

Road Safety, Traffic Management & Enforcement



OPERATION ZENITH

Introduction

Launched in April 2010, the Operation Zenith motorcycle safety campaign aims to reduce the number of motorcyclists involved in collisions on Grampian's roads by adopting an innovative multi-agency approach to raise awareness of motorcycle safety amongst all stakeholder groups.

Background

Annually, motorcyclists account for an average of 20% of those involved in all Killed and Seriously Injured (KSI) road casualty collisions in the Grampian area.

During 2009, motorcyclists accounted for only 2% of road users in Grampian, however 26% of those killed on the area's roads were motorcyclists indicating the disproportionate vulnerability of motorcyclists as road users.

Led by Road Safety Grampian (the Police and Fire and Rescue Services), Operation Zenith sees the North East's Road Authorities (Aberdeenshire, Aberdeen City and The Moray Councils,

as well as Bear Scotland) working in partnership with the Scottish Ambulance Service, local motorcycle groups, Community Safety Partnerships and the North East Safety Camera Partnership (NESCAMP) in recognition that there is a shared responsibility to reduce the number of KSI collisions involving motorcyclists.



Prior to its launch, the partners reviewed best practice in this field before collectively developing the content of the strategy, with each partner bringing their own strengths to the table and proposing measures covering the full spectrum of the Four E's – Education, Engagement, Engineering and Enforcement. The work initiated by Operation Zenith has resulted in a framework being put in place which during challenging financial times allows all agencies to work together towards the joint target of a 15% reduction in casualties in this group over the next five years.

The partners acknowledge that the joint approach has increased the overall impact and success of the campaign which would have been difficult to achieve individually. In addition, the Operation has generated a 'can do' attitude amongst the partners and given motivation to achieving the casualty reduction objective.

Approaches to Delivery and Putting Policy into Practice

Established as a multi-agency partnership, Operation Zenith aims to improve motorcycling safety by drawing together the four recognised strands of Education, Engagement, Engineering and Enforcement.

• Education

Improved rider skills were identified as being of key importance and the 'Bikesafe' training course, providing motorcyclists with road safety, first aid, basic machine maintenance and riding skills, was successfully reinvigorated with attendance increasing by 65% compared to the previous year. It was recognised that many of those that should be targeted were unlikely ever to attend, so funding was secured from Aberdeenshire Community Safety Partnership to offer 100 offending riders the opportunity to undertake a free independent skills assessment under the Enhanced Rider Scheme.

Rider safety information was also distributed via email and through the circulation of 1,000 information packs to local motorcycle dealers and trainers, who forwarded it to their customers. This information self-populated onto motorcycle websites and forums helping to stimulate debate and greater awareness. As a result, feedback from local trainers has identified a significant increase in those undertaking advanced training.

• Engagement

Communications designed to engage with motorcyclists and other road users on the campaign's messages have included advice leaflets, press releases, promotional films on YouTube and a series of 'tough-talking' radio adverts. A local bike dealer supported the campaign by loaning a sports motorcycle which was used as an icebreaker to help engage with bikers on a one to one basis at popular motorcycle venues, open days and events.



The campaign has also made use of the 'Around The Corner' website which uses maps to detail the hazards associated with popular motorcycle routes in the Grampian area with a breakdown of the hazards on these routes alongside other 'stopping-point' information for visiting bikers. In total, 10,000 maps have been provided to encourage use of the website and the safety messages and advice contained therein. The Internet and Intranet sites of the various partners and major employers in the region have also been used to promote the 'Look Twice... Think Bike... Think Biker' message to staff.

Frontline police officers completed a short computer based learning package which was developed to improve the understanding of particularly common offences associated with motorcycles.

A working group including representatives from each of the main project partners has also been established and meets on a monthly basis to review performance and plan future campaigns.

• Engineering

Prior to the campaign launch, riders from the police's motorcycle unit audited three routes popular with bikers in Grampian recommending signage, maintenance and engineering improvements. This work has subsequently been taken on by the local authority partners, who adopted the promoted routes and carried out improvement works designed to compliment the aims of the Operation. The Councils also worked jointly with the police to develop new, temporary, high visibility motorcycle safety signage on routes with high casualty rates promoting safe rider messages to bikers.

