

December 28, 2007:: Proper (protective) Riding Gear (attire) . . .

In the past for GWRRA, the MSF definition of what was meant by proper riding gear was assumed. Some argued that a definite policy was needed in GWRRA. To meet the perceived need voiced by the Membership, this policy was released some time ago and is included below. It is currently posted on the Rider Ed website under the References link and is stated in the GWRRA Rider Education Program (REP) Handbook under Conduct of Training & Skill Events. It states:

“GWRRA Policy Regarding - Conduct of Training & Skill Events, Revised August 16, 2003

We sometimes assume consistent and common safety practices are employed when conducting various GWRRA training and skill events. Based upon information received recently, however, exceptions have occurred.

In the interests of safety, adequate and consistent safety standards must be maintained when conducting National, Region, District, or Chapter motorcycle or trike training and/or skill events for the good of all participants as well as to eliminate unnecessary liability for the Association.

Effective immediately, the following requirements must be adhered to by all participants in GWRRA Region, District and Chapter rider training and skill events. (Including, but not limited to the GWRRA Advanced Rider Course, Trike Rider Course, or Trailering Course; Field (Skill) Events or Top Gun competitions, Parking Lot Practice sessions or any other MSF, CSC, GWRRA or ESC-sponsored instruction or riding practice.)

Rider Licensing - All Riders must hold a valid operators license with motorcycle endorsement *as required by the Rider's state/province of residence* or, at minimum, a motorcycle operator's learner's permit (again, as required by the Riders state/province of residence). Riders who do not hold a valid license (meeting their home state/province requirements) will not be permitted to participate.

Proper Riding Attire - All Riders and Co-Riders must wear "proper" riding gear while riding. This will include, at a minimum, a DOT approved helmet, eye protection, full-fingered gloves, over-the-ankle foot protection (boots preferred), with the balance of the body fully covered (leather or abrasion-resistant attire preferred; denim accepted.) Jackets or shirts should be a single piece of apparel and not be modular (i.e., not "riding sleeves").

These requirements shall apply at any GWRRA-sponsored rider education or competitive riding event. They do not apply to any "non-educational" or "non-competitive" riding activity, such as a Chapter ride, parade, fun/poker run, etc.

Please assist us in conveying this message to all GWRRA officers, educators and Members.

Thank you,

Bob Lorenz”

The statement above that “These requirements shall apply at any GWRRA-sponsored rider education or competitive riding event. They do not apply to any "non-educational" or “non-competitive" riding activity, such as a Chapter ride, parade, fun/poker run, etc.” **does not rescind (even temporarily or in States/Provinces that don't require helmets) the promise or requirement to wear proper riding gear if another commitment was made.**

The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for **ALL Rider Educators** currently states:

“You will lead others by the example you set for them to follow.” You will be expected to set an example of your leadership and dedication to your fellow Educators, Officers, Chapters, Districts and Regions of GWRRA. Your conduct will be such as not to embarrass, slander, disrupt, defy or libel GWRRA, your appointing officer, fellow educators, officers or members. **You will always** provide a safe environment within your appointed office and promote **proper rider education through protective riding gear** (including helmets) whenever riding in groups or by yourself.”

In the REP Handbook under Responsibilities of the *Chapter Educator*:

“Lead by example by becoming and maintaining Level IV in the REP and **always wearing proper protective riding apparel** whenever operating a motorcycle.”

A Region Educator must be Level IV so the Master Tour Rider Requirement applies (from the Master Tour Rider application):

“Rides with **proper protective gear**.”

The Rider Educator Knowledge Level Evaluation also has a question to reinforce this concept:

“Officers, including Chapter Educators, should **wear proper riding gear**.

True False”

In the REP Handbook under Rider Course Instructor qualifications:

“Demonstrate safe riding habits by **always wearing proper riding gear** as defined in the REP Levels program.”

Master Riding Course Instructor Application/Renewal states:

“I certify that the information given in this application is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge and that I have had no DUI convictions in the past 5 years, have no more than 4 points on my motorcycle or drivers license, am current in Level 4 or above in the GWRRA REP, have logged 25,000 or more safe motorcycle miles, **always ride in proper riding gear**, have been a GWRRA Rider Course Instructor for at least two years and am a currently certified MSF, CSC, or ESC instructor.”

The Chapter Director/Assistant Chapter Director Knowledge Evaluation has a question to reinforce the concept:

“All **officers should lead by example by wearing proper riding attire**, including a helmet.

