

# STATE OF OREGON

## GOVERNOR'S ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON MOTORCYCLE SAFETY

### 2018-2024 STRATEGIC PLAN



**Adopted**  
**January 17, 2019**

Transportation Safety Division  
Oregon Department of Transportation

## **BACKGROUND ON THE COMMITTEE**

Governor Vic Atiyeh informally established the Governor's Advisory Committee on Motorcycle Safety (GAC-MS) in 1981. Executive Order 99-09 formalized the GAC-MS, charging the committee to focus its efforts upon rider education, drinking and riding, road hazards unique to motorcyclists, motorist awareness of motorcycles, sharing the road, and other safety issues. Additionally, the GAC-MS advises the Governor and the Governor's Highway Safety Representative (the director of the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) Safety Division) on motorcycle safety issues and legislation that is in the best interest of the state's traveling public. The GAC-MS also reviews curriculum materials for rider training, making recommendations to the Oregon Transportation Safety Committee (OTSC). Staff from ODOT's Motorcycle Safety Program supports the GAC-MS.

The eight-member committee strives for a diverse membership by geography, gender, and type of motorcycle. The GAC-MS meets at least quarterly and nearly monthly when the Legislature is in session. The chair submits an annual report to the Governor outlining the GAC-MS' accomplishments, goals, and mission statement.

The vision, goals and objectives are included in the GAC-MS Strategic Plan. The GAC-MS in 2014 began updating the 2008 plan. Coincidentally, early in this process the GAC-MS learned the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) was going to perform an assessment on ODOT's Motorcycle Safety Program. The committee decided to wait for the recommendations from the 2016 NHTSA assessment to see which, if any, should be included in the GAC-MS Strategic Plan. The chair and vice-chair participated in the NHTSA assessment. The GAC-MS reviewed the 2016 NHTSA assessment at three meetings to see which recommendations were within the GAC-MS's responsibilities.

The GAC-MS Strategic Plan concentrates on several areas. At the broadest level, the GAC-MS identified and ranked several areas. The Committee discussed the topics at length and then each member assigned 5 (high), 3 (medium) or 1 (low) points to each committee member's priorities. The Committee's cumulative points were then used to set the Strategic Plan's priorities. Generally speaking, the results were:

- Motorcycle Rider Education and Training (13 points)
- Communication Program (9 points)
- Program Evaluation and Data (8 points)
- Highway Engineering (7 points)
- Program Management (5 points)
- Motorcycle Rider Conspicuity and Motorist Awareness Programs (5 points)
- Motorcycle Operation Under the Influence of Alcohol or Other Drugs (5 points)
- Motorcycle Operator Licensing (3 points)
- Legislation and Regulations (3 points)
- Motorcycle Personal Protective Equipment (3 points)
- Re-Examine Laws Related to Getting Endorsement (1 point)

The Committee recognizes some topic areas overlap.

## **SUMMARY OF THE OREGON RIDING EXPERIENCE AND CRASHES**

Oregon's mild climate, popular coastlines, scenic mountains and High Desert provide a variety of attractions for riders of all ages. The Cascade Range and Coast Range both run north-south the length of the state, resulting in a network of winding east-west rivers and the serpentine roads which parallel them. The east-west Ochocos and Blue Mountains in Central and Eastern Oregon have a similar effect on drainage and roads. Oregon's topography has led to numerous national and regional motorcycle rallies being held in the state. Oregon's highways and roads, notable for their scenery and curves, thus draw a range of local and out-of-state riders. Finally, the paved and well-maintained gravel roads through the various state and national forests along with Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lands attract riders.

Oregon's geography is diverse and the climate varies between the western and eastern regions of the state. An oceanic climate (also called "Marine West Coast climate") predominates in Western Oregon, and a much drier semi-arid climate prevails east of the Cascade Range in Eastern Oregon. The climate can produce unique challenges to riders, including snow or freezing temperatures at higher elevations in the shoulder seasons, black ice, and moss or leaf-covered roads that reduce available traction. The state's abundant deer and elk populations as well as free ranging cattle present additional hazards to riders.

There are approximately 4 million residents of Oregon. Oregon's population centers, which lie mostly in the western part of the state, are generally moist and mild, while the lightly populated high deserts of Central and Eastern Oregon are much drier. The Willamette Valley area includes the cities of Portland (658,000), Salem (174,000) and Eugene (173,000). The largest city in southwest Oregon is Medford (84,000). Other than Bend (90,000), the eastern two-thirds of the state is lightly populated. This means outside of the Willamette or Rogue valleys, it may take a long time for emergency responders to reach a site where a rider has crashed.

