



Governor's Advisory Committee on Motorcycle Safety

Final Report – 2026

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Pictured: Motorcycle riders seen traveling on a highway near a river, through a rugged forested landscape.

Executive Summary

The Governor's Advisory Committee on Motorcycle Safety (GAC MS) was established to represent Oregon motorcyclists and advise state leadership on policies and practices to improve motorcycle safety statewide. Over the past 45 years, the Committee fulfilled this mandate through legislative recommendations, program development, and public engagement, leaving a lasting impact on Oregon's transportation system.

Over time, changes in communication methods, information availability, and public engagement have enabled direct interaction between riders and policymakers. As a result, the Committee's original liaison function is no longer required, and the Executive Order establishing the GAC MS will be allowed to sunset in October 2026. Committee members, past and present, have provided substantial volunteer service in support of transportation safety.

Throughout its tenure, the Committee offered both informal and formal guidance to state officials, including the Governor, the Oregon Legislature, the Oregon Transportation Commission, the Oregon Transportation Safety Committee, and the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT). Many recommendations were developed through discussions with riders who attended Committee meetings to present emerging issues. In earlier years, research related to motorcycle safety was

limited, and decision makers relied on the Committee to identify available information and advise on potential actions.

Initially formed in 1981 and subsequently formalized by Executive Order, the Governor-appointed Committee consisted of eight members representing a broad cross-section of Oregon's motorcycle community. The Committee addressed topics such as rider education, impaired riding, motorcycle-specific roadway hazards, motorist awareness, and motorcycle safety. The Committee contributed to the development and support of House Bills 2121 and 2122 during the 1989 Legislative Session, which strengthened requirements for motorcycle endorsements and training. These legislative changes established statewide access to standardized rider training and supported reductions in crash involvement among trained riders.

Committee accomplishments were supported by collaboration with A.B.A.T.E. of Oregon, motorcycle clubs, Team Oregon, and other organizations. Committee meetings served as a venue for riders to present concerns and perspectives related to motorcycling. Members reviewed these concerns and provided recommendations to policy makers based on analysis and deliberation.

Today, motorcycle safety research is widely accessible, and individuals can review information and communicate directly with policymakers through modern communication tools. As these mechanisms now allow riders to engage directly with their legislators, the mission of the Governor's Advisory Committee on Motorcycle Safety is considered complete and will sunset in October 2026.

Background and Establishment

The Governor's Advisory Committee on Motorcycle Safety (GAC MS) was initially established in 1981 by Governor Vic Atiyeh at the request of Oregon motorcycle riders. The Committee was formalized by Governor John Kitzhaber in 1999 via Executive Order 99-09 and later reaffirmed by Governor Kate Brown in 2016 via Executive Order 16-01. Its purpose was to represent the interests of Oregon motorcyclists and to provide recommendations to the Governor and the Governor's Highway Safety Representative on matters related to motorcycle safety.

The Committee was composed of up to eight members appointed by the Governor. Members served four-year terms, initially staggered, and could be replaced at the Governor's discretion. The Executive Order charged the Committee with addressing key motorcycle safety issues, including rider education, impaired riding, motorcycle-specific roadway hazards, motorist awareness, and safe roadway sharing practices. The Committee was responsible for providing guidance to the Governor and the Governor's Highway Safety Representative on motorcycle safety matters and recommending legislation that supports the safety of Oregon's transportation system.

Committee Structure and Responsibilities

Throughout its tenure, the Committee carried out a broad range of responsibilities essential to supporting motorcycle safety across Oregon. As an advisory body, it reviewed legislative proposals related to motorcycle endorsements, training requirements, impaired riding, and roadway conditions, providing informed recommendations to the Governor, the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT), including the Driver and Motor Vehicle Division and Motorcycle Safety Program. The Committee also served as a statewide forum where riders could raise concerns, share perspectives, and bring emerging issues to the attention of policymakers.

In addition to its advisory role, the Committee was responsible for evaluating programs and trends that influenced motorcyclist safety. It provided ongoing input on the Team Oregon Motorcycle Safety Program, the state's primary rider education system, and monitored statewide developments, challenges, and emerging technologies that could affect rider safety. Direct engagement with the public was also a key function. Committee members frequently interacted with riders at meetings, safety events, and educational activities, helping to strengthen communication and public awareness around motorcycle safety.



