

New Motorcycle-Related Laws Focus on Training



The 2009 Oregon Legislature passed several laws that affect motorcyclists.

Some of the laws go into effect January 1, 2010; others are phased in over several years. Most of the laws are related to motorcycle endorsements for Oregon driver licenses and motorcycle rider training.

Across the nation, motorcycle crashes involving injuries and fatalities are rising. Oregon is no exception. Motorcycle crashes in Oregon have almost doubled from 2002 (443) to 2008 (873). In contrast, during the same time period, the total number of crashes in Oregon for all vehicles decreased 13 percent.

“Previous legislation to require riders under 21 years old to take a training course has been extremely successful at reducing motorcycle deaths and injuries for younger riders,” said Michele O’Leary, ODOT motorcycle safety program manager. “We’re hoping that as more people go through training, the number of crashes will decrease for riders of all ages.”

Senate Bill 124

Beginning January 1, 2010, Senate Bill 124 increases the penalty for riding without a motorcycle endorsement from a Class B (\$360) to a Class A (\$720) violation. The law also requires a court to suspend the fine for the violation if the rider completes training and receives a motorcycle endorsement within 120 days of sentencing.

Senate Bill 546

Senate Bill 546 will require all new motorcycle riders to complete an ODOT-approved motorcycle safety course before they can be issued a motorcycle endorsement by DMV. The law has a five year phase-in period based on the age of the rider.

ODOT-approved motorcycle safety courses are provided by the TEAM OREGON Motorcycle Safety Program. Since 1997, Oregon law has required all riders under 21 to complete a TEAM OREGON Basic Rider Training course as part of the endorsement process. Under the new law, mandatory

training will be phased in for all new motorcycle riders regardless of age. Beginning January 1, 2011, new motorcycle riders under the age of 31 must complete the course as part of the endorsement process unless they have a valid motorcycle-endorsed license from another state. Additional age groups will be phased in as follows:

- January 1, 2012 - All new riders under age 41
- January 1, 2013 - All new riders under age 51
- January 1, 2014 - All new riders under age 61
- January 1, 2015 - All new riders no matter what age

As of January 1, 2010, Senate Bill 546 increases the motorcycle endorsement fee for new applicants from \$77 to \$87 (this does not include the cost of a Class C driver license). The new law also adds two questions to the DMV regular driver license knowledge test pertaining to the safe operation of cars and trucks around motorcycles.

House Bill 2370

As of January 1, 2010, House Bill 2370 requires insurance companies to provide a discount on motorcycle insurance to new riders who complete an ODOT-approved rider education course. The amount of discount is not prescribed in the law, only that a discount needs to be given.

For more information visit: www.oregon.gov/ODOT/TS/motorcyclesafety.shtml.