(A) True (B) False”

“In the GWRRA Officers Guidebook, under expectations of District Directors:

Lead by example! The District Director is required to hold high the ideals of, and for, GWRRA. Officers may not embarrass, slander, disrupt, defy or libel GWRRA, your appointed office, fellow

officers, or Members. **Promote a safe environment and proper rider education by wearing appropriate riding gear** (helmet, gloves, long-sleeved shirt or coat, and boots) when riding.”

In the GWRRA Officers Guidebook, under expectations of Region Directors:

“Lead by example! You are expected to hold the high ideals of and for GWRRA. Officers may not embarrass, slander, disrupt, or libel GWRRA, the office, fellow officers, or Members. **Promote a safe environment and proper rider education by wearing appropriate riding gear** (helmet, gloves, longsleeved shirt or coat, and boots) when riding. Be proud to display and wear the official GWRRA 10” patch. Establish pride in GWRRA; educate and encourage Members to wear the official 10” back patch.”

As you can see, there are references to seeing this in the Levels program section of the handbook but it did not occur in Revision 8.

The gear mentioned here is the only GWRRA definition of what constitutes proper riding gear as it applies across Rider Education and Operations for the Levels Program, and any Memorandum of Understanding. Per the various Guidebooks, it applies at ALL times to ALL Master Tour Riders, ALL GWRRA Rider Educators, and ALL Operations Officers.

The following is the change that will appear (pending final approval) in the next release of the Handbook under the Level IV Master Tour Rider section, as a bullet under Rider/Co-Rider Requirements: (new text highlighted)

- **Wear proper riding apparel at all times** while riding. Proper riding apparel, a.k.a.: proper riding “gear” will include, at a minimum, a DOT approved helmet, eye protection, full-fingered gloves, over-the-ankle foot protection (boots preferred), with the balance of the body fully covered (leather or abrasion-resistant attire preferred; denim accepted.) Jackets or shirts should be a single piece of apparel and not be modular (i.e., not “riding sleeves”). Some have coined the acronym ATGATT standing for All the Gear, All the Time.

Now that you know the requirements as currently written or as originally intended (and will be updated in the next edition of the REP Handbook), it will be much easier to hold one-another accountable. Keep in mind that we are not a police organization. Lead by showing others you will abide by your agreement – promote using positive influence and reward. Use a little “peer pressure” for those who “lose focus”.

We don’t take away Master Tour Rider patches once earned. We all see those who choose to publically display that their word/signature means nothing and thus do not choose to promote safety or lead by example. The choice is clear, either you wear ATGATT or you don’t. The Membership picks up quickly if we have someone saying they care about safety when their actions tell another story.

If you are an appointing officer (District or Region Educator) this should weigh heavily on your selection choices. One bad choice can have a serious affect against all the good that many have done over the years in terms of the reputation of GWRRA Rider Education. At the end of the year or at the appropriate end of term, you need not reappoint an Educator that chooses not to meet their commitment. Per the MOU:

“As an Educator in the GWRRA, you will do everything in your power to see that the above areas of understanding are complied with. It is understood that any violation of this agreement may result in disqualification from GWRRA Educator status.”

As an Educator or Operations Officer, you can help stem the tide of bad press we hear about and see at events such as Wing Ding where Master Tour Riders show up not wearing ATGATT. Explain what the commitment means to any potential Master Tour Rider candidates BEFORE they make that commitment. Remind them that you and others will be watching closely when they ride in the heat of July and August. There are ways to manage the heat or cold, but the requirement (and their promise) will remain. There is no such time as “when no one is watching”.

We do encourage everyone to be safe while riding but it is a choice. As Educators, Operations Officers, Master Tour Riders/Co-Riders, Instructors, the choice was already made and the knowledge of making the choice was tested to confirm understanding.

How about others in GWRRA? On the REP Levels Application (Level I-III) we state:

“Participants are STRONGLY URGED to wear proper riding gear while riding.”

None of this information is new (except where stated as forthcoming). It has existed since the 2004 release of Revision 8 to the REP Handbook and before. Folks, the message and intent is crystal clear. There is no reason to believe there is any intentional loop hole allowing conduct not in support of these requirements. We are not all lawyers and don't need to be bound by legal jargon. If you made a promise, knowing the requirements, you will be expected to follow it. Safety truly is for Life. Accidents don't have to wait until you are ready for them. . . .

Friends Don't Let Friends Learn “by Accident”,
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