Pictured: A group of motorcycle riders on Highway 101 near the ocean.

These efforts – along with the development of outreach materials, safety campaigns, and broader public engagement initiatives – were carried out by ODOT, with the Committee providing input and guidance to support and shape that work.

The Committee's efforts aligned with core safety objectives: advancing rider education and ensuring training remained accessible statewide; reducing impaired riding; identifying and communicating roadway hazards specific to motorcyclists; improving motorist awareness and promoting safe interaction between all road users; and fostering a statewide culture supportive of transportation safety. Together, these responsibilities formed the foundation of the Committee's long-standing service to Oregon's motorcycling community.

Historical Timeline and Key Accomplishments

The Committee's accomplishments reflect decades of sustained engagement, deliberation, and collaboration with riders, agencies, and advocacy groups. Each milestone advanced the Committee's original purpose: to represent the interests of Oregon motorcyclists and advise state leadership on policies and practices that improve safety across the state.

Legislative Contributions

1981 – Support for original rider-education legislation

The Committee's endorsement of early rider-education legislation directly fulfilled its charter by promoting policies that increased rider skills and reduced crash risk. This foundational action strengthened statewide motorcycle safety practices and demonstrated the Committee's role in informing state leaders about essential training needs.

Foundation rider instruction provisions were codified in ORS 482 (1981), including sections on "Motorcycle instruction permit; requirements" and "Endorsement procedure; examination required," establishing the legal basis for structured motorcycle rider education.

1983 – Establishment of Team Oregon

By helping establish Team Oregon under the Oregon Traffic Safety Commission via ORS 484.575 in 1983, the Committee advanced its purpose by ensuring riders had access to a structured, statewide training system. This accomplishment set the stage for consistent, high-quality rider education, a core priority for improving safety outcomes.

1989 – Endorsement legislation for minors and expanded safety funding

In recommending legislation requiring minors to complete an approved beginner course and supporting increased funding for motorcycle safety programs, the Committee directly addressed its mission to improve rider preparedness and reduce risk among new and younger riders. ORS 807.175 required a "Motorcycle education course for 16, 17 and 18 years of age persons," formalizing rider training for minors and expanding funding eligibility for motorcycle safety.

1997 – Expanded training requirements for endorsement applicants under 21

The Committee's advocacy for expanded training requirements for younger endorsement applicants pursuant to 807.175 reinforced its long-established position that formal training is essential to crash reduction. Supporting fee increases dedicated to rider education further advanced statewide access to safety resources, aligning squarely with the Committee's original directive to strengthen motorcycle safety.

Research and Surveys

In 1995, the Committee oversaw a statewide survey of registered motorcyclists to better understand rider perspectives, training participation, and safety concerns. This work directly supported the Committee's purpose by gathering data needed to advise policymakers. The survey results, showing strong support for rider education, were instrumental in shaping the legislative updates adopted in 1997, demonstrating how the Committee used rider feedback to inform safety policy.

Safety Materials and Publications

Motorcycle Safety Awareness Month Proclamations

The Committee's longstanding collaboration with Oregon Governors to proclaim May as Motorcycle Safety Awareness Month advanced its mission by elevating statewide public attention to motorcycle safety. While the Governor's Office issued the proclamations, the Committee provided input and support to ODOT, which carried out the related awareness efforts.

Road Maintenance Information Card

The Road Maintenance Information Card was developed and produced by the Committee, with guidance and input from ODOT. Through creation of the information card, the Committee helped ensure riders had an effective tool for reporting hazardous conditions, strengthening communication between riders and transportation agencies.

State of Oregon Motorcycle Map

The State of Oregon Motorcycle Map was created by the Committee, informed by recommendations from ODOT regarding route selection, safety messaging, and rider-focused content. The map supported statewide access to reliable information to improve rider safety in all parts of the state.

