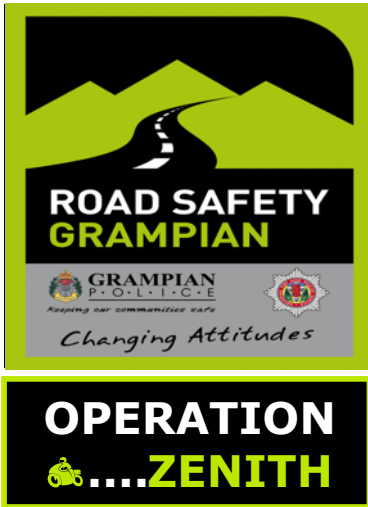


Attention All Motorcyclists - An update on Operation Zenith



Greetings,

With winter well and truly upon us, most motorcyclists will have taken their motorcycles off the road and tucked them away until spring. For most of us the biking season has been enjoyable, but for some it has been life changing.

Bikers are one of the smallest road user groups in the UK and form about 1% of total road users. Nationally however, we are one of the largest groups associated with road traffic collisions, making up about 20% of those killed or seriously injured.

As you may have been aware, Operation Zenith was launched in April this year. This was a multi Partnership approach by Road Safety Grampian, the association of motorcycle dealers for the North East of Scotland, Moray, Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire Councils, the North East Camera Safety Partnership and Aberdeenshire Community Safety Partnership. This initiative was launched in a bid to reduce the number of motorcyclists involved in collisions within the Grampian area.

Thankfully during 2010 we have seen a significant reduction in the number of bikers involved in fatal and serious collisions. Sadly however, we have still seen 5 motorcyclists die and 49 sustain serious injuries.

For all these collisions no single cause has been responsible, however in the majority of cases these collisions involved some level of rider error.

These figures are obviously higher than anyone would wish and we need to continue to act to get these figures down. We and our partner agencies cannot reduce these statistics and tackle the problem on our own. We need your help. Every road user has a duty and responsibility to use the roads in a safe and appropriate manner.

You cannot get away from the fact that you are far more vulnerable on a motorcycle than any other form of transport. So with this in mind why not think about the following –

Bike maintenance - Look after your bike and it'll look after you. After months sitting in the garage or shed, the condition of the bike can deteriorate. Take the time to have it checked over and serviced properly prior to using it.

Speed limits are just that – limits. How about keeping to a speed lower than the limit and always ride at a speed appropriate to the conditions. The faster you go, the less time you have to react and the more distance you need to bring the machine to a stop. The major causation in 1 in 5 of all motorcycle collisions is too much speed.

Observations are the key to safer riding. By looking and anticipating you will be a more competent and safer rider. Don't

assume other road users have seen you. Treat every other road user as a potential hazard.

Overtaking -Don't take unnecessary risks when overtaking, if in doubt hold back.

Roads are roads. They are not race tracks. Don't ride your bike around corners at a speed that you cannot possibly bring the machine to a stop safely. Unlike race tracks there may be a stationary vehicle, mud or many other hazards waiting for the unwary.

Wear the right kit - All the gear, all of the time, even for short trips. It may cost a little more, but wearing proper equipment all the time will make a difference. Wearing Hi Viz clothing makes you more visible to other road users.

During 2009 we spoke to over 4000 motorcyclists. We felt it was important to speak to as many as we possibly could in order to let them know that Operation Zenith was not a 'pick on motorcyclists' exercise, but more about giving advice on safer motorcycling. Out of all those spoken to we only felt it necessary to report 160 for their riding behaviour.

We are to continue with Operation Zenith over the coming years and engage, educate and where necessary enforce the rules with the sole purpose of reducing bike collisions.

Over the coming months we are aiming to host Safe Biking evenings at our Nelson Street Roads Policing complex. Our intention is to provide attendees with a presentation and information on safer biking as well as an input on basic bike maintenance. If you are a member of a motorcycling club and feel your club would like to attend one of the evenings, contact Road Safety Grampian (roadsafety@grampian.pnn.police.uk)

Also, if your workplace has a number of motorcyclists, you can again contact Road Safety Grampian and invite us along to give our 'Be A Better Biker' presentation. This input lasts one hour and includes some handy information and tips.

We're sure you'll agree that the more training and experience you have, the safer you will be. We continue to urge motorcyclists to further their motorcycle training and acquire some extra skills.

To this end we will again be running Bikesafe during 2011. These one day courses consist of an interactive DVD presentation by Police riders, input on first aid by a Paramedic and basic bike maintenance by a motorcycle mechanic. There are also demo and assessed rides by Police riders and members of the Institute of Advanced Motorists (IAM). The dates for 2011 will be announced shortly on our website.

Courses can be booked through Road Safety Grampian. For more information on Bikesafe go to the Road Safety section on the Grampian Police website. (www.grampianpolice.org)

Historically, September has seen a rise in the number of bikers involved in collisions. In August 2009 we organised a motorcycle open day at Woodhill House, Aberdeen called Safer September. Information on advanced training, protective clothing, along with

a manoeuvrability course and stalls from motorcycle clothing and dealers were provided. This was well attended and proved very popular and our intention is to hold a similar event during 2011. Keep an eye on our website for further details.

We are still working with Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire councils to improve road layouts and road surface conditions on the popular bike routes. We will also continue to use the additional temporary signage for bikers on these key routes to highlight the potential hazards.

Throughout the biking season we were out and about on our Ecosse Motorcycles sponsored Yamaha R1 motorbike speaking to bikers at the usual 'tea stops'. This provided us with a good opportunity to get to know fellow bikers and discuss biking safety issues. Our intention is to continue with this during 2011 so take the opportunity to speak to us and get some advice on how to get the most from your biking. We might have some handy biking freebies to give you.

If you want more information on Operation Zenith please go to the Grampian Police website.

Finally can I ask all motorcyclists to click on the following link and complete the attached short questionnaire. Your answers and comments will help us to shape the work we do within the motorcycling community and hopefully lead to less motorcyclists becoming casualties.

www.surveymonkey.com/opzen

Thanks

Jim Wood

Road Policing Inspector