Motorcyclists crash more than mathematically expected in Oregon. Motorcyclists continue to be statistically overrepresented in crashes. For the most recent data (2012-16) motorcycles comprised only 3% of the State's registered vehicles for each of those years, yet motorcyclists made up a low of 11% to a high of 15% of all traffic fatalities. Similarly, between 2012 – 2016 riders made up 14% of all Category "A" injuries, which are life altering events (loss of limb, paralysis, traumatic brain injury, etc.). While there are some year-round riders in Oregon, the state's riding season is typically mid-April to mid-October or approximately 215 days with the heart of the riding season being the roughly 150 days from early May to late September. The short seasonal nature of motorcycling vs. the year-round ability to drive further highlights the statistical overrepresentation of motorcycle crashes. The motorcycle fatalities and serious injuries typically happen in a much shorter time period, i.e. less exposure.

Riding impaired by either alcohol or drugs continues to be a problem. Alcohol or drugs were involved in 21% to 40% of the motorcycle fatalities between 2012-16. While alcohol and drugs adversely affect operation of any vehicle, motorcycles present an even greater risk due to their unique handling characteristics and lack of occupant protection.

An additional aspect includes where motorcycle fatalities occur. Between 2013-15 an average of 23 riders per year were killed while negotiating a curve.

In 2016, there were 55 motorcyclist fatalities in Oregon, accounting for 12% of fatal crashes. This was a slight decrease from the previous year, in which there were 60 motorcyclist fatalities. The average for 2012 through 2016 is 47 motorcyclist fatalities. See the table below for more detailed trends.

**Motorcycle Fatalities, Injuries and Crashes – Oregon 2012-2016\***

	Fatalities	Injuries	Crashes
2012	49	1028	1111
2013	31	953	1035
2014	44	874	981
2015	60	980	1090
2016	55	1015	1085

SOURCE: <http://www.oregon.gov/ODOT/TD/TDATA/car/docs/2013CrashSummaryBook.pdf>, page 4.

NOTE: Beginning in 2011, an improvement in crash report data capture was implemented resulting in a 15% increase in injury and property-damage-only crash numbers. There was no change in fatal crash reporting.

The top behavioral and environmental risk factors for fatal and “A” injury crashes involving motorcycles (2012-16) are related to riding at speeds above the suggested/posted speed, riding too fast for conditions, and riding impaired. These result lead to roadway departure crashes.

Finally, ODOT’s most recent Transportation Safety Action Plan (TSAP) identifies motorcycle crashes as an Emphasis Area (EA) and categorizes motorcyclists with bicyclists and pedestrians as a Vulnerable Road User. The TSAP has a goal of zero traffic fatalities or life-changing injuries by 2035 through changes in behavior, enforcement, engineering practices, infrastructure improvements, and cultural attitudes. EAs are targeted for near-term actions and improvements. The GAC-MS reviewed, but did not endorse, the TSAP due to concerns about possible prohibitions or restrictions in the future on riding motorcycles on public roads.

The following pages provides the specifics from the GAC-MS Strategic Plan and how this document relates to the 2016 NHTSA Assessment of the ODOT Motorcycle Safety Program, the TSAP, and other relevant adopted plans.

**GAC-MS STRATEGIC PLAN MISSION STATEMENT:**

**Maintain the safety and welfare of the motorcycle riding public in Oregon.**

The Committee had numerous discussions about the breadth of the mission statement as that is intended to guide the entire plan and the Committee’s actions. The mission statement is consistent with the NHTSA assessment, which calls for the State to have a coordinated and comprehensive response to reduce motorcycle fatalities and injuries. One cited approach is a state program that supports centralized planning and coordination to identify and address motorcycle safety problem areas.

The remainder of the Strategic Plan is presented according to subject area priority as determined by the GAC-MS voting results provided above.

