

Howdy,

Ya know, I've sat quietly for 1 1/2 years (since I moved to AZ) reading various emails from folks aligned with ABATE of AZ, and the MMA folks. It really amazes me how frustrated and angry everyone is regarding the issues that surround motorcycle accidents caused by what seems to be the non-caring, non-motorcycle driving public, and the lack of sufficient penalties, that cage drivers get for injuring, maiming, or worse killing a motorcyclist.

I once asked a Colorado Highway patrolman why the penalties for the above actions weren't more severe. The answer I got was pretty amazing. The number one reason was that the infraction has to be written up as a careless driving citation in order for the operator of the vehicle to receive up to the maximum penalty, and even if this type of citation is given, the people on the jury will normally propose a lighter sentence instead of the maximum allowed. I asked him why this would happen, his answer amazed me, he said because those who are dooling out the penalty see themselves as possibly being in the defendants shoes sometime in their life time. Bottom line was no one on a jury wants to see anyone receive the harshest penalty, because they themselves might be facing the same situation sometime during their lifetime. (unless they themselves are a victim)

I've also come realize that unless we as a people enact laws that protect everyone from those who would endanger the lives of the public by their acts of negligence, and carelessness, whether your riding a bicycle, walking, driving a car, or in our case riding a motorcycle. Then the cage drivers who injure, maim, or worse, kill a motorcyclist, pedestrian, or a bicyclist, will continue to get of with a slap on the wrist.

I have to blow my own horn here, before I left Colorado and moved to AZ, I was ABATE of Colorado's former Northeast regional coordinator. Six months before my wife and I moved here, I pressured the ABATE state office to enact a motorcycle awareness program. We modeled our program after ABATE of IL, and ABATE of WI (call me if you want more details, 480-247-2116, or go on ABATE of CO website and check out their motorcycle awareness program, it's a 2 part program). We also went to our state Legislators and asked them to create a bill that would enhance the penalties for anyone causing injury or death to a motorcyclist, pedestrian, or bicycle rider, by anyone operating any type of vehicle on a public highway (yes, this includes motorcyclists who act irresponsibly). We thought this would be a no brainer, but it seems that it's bogged down in the system because of paragraph 3 of this email. Everyone at the state capitol agrees that this bill makes sense, but know one wants to piss of the voting public, so at this time the bill is in limbo.

For the last 10 years I've been trying to convince as many cage drivers as possible that operating a vehicle is like operating a weapon (say handgun for example). All I do is ask a simple question, which I'm asking any of you that's taking the time to read this novel.

Before I do, here's a little bit of information to consider. I've been told that an average automobile weighing 3500 lbs going 70 mph down the highway generates 210,000 foot lbs of energy. Think about that, 210,000

Ft Lbs of energy, enough energy to put a 3500 lb vehicle through a concrete wall at 70 mph, and most people who are operating their vehicle on the highway don't have a clue to how many feet it takes to stop their vehicle in an emergency stop 70 to 0 mph. That's pretty frightening. Think about it the next time your on your bike or in a car, and the person behind you is on their cell phone, drinking coffee, eating a sandwich, reading a map or a book, putting on makeup, or shaving while tailgating you.

Question. Here's the scenario. Your driving your car, or motorcycle down the highway at 70 mph, if you had to come to an emergency stop, 70 to 0, how many feet would it take to bring your vehicle to a stop. Remember that conditions are perfect, and your vehicle is in tip top shape. I'm asking each of you to respond to this question, don't cheat just give me your most honest answer. I'll reply to your answers when I get them. If you don't know then why are you allowed to drive a missile on a public highway system? The scary thing is, that 99% of the people I ask this question of, don't have a clue. Think about that, they don't have a clue. I've heard everything from 40 feet to 2000 ft, which is it

Here's the last of my ranting, a question that needs to be answered by the powers to be. Why aren't the penalties for taking a life equal in all respects? I've been told that in an auto accident, (get it, accident) that the penalty normally given isn't that severe, because what is it, an accident, an act negligence. If that's the case, then why if you or I, or anyone, took a firearm of any type, walked out into the middle of street, covered our eyes, pointed the weapon at the sky, pulled the trigger and let the bullet fall where it may, would we face a felony charge (5 years) for discharging a weapon within a public area, and lets say the bullet fell back to earth and hit an unsuspecting pedestrian, driver, some little old lady, caused injury or death, why we would then have an additional manslaughter charge tacked on to the original offense. Something seems out of sync here, why aren't the penalties the same? Kill someone with your car (the person is still dead) or kill someone with a firearm, both by accident, 2 deaths, but the penalties are different. I don't get it, do you.

Bottom line is this, unless we educate the public, and make people accountable for their actions, and create penalties that equal to the crime of taking someone's life, unless we stand up in numbers to be heard, nothing will change, and we all will continue to be frustrated as well as targets for those who drive cages.

I'm done now, thanks for letting me vent

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