

2012 MSR Ride Crash Data – Annual Review

In keeping with our Risk Management Policy, the Committee reviews the incident data each year, nominally in March. This time I have got in early.

Referring to the **Ride Statistics – Distance vs Crashes** summary sheet, we see that in 2012 there were 24 crashes resulting in various degrees of injury. Twenty-one riders walked away unharmed (Rating 1), two riders suffered minor injuries such as broken ribs, bruising or concussion (Rating 2) and one rider suffered more substantial injuries (Rating 3) such as broken limbs and internal injuries. First (and last) time rider Cheeky Dunlop skewed the figures somewhat with two crashes on the same day, the second one resulting in a broken collar bone with multiple fractures.

2012 was the worst year in terms of absolute numbers of crashes (24), whereas 2011 is very poor in terms of severity (Rating 2s and 3s), being the highest in all categories (except Rating 4 = death, and we've only had one of those in the period) since 2005 - as far as I have collated records back to. (I have the data for previous years, just not collated.) How bad? Well, looking at the sheet we see 2011 had 22 crash, 2010 had 14 crashes and 2009 16 crashes. So not too bad ...

2012 tracked along much as 2011 did including the ratio of **new rider crashes** “N” (1st, 2nd, or 3rd ride or up until 3 months) to all crashes remaining at about 50%. New rider crashes are understandable, if not good. To generalise, typically new riders are not used to the sustained higher speeds, riding in groups, or have experience in all riding conditions – ie difficult riding conditions such as poorly surfaced roads, tough weather conditions, and coping with the unexpected. Since 2009 new rider crashes have consistently been close to 50% or half of all crashes. Which means the other half of crashes are the members! Fundamentally, motorcycling is dangerous.

If you add up the **official ride distances** for 2012, the Club provided 29,322 km worth of entertainment (down 2,550 km on 2011 – the Tassy Trip a contributing factor), but up 1300 km on the long term average (back to 2005) of 27,978 km.

If you multiply the ride distances by number of people on each ride you get a measure of how many kilometres people were at risk. Let's call this figure **Club Kilometres** (people x km). From the table we see that in 2012 the Club Kilometres totalled 420,139. This was roughly 32,00 up on 2011, and 73,000 km over the long term average of 346,862 [people.km]. The numbers are up because we had very high ride attendances (not measured here but implicit with many rides 25 plus riders). This would help explain why we had a couple more crashes this year – we rode more! And we had more members – up 7 on last year at this point. The increasing number of members – trending upwards since 2007 at least – has not been taken into account. It looks like we are riding more in absolute terms but if we divide the total kilometres by the number of members (another column for next year!) then we may see a different picture. “Lies, dam lies, and statistics” as my 90 year old Year 12 Pure Maths teacher used to say.

Year 2009 with 411,394 Club Kilometres and only 78 members is the standout year - the last year of the 10 year drought i.e. dry roads, perfect riding conditions. Whereas 2010 was the wettest in 10 years, dropping the figure down to 345,675 km. 2011 was somewhere near the long term rainfall average and 2012 was very wet till September with lots of flooding earlier in the year after which it has been comparatively dry – all the Victorian dams were at record levels, peaking at 84% total capacity. The last 4 months of 2012 in Victoria have been remarkably dry (The AGE, Jan 5th) leading to great ride attendances.

If we relate the number of kilometres and the **total number of crashes**, we see that there was a crash, of any description, every 17,506 [people km] compared to 2011 at 17,631 km. The long term average is 20,555 km so we are 14.8 % down on the long term average. The long term trend looks to be going the wrong way – every year we are having less distance between crashes. Something for the Committee to ponder.

If we consider only the **crashes where people were hurt**, Ratings 2, 3 and 4, then the Club travelled 144,046 [people km] between injuries in 2012. For comparison, it was 55,411 in 2011 and 86,419 in 2010. The long term average is 106,727, so 2012 was a relatively good year. Critically, the number of serious crashes has diminished this year. If we could only reduce the minor crashes then the figures would read really well.

Revised safety procedures include the collection of ICE numbers, a none too subtle reminder of the consequences of crashing before the start of the ride, and articles such as this, will hopefully aid in the long term improvement in the numbers.

The Club appears to be providing desirable services which is pleasing in these tough economic and politically correct times. Sports bike sales are dramatically down, but overall bike sales are stable. There is a large swing to dual purpose machines, away from hyper-sports models, possibly as a result of the continued crackdown by the police on speed. More and more roads are dropping to 80 km/h – Black Spur and Reefton Spur for instance, and now the Licola Road and sections of the Great Alpine Way heading for Omeo – making it harder and harder to “have fun” near Melbourne – or anywhere. Hence, the move away from sports bikes.

The ever more efficient and present use of laser speed detecting devices is having an interesting and direct effect on our ride participation rates. It seems that any one time a member is suspended, whether for 1 month or 6 months, and usually multiple people simultaneously, up to four at one time by my reckoning. Riders just “disappear”. But hasn’t it always been so?

MSR Incident Data Commentary – Everything Except Crashes

Looking at the MSR Incident data for 2012 and ignoring the crash data, a few things stick out.

Police. There were 12 speeding fines (a couple of Members twice) awarded on Club rides, up from 5 in 2011. And we were pulled over a few times for random checks, drug testing now more frequent. It is rumoured that the police are now checking helmet Australian Standards compliance.

Punctures. Four in 2012 (same as 2011) on Club rides, Usually we are pretty good at fixing them – so long as you have the plugs and needle to insert them with. But we failed to fix a BMW puncture as we had no carbon dioxide bottles to reinflate the tyre. Tow truck was the bad outcome.

Mechanical Always an interesting bunch. Three holed radiators (and Cliff’s self healing one a maybe 4th at this stage). Radiator guards are essential these days with no effective front mudguard on sports bikes. Door mesh from Bunnings is the go.

Other mechanical failures included a blown fork seal and a blown rear shock, a couple of gear change levers falling off, a disconnected fuel line spewing fuel over the rear tyre, a cut front brake line, and a sticking throttle cable on Mikey’s BM which would have been exciting when it jammed open on Granya Gap. A few of us suffered dented rims – more than is recorded on the list – a reflection of the poor state of repair of the Victorian and NSW roads, consequences of the recent flood damage and general state of the economy – there is not enough money to fix the roads.

Electrical: we had a few electrical issues this year with a Mirko’s 929 stator failing (as per normal Honda from that era), Misho’s CBR1000 cutting out, and Cindy’s 675 rectifier/regulator failure at Mansfield. We had a couple of battery failures as well.

Dumb stuff: 5 people ran out of petrol; luckily a siphon hose and a water bottle usually sees minimum delays. Corner markers leaving before the rear rider, or ambiguous corner marking, resulting in us losing 10 riders in three separate incidents, a few not ever re-finding the ride. A few people dropped their bikes at a standstill – let’s call this a fatigue induced accident. These minor drops didn’t count in the crash statistics.

There were **73 incidents** in 2012, up from 45 in 2011. The twelve speeding tickets somewhat inflated the numbers. Ride attendances seemed to be sky high for a period and with more people on rides, more stuff happens!

A year is a long time in our Club and a lot can happen. If your name is not on these lists, it probably means you just haven’t been riding enough – or have been very lucky!

A good year.

Ben Warden, Secretary