**Motorcycle Rider Education and Training**

1. Encourage and promote rider education.

1.1 Maintain, enhance, and improve Oregon’s motorcycle safety training program(s).

1.1.1 Review best practices to ensure Oregon-approved curriculum(s) are the best available to Oregon residents.

1.2 Urge endorsed riders toward the view that motorcycle training is a continuum, rather than a single mandatory event.

1.3 Encourage experienced riders to participate in ongoing training. Define “Focus Areas” of education.

1.3.1 Personal Protective Gear, its need for characteristics of

1.3.2 Impaired Riding

1.4 Training for three-wheeled vehicles<sup>1</sup>

NHTSA Assessment calls rider education “an essential component of a statewide motorcycle safety program...” Oregon Revised Statute (ORS) 807.175 requires everyone seeking an original motorcycle endorsement to an ODOT-approved rider training course. TEAM Oregon currently is the State’s sole provider of training, offering courses at 24 training locations statewide. The GAC-MS reviews training materials for compliance with state requirements. The GAC-MS continues to work with TEAM Oregon, as it would with other state-sanctioned trainers, to have riders decide to continue their training beyond the basic course by taking advance courses or short workshops on cornering, emergency braking, and collision avoidance skills. The Committee also participated in beta versions of TEAM Oregon’s web-based electronic training called E-Rider.

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<sup>1</sup> The GAC-MS agreed to monitor the crash data for three-wheeled vehicles, but not to recommend the State begin specific training for three-wheeled vehicles at this time due to the lack of crashes.

## **Communications Program**

### 2. Create an effective communications program.

#### 2.1 Safety outreach

2.1.1 Participate in events.

2.1.2 Develop a primary safety message each year.

#### 2.2 Continuing education.

#### 2.3 All the gear all the time (ATGATT)

#### 2.4 Impaired Riding

#### 2.5 Create public awareness campaign of known hazards.

#### 2.6 Clarify the public outreach message of the GAC-MS, TSD and TO.

2.6.1 Craft a letter of agreement and understanding relating to topics and outreach.

#### 2.7 Collaborate/provide input to ODOT on communications efforts.

2.7.1 Create public awareness campaign of known road hazards.

2.7.2 Use ODOT Variable Message Signs for coordination with motorcycle safety communication campaign.

#### 2.8 Get the word out more as to WHY motorcyclists are dying in Oregon.

The NHTSA Assessment notes communications programs should support strategies for specific high-risk populations based on data. The resulting communications should support overall policies and programs. The Transportation Safety Division (TSD) provides safety messages and utilizes the GAC to review those related to motorcycles. The Motorcycle Safety Program Manager typically brings materials whether printed, video, or audio, to the GAC-MS for review and comment. TSD staff and the GAC-MS are committed to involving the GAC-MS earlier in the process.

Agency staff and the GAC-MS continue to work together to provide materials with safety messages. An example is the GAC-MS's "Oregon Motorcycle Map" for rides in Oregon, which has a variety of safety messages printed on the map's flip side. The GAC-MS also produces a brochure that describes the Pacific Northwest's riding opportunities as well as the region's unique hazards that pertain to riders.

The GAC-MS at its meetings reviews crash data and discusses any apparent trends. The GAC-MS meeting also have designated periods for public comments. Internal discussions regarding crash reports and feedback from the public all influence the GAC-MS's communication strategies.

TEAM Oregon also brings examples of safety materials to the GAC-MS for review and comment. These have included posters, videos, and miscellaneous materials.

The GAC-MS has committed to working with TSD and the agency's consultants to make data-driven choices when deciding upon which media to use to convey safety messages. The GAC-MS also works with various motorcycle clubs and organizations to convey safety materials, messages, and information.

### **Program Evaluation and Data**

#### **3. Evaluate the ODOT Motorcycle Safety Program**

3.1 Measure and evaluate interventions and countermeasures implemented.

3.2 Evaluate programs, activities, outreach, funding, training, etc., as a common recurring activity.

The NHTSA Assessment stresses problem identification and continual evaluation to improve motorcycle safety. The GAC-MS reviews crash data for trends in terms of time of day, roadway type, roadway characteristics, rider endorsement or level of training, type of crash (single vehicle or multiple vehicles), rider impairment. ODOT's TSP provides the GAC-MS with crash data summaries as well as research on state and regional trends in motorcycle crashes. The Program Manager also provides open source information on motorcycle crashes.

The GAC-MS uses the supplied information to identify potential countermeasures as well as advising agency staff on potential safety messages and the media to use and not to use. The GAC-MS is exploring the potential of the Oregon Health Trauma Registry as an additional source of information on motorcycle crashes. Currently, the GAC-MS and ODOT concentrate on crash data for fatal and Serious Injury A crashes.

