routes in the locality of any new toll road being neglected or downgraded to ensure traffic flow along a tolled road.

MAG is aware that less than 25% of revenue raised by the Road Fund Licence is spent on building and maintaining the road infrastructure and that motorcyclists already pay more in taxes than the actual cost of using the roads. MAG's opinion is that more of the current revenue should be spent on an efficient transport network, and is convinced this would overcome many of the existing problems of traffic congestion and pollution problems.

The methods of collecting the tolls is also a concern of MAG. Toll booths, either manned or automated, will slow the traffic and create the congestion that the roads were designed to avoid. Electronic tagging is an option that may be expensive to introduce. Fixed tags will also be a target for theft from motorcycles as there is no enclosure similar to the car's passenger compartment to secure the tag.

The motorcycle is an environmentally friendly form of transport, and MAG feels that it should be recognised as such and subject to toll free travel. The European Parliament proposed that motorcycles should be exempt from all purchase, possession, and use taxes.

MAG will not accept the banning of two-wheeled motor traffic from any road under any circumstances.

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MAG Position - The Safety Issue

An Old Fashioned View?

Motorcycles are perceived as being a disproportionately dangerous form of transport and are often excluded from traffic plans on the grounds of roads safety. However, recent, dramatic and sustained improvements in urban motorcycle safety records over many years have done little to change views about motorcycles and road safety. It is time that this blinkered view is challenged.

Drawing Comparisons -- Cars and Motorcycles.

In 1987, the Government started a campaign to reduce road casualties on Britain's roads by one third by the year 2000 from a baseline average casualty figure among all road users during 1981-85. Within this overall target was built a framework for different vehicle types. Car casualties were to be reduced by 30 per cent,

whereas the motorcycle community was given a 40 per cent reduction target. Overall, good progress has been made on the numbers killed and seriously injured. 3,599 road users of all kinds were killed in 1997 compared to the 5,598 1981-85 baseline figure -- a 36 per cent reduction. There was a 42 per cent reduction in those seriously injured over the same period.

Motorcycle casualty figures have shown far more dramatic improvements. Deaths are down by 49 per cent, serious injuries are down by 70 per cent and slight injuries down by 60 per cent. The overall motorcycle casualty figure is down by 63 per cent -- exceeding the government target by 23 per cent, four years in advance of the year 2000 target date. Against this, sales of motorcycles increased by 36% in 1997. A recent blip in deaths and serious injuries has been largely attributed to non-urban motorcycle accidents.

The picture for car user casualties is somewhat different. Deaths are down by 18 per cent and serious injuries are down by 25 per cent, but slight injuries are up by 66 per cent -- an overall increase in car casualties of 47 per cent.

The reasons behind these stark differences in car and motorcycle casualties are easy to identify, Road Accidents Great Britain 1997 (DETR) shows that car traffic was up by 56.8 per cent over the 1981-85 baseline, with motorcycle traffic down by 52.6 per cent. But even with the casualty figures adjusted to take this into account, car casualties have only fallen by 6.4 per cent, whilst motorcycle casualties are down by 21 per cent, more than three times the casualty reduction of cars users.

Cyclists

Casualty figures among cyclists also continue to give cause for concern. Based on 1997 figures (DETR), cycling has seen a 34.2 per cent fall in use from the 1981-85 baseline average, with the casualty figures falling by 13.4 per cent from the 1981-85 baseline figure. However, the adjusted figures show that the cycling casualty rate actually increased by a massive 31.5 per cent, the only group of personal transport users to show an increase in accident rates per km travelled.

A Balanced View?

The major source of road casualties is the motor car, a vehicle type that continues to receive far more support in resource terms than the motorcycle. Similarly, the current policy of heavy public promotion of cycle use must be questioned given that this is set against a background of increasing cyclist casualties. Cycling is getting more dangerous but is a heavily promoted form of alternative transport. Car driving is the major source of danger but it is still dominant. Bizarrely, urban motorcycling is getting safer overall, but is still often ignored as an alternative for reasons of safety, a factor not often considered by those who promote cycle use.

The Way Forward.

