

DRINKING AND RIDING

Mark Welch — Safety Officer



Our state is one of the few, if not the only, state where we can enjoy riding all year. One of the downfalls is that our state leads the nation in motorcycle fatalities.

A large percentage of those fatalities involve motorcyclists who made the decision to drink and ride.

Some folks think that because all they had to drink was beer that they are OK to ride. The truth is that alcohol is alcohol no matter what beverage you enjoy. One 12-ounce beer has the same alcoholic content as a 5-ounce glass of wine or a 1.5 ounce shot of liquor. It takes the body about one hour to eliminate one drink.

I have had the opportunity to participate in “wet labs.” That is where the subject consumes alcohol while others watch to see the effects and measure the blood alcohol content. Yes, you read that correctly. I got paid to get drunk. Okay, maybe drunk is not the best word to use, I got impaired. That may be where a lot of folks get confused as they did not consider themselves to be drunk.

In Florida, when you get arrested for DUI, the charge is actually, “driving while under the influence of alcoholic beverages to the extent that the normal faculties were impaired.” So, you don’t have to be “drunk,” just impaired. And that takes less alcohol than most people think that it does. Back to my wet lab days, my BAC reached .09 after consuming 5 beers. Granted, they were consumed a little faster than usual. After all, I was being paid by the hour.

Have you ever seen a new story about someone who was driving impaired, and the author says that the BAC was more than twice the legal limit? Just so you know, there is no “legal limit” when it comes to impaired riding. You are considered to be under the influence if your blood alcohol level is at .08 per 100 milliliters of blood regardless of how well you can perform basic functions. You can be convicted of DUI if your BAC is lower than .08 and your ability to perform basic functions has been impacted.

There are also myths about sobering up faster. Some believe a cold shower will sober up a person faster.

Others believe hot coffee will do the trick while still more think eating will help speed the process. The truth is that if you do all of that to someone who is intoxicated, you will have a clean, wide awake, well-fed drunk on your hands. Time is the only way to sober up a person.



The first things that are impacted when your BAC increases are your judgement and vision. (That explains why so many bad hook ups happen when the bar closes.) So your ability to determine whether or not you should ride has eroded when it is time to go home and you make bad decisions. That is one of the many reasons HOG rules do not permit drinking on a sanctioned ride.

The best rule of thumb for us all is if you drink don’t ride and if you ride, don’t drink. Enjoy both pastimes if you choose to, but do them separately.

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MARK