

NOTE: The Idaho *STAR* Program has given their permission for use of this article. You may modify, edit or publish to meet your needs.

The Idaho *STAR* Program logo does not need to be included in any re-writes or publications.

Motorcycle Safety Tips

Bikes and Bars

by Stacey “Ax” Axmaker

Director – Idaho *STAR* Motorcycle Safety Program

In 2007 and 2008, 25-30% of motorcycle fatalities in Idaho involved riders who had been drinking. And most of these fatalities involved riders who had a BAC of .08 or higher. Nationally, these percentages are even higher. What gives?

One of the unfortunate elements of our ‘biker culture’ is alcohol. Poker runs often go from bar to bar; many bike shows, swap meets, and other riding events have beer gardens (or at least a keg or two). So often we see a row of beautiful bikes parked outside of a bar. Perhaps the riders in there are drinking coffee or lemonade – the fatality numbers suggest otherwise.

You’ll hear people say (or may you say) that they can ride fine with a few drinks. Here is the bottom line:

- 1. Judgment, vision, and divided attention skills are affected by even small amounts of alcohol. Judgment is the most critical.**
- 2. Reaction time and coordination are also affected and this is where we can really get bitten. A half second delay in reacting to a car pulling out in front of you can make the difference between a close call and a 911 call.**

Our best ‘rescue’ from these crashes and fatalities is each other. Drinking is not the problem; it’s what we do after we drink that can be the problem. Let’s face it – you know when one of your buddies shouldn’t ride. And guess what – your buddies also know when you shouldn’t ride. ‘Knowing’ isn’t the problem. The problem is that we typically don’t take action to stop something we know could result in disaster.

As riders, we take action when issues arise. Those issues could be that one of the riders in the group is having a problem with their bike, or it starts to rain, or maybe there is a speed trap ahead. We recognize the situation, we know what needs to be done, and we do it. In these ways, we look out for each other and ourselves. Alcohol is no different – please – look out for your buddies (and yourselves) and take action when you know they (or you) shouldn’t ride.

It’s your choice. Make the right choice – ride sober.

Idaho *STAR* Motorcycle Safety Program

www.idahostar.org

208-426-5552

1-800-280-*STAR* (7827)