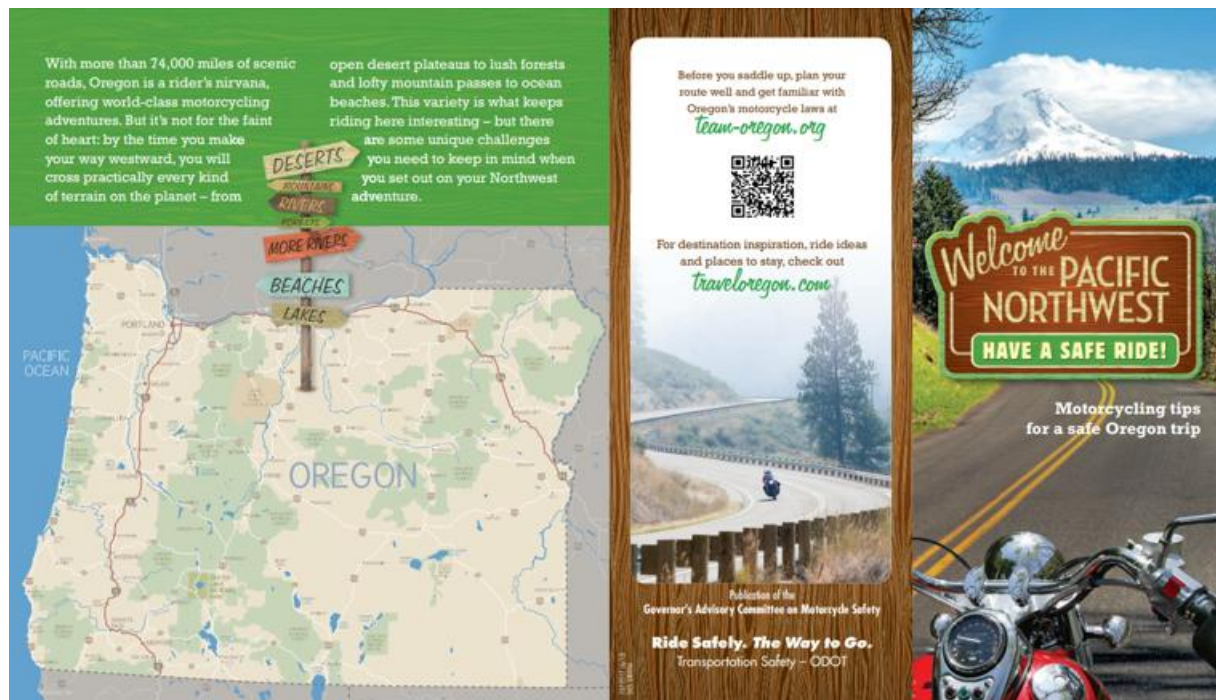
"Welcome to the Pacific Northwest – Have a Safe Ride" Publication

This publication was developed by the Committee in collaboration with ODOT, which provided suggestions, logistical support, and funding. Topics covered included regional riding conditions, hazard awareness, and impaired-riding prevention. The Committee focused on ensuring the messaging was aligned with longstanding safety priorities, and ODOT helped distribute the messaging to the riding community.

Strategic Plans and Subcommittee Work

The Committee developed and implemented its own formal and informal strategic plans to guide its work to improve rider safety. They also participated in development of the State's Transportation Safety Action Plan (TSAP) and related ODOT transportation safety planning documents. Their work identified priorities, emerging issues, and policy update needs, and ODOT used this guidance to shape statewide training, outreach, and safety initiatives. The Committee set direction and offered

recommendations, and ODOT carried out the operational planning, implementation, and follow-through tied to those strategies.



Pictured: The front side of the GAC-MS produced public safety brochure titled “Welcome to the Pacific Northwest – Have a Safe Ride”

Partnerships and Engagement

Partnerships have played a central role in the work of the Committee. The collaboration with Oregon motorcycle riders and transportation safety organizations has been integral to its operations. While differences in perspective occasionally arose, these topics were examined through the Committee’s standard process of review and deliberation to determine appropriate recommendations for motorcycle safety.

The Committee worked closely with numerous partners, including A.B.A.T.E. of Oregon, BikePAC of Oregon, OSU/Team Oregon, the Oregon State Police, the ODOT Driver and Motor Vehicle Division, the ODOT Transportation Safety Office, the Oregon Transportation Safety Committee, police departments, AAA of Oregon, local departments of transportation, the Oregon Trucking Association, and various motorcycle groups and clubs. These partnerships contributed to the development of policies and practices that have shaped the motorcycling environment in Oregon.