An important factor behind the dramatic improvement in urban motorcycle safety is the continued development of training for motorcyclists. The introduction of Compulsory Basic Training for motorcyclists in 1990 made a significant impact on motorcycle safety. At the same time, standards in professional training bodies have improved and the riders themselves are better equipped to face today's road conditions. However, there are still too many motorcycle accidents occurring, with the majority of them not being the fault of the motorcyclist.

In 1989, Booth found that 62 per cent of urban motorcycle accidents are caused by other road users (Characteristics of Urban Motorcycle Accidents). There is little evidence that this picture has changed significantly since then. Better standards of motorcycle awareness among other road users must be a priority and the recent changes to the theory test to accommodate this are welcomed. Separate measures are needed to tackle rural motorcycle accidents. MAG supports the Bikesafe 2000 initiative, a measure adopted by every UK police force that has been shown to result in a reduction in single vehicle motorcycle accidents.

Understanding Accidents.

Recent research by the Royal Automobile Club and the Motorcycle Industry Association has identified problems with the current collation of data in the official UK accident figures. The study 'Primary Motorcycle Safety' found that the interpretation of injury to vary widely between police officers completing STATS19 reports. Many injuries are inaccurately recorded, leading to unavoidable errors in the official figures. It will be difficult to accurately determine correct accident injury risk conclusions for any class of road user until greater consistency is achieved. Action should be taken to give a clearer definition of injury in STATS19 records.

Pedestrian Casualties and Motorcycles.

Government figures suggest that once distance travelled by each mode is accounted for, motorcycles are involved in a higher proportion of pedestrian casualties than those caused by cars. The reasons for this have not been fully established, but as modern motorcycles are in the main quiet and unobtrusive, it seems that pedestrians are both failing to hear the approach of motorcycles and taking insufficient care to look out for motorcycles before stepping into their path.

Perceptions About Speed.

Arguments against increased motorcycle use are sometimes based on perceptions of motorcyclists as being more prone to speeding than other motorised road users. Once the evidence has been considered and comparisons made with other road users, the true picture is somewhat different. DETR figures show motorcycles are more likely to comply with 30 mph speed limits than cars. 1997 records show that the average speed of motorcycles in urban areas to be 32 mph. The average for cars was 33 mph. 40% of motorcycles complied with 30 mph limits as opposed to only 30 % of cars. This does not mean that motorcyclists can avoid their responsibilities concerning speed, but given that the vast majority (70 percent) of cars are driven over the 30 mph limit, worries about speeding motorcyclists should be put in context before alarmists views are propagated.

Problems with speeding motorists of all classes should be solved by a combination of education and more effective enforcement measures.

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MAG Statement - Vehicle Restraint Systems

The Motorcycle Action Group (MAG UK) supports our colleagues in riders' organisations who are engaged with their road authorities in removing wire rope barriers from the road infrastructure.

Due to the open nature of the design which exposes the upright steel posts and wire cables, MAG UK considers that wire rope barrier systems are the most aggressive vehicle restraint system used on the roads.

MAG UK does not endorse any vehicle restraint system or the manufacturer of any of these systems.

It is the position of MAG UK that the main cause of injury to riders is the exposed upright posts of all vehicle restraint systems.

MAG UK's aim is to improve the safety of vehicle restraint systems thus reducing the potential for injury and death of motorcyclists when impacting these systems.

Therefore MAG UK is currently campaigning for steel beam barriers to be fitted with a 'motorcycle-friendly' secondary rail and to have wire rope barriers removed from the road infrastructure in the UK.

FEDERATION OF EUROPEAN MOTORCYCLIST ASSOCIATIONS- FEMA

FEMA MISSION STATEMENT

FEMA's purpose is to promote, protect and preserve motorcycling.

FEMA's Mission is to promote riders' interests and defend riders' rights throughout Europe and globally.

To achieve that:

FEMA calls for official recognition of the positive aspects of motorcycling as practical transport, addressing social inclusion, reducing congestion and limiting the take-up of land for transport use.

FEMA promotes the positive recreational aspects of motorcycling, particularly touring as a healthy, skilful and adventurous way of travelling which benefits communities and individuals through tourism throughout Europe.

FEMA calls upon all official bodies and government departments in Europe to make generous positive provision for motorcycle-based transport and recreation in policies, planning and legislation.

