

PennDOT Announces New Motorcycle Training for 2018

Courtesy of the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation, 2018 brings an exciting new line of Pennsylvania Motorcycle Safety Program (PAMSP) clinics focused on developing operator proficiency among prospective, experienced, and new Pennsylvania riders. Clinics are offered free-of-charge to Pennsylvania residents who have a motorcycle learner's permit or motorcycle license.

"It is important to practice and refine riding techniques from time to time. Riders of all skill levels can benefit from the valuable skills and safety lessons learned through Pennsylvania's free motorcycle safety clinics," said PennDOT Secretary Leslie S. Richards. "The short amount of time spent in training translates into many safe miles of riding by helping riders sharpen reflexes and hone the split-second decision making required to safely operate a motorcycle."

Developed by PennDOT's new program coordinator, Total Control Training Incorporated, PAMSP will offer five revamped training syllabuses tailored not just to hone a rider's knowledge, but to test their ability to physically manipulate a motorcycle properly. All training clinics are conducted under the supervision of certified instructors at one of numerous riding ranges located throughout the state. Three of the clinics – the Beginning Rider Clinic (BRC), the Intermediate Riding Clinic (IRC), and the 3-Wheel Riding Clinic (3WRC) offer a pathway to earning a motorcycle license.

The 17-hour BRC, consisting of seven hours of in-class instruction and 10 hours of practical riding, provides valuable training for new riders and gives experienced riders the opportunity to polish their skills and correct any unsafe riding habits they may have developed. Basic riding skills, shifting, stopping, swerving, turning and mental skills for hazard avoidance highlight the training. Students taking the BRC are provided with a motorcycle and helmet; however, students are responsible for providing all other protective gear. Act 84 of 2012 put into place the requirement that all permit holders under the age of 18 successfully complete the BRC to receive their motorcycle license.

The eight-hour IRC allows skilled riders to refresh their safety knowledge and hone their on-road skills. The IRC is based on motorcycle crash research and focuses on cornering, braking and swerving skills. Students taking this clinic must provide their own motorcycle and protective gear and provide proof of insurance, current registration and inspection for their motorcycle.

During the 3WRC, riders learn skills and safety strategies like those taught in BRC, except on a 3-wheeled motorcycle. As with the IRC, students must provide their own motorcycle and protective gear and provide proof of insurance, current registration and inspection for their motorcycle. The clinic is comprised of four hours of classroom instruction and eight hours of riding.

Motorcycle learner's permit holders who successfully complete the BRC, IRC or the 3WC will be issued a motorcycle license. Those who successfully pass their skills test on a three-wheeled motorcycle will be issued a motorcycle license with a "9" restriction, meaning they are prohibited from operating a two-wheeled motorcycle.

For those would-be riders who are still not sure if they want to ride, PAMSP offers the new, four-hour Introduction to Riding Clinic (ITR). This non-licensing clinic teaches fundamental skills for operating a two-or-three wheeled motorcycle and progresses from classroom to street skills and strategies. Students are provided with a motorcycle and helmet.

Rounding out the PAMSP offerings is the Advanced Rider Clinic (ARC), a one-day clinic for experienced riders who want to enhance their safety skills through attitude and awareness. The clinic is designed to enhance a rider's ability to avoid a crash through honing their decision-making abilities, riding strategies, risk management and rider behavior and choices.

In addition to the benefit of improving riding skills, according to the Pennsylvania Insurance Department, many insurers offer discounts for motorcyclists who have completed safety courses, have memberships in certain associations, or have a safe driving record. Anti-lock braking systems help maintain control during sudden stops, and some insurers offer discounts for motorcycles with factory installed anti-lock braking systems. Individuals should check with their insurance company for any applicable discounts.

For more information or to enroll in a clinic, visit www.pamsp.com or call 1-800-845-9533. Potential riders who want a convenient way to study for their knowledge test can download the PA Motorcycle Practice Test app by visiting www.pa.gov and searching the mobile apps for the Pennsylvania Motorcycle License Practice Test by clicking on the Apps link at the bottom of the page.

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