

IN-SERVICE POLICE MOTORCYCLE TRAINING

Training must be continuous and on going and should not stop after you attend a basic operators course. In-service training is vital to a Police Motorcycle Officer's (PMO) safety and survival and how often in-service is conducted, monthly, quarterly, yearly it can be boring and produce more "side stand training" than anything else.

According to the Law Enforcement Memorial Police Motorcycle accidents are the third leading cause of death for Police Officers. However, according to a study on PMO only 66.4 % of responding agencies conducted in-service training. This study also identified the top three accident causes for PMO: 1) Improper Braking 33.6% 2) Failure to take Evasive Action 26.7% and 3) Curve Negotiation 12.8% and 49.2 % of these accidents rider error was present. This is why accident avoidance exercises in conjunction with in-service training is of vital importance for overall safety.

I divide training into three different tasks: 1) Cone pattern work with the rear brake 2) Accident Avoidance exercises 3) Cone pattern work without the rear brake. In a training environment tasks will keep the PMO's attention. If your trainer merely sets up the same cone patterns each in-service and tells you "ride" you need a new trainer!

I list Accident Avoidance exercises the following:

- 1) 40 MPH Brake and Escape
- 2) 40 MPH 180 Deceleration
- 3) Accelerated U-turns
- 4) Braking in a curve
- 5) 40 MPH Evasive Maneuver
- 6) 30 MPH Cone Weave
- 7) Curve Negotiation

At least one of these exercises is set up and the officers are required to participate. If the exercise requires a speed than a radar gun is used to keep everyone honest. This exercise will be conducted before and after lunch to further develop the officer's ability and skill. Over the years I have collected a large inventory of cone patterns from across the nation, therefore, I make a strong attempt to set up different patterns each month. The cone patterns will assist the officer on enhancing their overall ability.

Don't forget a very basic training tool a "breezeout" or "follow the leader". All of the officer's will follow an instructor and imitate everything that is performed. This can be basic to advanced depending on the ability of your riders, cones or no cones, brake or no-brake, on or off road or a combination of all. This also can be used as a warm up of the officer and motorcycle, a cool down of the motor or an evaluation process of the rider.

In my agency we work on all cone patterns without using the rear brake a “crutch” for many. Without a doubt this technique will improve your ability and skill. It forces you to utilize quick head and eyes, stronger Grey area and exact wheel placement.

If training is not documented it never happened, therefore, make sure an attendance roster is kept along with a lesson plan. I have included a copy of our monthly lesson plan, which will take five minutes to complete, providing you have a training program, which covers all of your in-service material.

A training environment must be enjoyable for a student to learn, divide up the training to keep their interest and make it as realistic as possible.

BIO

Jim Polan is a 23year veteran of Law Enforcement and currently a Motor Sergeant with the Fort Lauderdale Police Department. Sergeant Polan is the lead motorcycle instructor for his agency and is an adjunct instructor for Institute of Police Technology and Management for the Police Motorcycle Instructor and Advanced Motorcycle Courses.