### **Highway Engineering**

#### **4. Address roadway hazards and obstacle mitigation.**

4.1 Minimize road hazards on Oregon roads

4.2 Promote the ability for riders to report hazards to the appropriate road authority.

4.3 Work to ensure ODOT addresses motorcyclists and their vulnerabilities in construction, design, and maintenance practices such as:

4.3.1 Address hazards presented by heavy paint or vinyl markings.

4.3.2 Develop standards for application of crack sealing aka "tar snakes".

4.3.3 Address animal diversion.

4.4 Work with local jurisdictions to make the changes necessary to minimize hazards.

Historically, the GAC-MS had focused only on ODOT highways. The GAC-MS now concerns itself with all public roadways, which includes City streets and County roads and not just State highways. The rationale is Oregon riders travel all public roads and safety is a primary concerns of all road authorities.

Highway, street, and roadway engineering is a critical component of any effort to reduce the number or severity of motorcycle crashes. Engineering is one of the E's used in ODOT's Transportation Safety Action Plan. ODOT designers and engineers routinely appear before the GAC-MS to discuss motorcycle safety topics. These have included treatment of edges of pavements, construction practices and advance signing, pavement treatments on ends of bridges, pavement markings, and setting of speed limits in curves to cite a few. The GAC-MS has begun to also invite representatives from City Public Works Departments and County Road Departments to talk about similar issues on the local transportation system.

Riders can utilize the agency's Ask ODOT website to report roadside hazards or contact local District Maintenance offices. Local jurisdictions vary in their abilities to receive similar reports.

### **Program Management**

5. Assess program budget's consistency with program's goals.

- 5.1 Track current program budget
- 5.2 Receive annual report from Program Manager and provide comments and direction on discretionary funding
- 5.3 Ensure all motorcycle programs and projects align with Strategic Plan
- 5.4 Establish Statewide motorcycle safety network for TSD lifeline to the riding community
  - 5.4.1 Community leaders
  - 5.4.2 Law enforcement agencies
  - 5.4.3 Rider groups
  - 5.4.4 Transportation engineers
  - 5.4.5 Licensing reps
  - 5.4.6 Motorcycle dealers
  - 5.4.7 First responders
  - 5.4.8 Citizen volunteer groups
- 5.5 Expand partnerships with agencies for data collection
  - 5.5.1 ODOT to act as gatekeeper
  - 5.5.2 ODOT to interpret and analyze data for causation factors



5.6 Establish mentor program for new GAC-MS members

5.7 Conduct a reassessment of the program post-2016 NHTSA assessment

The GAC-MS is an independent body which advises the Governor and ODOT on motorcycle safety. The responsibilities include input into ODOT safety plans, spending on motorcycle safety, educational curriculum, and outreach materials. The GAC-MS is also the designated state body to receive public input on the safety of the riding public as well as to provide outreach to the public on motorcycle safety through the use of a motorcycle-specific map, brochures, posters, a GAC-MS website, and public service announcements via various media.

### **Motorcycle Rider Conspicuity and Motorist Awareness Program**

6. Evaluate effectiveness of messaging.

6.1 Analyze awareness of messaging about conspicuity gear

6.2 Analyze effect of Share the Road messages with riders and motorists

6.3 Determine whether distribution channels are effective and sufficient

The 2016 NHTSA Assessment stressed state motorcycle safety programs should emphasize rider conspicuity and motorists' awareness of motorcycles. Examples include brightly colored clothing; brightly colored helmets; and lane positioning to increase the visibility of motorcycles and their riders. The GAC-MS is also concerned about in-attention blindness and how this could contribute to vehicles colliding with motorcycles. ODOT has used billboards on major freeways to raise motorist awareness of motorcycles and issues press releases regarding conspicuity at timely moments, such as when daylight savings time ends. Finally, Driver and Motor Vehicle Services (DMV) manuals address why motorists do not see riders.

### **Motorcycle Operation Under the Influence of Alcohol or Other Drugs**

7. Reduce the number of motorcycle crashes where riders are impaired.

7.1 Work with rider groups to illustrate their capability and responsibility to change the culture of combining drinking with motorcycle riding

7.2 Incorporate motorcycle-specific messages into all impaired-driving campaign materials and enforcement activities

7.2.1 Consider new approaches to address impaired riding

7.2.2 Assess value of doing another drinking (impaired) and riding symposium

7.2.3 Encourage riders and dealers to not participate in any motorcycle club activity that includes a bar/tavern in the activity

7.2.4 Contact riding groups about changing club by-laws to not stop at taverns on group rides

Unfortunately, alcohol persists as a major factor in motorcycle fatalities and serious injuries. Drug presence is also being detected in Oregon rider fatalities as well. The total of alcohol-related fatalities with BAC's at .08 or higher and/or drugs present ranges from 20 percent to 40 percent annually. Oregon has attempted to reduce or ideally eliminate this constant cause by public service announcements, DMV Motorcycle and Moped Operator's Manual, and Team Oregon curriculum. All of these approaches stress the negative effects of alcohol and drugs on a rider's ability to operate a motorcycle. The materials emphasize the combined effects of alcohol and other drugs together is more dangerous than either is alone. With the recent legalization by voters of recreational marijuana, which took effect on July 2, 2015, getting this message out is even more critical. The GAC-MS has supported the Program Manager's and the Transportation Safety Division's efforts to reach riders through the internet, public billboards, television, radio, print, and strategically selected bars/taverns popular with riders with posters tactically placed above urinals and the back of toilet stall doors.

