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# **Minnesota Motorcycle Safety Program**

## **1990 Media Kit**

**Minnesota Department of Public Safety**

MAY 29 1990



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For more copies of this media kit, write the Public Education and Media Relations Office, Minnesota Department of Public Safety, Room 316 Transportation Building, St. Paul, MN 55155 or call 612/296-6652.





STATE OF MINNESOTA  
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY  
SAINT PAUL 55155

TELEPHONE: (612) \_\_\_\_\_

TO: Minnesota Newspaper Editors

FROM: Gail E. Gendler  
Motorcycle Safety Information Coordinator

RE: Media Information Kit

This week marks the beginning of Motorcycle Safety Month in Minnesota. The month of May is when most people start to drive and ride motorcycles, and unfortunately, when statistics on accidents and deaths rise.

The Minnesota Department of Public Safety encourages all motorcycle riders and parents and friends of motorcyclists to become more aware of safety education courses that teach motorcycle skills. Through the beginning and advanced rider skills training courses, offered by our Motorcycle Safety Program, people will learn how to operate a motorcycle in all kinds of traffic and on all types of roads.

Equally important is for motorcyclists to know the laws that affect them. It is against the law in Minnesota to ride a motorcycle without an endorsement on a drivers license indicating a motorcycle exam has been taken and passed. This May, we are encouraging all motorcyclists to get the proper licensing or face the prospect of a \$700 fine or 90 days in jail for driving a motorcycle without a license.

The many safety messages of motorcycling are contained in this media information kit, along with a description of the Minnesota Motorcycle Safety Program, fatality and injury statistics, public service announcements, brochures and everything you would ever want to know about how to get a motorcycle license endorsement.

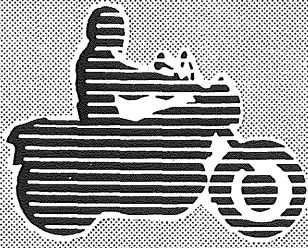
Also included in this packet is a news release on the Minnesota Washout 1990, an event at highway rest areas on May 19th, when motorcycle clubs from throughout the state will wash automobile and truck windshields and discuss safety issues with motorists.

Please use this information in your spring and summer outdoor issues, in editorials on driving safety and in any stories on traffic injury statistics. I also hope that you will encourage people to sign up for the rider skills training courses before they attempt to go onto the road.

If you need further information or have any questions, please call me at 612-296-6652.

Thanks for your help in making motorcycling safer!





# Minnesota Motorcycle Safety Program

Minnesota was the first state in the nation to implement a comprehensive motorcycle safety program in 1982. The program includes training, public awareness, research and improved licensing and testing. It is funded entirely through motorcycle endorsement fees (\$7.50 for each new license and \$6 once every four years to renew).

Minnesota's program has been highly successful in increasing the safety of the state's motorcycle riders. The beginning Rider Skills Training Course (RSS) trained 979 new riders in 1989, a slight rise over 1988. Since 1986, when 375 fledgling riders were trained, the program has grown 161 percent. The Experienced Rider Course (ERC) enrollment tripled in 1988 to 159, and in 1989, 286 participated. That is an overall increase of 426 percent since 1987 when the course was first offered.

Training reduces the likelihood of having an accident. Motorcyclist fatalities have decreased by 47 percent, injuries by 40 percent and the number of crashes by 38 percent since 1983.

## Motorcycle Rider Training

Minnesota has been a forerunner in training methods and program implementation.

The state training program uses the nationally recognized rider training programs of the Motorcycle Safety Foundation. These curriculums, which are considered to be the best available, are currently used for beginning and experienced rider courses. Both are available statewide. For more information on training or on becoming an instructor, call 427-5310 in the metro area and toll free 800-247-1303 in the rest of the state.

## Public Awareness and Education

Each riding season since 1984, the program has mounted award-winning public education campaigns to increase motorcycle safety awareness throughout the state.

The campaign topics have included: the importance of using your front brake; encouraging motorists to start seeing riders, taking rider training; wearing a helmet, and the dangers of riding after drinking. The campaigns run in May during Minnesota Motorcycle Safety Month. For more information on the public education activities, contact the Department of Public Safety Office of Public Education and Media Relations at (612)296-6652.

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## **Testing and Licensing**

Since the program began, Minnesota has dramatically improved its motorcycle rider testing procedures. The state currently uses one of the most advanced riding skills tests available today.