FEMA accepts that road safety is important and that it is the shared responsibility of all users, vehicle manufacturers, authorities and those responsible for the infrastructure. We promote and call for positive motorcycle-based measures rather than discouraging motorcycling.

FEMA will seek to maximise its membership, comprising European national riders' rights organisations which have interests, policies and principles consistent with those of FEMA, to ensure the best possible representation for all motorcyclists.

FEMA POLICY STATEMENT

BACKGROUND

The Federation of European Motorcyclists' Associations (FEMA) is the representative federation of motorcycle (comprising all powered two-wheeled vehicles) users throughout Europe. FEMA represents the interests' of citizens' national organisations at the European Union and agencies of the United Nations. FEMA's primary objective is to pursue, promote and protect the interests of motorcyclists.

FEMA recognises that motorcycles have different characteristics from other vehicles and emphasises the need for motorcyclists' specific requirements to be addressed.

The statements made in this document are summaries of policy arrived at according to current knowledge. This document is intended to be a 'living' document which will change as and when it is necessary in order to reflect current circumstances.

ACCESS TO ROADS

- FEMA promotes and defends the considerate use of all public roads by all motorcycles.
- We oppose restrictions to motorcyclists' rights of way and all bans which prevent motorcyclists from using public roads.

ANTI-TAMPERING MEASURES

- FEMA supports users' rights to make modifications to their motorcycles providing they do not compromise their safety and impact on the environment.
- We support the right of users to customise motorcycles to their tastes and to perform regular maintenance which anti-tampering measures are unjustifiably trying to curtail.

AWARENESS AND LICENSING

- FEMA recommends that awareness of motorcycles and mopeds becomes a compulsory element in all initial training and licensing for all vehicle groups.
- We oppose the discriminatory imposition of motorcyclists' age limits for motorcycle access, which are not in line with those for equivalent classes of cars.

CHARGES FOR ROAD USE

- FEMA seeks to promote motorcycle use by obtaining exemptions for motorcyclists from road pricing schemes imposed in addition to existing vehicle taxation and from congestion charging, in particular.
- We call for the appropriate and equitable inclusion of motorcycles in national or pan-European road pricing schemes should they replace current taxation schemes (such as fuel duty and fixed charges to use roads) for motor vehicles.

DISCRIMINATION

- FEMA opposes all discrimination towards motorcyclists.

ENFORCEMENT

- FEMA calls for the equitable treatment of motorcyclists in the enforcement of the law.
- We support active policing believing that automated enforcement is no substitute.

- We accept the enforcement of existing noise and emissions limits as preferable to measures that reduce these limits further.

ENVIRONMENT

- FEMA encourages the use of motorcycles for personal mobility and recreation as such use has a smaller overall impact on the environment than that of any other mechanically powered road vehicles, using fewer natural resources and creating less traffic congestion.
- We support manufacturers working to reduce negative effects which motorcycles may have on the environment without adversely affecting efficiency.
- We support the efficient recycling of used motorcycle parts, currently practised in the EU, without unnecessary restrictions.

EXTERNAL AGENCIES

- FEMA will ally itself with other organisations to pursue the interests of motorcycling, providing these alliances do not create conflicts of interest with the rationale of riders' rights.
- We will maintain regular contact and engage appropriate national motorcycle organisations in Europe and the rest of the world; the United Nations, EU institutions, national governments, international motorcycling organisations and all other bodies which are directly involved in motorcycling matters.
- We will not enter into agreements that in any way constrain, restrict or dilute FEMA's ability to pursue its primary purpose.

FISCAL INCENTIVES

- FEMA supports fiscal measures which promote motorcycle use.

INFRASTRUCTURE

- FEMA calls for authorities responsible for the infrastructure to become more motorcycle aware when planning and building road layouts, street furniture and repairs.
- We encourage motorcyclists to make highway authorities and contractors aware of their legal responsibilities towards motorcycle safety.
- We support the development and implementation of European standards based upon best practice guidelines to make the infrastructure more motorcycle friendly, for appropriate scheduled maintenance and repair and for the regular update of these standards.

