

# Motorcycle Accident Safety

By Dennis Martin

This event was hosted by the University of Missouri - Extension St. Louis County with the support of the Motorcycle Safety Foundation and the Kirkwood Fire Department and Police Department. Discussions about motorcycle accidents don't happen very often in the riding community and when they do, it is after a rider goes down. It is then we hear about the wellbeing of the rider or riders. Typically there is a gap of time that does not get talked about and that is the minutes after the accident and minutes before the first responders arrive. There are a lot of things you should NOT do and should do for an accident victim and this is what was covered during this event.

Larry McGowen of University of Missouri opened the seminar by introducing himself and the key speakers. The first portion on the agenda was presented by Kirkwood Detective Bob Bruhy. He has been a rider for many years and has probably seen more accidents than anyone really wants to know. Bob pointed out many things that we all should be doing, especially if there is a large group ride. Being prepared for anything that happens includes some preplanning on an individual level and on a group level.

Obviously, individually we should all make sure our motorcycles are road-ready and we evaluate our riding gear. Bob pointed out that having an emergency information sheet on your motorcycle would be a good thing and make sure a few people you ride with know it is there, just in case. There are apps on your phone that can store this info as well, but it is only helpful if the phone is still working after an accident and someone can access your phone.

For a group ride, we should certainly make sure everyone on the ride knows where we are going and at least know a rough route in mind. If someone were to go down, this will narrow the search as to where to look. Communication is important before, during, and in case of an accident.

When calling 911, be ready to give them the location of the victim. Hopefully there would be others to help you tend to the injured rider and to safely block and/or direct traffic to keep everyone safe. The 911 operator gives you instructions to administer care. One of the first reactions is to remove their helmet. This could be one of the worst things to do. If there is a neck or spine injury, moving the head could cause more injuries and even paralysis.

About a quarter of the way through this seminar, the Kirkwood Fire Department had to leave due to a house fire in the area. Luckily Matt Thomason, Thunder Roads Magazine MO/So.IL author of the Safety



articles, was in the audience and was able to fill in. With his background, he was able to quickly read through what they had planned and was a great substitute.

Airway obstruction, Bleeding, and Shock (ABS) are the three worst injuries in an accident and minutes can make a difference. The 911 operator will take you step by step to open the airway, stop or slow the bleeding, and treat for shock. A person is protected by the "Good Samaritan Law" to help the injured. Tilting the head back can help the airway. Bleeding can be controlled by direct pressure, elevating the wound, and/or applying a tourniquet. Treating for shock can be done by keeping the person calm and warm.

On May 4th, Larry will be presenting a \$500 donation to the City of Kirkwood for the Kirkwood Police and Fire Departments. With the success of this useful and educational event, I am sure there will be another in the near future. We will share these details when they become known.

