

Motorcycling in London

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This presentation looks at what has been done for motorcycling in London recently and what needs to be done to enable the motorcyclist to play a more effective role in the City's transport.

In recent years London has experienced a strong economy and growth. This is expected to continue and the forecast is for a net increase by 2016 of over 800,000 additional people and 600,00 new jobs. Against this background motorcycling has grown dramatically from about 62,000 motorcycles owned by Londoners in 1995 to over 100,000 today. As the numbers of motorcyclists grew the number of crashes and casualties also rose, in contrast with the declining number of casualties for all other classes of road users

The Mayor of London took office in 2000 and one of his first tasks was to publish his Transport Strategy and Road Safety Plan for London. These documents contained specific targets for reducing motorcycling casualties and measures to improve safety, to enhance and extend the provision of parking for motor cycles and to consider experiments to allow motorcycles to share bus lanes.

Reducing the number of motorcycle crashes and casualties is a key objective. Analysis of the data showed that many of the accidents involved cars and lorries crossing the path of the motorcyclist. Changing the behaviour of car drivers is as important as educating motorcyclists how to avoid crashes. Transport for London (TfL) has commissioned an innovative series of advertisements showing simulated crashes as a way of bringing drivers attention to the problem of "not seeing" the motorcyclist. These are being shown on television and in cinemas. The BikeSafe initiative funded by TfL involves motorcyclists going out for a ride accompanied by a qualified police rider who assesses the motorcyclist and advises how to avoid crashes. Over 5,000 motorcyclists have been assessed to date..

As a result of the safety measures introduced by TfL and the London boroughs together with initiatives from national government, the industry and others the number of killed and seriously injured motorcyclists in London fell from 1286 in 2001 to 895 in 2004. This 30% reduction is a significant improvement but more needs to be done to reach our target for 2010.

Progress is being made in other areas. There are currently experiments with motorcycles sharing some bus lanes and advanced stop lines that have been introduced for cyclists. We need to know the impact on safety as well as the views of other road users before broadening the application of these initiatives, and these pilot schemes should produce results in 2006.

Looking ahead safety remains an important issue for London's transport and highway authorities as they consider the role of motorcycling. Further efforts to reduce casualties will be the key to raising its profile in urban areas.