The test, the alternate Motorcycle Operator Skills Test (MOST) was developed by the Motorcycle Safety Foundation and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration to test the skills a rider needs most. These skills include balance, cornering, emergency braking and general skill in handling a motorcycle. For more information on testing and licensing, contact Gary Cunningham in Driver and Vehicle Services at (612)296-9501.

## **Minnesota Motorcycle Safety Advisory Committee**

Part of the success of Minnesota's program can be attributed to the recommendations and advice of the completely voluntary Motorcycle Safety Advisory Committee. This twelve-member body, appointed by the Commissioner of Public Safety, is composed of motorcyclists representing all regions of the state. Members make recommendations directly to the Commissioner on program direction, activities, and legislation. For more information about the committee, contact Susan Palmer in Traffic Safety at (612)296-8512.





# Motorcycle fatalities drop to lowest level in 20 years

Minnesota motorcycle fatalities dropped to the lowest level in 20 years in 1989, despite a rise in overall total vehicle crashes.

According to preliminary figures released by the Minnesota Department of Public Safety's (DPS) Office of Traffic Safety, a total of 37 motorcycle riders were killed on state roads last year, the lowest total since 1969, when 32 died. The 1989 total represents a 36 percent decrease from 1988's death toll of 58.

Injuries, too, decreased by 11 percent from 1988. Motorcycle riders injured in 1989 totaled 1,617, compared to 1,817 the previous year. Combining the injuries and fatalities for a total of all injuries added up to 1,654 for 1989, showing a nearly 12 percent decrease from 1988.

"The drop in motorcycle fatalities, injuries and accidents may be attributed in part to the state's nationally-recognized

Motorcycle Safety Program, which trained a record number of young motorcyclists in rider skills last year," said DPS Commissioner Paul Tschida.

In contrast, total traffic fatalities in the state went down by less than two percent, from 615 in 1988 to 605 last year. At the same time, total crashes rose four percent, to a preliminary figure of 105,996 crashes.

Motorcycle crashes went down 11 percent, however, from a total of 1,969 in 1988 to 1,748 last year.

As in 1988, the month of July proved to be the most dangerous in 1989 for motorcycle riders. There were 11 fatalities during July, higher than any other month, and also the highest number of total crashes, with 356.

Alcohol again was a major factor in motorcycle fatalities. Of the 32 motorcycle operators killed, 29 were tested for blood alcohol content (BAC). Of

those tested, 19, or 65 percent, had been drinking, and 17, or 59 percent, were legally drunk with a BAC of .10 or higher at the time of the accident.

This is up from the previous year, when 56 percent of fatally injured operators had been drinking and 38 percent had been legally drunk.

Fewer killed or injured motorcyclists wore helmets than last year, indicating once again that the odds for death and injury are much higher when riders go helmetless.

In 1989, 11 percent of fatally injured riders were wearing helmets at the time of the accident, while 78 percent were not. In the case of injuries, for the 1,616 injured riders, 28 percent wore helmets and 55 percent did not.

In 1988, 21 percent of fatally injured motorcyclists were wearing helmets and 71 percent were not. For injuries, 28 percent used helmets and 55 percent did not.

## 1989 Motorcycle Crashes by Month and Severity

	Fatal Injury Crashes	Incapacitating Injury Crashes	Non-Incapacitating Injury Crashes	Possible Injury Crashes	Property Damage Crashes	Total Crashes
January	0	0	1	0	0	1
February	0	0	0	0	0	0
March	0	3	6	3	4	16
April	1	17	48	25	15	106
May	9	62	96	50	32	249
June	7	85	137	58	43	330
July	11	83	144	82	36	356
August	2	83	121	53	46	305
September	4	57	75	40	41	217
October	3	30	52	42	25	152
November	0	1	4	4	5	14
December	0	0	1	0	1	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>421</b>	<b>685</b>	<b>357</b>	<b>248</b>	<b>1748</b>

## MOTORCYCLE CRASH SUMMARY, 1979 - 1988

	<b>Motorcyclists Killed</b>	<b>Motorcyclists Injured</b>
1979	97	2,833
1980	121	3,359
1981	96	2,874
1982	70	2,381
1983	73	2,678
1984	62	2,590
1985	77	2,500
1986	66	2,152
1987	51	1,853
1988	58	1,817

## **Minnesota Motorcycle Safety Program Questions and Answers**

### **1. Why is motorcycling and motorcycle safety an important issue in Minnesota?**

Despite our short riding season, Minnesota consistently ranks in the top fifteen states for numbers of motorcycles used, and this number continues to increase each year. Though the number of motorcycle crashes decreased in 1988 from 37 fatalities to 58 fatalities, the overall percentage of crashes that were fatal continue to be higher for motorcycles than for the total number of motor vehicle accidents. While motorcycle crashes continue to decrease, it continues to be important to have motorcycle safety awareness and quality training programs available to continue this downward trend.

