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## Life in the safe lane Officials emphasize Motorcycle Mentorship Programs

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As the 2009 riding season rolls into full swing, Army Leaders are once again encouraging both new and experienced motorcycle riders to renew their commitment to staying safe on the roads by participating in the Army's Motorcycle Mentorship Program (MMP).

"The MMP provides an opportunity for motorcycle riders to take responsibility for their sport," U.S. Army Combat Readiness/Safety Center Command Sgt. Maj. Tod Glidewell said. "The program brings riders together to learn and to have good, clean, high-energy fun."

The purpose of the unit or installation level MMP is to create a supportive environment of responsible motorcycle riding and enjoyment through mentorship by seasoned riders. The MMP was adopted by the Army in December 2005 through a memorandum signed by the then Chief of Staff of the Army, Gen. Peter Schoomaker. In that memorandum, Schoomaker asked motorcyclists to team up and ride together; look out for riders who aren't ready for more advanced challenges; and mentor the new riders as they develop their skills.

"Whenever you come together as a team, you learn a lot faster," Glidewell said. "When you are alone, it takes a lot longer to learn and often the lessons riders learn alone come from the school of hard knocks." There are several ways Soldiers can participate in MMPs around the country. One option involves becoming a Rider Coach.

A Rider Coach teaches the Motorcycle Safety Foundation's (MSF) Basic and Experienced Rider Courses and, if the Rider Coach is qualified, also teaches the Military Sportbike Riders Course.

Rider Coaches all attend a MSF Rider Coach Preparation Course. During the course, Rider Coach candidates learn the nuts and bolts of teaching the Basic Rider Course (BRC). The course is approximately 65 hours long. Keep in mind that in order to maintain your Rider Coach certification you must conduct at least two BRCs in a two year period. This may be a difficult task if you are deployed overseas or your installation has an abundance of Rider Coaches.



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Accepting the responsibilities of being a Rider Coach is just one way Soldiers can augment a MMP. "All riders, from the newest to the most experienced, have a place at the MMP table," Glidewell said. Staff Sgt. Xavier Brisco, a mentor with the MMP at Fort Rucker, Ala., said the program provides him a great opportunity to ensure riders in his community are as safe and skilled as possible. "This program helps riders maximize new skills, reduce their chances for mishaps, and helps them have fun in the process," he said.

Brisco said the MMPs are a great tool to help military communities continue to embrace motorcycle riding as a safe and enjoyable hobby.

"The programs get the less experienced riders together with the seasoned riders to share in responsible motorcycle riding," he said. "The inexperienced rider learns a wide variety of riding tips while the experienced rider keeps basic fundamental skills sharp by teaching others. The program is a win-win for all involved."

More information about Motorcycle Mentorship Programs, how to establish one and how to get involved in an existing program is available at <https://safety.army.mil/MMP/docs.asp>.

Information on signing up for motorcycle training can be found at your installation safety offices or by logging onto the Army Installation Management Command Registration System (AIRS) at <https://airs.lmi.org/Home.aspx>. At the Web site, individuals can sign up for the Basic Riders Course, the Experienced Riders Course and, if an installation has qualified coaches, the Military Sportbike Riders Course. The site also contains a schedule of other courses offered through the Army Traffic Safety Training Program (ATSTP). National Guard and Reserve personnel may also use this Web site to locate the closest Army installation where they can attend a course.

For more information on becoming a Rider Coach, active duty Soldiers should first contact their installation safety office. Reserve and National Guard Soldiers may visit the Motorcycle Safety Foundation Web site at [www.msf-usa.org](http://www.msf-usa.org). call (334)255-2892 or e-mail [Safe.Drivingtaskforce@conus.army.mil](mailto:Safe.Drivingtaskforce@conus.army.mil) for more Rider Coach information.