INITIAL TRAINING

- FEMA believes that structured, relevant and cost-effective initial training should be available to everyone taking up motorcycling and supports initiatives that require instructors to demonstrate their competence.
- We call for government support in providing safe areas to undertake initial training and initiatives to improve rider training at all levels.
- We only support the imposition of changes to the motorcycle test upon European member states when they are proven to produce a road safety benefit.
- We support the freedom of member states to adapt testing procedure as appropriate to local conditions providing they do not discriminate against motorcyclists and are proven to enhance road safety.
- We support the provision of voluntary post-test training.

INSURANCE

- FEMA calls for fair and accessible insurance for all motorcycles and motorcyclists.

INTELLIGENT TRANSPORT SYSTEMS

- FEMA calls for the needs of motorcyclists to be taken into account during the design, development and implementation of ITS-based traffic management systems to ensure that motorcycles are not excluded by default.
- We oppose any ITS which takes control from the rider.
- We support the development of ITS-based information systems suitable for motorcycling applications.
- We oppose the use of ITS for the purpose of unwarranted surveillance.

NOISE

- FEMA opposes any unjustified reductions of Type-Approved noise levels.
- We encourage riders to use exhaust systems approved for road use.

PARKING

- FEMA calls for sufficient dedicated motorcycle parking provision to match current and future demand to be provided by regional and local authorities and that it should be secure and free of charge.

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

- FEMA encourages the voluntary use of personal protective equipment and clothing appropriate to the environment in which they are employed.
- We oppose any requirements for the mandatory use of such equipment and clothing.

POWER LIMITS

- FEMA opposes the introduction of power limits for motorcycles.

RIDER AND VEHICLE CONSPICUITY

- FEMA recommends that the compulsory use by motorcyclists of conspicuous clothing, daytime running lights or headlamps in daytime should be subject to the discretion of national governments.
- We support the principle of subsidiarity regarding the mandatory use of conspicuity measures to other vehicles such as day running lights which should be left to the discretion of national governments.

SPEED LIMITS

- FEMA calls for speed limits to be appropriate and not to apply only to motorcyclists rather than all classes of vehicles.

STATISTICS AND RESEARCH

- FEMA encourages the production of statistics which truly reflect the risks attached to motorcycle riding.
- We oppose any motorcycling safety legislation based on shallow and flawed research.
- We encourage and, where opportune, take part in objective pan-European research into the causes of motorcycle accidents subject to scrutiny to ensure that such research is not flawed or biased.
- We seek to ensure that safety planning recognises motorcyclists as vulnerable road users and that cars are a substantial cause of motorcycle casualties.
- We call for information on motorcycle casualties to be expressed by rate of exposure as well as by number in order to reflect levels of motorcycle use.

SOCIAL INCLUSION

- FEMA advocates the use of motorcycles as a means of enabling individuals to seek employment and education particularly when alternative transport is not readily available.

TAXATION

- FEMA calls for the removal of the large differences in purchase tax within Europe which create an unjust market for its citizens.
- We continue to call for national governments to be enabled to reduce VAT from the standard rate for personal protective equipment and security equipment for motorcyclists.

THEFT OF MOTORCYCLES

- FEMA supports sustainable initiatives which better protect motorcycles from theft providing riders are not subject to costs which are a barrier to motorcycling.

- We encourage governing bodies of competitive motorcycle and motor sport to promote regular checks to discourage the use of stolen motorcycle parts with appropriate action taken against offenders.
- We encourage the investigation of the extent and nature of motorcycle theft in Europe in order to understand the problem and to enable the exchange of sound and effective advice between riders' organisations, industry and authorities.

TYPE-APPROVAL

- FEMA supports the application of Type-Approval regulations which help to remove barriers to trade, but opposes such regulations where restrictions are placed on an individual's ability to modify motorcycles.
- We support national single vehicle approval which allows the approval of one-off specials, vehicles from limited production runs and those built for non-EU markets.

VEHICLE DESIGN

- FEMA encourages the advancement of vehicle design.
- We will aim to monitor the quality, price, performance and design of motorcycles, components and accessories as of considerable importance to the safe use of motorcycles.

FEMA Policy Statement as adopted 4th February, 2006