### **2. What percentage of the population rides motorcycles?**

Over nine percent of the total driving population or 293,347 people were licensed to ride in the state of Minnesota in 1988.

### **3. What are some of the more important laws that are specific to motorcyclists?**

Every person who operates a motorcycle on public streets and highways in Minnesota must have a valid drivers license, with the appropriate instruction permit, license endorsement or restriction card.

All motorcycles must be registered with the state and bear a license plate showing registration tax has been paid.

The No-Fault Insurance law requires all motorcycles registered in Minnesota to have liability coverage for property damage or injury to the other party.

Motorcycles must have basic safety equipment in functional condition.

All operators must wear an eye protection device (eye glasses, goggles, face shield) unless the vehicle is equipped with an approved windscreen.

Operators and passengers under 18 and those operating on a permit must wear protective headgear that complies with standards established by the Commissioner of Public Safety.

**4. What is being done to promote motorcycle safety in Minnesota?**

May has been designated as Motorcycle Safety Month in Minnesota. The 1990 motorcycle information and education campaign, implemented on behalf of the Minnesota Department of Public Safety, focuses on the problem of the unendorsed motorcyclist. In 1988, only 55 percent of the motorcycle operators involved in fatal crashes had a valid motorcycle endorsement on their drivers license.

As part of Motorcycle Safety Month the Department of Public Safety has made it easier than ever before to obtain an endorsement. The following license examine stations will extend their hours to provide skill testing during convenient evening hours. (Time Period - 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.)

Metro

Arden Hills - Tuesday May 8, Wednesday May 9

Eagan - Tuesday May 8, Wednesday May 9

Plymouth - Tuesday May 8, Wednesday May 9

In Greater Minnesota

Albert Lea - Thursday May 10

Bemidji - Tuesday May 8

Duluth - Tuesday May 8

Mankato - Tuesday May 8

Rochester - Tuesday May 8

St. Cloud - Tuesday May 8

The motorcycle safety media campaign will include a 30 second television spot, outdoor boards and bus signs all with the message to "Get a License". The television and billboards will be distributed on a statewide basis and the bus signs will be used in the metro area only.

Kicking off the third week of Motorcycle Safety Month, the Department of Public Safety will host the *Third Annual Great Minnesota Washout*. Members of 18 motorcycle clubs throughout Minnesota will participate by occupying 13 rest areas on May 19 from 9:00-3:00 p.m., washing motorists' windshields and distributing safety information. The theme of the event is "Start Seeing Motorcycles".

Other activities the state will be doing to promote motorcycle safety are radio talk show interviews, a postcard mailing to 15 and 16 year old males in 13 communities throughout Minnesota, safety displays at malls and promotion through the yellow pages.

**5. What happened last year in Minnesota in regards to motorcycle accidents and fatalities? How can Rider Skills Training affect the statistics?**

Motorcycle fatalities were down 38 percent in 1989, dropping from 52 deaths in 1988 to 36 last year. Of the fatalities, 80 percent were between 15 and 39 years of age. Rider Skills Training does have an impact. As more and more people get properly trained in good quality rider training programs, more skilled and knowledgeable riders emerge. Riders who have more skill and knowledge are less likely to be involved in an accident.

**6. What is Rider Skills Training?**

The Basic Rider Skills Training Course includes 20 hours of instruction. There are eight hours of classroom sessions and 12 hours of on-cycle exercises. Sixteen (16) and 17 year-old participants are required by law to take an approved motorcycle training course before getting their endorsement. Accident statistics show that inexperienced riders contribute significantly to motorcycle accidents in the United States. Rider Skills Training allows new riders to gain valuable information in a short amount of time at the beginning of their riding careers to help compensate for

lack of experience. This involves both the knowledge and skills a rider must possess to operate more safely in the traffic environment. Rider Skills Training is available throughout the State during the riding season. Training motorcycles are provided for the basic course. Information on specific course sites can be obtained by calling **1-800-247-1303** or **612-427-5310**.

