

Accident Scene Management

We all hope that we will never be involved in an accident on our bikes. However there is a chance that we will either be involved in an accident, be there when one happens to a fellow rider, or come up on one after it happens. Following the occurrence of an accident your fellow riders want to be of assistance. They will feel helpless and not know what to do if they are not trained in accident management. Everyone should take a First Aid course at least every three (3) years to keep these skills up to par.

All riders should do several preparatory things in order to facilitate accident management:

- Carry a cellular phone when you ride. If you don't have one, ask who in the group has one and where it is kept.
- Carry a legible ID card with all your personal medical and insurance information that may be relevant in the event of an accident. There should be a current list of any medications you routinely take as well as any allergies that EMS personnel or doctors need to know about in the event you need treatment. The card should be kept somewhere on your bike or your person, where it can be easily found in an emergency.
- Carry a list of persons to contact in an emergency and their telephone numbers. If they are hard to reach, you should have enough information listed so your fellow riders can easily figure out a plan of action in a notification process.
- Carry a first aid kit on your bike. The kit should be oriented more towards road rash and more serious bleeding injuries. It should have larger, more absorbent dressings, tourniquets to control bleeding in the extremities and items that can facilitate the immobilization of broken limbs.
- Have a durable Power of Attorney prepared appointing someone close to you to be in charge of your business and legal affairs. "Durable" means the person designated can act for you even if you cannot act for yourself.

CHECK-CALL-CARE!

The first thing you need to do when arriving on an accident scene is to stop, take two deep breaths to help you remain calm. All the other people who are pumped and want to help will do whatever they are told to do by a calm person who seems to be in control and knows what he or she is doing. If you're excited and out of control as well, everyone will run around wasting precious time.

Before providing care, you should check to see that the area is safe, not only for the victim's safety, but also for your own. If, and only if, the scene is NOT safe, then you should move the victim out of harm's way. If people are available, get someone uproad and downroad to control traffic. Once the scene has been made safe, you should determine if there are other victims who may have more serious injuries.

After a person has gone down, they will be in a confused and scared state. They probably don't know what happened when they went down. They may be confused, frantic, etc.,

and often the only thing on their mind will be their bike. It is important to reassure them and to make sure they will not try to move or get to their bike.

Reassure the victim and establish communication. Tell them that they've been in a motorcycle accident. Tell them your name and that you are there to help them. Then ask them to answer the following questions without moving their head.

- Who are you?
- Where are you?
- What day is it?
- Do I have your permission to help you?

If breathing is taking place normally, LEAVE THE HELMET ON! It is very dangerous to remove someone's helmet if they have some type of cervical/back injury. The only time it should be removed is if the airway is blocked and cannot be cleared with the helmet on or if it is necessary to perform CPR.

Note: If the helmet was removed, send it along in the ambulance. The doctors may use the visible damage to the helmet to assist them in what to look for in terms of injuries.

The next step is to call 911 or other emergency number. If possible, involve another bystander to take care of this task to allow you the opportunity to provide immediate care to the victim.

In calling for emergency assistance to the EMS dispatcher be prepared to give the following information:

- 1) Location
- 2) Street Address
- 3) Cross Streets
- 4) City or Town
- 5) Directions
- 6) The telephone number you are calling from.
- 7) Your (callers) name
- 8) What happened
- 9) How many people are injured
- 10) The condition of the injured people
- 11) The assistance already being given, such as first aid, CPR, etc.

Following the summoning of emergency assistance, give all possible care, up to the extent of your training, to the injured party. You should be aware that all 50 states have a Good Samaritan law, which protects those providing assistance in an emergency, up to the limits of their training.

After the victims have been evacuated, get the name of the investigating officer in charge and find out where the vehicles are going and where the accident report will be. Take

photos if you can. Retrieve the rider's ID, insurance card and personal items from the bike and protect them.

Riders who witness a serious accident will be somewhat in shock even if they were uninjured. If you are managing an accident scene where a friend has been hurt, let bystanders help you as well as your friend. Don't rush to get to the hospital once your injured friend has been removed. Take time to collect yourself before riding again. Have a drink of water (shock can make you dry-mouthed), and try to remember to thank the emergency personnel and any bystanders who helped you, before you leave.

It behooves us all as motorcyclists to be prepared and knowledgeable in the areas of primary first aid and CPR. The most important thing to remember is that by being prepared, it may be our best friend or loved one, whose life we may save.

Portions of this article were taken from Accident Management by Cash Anthony and The Master Strategy Group, Accident Scene Management by Slider Gilmore, given at a motorcycle safety instructor conference in: Rochester, MN 10/11/92, and from the American Red Cross First Aid CPR/AED Program