



March 10, 2010

Reference No. 380489

Mr. Norm Leibel, Deputy Chief Coroner
BC Coroners Service
Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General
Metrotower II
800 – 4720 Kingsway
Burnaby BC V5H 4N2

Dear Mr. Leibel:

I am responding to your October 8, 2009 letter requesting responses on the Coroner's Report of the Death Review Panel on Motorcycle Fatalities. I very much appreciate the opportunity to respond to the recommendations of the Review Panel and apologize for the delay in my reply.

Over the past two years my office has partnered with the office of the Chief Coroner to undertake a comprehensive review of motorcycle safety in our province, best practices in other jurisdictions and a review of current data and research on the subject of motorcycle safety. As part of this approach we brought together other key road safety partners to form a project team to develop recommendations and put forward a motorcycle safety action plan.

In the development of this action plan the project team has developed a number of specific proposals that can be implemented to improve motorcycle safety in British Columbia, and has initiated external stakeholder consultations on a number of these proposals. The consultation includes surveying key motorcycle stakeholders for suggestions on how to increase awareness of motorcycle riders amongst passenger vehicle drivers.

Based on a review of research, motorcycle safety stakeholder recommendations and British Columbia's motorcycle crash statistics, three key areas for improving motorcycle road safety emerge:

- Provide riders with more experience before allowing them to ride unsupervised and unrestricted;
- Create a safer learning environment for new motorcyclists;
- Improve awareness of motorcyclists and their specific risks.

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Graduated Licensing

In alignment with recommendation 3, that a graduated licensing program be created for all new motorcycle operators, a number of changes to motorcycle licensing have been proposed as part of the Motorcycle Safety Project. These enhancements include:

- Longer Class 6 Learner stage;
- Post-Learner probationary period for Class 6 licences;
- Motorcycle power-to-weight restriction for all new riders;
- Zero Blood Alcohol Content (BAC) requirement for new riders; and
- Modernized supervisor requirements.

In addition to these proposals, key motorcycle safety and industry partners are being asked to comment on the proposal to increase the class six "L" licensing stream supervisor age restriction from 19 to 25 years of age. These stakeholders are also being asked to recommend other means by which the supervisor requirements can be modified to enhance rider safety.

Safety Equipment

As part the Motorcycle Safety Project, my staff are currently examining options with respect to recommendation 1: that the MVA be amended to require that all helmets worn on a motorcycle have a mandatory basic certification under one of the following: DOT, Snell, BSI, CSA or ECE.

With respect to recommendation 2, that eye protection is made mandatory equipment while operating a motorcycle, and recommendation 4, that all mobile communication and entertainment devices be restricted to single earpiece, we will include these items in our analysis as the initiative proceeds. Currently, the Province's ban on electronic devices applies to Class 8 GLP motorcyclists.

Enforcement

The ability to enforce the rules of the road is also a key element of motorcycle safety. Provincial deployment of Automated Licence Plate Recognition (ALPR) technology over the next year has highlighted the need to ensure that motorcycle licence plates are visible and sized appropriately. In British Columbia, Emergency Vehicle Operation (EVO) Policy prevents police officers from participating in pursuits of motorcycle riders for any offence that is not indictable (serious offences) due to the significant risk of harm posed by motorcycle pursuits.

The motorcycle safety project includes a proposed change to the licence plates used for motorcycles resulting in increasing the size of the letters by 3/8 of an inch, thereby allowing greater legibility of licence plates. As a result, police will be able to identify motorcyclists at a greater rate without engaging in dangerous pursuits.

Training

Another element of the comprehensive approach to motorcycle safety includes an evaluation and enhancement of current motorcycle training in British Columbia. This will include instructor training and licensing, as well as rider training standards. Discussion on safe riding gear is currently a mandatory theory component for individuals completing their motorcycle skills training and testing at a licensed driver training school.

Consultations on proposed licensing changes will proceed to the end of March 2010.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Steve Martin', with a large, stylized initial 'S'.

Steve Martin
Superintendent

pc: The Honourable Kash Heed, Solicitor General