**7. What is the Experienced Rider Course?**

The Experienced Rider Course is an eight hour course of instruction designed for riders who have at least six months of experience and wish to sharpen their skills. This course includes four hours of classroom discussion and four hours of on-cycle exercises. The classroom sessions cover street strategies, visual and perceptual techniques and mental skills needed for motorcycling. The on-cycle exercises emphasize braking, cornering and swerving maneuvers. Too many times a rider encounters a dangerous traffic situation and has insufficient knowledge or skills to handle that situation correctly. The Experienced Rider Course addresses these situations, both in the classroom and on a safe, controlled riding environment called the range.

**8. What is your position on the use of helmets and what do you see in the future in terms of legislation regarding helmet use?**

The Minnesota Motorcycle Safety Program is strongly in favor of the use of motorcycle safety helmets. Wearing a securely fastened helmet is the single most important thing you can do to improve your chances of surviving an accident.

**9. Can you comment on the advances on motorcycle design and technology and how these design changes may affect safety in the future?**

Tremendous advances have been made in motorcycle design technology within the past decade. Motorcycles are designed to corner easier, stop faster, and handle adverse situations much better than motorcycles from the old days. For example, BMW has produced a motorcycle that has anti-lock brakes. This is a significant

breakthrough in motorcycle safety that most likely will save lives. Several other manufacturers will be following suit.

**10. How often was alcohol involved in 1989 motorcycle accidents?**

Data on blood alcohol content of fatally injured motorcyclists are not yet available, but accident records do include a section for the responding officer's observation. Based on this information, alcohol involvement was suspected in one-third of motorcycle fatalities.

**For more information on motorcycle safety issues and training  
call 1-800-247-1303.**

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# How to Get a Motorcycle License Endorsement in Minnesota

If you want to operate a motorcycle in Minnesota, you must have a motorcycle endorsement on your driver's license. Violators of this law could be fined a maximum of \$700 and/or 90 days in jail.

## 1. You must have a valid Minnesota driver's license.

If you are under 18, you **must** enroll and complete an approved motorcycle safety education class.

- For a course schedule call the Minnesota Motorcycle Safety Program at (800) 247-1303.

## 2. You must pass a Driver & Vehicle Services Division written test (includes motorcycle laws and rules). This can be done at a driver exam station.

Once you pass the written test and pay the required fee, you will have your motorcycle permit which is valid for 45 days. The permit may be renewed *only once* for an additional 45 days.

### While riding with a permit:

- you must wear approved protective head gear (helmet)
- you may not carry passengers
- you may not drive at night
- you may not drive on the freeway

## 3. You must pass the Minnesota Driver & Vehicle Services Division Riding Skill Test referred to as the Alternate Motorcycle Operators Skill Test (Alternate M.O.S.T.), developed by the Motorcycle Safety Foundation.

Once you pass the riding skill test, you must apply for a duplicate license and pay the required fee. You will then receive a receipt which allows you to drive your motorcycle.

- Testing on a motorcycle which is 260 cc or smaller will restrict you from operating a motorcycle over 260 cc.

### Motorcycle Endorsement Fees:

- Permit - \$2.50
- Permit Renewal - \$1.00
- Initial Motorcycle Endorsement - \$7.50
- Endorsement Renewal - \$6.00

**For more information, call 612-296-6911 (Driver & Vehicle Services Division) or contact your local driver exam station.**



May, 1990

### MOTORCYCLE SAFETY PSAs

- (:30) Is someone you know riding a motorcycle illegally? Without the proper motorcycle license endorsement, they could receive up to a \$700 fine and 90 days in jail. Don't let this happen to someone you care about. For more information on obtaining a motorcycle license, contact your local driver license exam station or call 1-800-247-1303. This message has been brought to you by (radio station) and the Minnesota Department of Public Safety.
  
- (:30) Statistics show that one out of every three motorcyclists fatally injured on Minnesota roads did not have the proper endorsement on their driver's license. You wouldn't drive your car without a license and a motorcycle is no different. For information on obtaining your motorcycle license, contact your local driver license exam station or call 1-800- 247-1303. This message has been brought to you by (radio station) and the Minnesota Department of Public Safety.
  
- (:15) If you are riding a motorcycle without the proper license endorsement, you could receive up to a \$700 fine and 90 days in jail. For more information on obtaining your motorcycle license, contact your local driver license exam station or call 1-800-247-1303.



