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AMC Position Statement – Crash Barriers

There are no crash barriers that can be considered 'motorcycle friendly'. In the event of a motorcyclist impacting with a crash barrier the likelihood is that they will be severely injured.

Priority:- High

Where we are now:

All existing crash barriers have been designed to reduce the severity of a crash when cars and trucks leave the roadway. Little consideration has been given to the welfare of motorcyclists who collide with these barriers. In most cases the safest barrier for a motorcyclist is 'no barrier'.

Crash barriers can be classified into three types, rigid, semi rigid and flexible.

Concrete barriers are classified as being 'rigid', Armco as 'semi rigid' and wire rope as 'flexible'.

Wire rope barriers are very effective in reducing the severity of crashes when cars and trucks impact with them as they absorb energy. Rigid barriers are less effective as more of the energy of the impact is transmitted to the vehicle occupants resulting in greater injuries.

This is why wire rope barriers are installed instead of Armco or concrete barriers.

While the classifications of rigid, semi rigid and flexible have meaning in car and truck crashes they are meaningless in motorcycle impacts. To motorcyclists, all barriers are 'rigid'.

There has been little research into what constitutes a motorcycle friendly barrier nor how to make existing barriers less aggressive in causing injury to motorcyclists.

There are a number of products available that are designed make crash barriers less 'aggressive' which are designed to prevent riders sliding under the barrier or coming into direct contact with posts or sharp edges.

A number of European countries, notably France, Germany and the UK are leading the way in installing under rails on Armco barriers to prevent riders coming into direct contact with posts.

Where we want to be:

Road Authorities need to consider the special needs of motorcyclists before installing crash barriers, these include:

- the 'no barrier' option
- locating the barrier as far away from the road way as possible
- installing products that make barriers less 'aggressive'

Research is needed to determine what constitutes a 'motorcycle friendly' barrier.

How to get there:

Obtain funding for research into what constitutes a 'motorcycle friendly' barrier

Maintain AMC representation on the Standards Australia committee on crash barrier design.

Stay in touch with groups such as the Federation of European Motorcyclists Associations (FEMA) on developments overseas.