Collaborative legislative efforts with these partners have supported long-term progress in motorcycle safety. These actions have contributed to maintaining rider safety as a priority, expanding access to nationally recognized training, and ensuring that rider concerns can be effectively communicated within Oregon’s transportation system.

Strategic Direction and Long-Term Influence

Over its 45 years of service, the Committee helped establish a long-term strategic direction for motorcycle safety in Oregon. This direction grew directly from the Committee's original purpose: to represent motorcyclists, identify emerging safety needs, and advise state leadership on practices that reduce crashes, injuries, and fatalities. Through its legislative recommendations, program guidance, partnerships, and public engagement, the Committee shaped enduring priorities that continue to influence statewide motorcycle safety initiatives.

A central element of this strategic direction is Oregon's commitment to accessible, high-quality rider training. The Committee's early support for rider-education legislation and its instrumental role in establishing Team Oregon created a statewide system that remains fundamental to improving rider skills and reducing crash involvement. Its advocacy for evidence-based licensing requirements and training standards established a data-driven framework that still guides policy decisions.

The Committee also strengthened the expectation that motorcycle safety must be integrated into broader transportation planning. By consistently elevating issues such as impaired riding, roadway hazards, and motorist awareness, the Committee ensured that the needs of motorcyclists would be addressed within statewide safety programs, infrastructure decisions, and public awareness campaigns.

These foundational priorities, training access, evidence-based safety legislation, hazard awareness, impaired-riding prevention, and integration of motorcycle safety into transportation policy, form a strategic direction that remains embedded in agency practices and will continue to guide Oregon's motorcycle safety efforts long after the Committee sunsets.

Continued Commitment

Although the Committee has completed its formal role, Oregon's commitment to motorcycle safety remains strong. The framework established through decades of Committee work continues to guide agencies, partners, and riders in sustaining and advancing statewide safety priorities.

Motorcycle-specific publications and outreach tools, including Motorcycle Safety Awareness Month materials, rider focused publications, and rider-specific resources, will continue to be developed and maintained by ODOT. These materials will remain part of Oregon's broader motorcycle safety strategy after the Committee sunsets.

Motorcycle safety will also continue to be a regular topic of discussion at the Oregon Transportation Safety Committee (OTSC). The state is exploring the possibility of adding a member to OTSC to represent motorcycle riders and ensure their perspectives remain central to statewide safety decision making.

ODOT will continue collaborating with its Government Relations team to bring forward motorcycle-related legislative concepts to the Governor's Office for consideration. This process will maintain a clear and established pathway for policy proposals that reflect rider needs, emerging trends, and safety research.

The Governor's Advisory Committee on Driving Under the Influence of Intoxicants (GAC DUII) will also remain a venue for addressing impaired motorcycle riding. Discussion of motorcycle specific impaired riding concerns is expected to continue, and the state is considering adding a rider focused member to that body to strengthen representation and ensure motorcyclist safety remains incorporated into statewide DUII policy efforts.

In the absence of a formal motorcycle specific advisory body, Oregon's safety efforts will continue to be guided by the same strategic principles established through decades of Committee work, including informed decision making rooted in data and research, collaborative engagement with riders, awareness of unique motorcycling hazards, and shared responsibility among all road users. These principles ensure that motorcycle safety remains a priority within Oregon's transportation system. Oregon will continue to advance motorcycle safety using the same values that shaped the Committee's longstanding service to riders across the state.

Conclusion

The Committee fulfilled its original purpose by serving as a trusted liaison between motorcyclists and Oregon's transportation leadership. Its accomplishments, legislative advancements, statewide training improvements, public safety outreach, and decades of rider engagement, left a lasting impact on Oregon's transportation system.

As the Committee sunsets in October 2026, its legacy endures through established programs, long-standing partnerships, and strategic direction shaped by generations of volunteer members. Oregon's commitment to motorcycle safety remains strong, and the work continues through agencies, organizations, and riders who carry forward the values and priorities championed by the Committee for nearly 45 years.