**for  
immediate  
release:**

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Date: May 14, 1990

CONTACT: Marggy Sauer  
Minnesota Motorcycle Safety Program  
612/427-5310

MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT  
OF PUBLIC SAFETY



AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

SAINT PAUL ■ 55155

Contact: Director of Public  
Information (612) 296-6652

#### LOCAL MOTORCYCLISTS PROMOTE SAFETY WITH SOAP AND WATER

The third annual Minnesota "Washout" will be held Saturday, May 19, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., at roadside rest areas throughout the state. Members of motorcycle riding clubs will clean motorists' windshields and hand out information on motorcycle safety and rider training courses.

The "Washout" is part of May Motorcycle Safety Month and highlights the beginning of this year's riding season. The event is designed to remind motorists to look for motorcycles and share the roadways with them. The 1990 theme for the event is "Start Seeing Motorcycles" and participants hope to improve the image of motorcyclists among automobile and truck drivers as well as promote safe motorcycle operation.

The first "Washout" was held at three rest areas in 1988, expanding to seven in 1989 and this year 18 motorcycle clubs at 13 rest areas will be involved throughout Minnesota. Refreshments will be available for all motorists at participating locations.

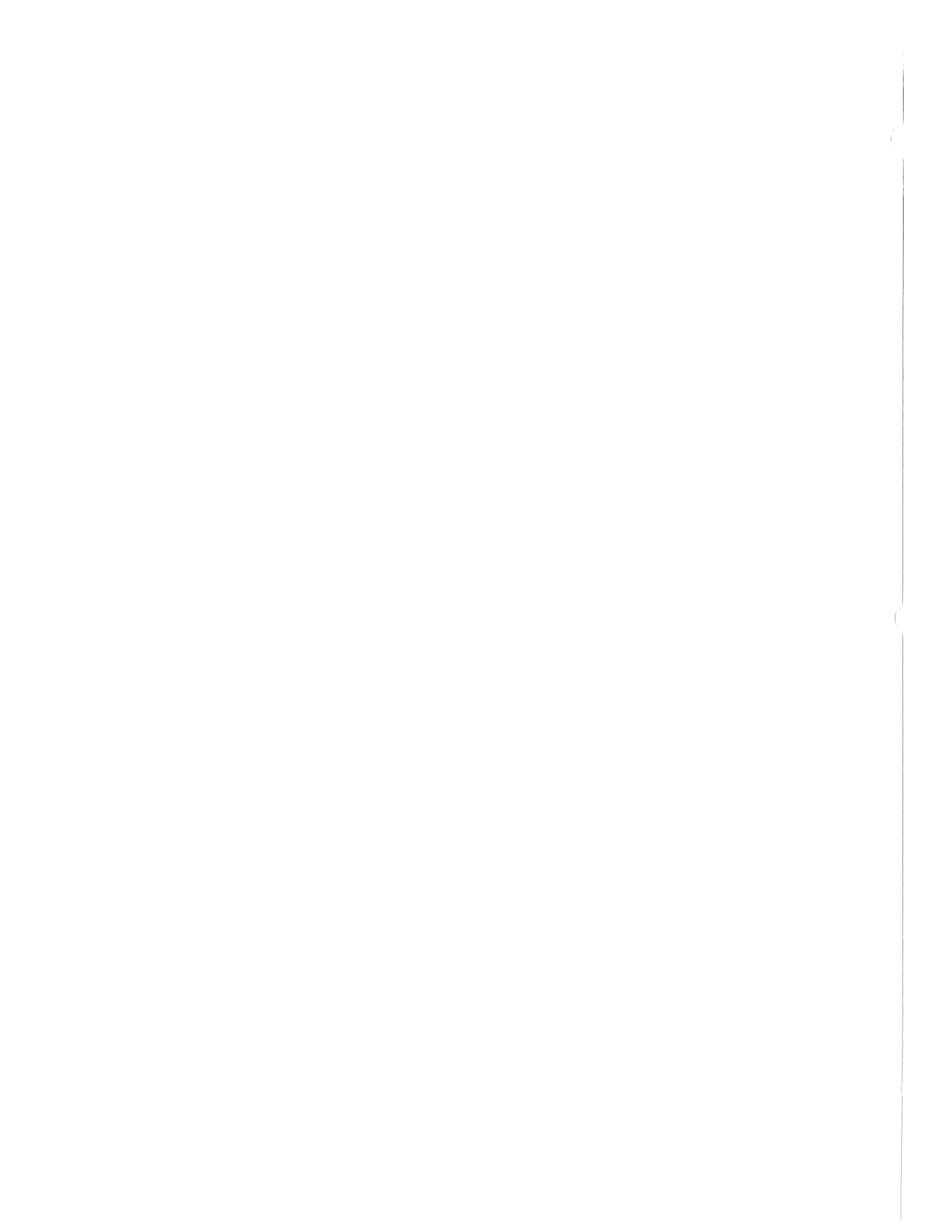
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Washout release  
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The event is organized by the Minnesota Motorcycle Safety Program and the Minnesota Department of Public Safety.