The GAC-MS has begun to explore an additional approach to reducing impaired riding by utilizing the sense of brotherhood, sisterhood, and camaraderie that many riders share. The concept is to have fellow riders watch out for one another and discourage riding impaired. This would be consistent with how riders inform each other of road debris, deer, or other hazards.

### **Motorcycle Operator Licensing**

#### **8. Provide input on licensing requirements.**

##### **8.1 Work with Oregon Driver and Motor Vehicle Services Division on upcoming versions of the Motorcycle and Moped Manual**

8.1.1 Include Oregon-specific motorcycle crash causation data to create a greater awareness of the factors motorcyclists encounter and reinforce the need for training and being properly licensed

##### **8.2 Encourage the implementation of an electronic real-time transfer of course completion information that results in the automatic update of a student's driver license record and Oregon Driver and Motorcycle Vehicles Services Division**

##### **8.3 Discuss the future of ORS 807.175(2)(b), the three-wheeled motorcycle exemption, from the rider training requirement**

##### **8.4 Encourage law enforcement to tow or impound a motorcycle if the operator is found to be improperly licensed or not endorsed**

##### **8.5 Re-examine laws related to getting an endorsement**

The DMV has a liaison at every GAC-MS meeting. The GAC-MS, along with Team Oregon liaisons, routinely discuss licensing requirements and how changes could affect DMV and vice versa. The intent is to ensure there are not unintended consequences. ORS 807.070 requires applicants for a motorcycle endorsement to take both a knowledge test and a skills test. ODOT must approve the motorcycle safety course. DMV offers the knowledge test statewide but the skills test, i.e., a motorcycle range, is only offered at a few DMV offices. Team Oregon courses and skills tests are offered statewide. Passage of a Team Oregon Basic Rider Training (BRT) course qualifies the graduate for a motorcycle endorsement.

## **Legislation and Regulations**

### 9. Comment on proposed bills and current regulations

- 9.1 Review legislation to either support, oppose, be neutral, or not track
- 9.2 Consider proposing legislation to change the legal definition of a motorcycle helmet to include the requirement of Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard (FMVSS) 218 standard compliant helmets. Include the chin strap must be latched. Strengthen the current helmet requirement.
- 9.3 Consider proposing legislation to allow motorcycles to go to the head of construction lines
- 9.4 Study and analyze lane-sharing crash data as it becomes available from California Highway Patrol (CHP) and others
- 9.5 Consider supporting legislation that would prohibit the use of studded tires as a safety, maintenance, and cost-savings initiative

The GAC-MS routinely reviews proposed legislation, but rarely introduces legislation. The GAC-MS recognizes legislation to bring the Oregon definition of helmet into alignment with the FMVSS definition could put the state's helmet law at risk. The GAC-MS has formed a lane-sharing subcommittee with includes stakeholders from all viewpoints; the subcommittee will report its findings back to the GAC-MS to assist the GAC-MS in its response to any legislation related to lane-sharing. The pavement ruts caused by studded tires can result in an extremely uneven pavement surface that could cause a motorcycle's tires to deflect unexpectedly.

## **Motorcycle Personal Protective Equipment**

### 10. Stress the benefits of protective equipment

- 10.1 Support motorcycle helmets that meet the federal standard
- 10.2 Continue and enhance Oregon's education campaign addressing the importance of personal protective equipment for all riders

The 2016 NHTSA Assessment reported on the benefits of personal protective equipment reducing the risk of death or injury in motorcycle crashes. In their outreach materials both the GAC-MS and Team Oregon display riders using appropriate gear (full face helmet, durable jackets and pants of leather or textiles, full-fingered gloves, and boots reaching past the ankles). While many riders prefer the traditional color of black, the GAC-MS and Team Oregon either use brightly colored gear or add high-contrast elements to black gear in their outreach materials. The GAC-MS emphasizes All the Gear All the Time (ATGATT) when riding.