



Contact:
Motorcycle Safety Foundation
Media Relations
(949) 727-3227, Ext. 3131

Landmark Motorcycle Rider Training Study Extended to 2011

IRVINE, Calif., June 3, 2009 – The Motorcycle Safety Foundation (MSF) has extended its contract with the University of North Carolina Highway Safety Research Center (UNC-HSRC) to continue the MSF Discovery Project through November 2011. The landmark research study was launched in 2006 through a cooperative agreement between the MSF and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) to jointly fund the \$1.3 million research effort.

Officially called "The Longitudinal Study to Improve Crash Avoidance Skills," the Discovery Project's objective is to determine the effects of involvement in a rider education and training system on crash prevention and avoidance skills, risk management, riding habits, and safety characteristics.

Students in the study first complete the MSF Basic *RiderCourse*, which is the learn-to-ride course in the MSF Rider Education and Training SystemSM (RETS). This training system consists of a series of interrelated hands-on and classroom courses developed by the MSF that are designed to increase knowledge, enhance skills, and improve risk management strategies.

Students who successfully complete the MSF Basic *RiderCourse* will be offered, via random sampling, three additional training opportunities at periodic intervals throughout the study; the MSF Experienced *RiderCourse*, *Advanced RiderCourse—SportBike Techniques*, and *Street Smart—Rider Perception*, a classroom module.

"The Discovery Project is the first motorcycle study to objectively evaluate the benefits of rider training based upon the principles of safety renewal," said MSF Director of Quality Assurance and Research Dr. Sherry Williams. "Extending the study, enrolling more participants, and working with a respected, independent university-based research team ensure the continuing integrity of the project. The results could very well chart the course of motorcycle rider education for decades, and most importantly, help reduce the number of motorcycle crashes."

As of March 2009, 1,199 students have been enrolled in the study, which is being conducted in Long Beach, Calif. at a California Motorcyclist Safety Program (CMSP) rider training facility.

– more –

Landmark Motorcycle Rider Training Study Extended to 2011 – Page 2

The UNC-HSRC provides independent evaluation of research that takes a comprehensive, field-based look at the benefits of ongoing participation in a rider education and training system, and its subsequent affect on crash avoidance skills and real-world outcomes.

UNC-HSRC's team, led by Dr. Rob Foss, conducts the impartial evaluation and documents what participants ride, how often they ride, where they ride, and also monitors their overall motorcycling experience and skill progression as they participate in various MSF RETS learning modules.

"Data collection has been under way for almost a year now and is going smoothly. This extension will enable us to obtain information on more riders and to track their success in avoiding crashes after they have completed the series of range and classroom courses," said Dr. Foss. "Both mean that the statistical analyses will be more robust and the results of the study more conclusive."

Discovery Project Background

The origins of the Discovery Project can be traced back to 1997 when NHTSA partnered with MSF to develop the *National Agenda for Motorcycle Safety*, a strategic planning document that provides a consensus-based vision for future motorcycle safety efforts by incorporating input from a multi-disciplinary spectrum of stakeholders. Published in 2000, the *National Agenda* addresses 23 issues associated with motorcycle safety relating to the human, social, vehicle, and environmental factors that influence motorcycle safety, as well as associated research needs.

The August 11, 2003 issue of *NHTSA Now* quoted NHTSA Administrator Dr. Jeff Runge as saying, "The Motorcycle Safety Foundation was NHTSA's earliest partner in promoting motorcycle safety and remains an important friend in this effort. Our partnership with MSF has a tremendous impact on motorcycle safety and motorcycling."

As part of NHTSA's 2003 budget, the United States Congress directed the agency to improve motorcyclist crash avoidance skills and to enhance motorcyclist conspicuity. Using the MSF Rider Education and Training System as the mechanism to address some of the recommendations outlined in the National Agenda, NHTSA and MSF have squarely targeted this directive with the funding and implementation of the MSF Discovery Project.

Since 1973, the Motorcycle Safety Foundation has set internationally recognized standards that promote the safety of motorcyclists with rider education courses, operator licensing tests, and public information programs. The MSF works with the federal government, state agencies, the military, and others to offer training for all skill levels so riders can enjoy a lifetime of safe, responsible motorcycling.

The MSF is a not-for-profit organization sponsored by BMW, BRP, Ducati, Harley-Davidson, Honda, Kawasaki, KTM, Piaggio, Suzuki, Triumph, Victory, and Yamaha. For *RiderCourse*SM locations, call 800.446.9227 or visit www.msf-usa.org.