

## HIGH SPEED ESCORTS - REALLY

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There has been an increase in discussion and questions regarding escort training and various issues that are associated with this dangerous task. One item of discussion continues to haunt me; too many motor officers speak of "high speed escorts." I'm currently in my twenty-ninth year of law enforcement with twenty-two years associated with Police motorcycle operation and training and I'm unable to provide a definition of "high speed escorts." But even if I could provide that definition, arriving at the justification to approve or participate in one would be a true challenge.

If you have a definition of a high speed escort and it's written into your agency policy please contact me and provide that level of knowledge.

Being a police motorcycle officer (PMO) is a risky job but there is absolutely no reason to take unnecessary chances and traveling at over 100 MPH is taking that chance! You could be the most proficient police motorcycle rider today, but you cannot control the movements of other vehicles or the roadway design and engineering.

Do you have documented escort training at over 100 mph?

Webster's dictionary defines the term RISK as *"possibility of loss or injury – someone or something that creates or suggests a hazard"*.

If PMO's already have the possibility of injury or death then why would anyone wish to increase those odds and take that chance. Are there exceptions to every rule, of course responding to an officer down call or an active shooter situation are two prime examples, but not while conducting an escort for someone who is or believes that they are special.

Research the officer down memorial page and take a look at how many PMO's have lost their life while conducting a funeral escort. What was the hurry?

For the motorcycle supervisors and the motorcycle instructors you have three obligations when planning and preparing for an escort and preparing your PMO's for street survival.

- 1- Prevention of injury for the motor officers
- 2- Planning of the escort for a safe movement
- 3- Practice the escort movements

### Prevention:

I do not believe any supervisor/instructor can prevent an accident from occurring because there are too many items that are out of our control. However we can attempt to achieve prevention by educating and training our personnel in the safe operation of the motorcycle.

### Planning:

This obligation is of extreme importance. Planning includes having an agency policy on escorts, a policy is designed to tell employees what they can and cannot do. Planning includes having a unit procedure in place (SOP) this SOP tells the members how to perform a certain task.

Planning includes having a lesson plan on escorts that will cover all levels of communication, planning and procedures. The lesson plan is your blue print for success and you must have documentation that your motor officers have been trained in escort procedures. If anything goes wrong and a PMO is hurt one of the first items that will be subpoenaed will be the training documents.

### Practice:

Using the most expensive paper to print your policy and procedures, using colorful diagrams in your lesson plan is very nice however unless you allow your PMO's to practice the escort it holds little value.

If your unit participates in escorts on a regular basis and during that preparation there is a formal briefing and a quality de-brief then practice maybe limited due to the multiple real time movements. But even the most talented NFL quarterback still practices the basic fundamentals, NBA players still practice the free throw, yet these guys just play a game. Participating in a Police motorcycle escort is not a game.

You must practice!

For a moment let's say that there are agencies that perform "high speed escorts" and those motors are traveling at or over 100 mph during the escort.

Supervisors/instructors what type of "high speed" training are you providing to your PMO's to prepare them for this one day?

What type of accident avoidance exercises is your agency providing to the PMO's at 100 MPH or higher?

Do not have the opinion of "that will not happen here" because injury, death and lawsuits are not prejudice.

There is a current U.S. lawsuit from the family of a motor officer who was killed during a dignitary escort and I guarantee training or lack of training will be a point of issue in this case. Another lawsuit was just settled in the State of Florida due to a motor officer being injured in motor training and all documentation related to that school was gathered and reviewed.

When involved in any police motorcycle escort I'm confident that law enforcement (LE) is in charge of the event therefore LE sets the speed! Supervisors/instructors if you have PMO's traveling at an unsafe speed you must handle the situation.

PMO's if you and/or a buddy are the ones traveling at this high speed ask yourself why and if it's truly worth the risk.

I also hear the comment from PMO's that the United States Secret Service (USSS) will direct us to increase the speed, I have been in this position on more than one occasion and you must make the proper decision. If something goes wrong it will belong to you!

The USSS cannot move the President of the United States (POTUS) without your assistance, they need you, explain and accurately communicate the dangers of the PMO during an escort. A positive conversation will often solve a conflict so let the lead agent know the escort speeds and if your discussion is not successful remember you are still in charge.

Missions are successful because of the men and women who perform the task but missions fail due to poor leadership. If you fail to regulate the speed of your PMO's and someone gets hurt or worse then you could be held responsible.

A final note on high speed: During my recent travels I have discussed the acceleration of various motorcycles during traffic enforcement and the pursuit of a violator. PMO's remember it's only a traffic violation and you have to wonder is there truly a need to travel over 100 MPH to issue a citation? What if? Develop another plan of action to conduct enforcement.

Again are you training at those speeds to prepare for that one day?

A note to remember is that "you will be replaced at work but not at home".

Ride well and ride safe.

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