A list of rest areas and the hours that clubs will be cleaning windshields is attached.





# Third Annual Minnesota Washout

## Rest Area Schedule

Club	Rest Area	Shift	Contact
Blue Knights #2	General CC Andrews (I 35) 1 mile S. of Sturgeon Lake Southbound	9 a.m.-12	Bruce Lang (218) 485-8245 (H) (218) 723-4885 (W)
ABATE NE Chapter	General CC Andrews (I 35) 1 mile S. of Sturgeon Lake Southbound	12-3 p.m.	John Kaufhold (218) 626-2744
North County Riders/Dry Riders	Culkin (I 35) At Barnum Northbound	9 a.m.-3 p.m.	Jan Doble (218) 879-4226
ABATE East Central Chapter	Goose Creek (I 35) 15 miles E. of Cambridge Northbound	9 a.m.-3 p.m.	Patricia Ryan (612) 444-4570
MN Wings-New Hope	Elm Creek (I 94) At Maple Grove Eastbound	9 a.m.-12	Tony Nechanicky (612) 544-3275
ABATE - Metro Chapter	Elm Creek (I 94) At Maple Grove Eastbound	12-3 p.m.	Linda Beek (612) 451-9468
Travelers Motorcycle Club	Forest Lake (I 35) 20 miles N. of St. Paul Southbound	9 a.m.-12	Betty Valiant (612) 445-4379
Midwest Motorcycle Riders, Inc.	Forest Lake (I 35) 20 miles N. of St. Paul Southbound	12-3 p.m.	Bonnie Schmuck (612) 459-6213
ABATE-Buffalo Ridge Chapter	Adrian W (I 90) 2 miles W. of Adrian Westbound	9 a.m.-3 p.m.	Amy Peterson (612) 427-5310
MMRA	New Market (I 35) 8 miles S. of Lakeville Southbound	9 a.m.-3 p.m.	Bob Illingworth (612) 541-1704
MN Moto Guzzi Owners	Heath Creek (I 35) 5 miles S. of Northfield Northbound	9 a.m.-12	George Dalin (612) 881-7069
MN Rider Motorcycle Touring Club - SW Chapter	Heath Creek (I 35) 5 miles S. of Northfield Northbound	12-3 p.m.	Lyle Miller (612) 881-4308
ABATE-Mississippi Valley Chapter	Lake Pepin (Hwy. 61) At Lake City Southbound	9 a.m.-3 p.m.	Dave Dykema (612) 388-9562
MN Wings-Little Falls Chapter	Burgen Lake (I 94) 2 miles E. of Alexandria Westbound	9 a.m.-12	DuWayne Matthews (612) 632-8427 (H) (612) 632-5234 (W)
MN Wings-Central Chapter	Middle Spunk Lake (I 94) 15 miles W. of St. Cloud Westbound	9 a.m.-12	Tim Karash (612) 444-4617
MN Wings-NE Metro Chapter	Middle Spunk Lake (I 94) 15 miles W. of St. Cloud Westbound	12 - 3 p.m.	Lee Scully (612) 441-3235
ABATE-Heart of the Lakes Chapter	Lake Iverson (I 94) 8 miles SE of Fergus Falls Eastbound	9 a.m. - 12	Ricky Mastin (218) 334-3317
Rochester Area Riders	Marion (I 90) 8 miles SE of Rochester Eastbound	9 a.m.-12	Al Mrachek (507) 281-0021 (H) (507) 288-5778 (W)
ABATE-Southeast Chapter	Marion (I 90) 8 miles SE of Rochester Eastbound	12-3 p.m.	Tammy Gasner (507) 289-2200