• Enforcement

Increased targeted enforcement across Grampian has also formed a major part of the campaign. A five phased enforcement operation was established with initial phases focusing on intelligence gathering and later phases providing a combination of enforcement and education.

Of the 4,000 motorcyclists engaged with and provided with advice on safer motorcycling during the campaign, only 160 were reported for their riding

behaviour, serving to highlight that Operation Zenith was not a 'pick on motorcyclists' exercise.

Innovation

Although a number of motorcycle safety campaigns operate across Scotland, it is believed that Operation Zenith is leading the way due to the holistic and innovative approach that has been adopted. From increased enforcement and the Operation of 'Bikesafe' training courses to the use of new motorcycle safety signage and novel approaches to engagement, the campaign has successfully tackled the problem of motorcycle collisions.

In an engineering capacity and complimenting the use of new, high visibility signage, a trial of anti-skid manhole covers has also been launched on certain routes to examine their potential to further improve motorcyclist safety.

Creative approaches have been adopted regarding media coverage to ensure motorcycle safety messages stay in the public spotlight. News stories prepared on the campaign have ranged from articles highlighting the dangers of 'muck on roads' (with testimonies from the National Farmers Union) to articles focussing on the economic benefits of motorcycling. Furthermore, safety messages have been promoted using Variable Messaging Signs across Aberdeen City, along with the 'AbLive' interactive screens located in Council offices, leisure centres, libraries and supermarkets across Aberdeenshire.



Invitation: Safer September

Sunday 22 August 2010 ~ 10am to 2pm
Woodhill House Car Park,
Westburn Road, Aberdeen

In the North East accident statistics show that September is the most common month for collisions involving motorcyclists.

As part of the **OPERATION ZENITH** Motorcycle Safety Awareness Campaign, we would like to invite you to join us on the above date for an Open Day Exhibition promoting motorcycle safety and specifically, a Safer September.

A whole range of activities and events will be on offer during the day, including:

- Manoeuvrability Course;
- Assessed rides by advanced motorcycle riders from the IAM;
- Drag Testing;
- Bike Clinic;
- Exhibitions from a wide range of motorcycling organisations;
- Various prizes including track sessions at Knockhill Racing Circuit, motorcycle clothing, tyres and much, much more.

Supported by:



Following analysis of accident data which concluded that collisions peaked during September, a 'Safer September' Open Day was held to engage directly with motorcyclists.

For further information contact:
Infrastructure Services
Aberdeenshire Council
Woodhill House
Westburn Road
Aberdeen
AB16 5GB
Tel: 01224 664580

www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk



Around 300 bikers attended the inaugural event, which provided manoeuvrability courses, bike simulators, drag test demonstrations highlighting the importance of appropriate clothing, bike clinics, assessed rides from the Institute of Advanced Motoring and was supported by exhibitors from motorcycle and safety organisations.

Evidence of Progress

Operation Zenith did not expect to change attitudes overnight, but set out on a five year journey to reduce serious and fatal road traffic collisions within the motorcycle user group by 15%. The impact of the campaign has been extremely positive and it is considered that the engagement with over 4,000 motorcyclists during 2010 not only raised awareness, but contributed to the following reductions in motorcycle injury collisions in the biking calendar year from March to October 2010:

- Fatal injury collisions down from 6 to 5 (-16%)
- Serious injury collisions down from 57 to 48 (-16%)
- Slight injury collisions down from 81 to 62 (-24%)

An online evaluation of Operation Zenith, completed by nearly 200 bikers, also confirmed the success of the campaign with 80% of respondents stating that they felt the campaign had a positive impact in terms of increasing awareness levels of motorcyclists and their safety.

The motorcycling fraternity has commented positively via media and internet 'chat rooms'. Positive feedback has also been received from

communities across Grampian who have jointly felt the benefits of the work carried out and seen for themselves the positive action carried out by all of the partners in tackling an issue of long standing community concern.



Conclusion

Although only launched in April 2010, the campaign has already been recognised for awards including the Scottish Accident Prevention Council's Road Safety Award, and by COSLA. Early signs are extremely encouraging and lessons learned during the Operation will be used to influence its ongoing development in future years.

Further information on Operation Zenith is available by visiting www.grampian.police.uk/operationzenith.