

Motorcops.com Training Article

Anti-Lock Braking System

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The addition of an Anti-Lock Braking System (ABS) is a big winner for Harley-Davidson and for all police motor officers (PMO) who ride a Harley police motorcycle equipped with ABS.

I have received many phone calls since the inception of ABS with Harley-Davidson regarding training and how to use ABS in training. Questions like: Should we still instruct conventional braking or should we disconnect ABS during basic training so the student understands the concept of braking?

Leaders/supervisors/instructors do not disconnect ABS for training or for any other reason (i.e. Rodeo competition). ABS was designed for officer safety and to prevent accidents to reduce injury and death. If you decide to disconnect this valuable safety net for any reason you are **LIABLE** for whatever may happen to that motorcycle officer.

Let's go with "what if?"; you have the students disconnect ABS during training and an officer has a front wheel lock-up goes down and suffers a career ending injury.

First of all you will have to live with the poor decision that you made to disconnect and second you may be held liable with punitive damages in civil litigation. Instructors and supervisors are involved in civil suits daily regarding training in law enforcement. Whether the topic of the law suit is lack of training or more important negligence, you will be involved.

It's been brought to my attention that some departments allow the PMO's to disconnect ABS for competition and again I ask "what if?". What if during the competition there is a front/rear wheel lock up and the PMO suffers a career ending injury. What if after training or the competition the PMO is riding home with the ABS disconnected and is involved in a fatal collision which is directly related to improper braking.

Leaders/supervisors/instructors, if you are aware that your riders are currently disconnecting the ABS, you are directly liable if anything goes wrong. If you have knowledge, then you are responsible and you must make the decision like leaders are made to do. Remember that sometimes decisions mean pissing people off, but that's part of the job that you accepted as a supervisor/instructor. And by the way, if everyone is happy with your decisions there is a strong possibility that you are not making the correct decisions.

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During basic or in-service training and while conducting braking exercises with an ABS machine, I recommend the following.

- 1) Continue to teach conventional braking - front brake first followed by the rear brake.
- 2) If during the training the student has an ABS event count that as an error on the daily evaluation. As an instructor you must ensure the student understands the difference between positive threshold braking and an ABS event.
- 3) If the PMO has an ABS event they are in a skid and in reality could lose control of the motorcycle if the ABS would fail. And let's face it, ABS is electronics and electronics do fail.
- 4) Practice the correct safe way so on game day when it truly counts the PMO will react the way they were instructed.

The current Brake and Escape exercise was designed for stopping a motorcycle while traveling at 40 MPH within 62 feet. I have learned and overheard that some agencies are bragging about raising the bar and traveling 45-50 MPH during this exercise. It would be a great challenge to safely and effectively stop a police motorcycle traveling 50 MPH in 62 feet with proper braking and then under control negotiate the hazard you were attempting to avoid. There is a strong possibility that the rider will fail while braking, which would include an ABS event or be unable to safely avoid the hazard.

Remember if you or anyone you work with has a continuous ABS event during training you must provide correction. Because one day that same officer will be on duty when an emergency stop is necessary to avoid a collision or hazard and the electronics will fail and so will the operator.

Train safe, train hard but train SMART because one day it will happen!

BIO

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