

## Motorcycle Rider Licensing

**Jim Heideman**  
**Director, Licensing**  
**Motorcycle Safety Foundation**

# National Data

In 2011, 22% of motorcycle riders involved in fatal crashes in the United States did not have a valid motorcycle license.

*Motorcyclist Traffic Fatalities by State*

*GHSA 2013 Preliminary Data*

# State Results - Michigan

From 2008 through 2012, 47% of motorcycle operators involved in crashes in Michigan did not have a motorcycle endorsement, and in 2012 alone, 58% of those riders killed were not properly endorsed.

*Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel*

*April 14, 2014*

In Wisconsin in 2012, 43% of motorcycle fatalities involved motorcycle operators who did not have a valid motorcycle license.

*Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel*

*April 14, 2014*

## Why some riders choose to ride unlicensed

- Testing is inconvenient
  - Scheduling
  - Time/place
  - Cost
- Test is difficult/inappropriate
  - Test is old
  - Off-road
- Unaware of alternatives
  - Training waiver
- Embarrassment factor
  - Training with young, beginning riders
  - No perceived need, even after not having ridden for years
- Unaware of requirement
  - Returning riders
  - Move from another state
  - Have ridden for a long time without a license

# State Initiatives

- Proactive Measures
  - Permit process
  - Public education campaigns
  - Targeted messaging to registered MC owners
- Reactive Measures
  - Enforcement – fines and demerit points
  - Insurance costs (after a crash)
  - Motorcycle impound

# Additional Actions

What can be done to strengthen state motorcycle licensing programs to reduce fatalities among those riders (the other 78%) who are licensed?

# Tiered Licensing – New Jersey

In New Jersey, if a rider tested on a motorcycle less than 231 cc, the rider is restricted to riding a motorcycle of 500cc or less. (This restriction is waived if the rider has completed a state-approved rider education course.)



# Tiered Licensing - Utah

In Utah, the license endorsement is restricted based on the capacity (cc displacement) of the motorcycle ridden during testing. Four classes are:

- Up to 90 cc
- 91cc – 249cc
- 250cc – 649cc
- 650cc and above

# Graduated Licensing

- Level 1 – Learner Stage establishes age ranges, training and preparation and riding restrictions
- Level 2 – Intermediate Stage establishes a minimum “holding” period , with reduced restrictions, prior to full license entitlements

# Concluding Considerations

- Age/experience restrictions
- Minimum time for holding a restricted license
- Passenger carrying restrictions
- Supervised riding
- Engine capacity restrictions
- Power to weight restrictions

## Concluding Considerations (2)

- Speed limit restrictions
- Display of L or P license plate
- Lower (or zero tolerance) BAC limits
- Time of day restrictions
- Road usage restrictions
- Helmet requirement
- Mandatory training requirement